

**ASANTE ART AND CULTURE: THE MAINSPRING OF ASANTE'S
GREATNESS AND GLORY**

**ASANTE ART AND CULTURE: THE MAINSPRING OF ASANTE'S
GREATNESS AND GLORY**

A thesis submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Kwame Nkrumah
University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in

AFRICAN ART AND CULTURE

By

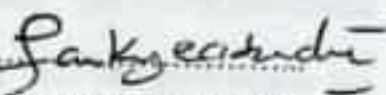
NANA KWAKU ASIEDU

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DECLARATION

I certify that this Master of Arts thesis is my own original work. When and where references are cited or made to other people's works and opinions, full acknowledgements are given. Furthermore, this thesis has never been submitted to any other university for any degree.

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Candidate.

I certify that this thesis is the candidate's own work.

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PREFACE

This thesis presents some aspects of the role that Art and Culture played in the greatness and glory of the Asante Kingdom which is now part of Ghana. The need for cultural development seems to be everywhere recognised. This is even manifested in the activities of the UNESCO, and the African Union, both of which Ghana is a member, which aim at bringing this matter to all nations of Africa and the world at large.

The ability of a person to retain both his individual as well as his national personality in the face of the contemporary world influences, which makes him what he is, appears to set his art and culture high above all his other possessions. The need to promote the cultural growth of Ghanaians in particular has been and continues to be the primary concern of the Ghana government. This has led to the introduction of the art and cultural enrichment programmes into the educational curricula of both first and second cycle institutions, and even in the tertiary ones, with the avowed aim of encouraging the youth to appreciate their indigenous arts (culture).

This therefore, calls for the need to promote certain customs and traditions like festivals, which embody some art forms to suit the interest of the youth and to help transmit our rich cultural heritage to the future generation.

In tackling the issue at stake: 'Asante Art and Culture: The Mainspring of Asante's Greatness and Glory', the problem that characterised my Literature Review, was the difficulty of finding the 'right' books, journals, etc, containing pertinent information on the role art and culture played in Asante's greatness and glory, since no one seems to have written on 'Asante art and culture: The Mainspring of Asante's Greatness and Glory', to have made the work easier. Despite all these, through enough research, I was able to lay hands on a number of books, journals, brochures, etc, that were useful.

The research on the field was not an easy task since in most cases, information was not readily available at the places I visited. Even, in some cases, there was no one present to provide me with the necessary information. I therefore point out that, if great care is not taken, vital information on Asante art and culture would be lost to the future generation since much of the information is left uncovered.

It is therefore, against this backdrop that I, having realised the educative and the artistic values inherent in the Asante Art and Culture, have thought it expedient to delve into this subject with the view to exposing its educative and artistic values which can be of immense benefit to the youth and the entire Ghanaian populace. The facilities used to enable me to write this thesis were the main Library of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, the Library of the College of Art and Social Sciences, KNUST, the Ashanti Regional Library, Kumasi, The National Museum, Accra, Regional Archives, Kumasi, Ashanti Regional Museum, Kumasi, the Manhyia Palace Museum, Kumasi, the Manhyia Palace Archives, Kumasi, the Accra Polytechnic Library and the Okomfo Anokye Museum, Kumasi. I elicited data from the field and literature. It is my conviction that, this

thesis will go a long way in promoting some aspects of the culture of Asante and Ghana as a whole.

Kumasi

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July 2005.

B.A (Hons) Social Sciences

Diploma in Business Education

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Again, I am grateful to the following: Opanin Kwabena Asamoah, attendant, Manhyia Palace, Kumasi, who offered me first hand information during my visit to the Manhyia Palace, the *Kontihene* of Asante Mampon, Nana Yaw Kodua, who briefed me of all about Mampon's role in Asante's greatness and glory, the *Tuffuhene* of the Kumawu Traditional Area, Oheneba Okyere Adjei Diatuo I, the *Ntenehene* of the

Bekwai Traditional Area, Nana Oppon Panin II, the *Nifahene Abusuapanin* of Kokofu, Opanin Kwabena Amankwaa and Okyeame Yaw Akuoku, a Chief Spokesman of the *Edwesohene*, all of whom offered me information concerning the role their areas played in Asante's greatness and glory. The nice reception accorded me by the *Amanuhene* of Kokofu and Edweso, Barima Okogyecasuo Offe Akwasi II and Nana Aboagye Agyei III, and the Queenmother of Kumawu Traditional Area, Nana Serwaa Amponsah, needs special commendation.

I am indebted to all the authors, whose literally works are partial sources of my information and quotations and Mr. Amos Kabobah who did some typesetting and the printing of this thesis. Finally, I am most grateful to my dear wife, Mrs. Diana Asiedu, a tutor of the Effiduasi Methodist Junior Secondary School, Ashanti and my son, Mr. Allan K. Asante-Yeboah, who supported me financially in bringing out this thesis.

Nana Kwaku Asiedu.

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Maps

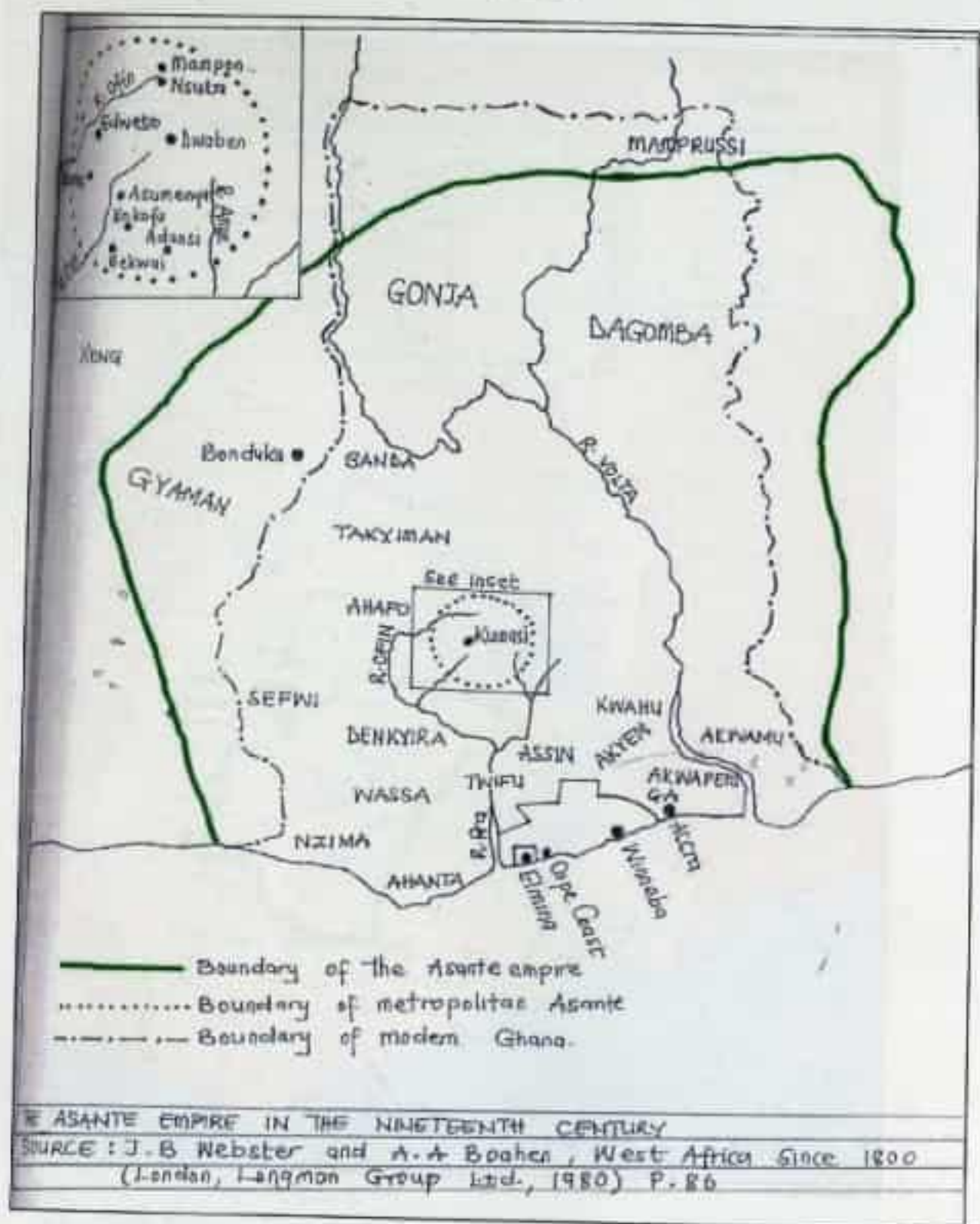
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ABSTRACT

The study makes a general survey of the Art and Culture involved in the greatness and glory of Asanteman; and in accordance with the research objectives, the thesis has mainly given an account of the role which Asante Art and Culture played in Asante's greatness, and the role that Asante Art and Culture played to make Asante glorious.

The thesis comprises five chapters. Chapter One which deals with the statement of the problem and its setting, which are the objectives, importance of the study, reasons for writing the thesis, delimitations, limitations, justification of the objectives, hypothesis, statements of assumptions, methodology, ethnographic background of Asante and the significance of the research.

Chapter Two reviews some literature pertinent to the topic, whilst Chapter Three of the thesis concerns itself with the role which Asante art and culture have played in making Asante great. It therefore discusses the political, social, medico-religious, and economic aspects, as well as the arts that helped Asante to become great.

Chapter Four investigates and discusses the role which Asante Art and Culture played in making Asante glorious; it therefore examines the various branches of art (the visual, body, performing and verbal ones) that contributed to make Asante glorious. Also, the role that some other cultural aspects, such as religion, traditional politics (that is chieftaincy) played in making Asante glorious has been considered.

The last chapter (five) concludes the discussions, with the summary of the thesis and offers some suggestions for the development of the arts to make Asante more glorious. It has pointed out, however, that since art is dynamic, the identification and examination of the various artifacts, connected with Asante culture should be examined more properly, so that the archaic ones are done away with, and the good ones be promoted or retained, for the use of the future generations. The thesis has shown that Asante art and culture made Asante great and glorious. Art played and continues to play an important role in Asante's greatness and glory as seen in all the chapters in this thesis. It is hoped that it will generate further investigations in order to arouse further interest in this area for future field researchers.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

The essence of writing this thesis is to create the awareness of the role art and culture played and still plays to make Asante great and glorious.

1.1 Statement of the problem.

Since nobody seems to have written that it is Asante Art and culture that have made and still make Asante great and glorious, there is the need to conduct this research to show how these have contributed to the greatness and glory of these people. I am hopeful that the success of this research will promote the study of Asante Art and Culture in Ghana and other parts of the world. The result of this research will hopefully become an academic legacy for posterity, and will continue to remind the future generations of the greatness and glory of Asante. Therefore, the objectives of this thesis are as follows:

1.2 Objectives of the thesis

This thesis is to:

- a) study how Asante Art and Culture contributed to the building, greatness and glory of this empire in the past;
- b) study how the Art and Culture are still contributing to the glory of Asante; and
- c) offer suggestions for the promotion of the study of Asante Art and Culture in Ghana and other parts of the globe in order to attract more tourists to visit Asante and Ghana as a whole, to boost the economy of this country.

1.3 Importance of the Study

This thesis is a contribution to the documentation of the Art and Cultural heritage of Asante. Again, it will be of much help to such institutions as the National Commission on Culture (N.C.C), as this document could be used as a source of reference by visitors to Ghana, and even Ghanaians, who will need more information about Asante Art and Culture.

It will also help the Ashanti Region since it is likely to attract tourists who will bring foreign exchange into Asante and Ghana as a whole. The thesis will also be important to anthropologists, historians, ethnographers, educationists, artists, academicians, the Tourist Board of Ghana, the National Museum and Monuments Board, which can

make replicas of some of these artifacts for visitors to see and collect, and also provide some useful information to the general public.

Furthermore, the thesis will help to enhance the sense of cultural awareness of the general public and thereby promote the cultural growth of Ghanaians since the thesis will become a source of cultural education. This thesis will also benefit students, in our secondary and tertiary institutions, who will want to pursue courses on Asante art and culture. On the whole, it will serve as a source of document, where information can be sought from.

1.4 Reason(s) for writing the Thesis

The major reason for writing this thesis is to fill the vacuum created by the inability of various writers to write on how Asante Art and Culture have helped Asante in its greatness and glory. The thesis has therefore been written to enable people obtain more information about Asante Art and Culture.

1.5 Delimitation (The scope of the work)

This research is limited to the role Art and Culture have played in making Asante great and glorious, right from the formation of the Confederacy to the present day. However, in some cases, references are made to the period in Asante history before the formation of the Confederacy.

1.6 Limitation

In the course of writing this thesis, the writer encountered the following problems: first, grants given for this research are insufficient. This situation placed some serious financial obstacles in my way, especially, during my travels to obtain the necessary information. This aside, the amount involved (the grant) was paid very late to me and thus outlived its usefulness. Again, documents such as photographs, printing materials, etc, were not obtained easily due to lack of funds.

1.7 Justification of the Thesis

It is justifiable to write this thesis because many people are unaware that the building, greatness and glory of the Asante Empire in the past depended mainly on the people's art and culture. It is also important to write this thesis because generally Ghanaians, especially the institutions in this country, are not seriously studying about the Asante Empire, culture and art. This thesis is therefore to resuscitate and more actively promote the fame and glory of Asante to attract more tourists into the region to enable Ghana obtain more foreign exchange for the socio-economic development of this country.

1.8 Hypothesis

'That Asante's greatness and glory in the past and present have mainly depended on her art and culture.'

1.9 Statements of Assumption

- a) 'This study assumes that Asante's greatness in the past depended mainly on her art and culture'.
- b) The improvement of the arts will lead to the development of the Society.
- c) The sustenance of the art and culture will boost tourism in Asante and the Country as a whole.

1.10 Methodology

First, much information was sought through interviews, questionnaire and personal observations. Again, there were visits to a number of places to gather data on the thesis. Finally, analytical, statistical, narrative, descriptive and interpretive approaches, were adopted to make the research successful. Also, discussions form part of the methods chosen to accomplish this thesis.

1.11 Ethnographic background of Asante

The Asante Empire¹ was founded in the seventeenth century by a Confederation of some Akan-Speaking peoples. The empire attained the height of its power hundred years later, dominating all of what is now Ghana and some parts of the present-day Cote d'Ivoire to the west and Republic of Togo to the east. (see map 1). Some British citizens occupied Kumasi, the capital of the Asante Kingdom in 1896, after the Asante-British war in that year. In 1900, Asante was defeated in the Yaa Asantewaa

The need to control the trade in kola, gold and other items to the north of the Kingdom brought Asante into contact with Dagomba and Gonja in the north-east and Gyaaman in the north-west. And the trade with the castles and forts on the coast, brought Asante into conflict with their neighbours in the Fante states and ultimately with the British with whom they fought seven wars in the nineteenth century. These constant wars and trading activities of Asantes sent their name far and wide, making them great among the West African Kingdoms. Asantes today retain a strong sense of historical and cultural identity in modern Ghana, with the *Asantehene* as the head of the Kingdom. The traditional capital, Kumasi, is the second largest city in Ghana.

Asantes are agriculturalists, producing plantains, bananas, cassava, yams and cocoyams for local markets, and cocoa, timber, gold, etc, for export. The basis of Asante social organisation is the matrilineage, composed of various clans whose members claim descent from common ancestresses. In each town or village are lineages of the clans. The lineage head is responsible for internal peace. He is the custodian of lineage stools, which are believed to embody the spirits of the lineage's ancestors. The *Abusuapanin* (that is the lineage head) is also the mediator between the living and the dead members of the lineage (family). Every important lineage head also has a stool as his symbol of authority in the lineage.

In Asante, the queenmother advises the King/chief about his conduct and is regarded as the authority on kinship relations of the lineage. She nominates candidates to fill a vacant chief's 'stool'. In the past, the King's/chief's primary duties were religious and military, but in modern times the position has become increasingly secular, involving economic administration and the provision of social and welfare services.

Although there are Christian and Muslim converts among the Asante, the traditional religion, based on belief in a supreme God, a pantheon of gods and lesser spirits and the ever-present spirits of ancestors, remains the basis of the Asante conception of the universe².

The *Asantemanhyiamu* or Asante National Assembly is the highest governmental body in the Asante nation, headed by the *Asantehene*. The *Asantemanhyiamu* is composed of all the divisional chiefs (*Amanhene*). It used to meet in Kumasi annually, at the great national festival of unity known as *Odwira*, as seen in Chapter Two. To day, *Odwira* is not celebrated; however, the assembly continues to meet. Instead of *Odwira*, *Adackese* is celebrated, and the reason for this is provided in Chapter Five. Some communities in Asante have specialised in the manufacture of cloth, pottery, and other goods for local markets. Most Asante people live in agricultural villages and produce their own foodstuffs.

Local metal workers produce exquisite gold jewellery and a wide range of cloths, of which the best known are *Kente* and *Adinkra*. The courts of the *Asantehene* and his high officials were, and still are, centres of the performing arts, featuring great drum and horn orchestras and singers of poems who praise great men and women of Asante history.

The veneration of ancestors remains the most visible aspect of Asante spiritual life. Following traditional practices, stools are blackened as shrines and memorials to the dead (the ancestors) and at least once every forty two days, the dead are religiously remembered. The ancestors' names are called out, their deeds recited and reports are

made to them on the fortunes of their living descendants. Respect for the ancestors remains a vital part of Asante life.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Asante had become the dominant Kingdom in the forest belt of the Gold Coast and Asante provided a vital link between the coast and the savannah areas to the north of what is now known as Ghana. Its central position has contributed to the acculturation of the Asante territory. That is, it adopted much of the culture of the many communities that it came into contact with. Asante was described on a 1764 French map of Africa as *Roy de 'Il.' Asiante, tres puissant'* (very powerful).³

1.12 Definition of Terms

a) Art

It is difficult to define art to satisfy everybody. However, individual writers have tried to come out with their own definitions, to suit the context in which it is used. And in view of the difficulty of defining art to the satisfaction of everybody, I have declined to define the word 'Art' in this thesis. But when I mention art in this work, I mean some created objects, words, music and dances that are aesthetically and emotionally pleasing. In this thesis, the arts are categorised into visual, body, performing, and verbal arts.

On their way to greatness and fame, Asante arts played and still play a decisive role as would be seen in the subsequent chapters. The visual arts that have contributed to the

building and greatness of Asante include stools, state swords, umbrellas, spokesmen's staves, palanquins and many others which to date, have contributed to the pomp and pageantry of Asante chieftaincy, and which have been discussed in detail in the subsequent chapters.

The body arts that make the *Asantehene* and his sub-chiefs prestigious include headcrowns/gears, necklaces, wristlets, finger-rings, beautiful *Kente*, *Adinkra*, and other types of cloths, as well as beautiful sandals worn for festivals, durbars and other occasions as seen in Chapter Four.

Also, performing arts that are part of the culture and make Asante great include instrumental and vocal music, various types of Asante dances and drama. The verbal arts also that are cultural phenomena, and which contribute to the greatness of Asante are: proverbs, idioms, panegyrics, *amanse* stories, among others.

b) Culture

Culture, as used in the thesis, is the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behaviour. Culture thus defined, consists of language, ideas, beliefs, customs, taboos, codes, institutions, tools, techniques, works of art (even though art is an aspect of culture, it is for the sake of emphasising art in this thesis that I have separated it from culture), rituals, ceremonies, and other related components. Also, culture includes politics, economic and social aspects, religion, etc.

The cultural phenomena that have made Asante great and glorious include chieftaincy, social relationships, traditional religion, medical systems, economic activities, philosophy, etc.

c) Greatness

The word 'greatness' used in the title of this thesis, refers to the building of the Asante Empire or Kingdom which was so militarily strong that its (Asante's) neighbours could not conquer or withstand its might, until the British came in to assemble other ethnic groups in the country, troops from British West African colonies, and some army personnel from Britain to conquer it.

d) Glory

'Glory' mentioned in the title, is the beauty, pageantry, pomp and glamour that have characterised the Asante Kingdom since its inception. 'Glory' also refers to the fame, honour, adoration, praise, beauty and magnificence achieved by Asante, and manifested in Asante festivals and durbars, and in the adornments of Asante kings, chiefs, queenmothers and the rest of the citizenry.

References and notes

1. In the past, Asante could be referred to as an empire, a nation or a kingdom, it is now a region in the Republic of Ghana. Asante is still recognised by the UNESCO today as a kingdom. However, if one comes across terms such as 'nation', 'empire', etc. being use in this thesis, it still refers to the Asante. Meanwhile, previously the traditional areas were referred to as states. And for the purpose of differentiating the states from the Asante Kingdom, I have in this thesis referred to them as states.
2. Microsoft *Encarta Encyclopaedia* 2004 (1993-2003) Microsoft Corporation. p 1979.
3. A S.Y Andoh *A Souvenir Brochure on Asanteman Adaekese*. Published by the *Adaekese* Planning Committee (May, 9, 2004) p 52
4. Edweso ----- the official name for this town is spelt 'Ejisu'. But this is wrong. The right spelling is Edweso and I opted to use this spelling throughout this thesis; and the same thing applies to:
5. Dwaben-----Juaben

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Rationale for writing the Literature Review

The rationale for writing this Literature Review is that it helps me to know the vacuum to be filled so that I may either look for new materials or find new ways of discussing the old materials to contribute to knowledge. If the review was not done, I might ignorantly reproduce what others have already written. These may be a waste of efforts and cause my failure in the examination since I may not have contributed to the growth of knowledge in the area of my study.

The review of literature is also important because it helps the reader to know of other sources of information on the same subject. Again, it has equipped me with more adequate knowledge to solve the problems I have encountered during my discussions, analyses, and arguments in this thesis.

Furthermore, it has also enabled me to compare and contrast my findings with some information already existing in Literature. Of course this has enhanced the quality of my contribution to knowledge. Without the comparison and contrast, the Literature Review remains isolated and therefore irrelevant in this thesis.

Information collated from related literature has been critically examined since my incorporation of any wrong information makes this thesis faulty.

Materials from one book have been compared and contrasted with those from other books, magazines, monographs, etc and with the facts or points obtained from my field research. This has helped me to adequately criticise any wrong point made by some previous writers, and has also enabled me to make meaningful and constructive comments about it.

The review has considered the importance which the study has for practitioners in the discipline. It provides evidence to support the need for the study and its practical value to the discipline to which the study belongs. It includes up to date data from the field and literature information based on authoritative sources. It summarises previous research studies on Asante art and culture that have a direct bearing on the subject I have chosen. While making the summaries, the strength, and weaknesses of previous writers have been identified and commented upon.

The ideas of previous writers have also been compared and contrasted, and have been reviewed from the current situations and conditions. The review is logically organised and focuses on the main study, 'Asante Art and Culture: The Mainspring of Asante' Greatness and Glory'. It outlines and justifies my mode of data collections and documentations. The presentation of the data is related to the hypothesis and the objectives of the study.

Several books have been written in connection with the development of the Asante nation in the past and even today. In reviewing some of these books, it has become explicit that their authors have just given the historical background of the success achieved by *Asanteman*, no special mention has been made of the artistic and the

cultural aspects of these developments. Though the authors have mentioned some of the arts and other cultural aspects, they have not categorically referred to them as art works or the aspects of Asante culture that have helped Asante to become great and glorious.

2.1.1 Social Aspects that have contributed to the development of Asante

In his book titled *Topics in West African History*, Professor Albert Adu Boahen of Ghana, aided by J.F. Ade Ajayi and Michael Tidy (both Nigerians), have stated that the cradle of the Akan has been located in the Adansi-Amansie area (in present-day Asante) where they developed their peculiar matrilineal system of inheritance of kingly office and their matrilineal clan groups into which they are all divided. He has further stated that from their cradle the Akan migrated in different clan groups into the area of modern Asante from about 500 AD onwards. By the middle of the seventeenth century, these earlier immigrants had founded a number of states all within about fifty kilometre radius of present-day Kumasi. These included Mampon, Afigyaase and Seniagya, founded by the Bretuo clan groups or lineages. Abooso, Baman, Makom and Agona were founded by the Asenie clan groups, and Asokore, Otikrom, Sekyere, and Kwaaman by Ekuona clan groups. The last group of states to emerge in the area were Dwaben, Kokofu, Nsuta, Bekwai, and Kumasi, all founded by Oyoko clan groups which had migrated from Asumenya-Asantemanso in the Amansie area in the middle of the seventeenth century.

The learned Professor has also stated that, the arrival of the Oyoko people was, however, the immediate reason for the rise of the Asante Empire. The Oyoko clan

groups were able to accomplish what the earlier groups could not do. Socially, the Asante people belong to the following clans: *Aduana, Asoma, Asakyire, Agona, Bretuo, Ekuona, Aserree and Oyoko*. According to Professor Adu Boahen, the Oyoko group was a much more closely-knit group. Unlike the other clan groups, the Oyoko states believed that they came from a single line. The chiefs of Dwaben, Bekwai, and Kumasi regarded and still regard themselves as brothers and they all look upon the chief of Kokofu as their uncle.

Hence, instead of competing among themselves as the other Asante states were doing, the Oyoko states co-operated closely and, as all of them were concentrated within an area of thirty kilometre radius from Kumasi, the nucleus or the core of an empire was thus initially created. Thus, the growth of this nucleus into the empire of Asante, under the rule of the Kumasi lineage of the Oyoko clan, was the result of the work of the first three rulers of Kumasi, namely Obiri Yeboah, Osei Tutu I and Opoku Ware I.¹ So here, a point is raised. But some authors like W.E.F Ward in his book titled *A Short History of Ghana* (p 114), talks about the laid down of structures at Asantemanso. He stated that Oti Akenten laid down the lines for the future development of Asante. According to Ward, it was under Oti Akenten that the Asante became a military people, spreading far and wide from Asantemanso and similar centres, conquering neighbouring ethnic groups to provide themselves with land. This information by W.E.F Ward differs from what Professor Adu Boahen and other African or Ghanaian writers have said about the formation of the Asante union. Whereas almost all the Ghanaian writers and oral sources talk about the formation of the union after the migration, Ward states that the formation started right at Asantemanso. But my investigations reveal that before the migration from

Asantemanso, there was no nation or empire called Asante; instead the various clans were living in their individual states, such as the Bekwai, Mampon and Kokofu states. Ward stated that rulers like Twum and Antwi, Kobia Amanfi, etc. also ruled in Kumasi, which is not correct. However, an author like Osei Kwadwo (who is also the Curator of Manhyia Palace Museum in Kumasi), states that the migration to Kumasi began with Oti Akenten at Kwaaman. The role played by the Oyoko clan, led to the success of Asante. That is, it was the unity of the Oyokos, which helped in the gradual formation of the Asante Union and Empire which became great and glorious, and this has survived to date.

Whereas Professor Adu Boahen stated that the formation and structures of the federation began after the migration of the various clans from Asantemanso, he went further to say that, Osei Tutu I, assisted by his adviser and chief priest, Okomfo Anokye, contributed to the growth of the Asante Empire in five main ways. The first problem he tackled was the creation of a lasting union. It was with a view to making this union a permanent one that Okomfo Anokye² "conjured down from the sky" the now revered and sacred Golden Stool. He urged on the assembly that the stool embodied their soul, strength, vitality, unity and their very survival, and that it should be guarded at all costs. It was further agreed that its occupant was to be recognised as the *Asantehene*, the supreme political and religious head of the Union of States, to be selected from the dynasty of Osei Tutu I and Obiri Yeboah. Here, W.E.F. Ward did not state that, it was earlier agreed that the 'occupants' of the Golden Stool would be the descendants of Osei Tutu I and Obiri Yeboah, but said there appeared "a wooden stool adorned with gold, which floated to earth and alighted gently on Osei Tutu's knees" (*A History of Ghana*, p 119). Professor Adu Boahen continues, "It is

interesting to note that to this day, it is believed that the Golden Stool is the soul and symbol of the Asante people and it is still guarded with the same dogged devotion" (*Topics in West African History*, p 57).

Next, according to Professor Adu Boahen in his *Topics in West African History* (p 58), to strengthen the union even further, Kumasi was to be recognised as the capital, and members were to attend the *Odwira festival*² every year in Kumasi. At this festival prayers were said for the entire nation, disputes or quarrels among chiefs were settled, and plans were concerted for the following year. This festival, *Odwira*, is one of the cultural activities which was believed to have helped Asante to become more powerful, as during this festival, the nation's activities were planned. Mistakes that were made in the past were corrected. Again, at the assembly of all the chiefs, the real culture of the people was displayed, as chiefs dressed in their full regalia, thus portraying the beauty of the Asante people

Again, Osei Tutu I made a constitution for the union as its head, and also, as the head of the then Kumasi state. Below him were the paramount chiefs or *Amanhene* of the component states or *aman*, all of whom had to recognise the court of the union as the Supreme Court. They were to attend the annual *Odwira* festival, contribute a contingent and pay tribute after getting booty in wars. Also, according to Professor Adu Boahen, since one of the main *raison d'être* of the union was the overthrow of the Denkyira rule, Osei Tutu I paid particular attention to the military organisation of the union. Osei Tutu I is said to have introduced into Asante the Akwamu military formation consisting of the van guard or *adonten*, the rear guard or *kyidom*, the left guard or *benkum* and the right guard or *nifa* wings. Each member state was assigned

a place under a commander who was at the same time the Paramount chief of one of the member states of the union.³

On why the Asante Empire grew wider in terms of territorial expansion, and stood at the peak of its power and glory, the learned Professor, Adu Boahen, stated the following reasons: first, all the rulers of the second half of the eighteenth and the early decades of the nineteenth centuries were able to provide the necessary leadership and inspiration and to suppress all revolts and rebellions that broke out in the empire.

The second reason for the survival of the empire was the strength of its army. Throughout the period under review, the Asante army remained strong and virtually invincible. The third reason was the healthy nature of the economy of the Asante nation. The core of the empire did not only emerge in an area very suitable for agriculture, but it was also the area that produced the two commodities in urgent demand both by the inhabitants of the savannah areas to the north and the Europeans on the coast. The needed commodities were kola nuts and gold. Finally, until the nineteenth century, Asante never experienced any interference in its internal affairs by any external power. Here, even the learned Professor failed to mention any role played by art and culture in the greatness and glory of this famous empire.

Again, whereas Professor Adu Boahen stated that the various states which later formed the Asante union moved in clan groups, from Asantemanso to their present

site, W.E.F Ward wrote that the states moved out of Asantemanso together and not necessarily in clan groups.

According to Ward, to strengthen the union, Okomfo Anokye employed certain magical or religious ceremonies. He made some 'medicine' and mixed it with palm wine, and all the Asante chiefs drank it. Again, under Anokye's instructions, Osei Tutu I made new swords⁴ for his army officers, and each officer swore an oath to fight to the end. (This information was confirmed by Opanin Kwabena Asamoah, during my data collection at the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi). Also, he set to work to unite the Asante people by providing a common stool in order that the whole nation might be united in the same way as each section or state was united through its common stool. He began by taking three cuttings of the *Kumini* tree and planting one each at Kwaaman, Dwaben, and Kumawu. Those at Dwaben and Kumawu died, the one at Kwaaman lived, and this was taken as a sign that Osei Tutu I was the leader chosen by the gods to be the permanent head of the nation. Henceforth Kwaaman was known as Kumasi, 'under the *Kumini* tree'. Professor Adu Boahen did not give this account, but only stated that 'to strengthen the union even further, by a shrewd use, both of diplomacy and of magic, Osei Tutu I got the members⁵ to agree that Kumasi is to be recognised as the capital and that once every year, all members of the union were to attend the *Odwira* festival there'. But other oral sources have it that the tree planted at Kwaaman died and that of Kumawu was transplanted at the present-day Kumasi.

R.S. Rattray, in his book titled *Ashanti* (p 288), under 'The Golden Stool', talks about the origin and significance of the Golden Stool. He said that in all, there have been at

least sixteen kings of Asante, beginning with Kwabia Amanfi. He went on to say that the fourth Asante king was Osei Tutu I, the first king to make the Asante a great people, and that he achieved this by means of the power of the Golden Stool.

Rattray's reference to Kwabia Amanfi and other Asante chiefs before Osei Tutu I, as being part of those who ruled the empire is wrong. Rather, those who ruled before the era of Osei Tutu I, ruled their Oyoko people right from Asantemanso to the time Kwaaman was founded which later became Kumasi. According to him (Rattray), Anokye, in the presence of a huge multitude, with the help of his supernatural power, brought down from the sky, in a black cloud, and amid rumblings, and in air thick with white dust, a wooden stool that had three supports and which was partly covered with gold. This stool did not fall to the earth but alighted slowly upon Osei Tutu's knees. Rattray's narration of how the Golden Stool reached the people is different altogether from Adu Boahen's and Ward's.

Examining what is entailed in the *Topics in West African History* by Professor Adu Boahen, I am inclined to state that after arrival from Asantemanso, the various clan groups lived in their own entities, and there was no Kingdom called Asante until Osei Tutu I and Okomfo Anokye appeared on the scene, later formed the Asante union, and built the Asante Empire.

The account of the origin of the Golden Stool narrated by Rattray is different from the versions given by both Professor Adu Boahen and W.E.F Ward. According to Professor Adu Boahen, 'by playing on the common fear and hatred of all the states for Denkyira, he [Osei Tutu] and Okomfo Anokye were able to bring all of them

together. It was with a view to making this union a permanent one that they (referring to both Okomfo Anokye and Osei Tutu) conjured down from the sky the now revered and sacred Golden Stool.² In fact, the word 'they' used by Adu Boahen in this account, wrongly suggests that the Golden Stool was conjured by Okomfo Anokye and Osei Tutu I together. But contrary to what Adu Boahen has stated here, it is well known that the Golden Stool was conjured by Okomfo Anokye alone. To substantiate the fact that it was Okomfo Anokye alone who conjured the Golden Stool, I quote the following from W.E.F. Ward, in his book, *A History of Ghana* (p 119), who states that on 'one Friday, a great gathering was held at Kumasi, and there Anokye brought down from the sky, with darkness and thunder, and in a thick cloud of white dust, a wooden stool adorned with gold, which floated to earth and alighted on Osei Tutu's knees.' Osei Kwadwo, the renowned Historian and Curator of the Manhyia Palace Museum, also attests to this fact in his book, *An Outline of Asante History*, p 5).

2.1.2 Religions and Medicines that have also contributed to the development of Asante

W.E.F Ward, states that the magical or religious ceremonies which Okomfo Anokye employed, and which are remembered today in such detail, no doubt followed on long weeks or months of patient diplomatic negotiations, by which the desire for unity was achieved. Anokye made some 'medicine' and mixed it with palm wine, and all the Asante chiefs drank it, under his instructions, and as pointed out already, Osei Tutu I made new swords for his army officers, and each of them swore an oath to fight to the end. Although the army officers had sworn the oath to fight to the end, some of them were sceptical about victory. For their last war against the Domaa had

ended in a disaster, in spite of the fact that Anokye's own elder brother, called Okomfo Yamo, who was also a priest, had promised them victory. Anokye succeeded in overcoming their fears, and under the leadership of Osei Tutu I the Asante forces were victorious over the Domaa people, and then over the people of Tafo.

On the side of Rattray, he said: Anotchi (that is Anokye) told Osei Tutu I and all the people that the stool contained the *Sunsum* (soul or spirit) of the Asante nation, and that the people's power, their health, their bravery, their welfare were 'in the Golden Stool.' To emphasis this fact he caused the King, Osei Tutu I, and every Asante Chief and all the Queenmothers to take a few hair from their heads, and nails from their forefingers. These were made into powder and mixed with "medicine", and some was drunk and some poured or smeared on the Stool. Anotchi told the Asantes of that time that if the stool was taken or destroyed, (then, just as a man sickened and died, whose *Sunsum* during life had wandered away or had been injured by some other *Sunsum*), so would the Asante nation 'sicken' and lose its vitality and power. Anokye instructed the people that the stool was never to be sat upon. It was not the ordinary stool of everyday or even ceremonial use. On very great occasions, if its power was to be invoked, the King of Asante would just make pretence to sit upon it three times, and would then seat himself upon another stool, resting his arm upon the Golden stool.

Still on the religious and medicinal aspects of the Golden Stool, Osei Kwadwo, a renowned Curator and Historian at the Manhyia Palace state that on the appointed

day, the chiefs met each waiting to be the King-elect. The atmosphere looked calm. Okomfo Anokye appeared amidst drumming and dancing. After some magical dances, he paused a little, jumped here and there and began to conjure something from the sky. Drumming started again and the priest conjured. The sky became tense and deafening noise was heard. Then a stool studded with gold descended on to the laps of Nana Osei Tutu I. It therefore meant that he had been chosen by the ancestors and the gods to be the unquestionable King of the Asante Nation.

After this, as Osei Kwadwo recounted, finger nails and a small collection of hair from each chief were collected, all were burnt and some of the ashes smeared on the stool and the rest mixed with palm wine for all the chiefs to drink. Okomfo Anokye was said to have told Asantes, as pointed out earlier, that the stool contained the spirit of the Asante Nation.⁶ The potion they drank meant that they had sworn by the gods, which meant they had taken an oath of allegiance to the spirit of the Golden Stool and the chiefs. Each chief in turn took an oath of allegiance to Nana Osei Tutu I, and swore never to raise arms against the Golden Stool.

When Osei Tutu I 'ascended' the stool as the first *Asantehene*, he first fought the Dumaas, who were then living at the present day Suntreso near Kumasi. The Dumaas were defeated and driven away to their present site in the Brong Ahafo Region. Though they were defeated and their state annexed into the Asante Kingdom, their chief was made *The Soul Washer*⁷ of *Asantehene*.

On the war with Denkyira, Osei Kwadwo said, Okomfo Anokye, when consulted, assured them that they would be victorious provided some men would give

themselves up for sacrifices. Three men would be needed for the sacrifice. First, one would be buried alive. His hands would appear at the surface of the earth and two brass pans full of war medicine mixed with water, would be put in the two palms of the raised hands for the warriors to bath with before they would leave for the war front. The second volunteer would be butchered to death and his flesh thrown away for vultures to take to Denkyira land. Wherever any piece of the flesh would fall the men of the place would lose their bravery and become cowards. The third volunteer should be a paramount chief. He would be armed and he would be in front of the marching soldiers. He was not to fire a shot even if he met any enemy. He should look on for the enemy to shoot and kill him. It was only when he felt that the Asante Nation would be victorious. If he did not conform to that and he shot a gun that would be the doom of the Asante Nation. Those who volunteered were:

- a). Nana Asenso Kofo, chief of Adwumakaasekese who was buried alive;
- b). Nana Dikopim I, chief of Edweso that gave himself up to be butchered to death;
- c). Nana Tweneboa Kodua, paramount chief of Kumawu, who led the warriors and was killed in accordance with Okomfo Anokye's prediction.

However, before Asantes embarked on the Denkyira war, all the Asante chiefs swore to Nana Osei Tutu I that they would forever push forward, never would they retreat. The advance guard was led by Tweneboa Kodua as said earlier, while Boahen Anantuo led them as War General. Okomfo Anokye himself was at the war front and provided the magical antidotes.

F.K. Buah also in his book titled *A History of West Africa from A.D 1000*, states that On the occasion of *Odwira*, a festival which has lasted to this day, all the rulers in Asante, and later of the vassal states of the empire, assembled in Kumasi for religious observance and renewed their allegiance to the Golden Stool and the *Asantehene*. The importance of this was that at least once a year all the member states of the empire confirmed their solidarity as one people with a common destiny and as they were one people on no account could one member state go to war against another without reference to the *Asantehene*. But the question here is, were the states able to abide by these rules?

Member states of the Union at times flouted these rules as they sometimes waged wars among themselves. Dwaben, for instance, on two occasions, waged war against Kumasi. These were in 1932 and 1975. These led to some of her people migrating to settle in Akyem Abuakwa, and creating the New Dwaben State. Buah also claims that the *Odwira* festival is now called *Akwasiɔɔe Kesiɔ*. He went further to say that the *Odwira* festival has lasted to this day. This assertion by Buah no more holds, as Asantes no more celebrate *Odwira* but rather *Adaɔ Kesiɔ*, as rightly stated by the renowned author.

According to Buah, Osei Tutu I owed many of his achievements to the inspiration and guidance of his great friend, the priest, Okomfo Anokye. Those were the days when priests had a great influence on the minds and imagination of the people. Okomfo Anokye was believed to possess powers next only to those of the supreme God. Okomfo Anokye's magical powers inspired Asante and frightened her enemies in the

war of expansion which took place in the reign of both Osei Tutu I and his successor, Opoku Ware I.

All these versions given by the various writers indicate that Asante's strength and successes probably depended greatly on its religion and medicines, which are some of the cultural aspects of the people. Okomfo Anokye was a major instrument in these aspects, as he provided the needed medicine for war and religion for the maintenance of the confederation.

2.1.3 Economic activities that contributed to the growth and development of Asante

One of the cultural factors that enabled Asante to become great and glorious is its sound economy. With reference to the economy of Asante, the review of related literature has the following: according to Professor Adu Boahen, one of the factors that gave rise to the Asante Empire was the establishment of so many trade routes in the empire. The fact that trade routes to and from Mandeland in the northwest and Hausaland in the north-east converged precisely in that region (Asante) and from there further routes radiated southwards to the coast. There was therefore an indication that money would definitely come to Asante. That these routes should converge in this area is not surprising since it was used for the exportation of two main products transported northwards, namely gold and kola nuts. Obviously this region could not but attract migrants from the south, land hungry and poor as they were, to settle there and work. The learned Professor went on to say that, Asante also became prosperous as a result of her involvement in the Trans-Atlantic trade, which had Europe and the Americas on one hand, and West Africa on the other.

The peoples of the interior became increasingly anxious to trade directly with the Europeans on the coast as the trade became more and more voluminous and lucrative, particularly with the rise of the demand for slaves for the sugar plantations in the Americas from the 1640s onwards. But the coastal states and peoples persistently refused to allow Asantes and other people of the interior to come to the coast, and this paved a way for Asante to fight these states, which it eventually overcame and had direct trade links with Europeans. This partly explains the occupation of the coast by Asante on several occasions. The Trans-Atlantic trade brought a lot of guns and gunpowder into Asante, which made them embark on their expansion spree. As possessors of these new weapons, Asante certainly enjoyed an overwhelming advantage over those who did not have them, in offensive as well as defensive wars. Outside the arms, Asante traded in other commodities such as slaves, gold, kola and salt, with the last one bought by Asante into the interior. Buah also talks about two economic factors that helped Asante to become perhaps the richest of the Akan kingdoms, and to preserve her culture. The first factor was the position of the capital, Kumasi, from which trade routes radiated in all directions. Along the northern and north-western routes, Asante traders carried gold and kola nuts to the kingdoms beyond the northern frontiers of present-day Ghana. They brought back merchandise such as precious beads, cotton, cloths and salt. In the south, Asante merchants exchanged goods for European commodities. Also, goods from the Sudanese empires and the kingdom of Mossi came down to the Asante markets.

The second factor was that most of the tributary states abounded in rich mineral resources, especially gold. Chief among these territories were Wasa, Schwi, Adanse

and Twifo. Tributes from these vassal states poured in to fill the Asante royal treasury. Having amassed such wealth, Asante developed the skill of using gold weights and measures to a degree unknown in any other Akan state. The wealth also helped the empire to develop into one of the greatest in western Africa. According to Buah, all these economic aspects of Asante made a British official visiting Kumasi in 1817, to write the following about the city: 'Four of the principal streets are half a mile long. The streets are all named.... Every household burns its rubbish every morning....'

T.A. Osae and A.T.O. Odunsi in their book *A Short History of West Africa (AD 1800 to the present day)* said the overthrow of the Denkyira yoke and the defeat of Akyem by Asante in the early years of the eighteenth century had paved the way for increased trade between Asantes and Europeans on the coast. The Europeans for their part welcomed this development. Asantes also attached great importance to the purchase of firearms from the Europeans. They needed ever greater quantities of guns and ammunition to keep their constant military campaigns going and also to hold the vast Asante Empire together.

Asantes always complained that the states through which their traders passed to reach the coast were unduly hostile. They also felt that the Fante middlemen through whom they transacted business with the Europeans often cheated them. This definitely had to happen since the Fante traders added huge profits to whatever goods they bought from the Europeans. Therefore, in 1765, Nana Osei Kwadwo (the then *Asantehene*), found it necessary to mount an attack against the Wasa for blocking the Asante trade routes to the coast.

J.D. Fage in his book *A History of West Africa*, says, Asante fought several wars with the coastal ethnic groups, simply because Fantes did not allow Asantes to have a direct trade contact with the Europeans on the coast. Captain George Maclean, who had then assumed reigns of the Gold Coast forts, did all within his means to deal firmly and tactfully to solve this problem (the Asante-Fante war), but to no avail. In 1831, he negotiated peace treaties between the coastal states, the Danes and the British on the one hand, and Asante on the other. Asante renounced her claim to suzerainty over the coastal states, pledged to keep the peace and to allow freedom of trade with the interior. This coastal trade by Asantes was very crucial since it enabled them acquire basic items like guns and gunpowder, salt, textiles, among others.

Buah, in his another book, *A History of Ghana*, stated that while Opoku Ware I was occupied with the Akyem wars, the Sehwis attacked Kumasi, killing the *Asantehene's* mother. The Asante army, led by Amankwatia I of Bantama, totally *defeated* the Sewhis, who left their homes and moved southwards to the area they occupy today. It is believed that the *Asantehene* turned the original Sewhi homeland into a royal hunting reserve, hence the present-day name of the area, *Ahafo*, meaning 'hunters'. Therefore, economically, the *Asantehene* was getting game and other wood products free of charge from this conquered land.

Opoku Ware I avenged the killing of his grand uncle, Osei Tutu I by Akyem Abuakwa. He halted the Akyem threat in two campaigns. Not only did his men inflict a humiliating defeat on the enemy, but also they actually killed two rulers of

Akyem, Nana Frimpon Manso and Nana Owusu Akyem Tanten. Also a third chief, Nana Pobi Asomani, was killed in this war. Furthermore, his campaigns in the south between 1741 and 1744 brought his conquest to Akwamu and Ga-Adangbe lands. As a result he acquired the 'notes' or documents relating to the Europeans possessions in that coastal area, and the right to collect rents on the European forts and establish direct trade in Greater Accra. This added another wealth and glory to the Asante Empire.

Still on the economic aspects, Elizabeth Isichei, in her book *History of West Africa since 1800*, states that, in the eighteenth century, the power and wealth of Asante were extended by another great ruler, Opoku Ware I, who died in 1750. Asante was wealthy, selling slaves to Europeans and exporting gold both to the south and to the north, outside the empire. Opoku Ware I was much more than a successful general. He showed a great interest in economic development, introducing the use of imported thread in the Asante textile industry. Again, he tried to set up a distillery with the aid of Dutch technical experts as an early attempt at import substitution, which means producing goods locally which would otherwise have to be imported. These helped Asante to get much money to embark on their wars of expansion. According to Isichei, the court at Kumasi was the centre of a highly developed bureaucratic system. The Minister of Finance (*Sanaahene*), whom she wrongly called *Gyatsawahene*⁸ held a daily court of exchequer. The state was financed by tribute from conquered areas, a poll tax was levied in Kumasi, death duties and tolls were also collected. A large sector of the economy was controlled by the Kingdom, including the royal mines worked by slave miners, ivory hunting and much of the trade in Asante. She went

further to state that by the early nineteenth century, Asante was a highly centralised, bureaucratic state with a high degree of economic planning.

From the accounts given by the various writers so far, we realise that the driving force behind Asante's desire to reach the coast was the control over the coast-bound trade, and the trade routes. Asante became aware very early that European presence on the coast gave them a profitable outlet of their gold and slaves. It also provided them some manufactured items (such as guns, and gunpowder) and more importantly, ammunition required to maintain their political ascendancy. This, coupled with the internal tax system, sustained the empire and made it great and glorious.

2.1.4 The Art that also contributed to the growth and development of Asante

a) Visual Art

The role of the Arts in Asantes' greatness and glory cannot be overemphasised. On visual art, Opoku Ware I created the *Ankobia* Stool to be used by the chief of the Home Guard, to guard women and children and the vulnerable who would be left at home when the nation was at war with another nation (a source from Osei Kwadwo 1994) The source went further to say that Nana Osei Kwadwo, the *Asantehene*, also created several stools, all of which are visual art works.

According to Osei Kwadwo, Nana Osei Kwadwo created additional stools such as *Kyidom (Akyempim)* and *Anomako* stools for *Ahenemma* (children of 'occupants' of the Golden Stool). This brought efficiency into his administration because he had men with requisite capacity at his court to advise him. This system again made him

powerful because those appointed owed allegiance to him. The creation of stools, went on to build a healthy administrative system for the kingdom, and made it greater. This has persisted till today.

According to Osei Kwadwo (1994 p.17), Nana Osei Kwame, who ruled from 1777 to 1797, also created the *Atipim* stools. This followed attempts made by some of his lieutenants to overthrow him. He gathered courage to deal drastically with the coup plotters by ordering their execution. After this deed, he again created the *Apagy* stools, in remembrance of how the people plotted against him and had them executed, which he somehow, felt sorry for their execution (after the solemn days).

Still under visual art, Professor Adu Boahen in his *Topics in West African History* states that it was with a view to making this union (Asante) a permanent one that Okomfo Anokye conjured down from the sky the now revered and sacred Golden Stool. He urged on the assembly⁸ that the Stool embodied their soul, strength, vitality, unity and their very survival, and that it should therefore be guarded at all costs as was heard during the field research.

Professor Adu Boahen further states that by the end of the reign of Opoku Ware I, Asante was occupying an area much larger than modern Ghana, and by bringing into their capital (Kumasi) the craftsmen of the states they had conquered (as seen in the subsequent chapters), especially those from Bono and Denkyira, the kings of Asante were able to develop a civilisation noted for their golden regalia, rich and many-coloured *kente* cloths, artistic gold weights and stools, colourful umbrellas and rich court music. For example, oral tradition had it that the people of Ahwiaa in the

present day Kwabre district were from Denkyira, whose aim was to produce all kinds of stools for the *Asantehene*.

Again, on assuming power, according to Buah, Opoku Ware I acquired the 'notes' or documents relating to the European possessions of that coastal area and the right to collect rents on the European forts and he established direct trade with the people of Accra.

Opoku Ware I conquered the Akwamu and Ga-Adangbe lands, which were earlier on in possession of these documents on the European forts and castles. The securing of these forts (visual architectural arts) brought more money to Asantes, and they were able to buy more guns (also, art objects) and powders for their wars of expansion. Thus the empire became more powerful.

In the *Asante, the Making of a Nation* by Nana Otamakuro Adubofuor, his version about the creation of the *Ankobe* stool is that:

while Opoku Ware I was in Akyem with his fighting forces, Abirimuro of Sehwi marched unimpeded to Kumasi, ransacked, and rifled the palace and sacred places. Abirimuro was checked for this; but what was more, Asantes quickly learnt from their mistake, and created an army (the *Ankobe*) to guard the home front during distant campaigns

In his book, *Kingship and Ceremony in Ashanti*, Dr. A.A.Y. Kyerematen, the author, seeks to highlight the artistic structure and functionalities of the *Asantehene's* palace in Kumasi. He begins by describing the structure of the palace itself by naming the functionalities of the royal household, called the *Ahotenafo*. On the outskirts of the

palace (from the airport road) one comes across the following artistic structures: rooms, or enclosures *Sumpie Kumaa* (also called *Bogyawe* because formerly it was sited in the *Bogyawe* Ward of Kumasi): *Bogyawe* is the smaller of the two royal daises standing outside the palace and is used by the King for funerals and other serious or mournful occasions. It is also used for *Sadwa*, the afternoon celebration of an *Adae* festival.

The other and larger daise, the *Sumpie Kesse* from traditional times known as *Dwaberem*, is at the foreground of the palace, facing the front of the King's present personal residence, *Abroxanase*, and is used for festal occasions, such as the *Adaekese* or the grand *Adae* festival. Proceeding from the *Sumpie Kumaa*, going under an arch, one enters a large rectangular enclosure, the *Pramakeseso*, along the four sides of which are half open verandas, *Pato*, used as offices, courts and a room for the palanquins and sedan chairs of both the King and Queenmother. The King is carried in a big palanquin (*Apokan*) whilst the Queenmother is carried in a sedan chair (*Seko*). The *Pato* also houses the talking drums (*atumpan*). There is also the *Patokromu*. The *Patokromu* provides a place for a court to sit, a dining hall for the King, the cleansing ceremony, on a *Fofie Feast Day* of the Golden Stool, and the lying-in-state of a deceased King.

Another doorway from the *Patokromu* also leads to the *Akrafieso*, a chapel, where rites are performed during the purification of the souls and spirits of the Kings. The purification is a cleansing ceremony associated with the two principal swords of the Asante nation, the *Busumuru* and *Bosompra*. Turning right from the *Akrafieso*, one

enters a passage which ultimately leads to the King's personal residence, *Abronsomase*.¹⁰

The great palace, an important artistic structure, added another glory to Asante's greatness, as many people, both far and wide, wanted to catch a glimpse of it. Even today, the Manhyia Palace seems to serve as a number one tourist attraction in the Ashanti Region and Ghana as a whole.

b) Performing Art

Like visual arts, performing arts cannot be left out in Asante's greatness and glory. This branch of art also played and still plays a decisive role in making Asante great and glorious. Instrumental and vocal music, various types of Asante's dances and drama played and continue to play an important role in the lives of most Asante chiefs and their people.

According to Nana Otamakuro Adubofuor in his book, *Asante, The Making of a Nation*, during war times, the sound of drums and horns on the battle field continued to strike terror in the hearts of the enemy. By this way, Asante was often able to defeat its enemies. He further states that, after each successful war, each chief was permitted to entertain his men with drumming and dancing. A period in about September was the usual time for the national victory celebration. All these raised the morale of the warriors and they were able to defend the nation at all times.

According to Kyerematen, when the King dies, before a new one is sworn in, the only music played is that of the Queenmother, the *Kwachum*, and other musical ensemble being held in abeyance until after swearing.¹¹ Then, during the rites leading

to the installation of the King-elect at Pampaso (a ward in Kumasi), when he comes out of the room, and stands before the *Plexive* Spear, the *Aprede* music is played. This type of music was the favourite of Nana Osei Tutu I. When he took the oath of office he danced to the tune of *Aprede* music. After this, wearing the *Denkyemkye*¹² and holding in his right and left hands the *Buunuru* sword and the *Apemasanta* (a shield), respectively, he rejoined the assembled chiefs and people and danced to *Fentemfrem* (*fontomfrom*) music.

Still on performing art, during the *Adae* festival, towards the evening of the *Memeneda Dapaa* (which is Saturday preceding the *Akwasiadae*), elderly women well versed in traditional songs, go to the Palace of the chief to sing memorial songs until late in the night. State drums are beaten and the great horns sounded to herald the celebration of *Akwasiadae*. Throughout the night, there are drumming and dancing and merry-making. The drumming is resumed in the early hours of the morning of *Akwasiadae* to rouse the spirits of the dead Kings and their elders from their long sleep to participate in the *Akwasiadae* festival.¹³

From the Encarta Encyclopaedia (2004), we read,

Among the Ashanti people of Ghana, music has played an important role in social, economic, and political structures within the culture. Many Ashanti Kings were patrons of music and promoted the creation of ensembles. Although there are other types of instruments used in ensembles, drums and dance groups play music associated with the Ashanti Kingdom. Today, these ensembles are featured in a variety of community functions. This example features a style of drumming called *Nan*, which is generally played at funerals.¹⁴

From all that have been stated so far from the various writers, one can conclude that, indeed, performing arts also made an important mark in the greatness and glory of the Asante Kingdom.

c) Verbal Art

Through the verbal form of art, Asante achieved a lot of successes as pointed out by Nana Otamakuro Adubofuor in his *Asante, The Making of a Nation*. In his view, before the nation went to war, a few artistic words were said to boost up the morale of the soldiers and their commanders. Medicines were bathed or drunk, and poetic words were uttered to inspire the warriors. Basically, during such occasions like *Akɔe*, libation is poured, water, ment and foods are taken to the stool room by the chiefs who give great respect (bare-footed) to, and commune with the ancestors by uttering artistic words, such as the following in the form of supplications in the stool room where libation and *Akɔe* rituals take place:

My spirit grandfather, today is
Awukudae, come and receive this
mashed plantain and eat, let
this town prosper, and permit the
bearers of children to bear children...¹⁵

This supplication, which takes place in the stool room, has a psychological effect on Asantes since they feel their ancestors will come to their aid in the course of war. All these urged Asantes to fight hard to win many wars, thereby making them great. When the 'occupant' of the Golden Stool passes away, whilst lying-in-state, the various *Amanhene* (paramount chiefs) come to swear to the body. In their poetic words of the oath swearing, each ruler mentions the name of his stool and gives his pedigree. The *Mamponhene*, being the occupant of the *Amaniampon* stool and of the

Silver Stool of Asante, who also ranks next to the *Asantehene* in the Kingdom, would, for instance, say as follows:

*Me Mamponhene mete Amaniampon
Akamwa soo, wo Nifahene ne ne;
Odomankama wuo na okura adee,
onipa ntumi ngye, se ka oxa na
yeko e, na watoree na se manhuri
antra wo
anko twa Osahene no ti mansie
wo a, meka ntam kesee.'*

Translated as;

I am *Mamponhene*, the occupant of Amaniampon stool. I am the head of your right wing chiefs. Man has no power of resistance against death that is natural. If we had gone to war and there you had fallen at the instance of the enemy, and if I had not then overtaken you to take the head of the (leader of the) enemy and with it to bury you. I swear the Great Oath.¹⁶

Finally, with the verbal art, when the King-elect is about to be installed, he swears an oath. According to Kyerematen he lowers his cloth to the waist (*koha ntoma*) – a sign of respect before an elder or a superior officer, usually carried out by *nthinkwaa* (palace attendants) – unsheathes the *Mponponsuo* sword and points it towards the Queenmother and takes the oath of office; saying:

*Osei ne Opoku nana ne me
Bonsu nana ne me, Agyeman nana
ne me. Prempe wofaase animpon ne me
enne me wofa Agyeman Prempe a okoo
ne kra akyi ne tuo ato Wadavoromma
ene Kumasifoo adavoromma se manfa
anihwe wo so hwepa na manfa amu
amanmu pa senea me nanan meka ntamkesee.'*

Translated as:

I am the Grandson of Osei and Opoku

of Bonsu and Agyeman. I am a direct nephew of Prempe. Today the soul of Agyeman Prempe has gone whence it came and his gun lies idle. By your grace and by the grace of Kumasi people you have presented the gun to me. If I do not protect and govern you well as did my forebearers, I swear the Great Oath.¹⁷

This was the oath taken by Otumfuo Opoku Ware II, after the death of Nana Sir Osei Agyeman Prempe II.

Verbal arts, therefore, played significant roles in the greatness of Asante as important poetic prayers said by people, inspired them to win most wars. Also story-telling (Ananse stories), idioms, proverbs, among others were all part of the verbal arts that encouraged Asantes all the time to withstand the test of the time, and making them great.

d) Body Art

Just as the above-mentioned types of art played a role in the greatness and glory of Asante, so also did body arts play that part. The body arts that make the *Asantehene* and his sub-chiefs prestigious include headcrowns/gears, necklaces, wristlets, finger rings, beautiful *kente* and other types of cloths, as well as beautiful sandals.

In Asante, every occasion or situation demands a type of clothes to be worn. For example, when the King, chief, or a member of a family passes away, the people don mourning cloths (either black or red in colour). According to Kyerematen, when the

Asantehene dies, until a new king has been enstooled, the state is in mourning and people move about in mourning cloths (*Adinkra* or *Kuntunkum*). So also during the *Adae* festival, on the eve of the procession to the royal mausoleum, the King dressed in his mourning cloth with his sandals on, is carried in his palanquin. With the exception of the King and the *Nsumankwaahene*, no one is allowed to enter the mausoleum in sandals because the two peoples feet are not suppose to touch the ground.¹⁸

During the installation processes of the King-elect, one of the places where rituals are performed in connection with the installation is Pampaso, a ward in Kumasi. During such rituals, the King-elect is dressed in an *Adinkra fufuo* cloth (a stamped cloth with a white background), wears a plain pair of a sandals and is protected from the sun by a small umbrella called *akroponkyiniwa*. At that same ceremony, the *Adwumakaase keshene* places the *Denkyemkye* (a cap made of crocodile skin) three times on the head of the King-elect. The *Denkyemkye* originally belonged to King Osei Tutu I (Osei Tutu I is the same as Opemsuo Osei Tutu I). He was wearing the *Denkyemkye* cap when he arrived in Kumasi, after he had been recalled from Akwamu to become *Asantehene*.

At midnight all the chiefs, except the *Mamponhene* congregate again at Banpanase in simple cloths. They take with them only a small umbrella and it is only their principal followers who are allowed admission. The *Asantehene*-elect, on the other hand, is richly dressed in an *Adinkrafufuo* cloth, which he later lowers to the waist and goes to the ceremony wearing the *Mpaboakexee* (big sandals). These sandals were originally worn by Opemsoo Osei Tutu I, and were regarded as the most important of the King's sandals (hence its name). The *Asantehene*-elect also puts on

the *Denkyemkye*, an iron neckwear (*Dadee Atweaban*), the *awaso* gold necklace (of bells), the *Afooko* military kit (*ntoo*) and carries with him the *Busumuru* and *Mponponsuo* state swords. He completes his dressing in the presence of the *Dwabenhene* at Banpanase.¹⁹

An ancient battle dress (*ako-tadie*), popularly known as *batakarikesee*, which was allegedly made by Okatakyie Opoku Ware I in the year 1731, has since been preserved. Custom demands that every *Asantehene* has to put on this special battle dress twice in his life time. First, it is to be worn during the installation ceremony and lastly during the *ayi-kese* (final funeral ceremony of the King's predecessor).²⁰

These body arts which were allegedly fortified with medicines, when worn, psychologically prepared the people's minds for the numerous wars fought. Asantes won most of these wars, and this indeed made them great and famous. All these body arts found in Asante culture, went a long way to highlight the rich culture of the Asante people.

2.1.5 Summary of the Chapter

From the foregoing discussions, despite differences in facts given by the various writers, it can be concluded that the religious/medical, social and economic activities of the people and the arts (visual, performing, verbal and body), contributed to the greatness and glory of the Asante Kingdom in the past and to date, as this is visible in the write ups of almost all the authors whose books were reviewed. The Asante Kingdom today, is considered by the UNESCO, as one of the few surviving empires in the world.

References and notes

1. A.A. Boahen
Topics in West African History.
Published by Longman, Singapore
publishers. Pte. Ltd. 1986
2. Ibid
p 57
3. Ibid
p 58
4. Swords
King Osei Tutu with the assistance of his
Priest-friend, Okomfo Anokye, made
several swords for the states, including
the now revered swords, *Busumuru* and
Bosomptra.
5. A. A. Boahen
Topics in West African History.
Published by Longman, Singapore
publishers. Pte. Ltd 1986. p 57
6. Members
Members here refers to the various
paramount chiefs who constitute the
Asante Union
7. The Soul Washer
The King's soul washer is the person
who offers sacrifice on behalf of the
King to pacify the King's soul. Akans
believe that every individual has a soul
which is divine and superior to the
human body. The soul could make one
sick when aggrieved. (Osei Kwadwo,
An Outline of Asante History, p 6)
8. *Gyaasewahene*
Isichei is wrong by referring to the
Gyasehene as *Gyaasewahene*. In Asante
and the other Akan states the *Gyasehene*
is not the Finance Minister, as is being
referred to here by Isichei. The Finance
Minister is the *Sanaahene*.
9. A. A. Boahen
Topics in West African History.
Published by Longman Singapore
Publishers Pte. Ltd. p 57
10. A. A. Y. Kyerematen
Kingship and Ceremony in Ashanti.
Buck Press Kumasi. Pp 1 - 2. Dateless
11. Ibid
p.15
12. *Denkyemkye*
It is a leather cup, embodying the horns
of a ram (*Dwenimen*), the tail of a

- leopard (*sebo dua*) and the head of a crown bird (*twereku ti*)
13. E. K. Braffi
Akwasidae and Odwira Festival.
Published by Bayoba Graphics Ltd,
Kumasi in 2002. Pp 3 – 4
14. Extracts
Extracted from the *Microsoft Encarta Encyclopaedia* 2004, (1993 – 2003). Cat # Folkways F.e. 4240. P 1979.
Smithsonian/Folkways Recordings.
15. E. K. Braffi
Akwasidae and Odwira Festival.
Published by Bayoba Graphics Ltd.
Kumasi in 2002. p 2
16. A. A. Y. Kyerematen
Kingship and Ceremony in Ashanti.
Published by the Buck Press Ltd.
Dateless. p 10.
17. Ibid p 18
18. Ibid p 12
19. Ibid p 26
20. E. K. Braffi.
The Esoteric Significance of the Asante Nation. Published by Bayoba Graphic Ltd. Kumasi in 1984. p 60.

CHAPTER THREE

THE ROLE OF ASANTE ART AND CULTURE IN THE GREATNESS OF ASANTE

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the role art and culture played in the greatness of the Asante Kingdom, which up to date, is considered as one of the few surviving Kingdoms in the world. It therefore discusses the political, social and medico-religious aspects that made Asante great. It also discusses the role that visual, body, performing and verbal arts played to make Asante great.

3.2 Political aspects that helped Asante to be great

One major contribution to Asante's greatness is its political unity; and this unity was made possible by the following: threat of the common enemy - that is Denkyira, the desire to unite initiated by Nana Osei Tutu I and Okomfo Anokye, the Golden Stool, common cultural elements, including the common language, patriotism, good leadership qualities exhibited by its leaders, and finally, Asante arts.

The persistent threat of Denkyira over the Asante states at that time, made Asantes to sit up and find a lasting solution to this problem. Therefore, by playing on the common fear and hatred of all the states for Denkyira, Osei Tutu I and Okomfo Anokye were able to bring all the Asante States together to form a lasting Union - and eventually, they were able to overthrow Denkyira's supremacy over them.

Looking at the whole scenario, it can be concluded that the threat from Denkyira, finally made Asante what it is today – its greatness and fame.

Again, the desire to unite the states by Osei Tutu I and his priest-friend, Okomfo Anokye, all these time helped to form a lasting union. Buah states that through diplomacy, Osei Tutu I and his friend, Okomfo Anokye, persuaded all the Asante States to accept the King of Kumasi as the overlord of the entire Asante Nation. From then on, all the chiefs offered allegiance to him as the *Asantehene* ¹.

The good leadership qualities exhibited by Nana Osei Tutu I and subsequent Asante kings forged unity among the people, which led to a total political unity which became known as Asante Confederation. The political unity made Asantes strong to win most of their wars. For, on the basis of unity, the states were committed to support and defend one another. They were also committed to fight together to defend the Union. As a result of the Union, the Kingdom grew in numerical strength, and in wars, they usually had numerical advantage over their enemies.

Furthermore, the presence of the Golden Stool helped Osei Tutu I and Okomfo Anokye to unite the people more than ever. Having been told by Okomfo Anokye (who 'conjured down the Stool from the sky') that the Stool embodied their 'soul', strength, vitality, unity and their very survival, and that it should be guarded at all costs, Asantes paid greater respect for this Stool, and were even prepared to perish at the expense of the Stool.

Apart from the unity the Golden Stool helped to provide, it also aided Asantes to be more courageous, as they believe it has a special power to make them win their wars. This symbolic Stool from the cradle of Asante history has become the paramount stool for the whole of Asante². The people also have become convinced that the Stool is the 'soul' and symbol of unity of all Asantes. According to Osei Kwadwo, the Curator of the Manhyia Palace Museum, the belief in the Golden Stool by the people heightened their courage and boosted their morale during war times. Accordingly, this stool was always carried to wars³. (See plate 1 for a picture of the Golden Stool and plate 1b, the Stool and its carrier)

Plate 1



Sikadwa "Kofi"

The Golden Stool of the Asante Kingdom

Source: (Culled from *A Souvenir Brochure on Asanteman Adaeke*. Kumasi, April, 2004)

Plate 1b



The Golden Stool being carried to a function

Source: (Culled from a Brochure on the 5th Anniversary Celebration of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II (Asantehene), 2004,

Before the appearance of the Golden Stool, there were constant intra Asante wars and it was in order to stop such wars and unify the disintegrated Asantes that the Golden Stool was allegedly invoked to descend from the skies. After the unification, the people were able to build a strong army to embark on wars whenever there was the need to do so. With the presence of the Stool during war times, it urged the people to fight courageously and it also frightened the Asante enemies because the enemies thought the Stool was magically powerful.

As earlier stated in Chapter Two, Okomfo Anokye was said to have told Asantes that the Stool contained the 'soul' of their nation. And referring to the Golden Stool, Okomfo Anokye allegedly said:

Your power, your strength
bravery and welfare are
enshrined in this wonderful
Stool which you see now settling
on the laps of your great king.

This was what all the Asante chiefs and people had curiously waited for, after Okomfo Anokye, the great priest, had made a public announcement about its descent from the sky. After this miraculous feat, in order to spiritually strengthen the bond of the newly created unity, Okomfo Anokye ordered the paramount chiefs and their queenmothers who had been present at the ceremony to provide some of their hair and pieces of their nails from their forefingers. These substances were pounded into powder and mixed with a lotion. Anokye performed a rite with the mixture and requested each chief and queenmother to drink a little of it. It is further told that some of the mixture was poured down thrice as libation; and the rest used in smearing the Golden Stool⁴.

Okomfo Anokye, not unexpected, as told by Osei Kwadwo, spoke to the frenzied gathering in these memorable words:

This Golden stool comes direct from
Onyankopon (the Omnipotent God)
It is the most sacred treasure of
all your state stools, for it symbolises
the Asante sunsum, (that is

personality - spirit distinct from the soul of man). It is the symbol of your unity and your oneness as a nation, the visible link between you and God, the Great Ancestor, from whom it descends, and your dead counterparts in *Axumando* (the spirit world).
Keep it well and holy.

Again, Okomfo Anokye, according to the statement, warned the King, the elders and all present that under no circumstances should the Great Stool be captured by any enemy, as that would invite a disaster for the Asante Nation. To king Osei Tutu I, Okomfo Anokye said:

In principle you and your successors are the 'occupants' ⁵ of this stool. Never sit on this sacred stool. On very great occasions you are to pretend to sit on it thrice, and then sit rather on your own stool, resting your one arm on the Golden Stool.

The idea of protecting the Golden Stool is to keep the unity of the Asantes going, and this made them fight bravely in the past. It is the same belief which led to the adage: *Asante Kotoko, kum apem a apem beha*. (literally, 'valiant Asante warriors kill a thousand and a thousand will come'). The Golden Stool allegedly made the leaders (Kings and chiefs) of Asante very patriotic. They were devoted and even prepared to die for their state. This could be seen from the way they contributed troops for the national army during war times. Not only did they contribute warriors, they themselves took part in all the wars fought. My visits to Kokofu, Bekwai, Edweso, Kumawu, Mampon and Manhyia revealed that their leaders took part in all the Asante wars. Sometimes, some of the chiefs sacrificed their lives in the interest of the nation. A case in point is where a paramount chief, Nana Tweneboa Kodua of Kumawu, and

two other chiefs, Nana Dikopim I of Edweso and Nana Asenso Kofo of Adwumakaasekese, were reportedly sacrificed⁶ to enable Asante conquer Denkyira in the battle of Feyiase, which took place between 1699 and 1701. Boahen Anantuo⁷, a chief of Mampon, was also alleged to have sacrificed his life to enable Asante win the same Denkyira war. With this patriotism from even paramount chiefs, what else is expected of the ordinary people to do? These spurred them on to fight hard to defend the Union.

When Prempe I was arrested by the British, the then colonial government, and sent to Seychelles Islands in 1897, the Queenmother of Edweso, Nana , Nana Yaa Asantewaa, raised arms to fight the British but was defeated. This war, waged by the Queenmother in 1900, is today known as the Yaa Asantewaa war. The good leadership qualities exhibited by Asante leaders, forged the people together, and through togetherness, Asantes were able to create a large empire which became great, as stated earlier. Concluding, on their way to success, Asantes' political institutions, played an important role in the unity of the people which later spurred them on to win many wars thereby becoming great.

3.3 The Social aspects which contributed to the greatness of Asante

The Asante clan system facilitated the creation of political unity among the people. For example, an *Asona* man, irrespective of which part of Asante he comes from, knew that every other *Asona* person from any where in the Kingdom was a brother or sister. With this at the back of the minds of the people, they moved together as one people, and ruling houses in Kumasi, Dwaben, Bekwai, Kokofu, Nsuta and other places, considered themselves as one people. Therefore, there was no need to fight

among themselves. This system united the people more, and whatever affected one also affected the other.

Also, on political unity, one reason why Asantes came together quickly was the common cultural elements, including the common language, the clan system, etc. The fact that the people speak a common language - Twi, facilitated the creation of unity, as whenever there was a meeting, there was no need for an interpreter. Therefore, in planning for their wars, the founding fathers or states of the Union did not have any problem on agreeing to common decision.

As seen in the Literature Review, the Asante clan system, being a cultural element, was an important social factor, which brought about social unity and contributed greatly to the building of Asante Empire. Akans, of which Asantes are a part, are *made up of clans*. These clans include the *Asakyiri, Asona, Agona, Asenie, Bretuo, Ekuona, Aduana* and *Oyoko*.

According to Professor Adu Boahen, Asantes started moving from their original home of Asantemanso in clan groups, and founded a number of states all within about forty kilometre radius of the present-day Kumasi⁸. This movement by the various clans from Asantemanso was confirmed by the *Konthehe* of the Asante Mampon, Nana Yaw Kodua. But he added that, from Asantemanso, the *Bretuo* clan founded states such as Mampon, Afigyaase and Seniagya. According to Opanin Kwabena Amankwaa of Kokofu⁹, the *Oyoko* group, who settled at Kumasi, Kokofu, Nsuta, Bekwai and Dwaben, was among the clan groups that moved out of Asantemanso to their present locations. All these confirm what the learned Professor stated in the Review.

Knowing that they descended from common ancestresses, Asantes started working together, though they were living in separate states. With their clan symbols being their source of pride, they started uniting their states quickly. Among their symbols are the crow for the *Asona* clan, hawk for the *Oyoko*, buffalo for the *Ekuona*, the vulture for the *Asakyiri*, dog with fire touch in its mouth for the *Aduana*.

The principle of social unity which is an Asante cultural element helped the people to win their wars, thereby making them great. Also, other social factors such as social training discussed below, contributed to the courage with which Asante's fought courageously to build a great and glorious empire.

The social factors include the activities and other matters associated with the birth, puberty, marriage and death of an Asante male. That is, during the naming ceremony, the rituals as well as the words spoken to a baby boy are aimed at making it a courageous warrior in future. In his childhood, through the puberty, he is instructed to be brave and courageous. He is told stories about the courageous warriors of Asante. He participates in narrating *anumse* stories which stress on courage and wit. And in the social set up of Asantes, since women are not interested in marrying men that are cowards, and since in the past, those who ran away from wars were ridiculed and killed, such situations were major factors that prepared Asante men to be courageous to win their wars.

Asantes are noted for their pride. The belief that they are second to none, so far as the other ethnic groups are concerned, stems from time immemorial. Because of this pride, they felt there was no need for anybody to check or rule them. In the past, it

was customary for an Asante father to buy a gun for his son who reached the puberty age, and he instructed his son to be courageous. Also, since a coward Asante man was not regarded as an ancestor, after his death (and is still not so regarded), it was incumbent on every Asante warrior to display courage in Asante wars of conquest. Again, in the past, it was common for the youth to enact wars during entertainments when they usually sang:

Yeye Asantefoo!
Yeye Asantefoo!!
Asante Kotoko,
Kum apem
apem beha.

Translated as:

We are Asantes!
We are Asantes!!
Asante porcupine
Kill a thousand,
and a thousand will come.

This song has the tendency to inculcate courage and bravery in the youth. The song inculcates in them that they should not run away but advance on the enemy, even if a thousand of them are killed on the battlefield.

3.4 Medico -Religious aspects that made Asante great.

On its way to greatness, Asante's medical and religious systems played an important role. In the first place, as I was informed, the Golden, Silver and Black Stools of the various chiefs were all considered religious objects that helped Asantes to win their wars of expansion. So at Asante Mampon, when the people were about to go to war,

the *Akwamu* and *Kontire* divisions brought the Silver Stool from the *Ebaamu* (its sacred place of rest), and the stool was carried to the battlefield.

According to Nana Yaw Kodua, a centenarian, who is the *Kontihene* of the Mampon traditional area, when it was time for war, the people consulted a lot of deities of various shrines, namely: *Nyinamampon Atoku*, *Botoku* at *Kyirimfazo*, *Boakwra* (alias *Bubene*), *Akwasi a ote apem soo* at Nintin, among others. Special drinks were presented to the divinities at these shrines for special protection for the warriors. Then the chief promised the priests/priestesses, that if he and his warriors were able to win their wars, special rams would be presented to the gods.

With all these in presence, the war dresses and other accoutrements for the war were believed to be spiritually imbued with special medicines from the above-named shrines. The *Mamponhene* and his sub-chiefs then put on the dresses and the *Akrakonmu*, and a warrior never missed his target, with the *Akrakonmu* on, if he fired at his enemy. (see plate 2)¹⁰. If it was a national war, then later, they all converged in Kumasi to join the Asante national army; they joined them for which ever war it was. Apart from the preparations made by the people of Mampon, the citizens of Kumawu allegedly went through some forms of medical preparations, especially when the Kumawu people waged independent wars against their enemies.

According to Oheneba Okyere Adjei Diatuo I, the *Tuffuhene* of Kumawu traditional area, as soon as it was time for war, the *Kumawuhene* gave an order for the *atumpan* (talking drums) to be beaten for the people to get prepared for *amiam* (war). The source said, at this juncture, the warriors got themselves prepared with various sorts

of medicine. The *Twafoshene* (a sub-chief who cleared the war path) led the army. He was followed by *Kontire*, *Akwama*, *Nifa* and *Benkam*.

The Kumawu state prepared special herbs in the form of *Oshuko* (concoction of herbs), which all the warriors bathed with seven times a day. This was believed to strengthen them spiritually, making their bodies immuned to bullets. Apart from making them immuned to gunshots, the concoctions were believed to enable them to see things spiritually, especially in the night. For them to see spiritual things, the blood of dogs and cats were reportedly added to the concoction, as these animals have the ability to see well in the night, and are also believed to see spiritually. *Adakrumsu nno* (water trapped between buttresses of trees), or some amount of rain water collected by a

The following information was obtained from the *Journal of the Royal African Society*, Vol. 1, 1902, p. 100, where it is stated that the *Twafoshene* was the name of the chief of the *Twafoshene* tribe.

Journal of the Royal African Society, Vol. 1, 1902, p. 100.

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Plate 2



The *Akrakonmu*, talisman, and other body arts being displayed by Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, which when put on during wars (as the people believed) enabled the wearer to shoot at the enemy without fail.

Source: (Culled from Ghana Review International (a News Magazine), Issue No. 106, London, 2004).

bowl deposited on a grave, could be used for the bath, (this is the kind of water used to prepare the concoction). All these were thought to strengthen the warriors spiritually and were able to make them fight courageously to defeat their enemies. The *batakarikese* worn by the *Kumavuhene* was believed to be fully fortified with medicines so that, no bullet could kill the chief¹¹.

The final and the last thing which the participating warriors went through before leaving for the battlefield was what the people refer to as the last rituals. A

concoction was in this case prepared, and all the warriors were to dip their hands into it. According to Oheneba Okyere Adjei Diatuo I, the *Tuffuhene* of Kumawu, whoever's hands the medicine would scald would not be fit for the war, and had to be withdrawn from the army. Finally, when the warriors were moving, it was the *Domeakwæhene* (a sub-chief), who was the last chief to follow the *Kumawuhene*. Amulets were said to be put around the chief and the other warriors' waists to ward off any spiritual attack from the opposing side.

Oheneba Okyere Adjei Diatuo I said further that some of the shrines whose deities were consulted by the Kumawu people before the war, were Naglo shrine, Taa Yaw shrine, Taa Kwasi shrine, Taa Kwabena shrines (all the 'Taas' belong to the Tano god), among others. All these shrines were reported to be located in the Kumawu traditional area. The divinities associated with these shrines were consulted to find out whether all would be well with the warriors. Also, for the outcome of the war to be known, the god, *Apedie*, was said to be consulted.

On the part of Edweso, her warriors went through series of rituals. The gods of many shrines were contacted to find out the outcome of impending wars. According to *Okyeame* Yaw Akuoku, a chief Spokesman of the *Edwesohene*, the deity, Taa Kwadwo, was mostly consulted for solutions to war problems. Nana Yaa Asantewaa, the legend Queenmother from Edweso, was believed to have consulted this deity before embarking on her war against the British in 1900. But Nana Yaa Asantewaa lost the war, a matter discussed in chapter five. She was captured and sent to Seychelles where she died. Apart from Taa Kwadwo, Besese Taa Yaw was consulted. All these shrines were and are still Tano River Shrines. The riverian

divinities, Bafo and Hoakam, all at Edweso were not left out in these consultations¹². All these shrines were believed to help in making Asante win most of her wars. Now the question one would ask is: why was Asante not able to win all her wars in spite of the presence of all these shrines? This will be discussed in detail in Chapter five.

According to Opanin Kwabena Amankwaa of Kokofu (see footnote⁹), when it was time for war, his people fortified themselves so as to win those wars. As their brothers in Kumasi were preparing a part of the national army (as all the other states met finally in Kumasi), the Kokofu warriors in their own small way were also preparing feverishly for the wars, before finally joining the national army in Kumasi. The deities of Sebetie Takora – a shrine near Kokofu, Taa Kofi, a Kokofu shrine, Komfo Tuda (a priest), among others, were all consulted. Another shrine whose deity was allegedly consulted, and which is still in existence is *Ateakosua*, located in the palace at Kokofu.

While preparations were taking place at Kokofu and other places, the people of Bekwai were also embarking upon their own. They reportedly consulted several gods. These included the god Tano and the divinities of the *Kobire* shrine, the *Apemanka* shrine, etc. The deities of these shrines were believed to have directed the *Bekwaihene*, as to what measures to put in place to win the wars. As usual, special medicines and charms were prepared for the warriors.

It was believed that the priests fortified the guns that were used for the wars. The warriors also drank medicines to strengthen themselves. On the wars themselves, the Bekwai state took part in almost all the wars fought by Asante. For the protection of

the Bekwai army. *Gyahom*, a silver container containing special herbs and medicines to ward off bad spirits during war times was carried to the battlefield. It was also carried in front of the *Bekwaihene*, when he was moving in town or when he was travelling (even if it was not war time), and is still carried in front of him in times of peace.

According to the *Ntenehene* of Bekwai, Nana Oppon Panin II, another spiritual assistance sought for the Bekwai warriors came from the *Amanzie Pramire* – a visible snake believed to be embodied by a spirit. If there was going to be a war, the *Bekwaihene* poured a special libation in a particular sacred forest and invoked this spiritual snake to come out of its hole. It was fed with special mashed yam (*oto*) and eggs. After eating, it went back into its hole, signifying that, all would be well with the Bekwai troops. It was considered to be a god.¹³

According to Opanin Kwabena Asamoah, an attendant at the Manhyia Palace, at the national level, religious activities were at its best, as the *Nsumankwaahene*¹⁴ played a decisive role. Whenever there was an impending war, the *Nsumankwaahene* first asked the divinities if Asante would be successful. It was after this consultation that divisional chiefs like the *Kontire*, *Ankohea*, *Gyaase*, met to strategise.

Among the divinities contacted were the god Tano (see Appendix 3, plate c) and the spirits of the Subin River and the Bosomtwi Lake. After seeking protection from the shrines of these deities, the *Asantehene*, together with the *Nsumankwaahene*, converged at the stool house to pour libation. This was poured to invoke the spirits of the departed souls at the *Nkomwafie*. The *Asantehene* invoked the spirits of his

departed predecessors, to help win the impending war. The guns and ammunition for the wars were all fortified spiritually before taken to the war. The *Asantehene* donned the *batakarikesee*, studded with *sedee* (cowries) and other types of spiritual medicine prepared by the *Nsumankwaahene*.

Apart from these medico-religious activities performed before wars by the individual states, and at the national level, Okomfo Anokye instituted the *Odwira* festival, during which special prayers were said for successes in wars, and for the prosperity of the entire Asante nation as stated in the Literature Review. There was (and is) also the Asante *Adae* when prayers were offered to the guardian spirits of Asante for successful wars and welfare of the Asante nation. The *Adae* is essentially a religious feast day on which the Akan traditional rulers and leaders perform rites in communion with the spirits of their deceased predecessors. There are two such *Adaes*, non-movable feast days which fall on Sundays (*Akwastidae*) and Wednesdays (*Wukudae*) in cycles of six weeks or forty-two days on the Akan calendar (see Appendix 1).

Asantes believe that the celebration of these religious festivals helped their forefathers to win their wars. But how far this is true is debatable. But it is admittedly true that the magico-religious activities could have psychological influence on the Asante warriors to fight courageously to conquer their enemies.

3.5 Economic aspects that helped to make Asante great

The wealth of Asante helped the Kingdom to manufacture and buy arms to promote their wars of expansion. Asante's export in gold, kola and other forest products to the

coast, enabled her acquire more arms, which were used to fight the numerous wars of expansion, which eventually led her to become great.

Furthermore, the strategic position of Asante (that is her geographical position allowed her to control trade to the north, east and west) empowered her to collect tolls from traders who passed through the kingdom. All these boosted up the finances of the kingdom and made the people financially strong to fight many wars.

Again, Asante benefited economically from conquests, since the conquered territories paid tributes, and the more Asante became rich, the more she could buy arms from the white man to expand her territory through wars. This helped to make Asante great and frightening because her neighbouring territories could not withstand her military might.

Also, the booty Asante got from wars, made the people richer, and the booty spurred them on to fight more and more, a phenomenon which truly made them great. Also, the desire to reach other lands to trade made them embark on wars of expansion. Trade in both physical goods and humans, brought more money to Asante, enabling her acquire more fire arms for her expansion which made her more great.

Asante conquered areas like Wasa, Schwi, Adanse, Twifo, among others and tributes from these vassal states poured in to fill the Asante royal treasury. The *Asantehene* appointed ambassadors over the vassal states to enforce the payment of tributes to Asante, and to remind the vassal states that they had an overlord who ruled a great empire.

3.6 The role of the Arts in Asante's greatness

The role of the Arts in Asante's greatness cannot be over-emphasised. As shown in Chapter One, these include the visual, body, performing and verbal arts.

a) Visual Arts that aided Asante to become great

The visual arts that made Asante great include the Golden Stool itself. This psychologically spurred Asantes to fight to build a large and powerful empire whose fame spread to almost all the other parts of the world. Other stools include the Silver Stool of Asante Mampon and the Blackened Stools of the Paramountcies, as these gave them inspirations to win their wars.

The presence of the Golden Stool at all the wars fought by the Asantes, psychologically, made them put in all their might to fight the enemy. Not only the Golden Stool, but according to the *Kontihene* of Asante Mampon, Nana Yaw Kodua, the Silver Stool was always carried to the battlefield by the *Mamponhene's* stool carriers. Also, the black stools of Kumawu, Bekwai, Kokofu, Edweso and the other states were sent to wars fought by Asante¹⁵.

Asante purchased several weapons which were also artefacts from the coast to enable them expand their territories as stated earlier. The artistic weapons included guns, shields, swords, which Asantes used to fight their enemies on the battlefield. Again, since Asantes consulted shrines before their wars of expansion, the consultations took place in the presence of many art objects since the buildings in which the

consultations were made were arts of architecture, and since most of the paraphernalia of the shrines were art objects, it is therefore important to note that religious or magico-religious art played a crucial role in the wars that made Asante great.

b) Body Arts that helped in making Asante great

A lot of body arts were among the forms of art that believably helped Asantes to win the wars that made them great. Mention has already been made of the *batakarikese*, a body art, which was believed to have power to protect its wearer. This war dress which according to Opanin Kwabena Asamoah of Manhyia Palace, was commissioned to be made for Nana Opoku Ware I, psychologically made the *Asantehene* great and fearless to lead his people to all wars fought from the time of that *Asantehene*. Opanin Asamoah pointed out that on no occasion did any *Asantehene* wear this dress and was killed in a war¹⁶. He therefore argued that Nana Osei Tutu I was not wearing the *batakarikese* when he was killed by the Akyems in a war in 1719, because by then the *batakarikese* had not been made.

If a king put on the *batakarikese* he also had to put on the *mpaboakesee* (big sandals), another kind of body arts. There is therefore the belief, as alluded to above that if the *batakarikese* and *mpaboakesee* had been available for Nana Osei Tutu I to wear, he could not have been killed by the Akyems while he was crossing the Pra River in 1719. Other body arts that were thought to have helped Asantes to win their wars that made them great, were talismans and amulets including *Akrakonmu* (see plate 2) which was mentioned earlier. Other forms of protective body arts which

Asante warriors wore for battles comprised some specially made finger rings that were believed to have magical power to invite protective spirits to guard the warriors, the amulets were thought to ward off any evil spirit that wanted to attack the wearer. All these art materials made the people build up their confidence to defeat their enemies to become great. But as to whether the body arts had spiritual powers to make Asantes win their wars or not, it is difficult to tell. However, discussions on this issue are deferred to the fifth chapter of this thesis. (See plate 2 for a picture of the *Akrakonmu*, Talisman, etc.)

c) The Performing Arts that believably made Asante great

When one considers the performing arts, it is empirically proved in a way, that Asante music and dance helped the people during war times. Because drums were beaten to direct the movements of troops during the war. Songs were also sung to encourage Asante troops to have the vigour and energy to fight. As stated by the *Kontihene* of Asante Mampon, Nana Yaw Kodua, during war (on the battlefield), the Mampon warriors sang a song composed of the following words:

Kotoko kru kuoe!
Kotoko kru kuoe!!
Mensurohene wo ha.

Translated as

Kotoko warriors!
Kotoko warriors!!
The chief who does not
fear anything is around.

The song, according to the chief, encouraged the troops to fight tooth and nail to defend *Asanteman*. Drums like the *npebi*, *etwie*, *nkrawiri* (see plate 3), and others were used in wars. The *etwie*, it was said, was sounded to frighten away the enemies of Asante, as it sounded like the noise of a leopard. When some of these drums were beaten and special war songs were sung, they boosted the morale of the Asante warriors, as pointed out earlier.

Still at the national level, in battle array, the Asante warriors sang the following national war song to inspire them to fight courageously and fearlessly:

Ogya - o - ogya, yee ogya!
Ogya - o - ogya, yee ogya!
Kroba Asante Kotoko ee ogya o o!

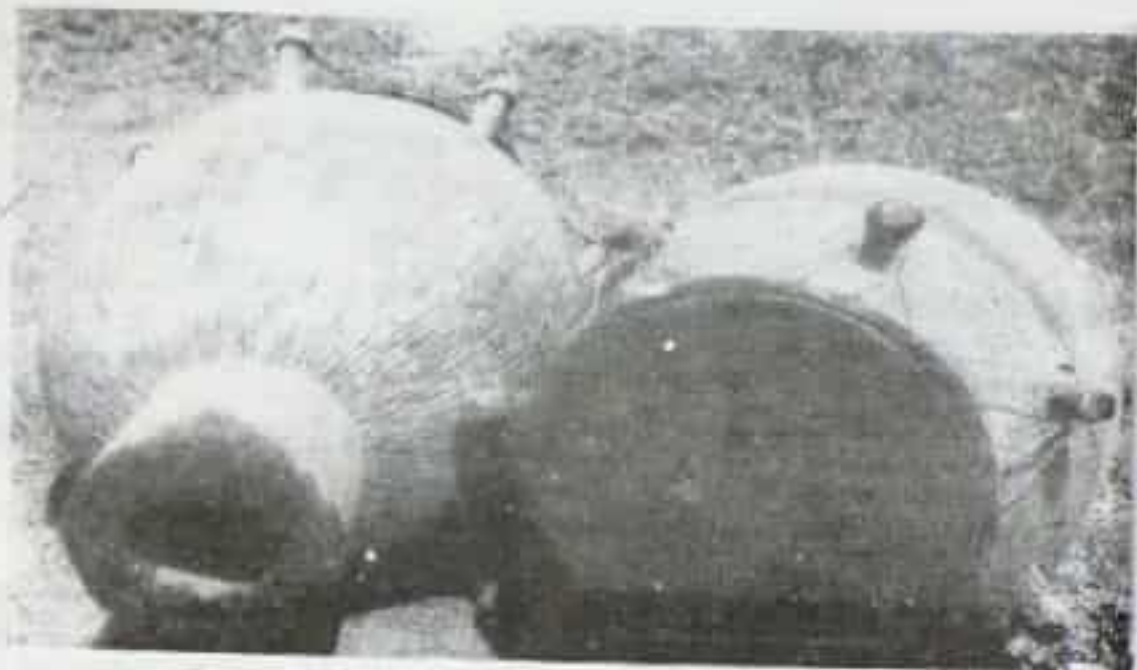
Translated as

Blazing fire, ay blazing fire!
blazing fire, ay blazing fire!!
Kroba Asante Kotoko
blazing fire o o!

This national martial song with instrumental accompaniments such as drums or double *dawuro* (or *nawuta*) (what people wrongly call "gong gong" as musicians believe)¹⁷ stirred up even lethargic men or soldiers when they were at the battlefield. All this time, women left in the towns and villages were gathered by the queenmothers to sing *momome* from one end of the street to the other. *Momome* is a special song sung in the streets of towns and villages to telepathically encourage the warriors on the battlefield. The women smeared their bodies with red clay, signifying that they were serious just like their male counterparts on the battlefield.¹⁸ While

singing *momome* songs, the women were allegedly smashing ripe pawpaws on the ground to signify that they were spiritually smashing the enemy. (See plate 3 for the *mpebi* and *nkrawiri* drums used in war by the Asante).

Plate 3



The head of the akangji is held by strings attached to pegs.



d) Verbal Arts that supposedly made Asante great

The verbal arts also that are cultural phenomena and which contributed to the greatness of Asante are: proverbs, idioms, panegyrics, *ananse* stories etc.

Before wars were fought, Asantes spoke artistic or poetic words during libations to invoke the gods and ancestors to help them in the wars. It is not the pouring of the libation that is considered as verbal art, but the poetic words that accompanied the libations. For example, the person pouring the libation called the names of the powers first of all, he mentioned the name of God Almighty, then the earth, royal ancestors and the deities one after the other, or collectively and poured drops of the drink on the ground intermittently and spoke as follows:

*Otweadumpon Kwame nsa
Asase Yaa nsa nie
Nanunom nsamanfoo, nsa nie
Asuo Afram, Asuo ofin, monsa nie
Oyokofoo nsamanfoo, mommegye nsa
Nana Osei Tutu, wo nsa nie ...*

Translated as

Almighty God of Saturday, a drink for you
Mother earth, a drink for you
Spirits of our forefathers drink for you
Rivers Afram and Ofin, this is your drink
Ancestors of the Oyoko clan, come for the drinks
Nana Osei Tutu, a drink for you...

According to all the traditional areas the researcher visited, they all accepted the fact that, on difficult occasions, like war, they all sought the assistance of their ancestors and gods and this they did by pouring libation and offering poetic or artistic prayer. At the national level (Manhyia), as pointed out earlier, the *Nsumankwaahene* invoked the spirits of the departed kings through artistic words in conjunction with libation,

while being assisted by the reigning *Asantehene*. This they did by going to the *Nkamwafie* (stool room), to pour libation, with its accompanying words. After this, they believed they had the necessary support of the protective spirits in the war. And as said before, this psychologically prepared them for the war, and in most cases, they won their wars.

Ananse stories about courage, told to the youth at the time, boosted their morale and encouraged them to become brave men to defend Asante. Stories about great leaders like King Osei Tutu I, Okomfo Anokye, Nana Opoku Ware I, Nana Osei Asibe Bonsu, Nana Yaa Asantewaa, among others, about the role they played in making Asante great, were told to the youth, who took inspiration from these to defend Asante at all times.

Summary of the Chapter

The good political structures put in place by the founding fathers of the Asante nation, coupled with the beliefs in the Asante arts – visual, body, performing and the verbal, the economic nature of Asante during those times and its position, all assisted Asante to win most of the wars fought, thereby making Asante great.

References and notes

1. F. K. Buah. *A History of West Africa from A. D. 1000*
Published by Macmillan Ltd. London, in
1980. p 61
2. Ibid p 61
3. Personal Interview with Osei Kwadwo, Curator, Manhyia Palace Museum, aged 69 yrs. The interview took place on 28th August, 2004, at 9.15 am at the Manhyia Palace, Kumasi.
4. E. K. Braffi. *The Esoteric Significance of Asante Nation*. Published by Mystic House, Kumasi in 1984. Pp 30 – 33
5. Though the *Asantehenes* are said to 'occupy' the Golden Stool, in actual fact they do not sit on it, as Okomfo Anokye warned that 'you and your successors are never to sit on this stool.' During enstoolment, the *Asantehene*-elect should pretend to sit on it three times – the *Mamponhene*, supported by the Right Wing *Amanhene*, holds the right arm of the King-elect; the *Asumengyahene*, supported by the Left Wing *Amanhene* holds the left arm; the *Kyidomhene* (*Akyempimhene*), with the support of the *Kyidom* Chiefs, the *Konti* and *Akwamu* chiefs, and the *Gyase*, *Ankobe* and *Mamwere* chiefs, holds his waist, right foot and left front, respectively, and lower his buttocks three consecutive times over the Golden Stool.
- 6a) Nana Asenso Kofu, chief of Adwumakaasekese – He was said to have been buried alive.
- b) Nana Dikopim I, chief of Edweso, gave himself up to be butchered to death.
- c) Nana Tweneboa Kodua, Paramount chief of Kumawu, also gave himself up. He led the marching soldiers. Though he was armed, he was forbidden to shoot, therefore, he was killed. Asantes believe this helped Asantes to win the war.
7. Boahen Anantuo, chief of Manpon, he allegedly acted as the War General in the Asante – Denkyira war. But Okomfo Anokye had earlier predicted that whoever led as the War General would not live beyond seven days, after the war.

8. A. A. Boahen. *Topics in West African History* (New Edition), published by Longman Group, U. K. Ltd in 1988 p.54
9. Personal Interview with Opanin Kwabena Amankwaa, Elder of the lineage of the Right Wing chief, *Nifahene's Abusaoponin*, aged 98yrs at Kokofu.
10. Personal Interview with Nana Yaw Kodua, *Kontihene*, Asante Mampon, aged 100 yrs. The interview took place on 13th August, 2004, at 1.05 pm at his palace, Asante Mampon.
11. Personal Interview with Oheneba Okyere Adjei Diatuo I, the *Taffihene* of Kumawu Traditional Area, aged 72 yrs. The interview happened on 30th August, 2004, at 11.13 am at Bodomase.
12. Personal Interview with Okyeame Yaw Akuoku, a chief Spokesman of *Edvesohene*, aged 64 yrs, on 27th September, 2004, at 9.45 am at *Edvesohene's* Palace
13. Personal Interview with Nana Oppon Panin II, *Niensehene* of Bekwai, aged 68 yrs. This interview occurred on 24th August, 2004, at 10.15 am at Bekwai hene's Palace.
14. *Nsumankwaahene*: He is the chief in charge of all medicines and religious activities of the Asante Kingdom.
15. Personal Interview with Nana Yaw Kodua, *Kontihene* Asante Mampon, aged 100 yrs. The interview took place on 13th August, 2004, at 1.05 pm at his palace, Asante Mampon.
16. Personal Interview, Opanin Kwabena Asamoah, aged 60 yrs, attendant, Manhyia Palace. The interview occurred on 23rd August, 2004, at 10.30 am at Manhyia Palace. Kumasi.
17. Gong – gong: It is called *dawuro* in Twi. Ghanaian musicians say that the word gong – gong is wrong because gong – gong is a particular kind of drum.
18. Personal Interview, Opanin Kwabena Asamoah, attendant, Manhyia Palace. The interview took place on 23rd August, 2004, at 10.30 am at Manhyia Palace, Kumasi.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE CONTRIBUTION OF ASANTE ART AND CULTURE TO THE GLORY OF ASANTE

4.1 Introduction

This Chapter also discusses the role which Asante art and culture have played in making Asante glorious in the past and today. It introduces what the various branches of art, notably, the visual, body, performing and the verbal arts, have played in the glory of Asante. It also discusses what other cultural arts have contributed to the glory of Asante, and these include its chieftaincy, social relationships, traditional religion, medical systems, economic activities, philosophy, among others.

4.2 The Arts that contributed to the glory of Asante

As stated earlier, and noted in Chapter One, the four categories of art that have contributed in making Asante glorious are: visual, body, performing and verbal arts.

The visual art includes royal stools (including the Golden Stool), state swords, spokesmen's staves (wrongly called linguist staves), umbrellas, etc. The body arts also include: headcrowns/gears, necklaces, wristlets, finger rings, beautiful *kente*, and other types of cloths, as well as beautiful sandals.

Also, performing arts that are part of the culture and make Asante glorious include: instrumental and vocal music, various types of Asante dances and drama. Finally, the

verbal arts that are cultural phenomena, and which contributed to the glory of Asante are: proverbs, idioms, panegyrics, *ananse* stories, among others.

Now the major question here is: how have these arts helped Asante to become glorious?

4.2.1 The visual arts that have contributed to Asante's glory.

Today, most of these objects like the swords, palanquins, umbrellas, guns, among others, which were used in wars, are the centre of attractions during festivals like the *Adaekese* and even great funerals of the Kings and chiefs of Asante. These artefacts which are not used today are in rooms or museums for people (especially tourists) to see. For instance, some of them are at the Manhyia Palace Museum in Kumasi, where samples of the guns used by various *Asantehenes* are on display.

During festivals like *Adaekese*, the *Asantehene* with his paramount chiefs is seen donned in beautifully-designed cloths like *Kente*, *Adinkra*, etc. Not only in such rich cloths are they found, but also, they are seen in gold headgear/crowns, wristlets, and beautiful necklaces. On their legs are gold chains and beautiful sandals to match (as seen in plate 4 with Otumfuo Opoku Ware II.).



Otumfuo Opoku Ware II displaying some body arts (including a beautiful *kente* cloth and a headgear to match)

Source: (Photograph taken from an old Asante Calendar)

At such festivals, all visitors who visit the ceremonial grounds see the beauty and glory of Asante people. Also, when they see how beautifully the King and the chiefs have dressed, they spread the fame of Asante far and wide. (See plate 5 for a photograph of the *Asantehemaa* in a beautiful *kente* cloth, displaying some ornaments on her feet, hands and shoulders.)

Plate 5



The Asantehemaa in a beautiful kente cloth, leglets, bracelets, and other ornaments.

Source: (Photograph taken from an old Asante Calendar)

Display of visual arts during (*Adaekese*) festivals

During the *Adaekese* festival, on the climax day, the *Asantehene* sits in splendour and receives homage, greetings, congratulations and respects from his subjects, well-wishers and admirers. Most people, especially non-Akans, who throng the festival grounds, do so, just to see the splendour of the festival, the 'beauty' of the King, his chiefs, queenmothers, and his people. Asante art and culture have brought such a glory to the region that in the just held festival (*Adaekese*), people from all over the

world, including diplomats, and the famous Zulu King, Gatsha Mangosuthu Buthelezi, of the Republic of South Africa, were there to see the beauty of the festival.

According to Osei Kwadwo, the Curator of the Manhyia Palace Museum in Kumasi, during such great festivals, the *Asantehene* uses the *Nyankonton* (rainbow) umbrella. This umbrella has the colours of a rainbow and with a *babadua* top. The rainbow colours are meant to draw the attention of the people to their obligations to their ruler.¹ Today, Asante's glory is partly seen in museums, as some of the guns used by the various *Asantehenes* in the numerous wars fought are being displayed there. It has become a great tourist attraction in the region. Osei Kwadwo further said that, among the guns on display at the Manhyia Palace, is one called *doku*, used by the founder of the Asante nation, Opemsuo Osei Tutu I. He was said to have used the gun between 1695 and 1719. Incidentally, the Curator added, this was the very gun which Opemsuo Osei Tutu I was using when he was killed by the Akyems while he was crossing river Pra.

Nana Opoku Ware I, (who ruled between 1720 and 1750) also used the *sikantoo* gun in his wars. The *Gyahyetoo* gun was used by Nana Osei Kwadwo, popularly known as *Oko-awia* (he who fights in the noon), who was the *Asantehene* between 1764 and 1777.

The *sisire kwabrafo* gun was used by Nana Osei Kwame Asibe Bonsu, who ruled between 1800 and 1824.² (photographs of the guns used by the Kings could be found in plates 6, 7, 8 and 9).

Plate 6



The *doku* gun used by Opemsuo Osei Tutu I, founder of the Asante Nation

Source: (Culled from *A Guide to Manhyia Palace*. A brochure by
Otumfuo Opoku Ware Jubilee Foundation, 2003)

Plate 7



The *sikantoo* gun used by Nana Opoku Ware I

Source: (from the same source as Plate 6 above)

Plate 8



Gyahyetou gun used by Nana Osei Kwadwo (Oko-awia, meaning, he who fights in the noon)

Source: (from the same source as above)

Plate 9



The *sisire kwabrafo* gun used by Nana Osei Kwame Asibe Bonsu

Source: (from the same source as above)

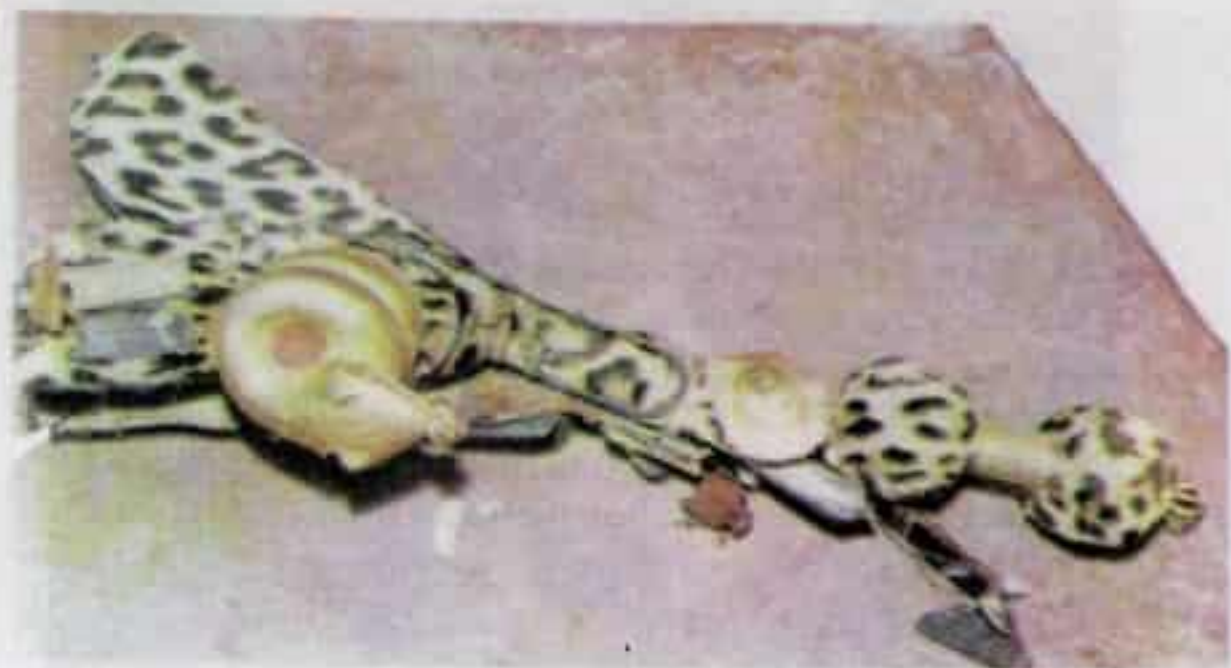
Still on the contribution of Asante art and culture to the glory of Asante, Opanin Kwabena Asamoah of Manhyia Palace, said that in the past, the *Asantehene's* personal body-guards, *atuntufoo*, carried guns richly adorned with gold and silver on the butts, barrels and the end of the barrels. Their livery, similarly ornamented, comprised skull caps made of the skins of such animals as the elephant, lion or leopard. Among the livery of the body-guards were ration pouches or haversacks with one or two straps each for holding *sepo* knives.

Also, the attires of the body-guards comprised bandoliers or shoulder belts that had several straps for holding *sepo* knives and a horn or a container for gun powder and bullets. Of special interests was a skull cap embossed in gold, depicting an *adinkra*

symbol called *obi nka obi* (meaning, no one has offended anybody), and which was worn by one of the body-guards. Incidentally, this skull cap was among the regalia taken away by the British during the 'Sagrenti' war of 1874, but which was repatriated in 1985 at a cost of three thousand six hundred British pounds. The display of the above visual arts by the *Asantehene*'s body-guards during the past years made 'outsiders' really believe that Asante art indeed contributed to the glory of Asante³, especially at festivals when the rich culture of the people was on parade.

Today, apart from the guns which add up to the glory of Asante, other stool regalia which proclaim the glory of Asante, and which are found at the Manhyia Palace Museum include: gold rings, necklaces, swords, and other gold ornaments. These art objects which once aided Asante in one way or the other during war times, have now become fortunes of the empire and continue to attract hundreds of visitors to the region monthly. And most important among the swords is the *Mponponsuo* sword. This sword is used by the *Asantehene* to swear his oath of office to the chiefs and people of Kumasi, and by Paramount and other high ranking chiefs (*Abrempon*) to swear their oath of allegiance to the *Asantehene* as the 'occupant' of the Golden Stool. It is believed that the original *Mponponsuo* sword made for Nana Opoku Ware I by Okomfo Anokye is at the British Museum of Mankind in London.⁴ (see plate 10 for a picture of the *Mponponsuo* Sword and plate 10b for a photograph of the chief-in-charge of the *Mponponsuo* Sword)

Plate 10



**The *Mponponsuo* sword of Asante.
The original *Mponponsuo* sword is believed to be at the British Museum of
Mankind, London.**

**Source: (Culled from *A Guide to Manhyia Palace* by Otumfuo
Opoku Ware II Jubilee Foundation, Kumasi, 2003)**

Plate 10b



The *Mponponsuohene* (the chief-in-charge of the *Mponponsuo* sword) with the *Mponponsuo* sword in hand

**Source: (Culled from *Ghana Review International* (a News Magazine)
Issue No 106, London, 2004)**

Plate 10c



The *Busumuru* Sword (The most revered sword in Asante)

Source: (Culled from *Ghana Review International* (a News Magazine)
No Issue 106, London, 2004)

Another very important sword at the Museum today is the *Funtunfunafu ne Denkyemfunafu*. This depicts two crocodiles with one stomach: a sword whose name means that despite that all citizens belong to the state each one struggles for individual recognition. (see plate 11 for a picture of the sword, *Funtunfunafu ne Denkyemfunafu*)

Plate 11



**Sword of the *Asantehene*: *Funtunfunafu ne Denkyemfunafu*
(two crocodiles with one stomach)**

Source: (Culled from *A Guide to Manhyia Palace* by Otumfuo
Opoku Ware II Jubilee Foundation, Kumasi, 2003)

The State Sword, *Akokobaatan ne ne nma* (the hen and her chicks), tells us that just as the hen protects her chicks with her wings, so does the King (*Asantehene*) defend and protect his subjects. All the above-mentioned swords are State Swords used by the King and prominent chiefs of Asante, and which depict the glory of Asante. (see plate 12 for a picture of the sword *Akokobaatan ne ne nma*)



Akokobaatan ne ne nma sword (the hen and her chicks).
Another sword of the *Asantehene*.

Source: (Culled from *A Guide to Manhyia Palace* by Otumfuo
Opoku Ware II Jubilee Foundation, Kumasi, 2003)

The following swords used in the past and continue to be used by 'state' couriers are also found at the Manhyia Palace Museum for tourists (and other visitors) to see. These include the: *asomfofena* (courier swords): - *gyegyatiere*, *nsroma*, *worasatiere*, *akuma* and *akyikyidee*. They are used by 'state' couriers who travel outside the capital to announce grave matters such as deaths in the royal lineage, or when accompanied by a herald to declare war on an enemy 'state'.

Like most 'state' swords of the King, the hilts are decorated with gold leaf and hangings from leather sheaths (*boha*). The hangings are gold casts which give the names to the swords. For example, the *gyegyatiere*, *nsroma*, *worasatiere* and *akyikyidee* have casts of the skull of a mangabey, a star, the head of a defeated warrior and a tortoise respectively. The *akuma* (axe) for instance, means that Asante want a

peaceful solution to any differences which may have arisen between them and an enemy 'state', since an axe is said to cut through any knot.⁵

The main sword used by all chiefs of Edweso is called *Bosomtwe*. The *Edwesohene* uses this sword to swear to his subjects during his installation. Then the chiefs occupying the *Abrempon* Stools under the Edweso chief in turn use it to swear to the chief.⁶

On the role of the spokesman's staves in bringing glory to Asante, the use of these artistic objects went further to enhance the important role that the *Asantehene* and other chiefs of the Kingdom played in the past. Some of the spokesmen's staves at the Manhyia Palace include: *wo fro dua pa a na ye pia wo* (if you climb a good tree you deserve to be pushed. See plate 13 for a picture of this staff), *Sankofa* (return to take it), among others. These staves are used by the various Spokesmen of the *Asantehene*, when sent by the King. These Spokesmen are usually accompanied by the *Nsenie*⁷ people, donning the *Nseniekye* (a cap worn by the *Nsenie* people). They take the lead and are followed by the Spokesman (or men). At such instances, the *Nsenie* couriers carry the *asonfofena* swords. There are other types of staves of office, apart from the two mentioned above, that are held by the *Akyeame* (royal spokesmen/ambassadors), commonly and wrongly referred to as linguists, whenever they perform official functions:

These fascinating 'Akyeame Poma (Spokesmen's Staves) often feature shafts decorated with narrative reliefs of symbolic abstract motifs and ornamented finials in gold leaf. The finial of a spokesman's shaft can be a motif of abstract or figurative

symbol with profound interpretations that relate to the historical origins or religious principles of groups or communities⁸ (see plate 13 for a picture of a spokesman's staff)

Plate 13



The Spokesman's Staff (wrongly referred to as the linguist staff)
Wo fro dua pa na ye pia wo (if you climb a good tree you deserve to be pushed)

Source: (Culled from *Traditional Art of Ghana*. Kojo Fosu, 1995)

Umbrellas also contribute to the pomp and pageantry of Asante Chieftaincy. At the *Bekwaihene's* Palace, the *Ntenehene* of Bekwai stated that the most important umbrella of the Bekwai *Omanhene* is the *Amansie Prumire*. This umbrella with a carved coiled snake as its emblem on top of it was formerly used solely by this *Amansie* chief on important festivals like the *Adoekese*, or when he was mourning a

relative, until the *Asantehene* saw its beauty and since he (*Asantehene*) also hails from *Amansie*, he made one for himself.

At Asante Mampon, among the umbrellas used by the 'occupant' of the Silver Stool are: *Ebi da bi akyi* (one thing follows another) and *Frumakro* (one navel). According to Oheneba Okyere Adjei Diatuo I, the *Tuffuhene* of Kumawu, the *Kumawuhene* uses the *Prekese gyinaku*, with a *prekese* finial. This umbrella was made during the era of Nana Asumadu I, around the nineteenth century, and used during occasions like the *Adaekese* in Kumasi, and *Papa Nantwi* festival at Kumawu.⁹ *To akyire a efa* is the name of another umbrella used by the *Kumawuhene*, and is solely used whenever there is trouble, like war, funeral, etc.

Back to Manhyia, the King uses a variety of umbrellas on different occasions, and various umbrellas were made during the reign of the various *Asantehenes*. One of the names of the Manhyia umbrellas is *Boaman*- that is shelter of the nation, and this was made for Nana Osei Bonsu, who ruled from 1800 to 1824¹⁰. There is the *Oyokoman* umbrella also. The Oyoko clan is the clan of the royal family from which the *Asantehene* is selected. This umbrella is made of a silk woven *kente* cloth and has a *bahadua* top. It was alleged to have been made for King Osei Tutu I, and is said to be the most revered umbrella of the King of Asante.

The *Asantehene* also uses the *Nyankonton* umbrella. It was said to have been made for King Osei Tutu I. The cloth of the umbrella depicts the rainbow colours which remind the people of their allegiance and obligations to the King. By the rule which established the Asante Union, all 'occupants' of the Golden Stool were to be accorded

the highest respect at all times, as stated by Okomfo Anokye. And the rainbow colours (in the umbrellas) are to remind the people of their obligations to the King.

Another umbrella belonging to the *Asantehene* is known as *Akokobaatan*, because its finial depicts the image of a hen and its chicks. The images symbolise love and care since Asante believe that a hen has tender love for her chicks. Even when she steps on the chicks, she does not injure them, meaning: when the King punishes any of his subjects, he does so with love just to correct him, and not to destroy him. Therefore, the King presides over a case for which a peaceful settlement is made. It was made for King Osei Kwadwo, who ruled from 1764 to 1777.¹¹ (see plate 14 for pictures of some of the umbrellas used by the various *Asantehenes*).

Plate 14



Some umbrellas used by the various *Asantehenes*. (these include: from left to right the *Nankanini*, *Mfoanfoa*, *Prekese*, *Boaman*, *Oyokoman*, *Nyankonton*, *Amansie Pramire* and *Akokobaatan*)

Source: (Culled from *A Souvenir Brochure on Asanteman Adaeke*
Kumasi, April, 2004)

According to Opanin Kwabena Asamoah of Manhyia Palace, the *Asantehene* rides in a palanquin during wars or festive occasions like *Adaeke*, coronation or funeral. During festive occasions like *Adaeke*, the procession of the *Asantehene* as he rides in a palanquin is led by a man carrying the *Samanka* – a brass pan borne by one of the *Asantehene's* traditional healers and diviners, *Nsumankwaafuo* and containing

talisman and herbs reported to possess the power to drive away evil spirits before the *Asantehene* and his procession should proceed.

Among the major palanquins used by the *Asantehenes* during wars, funerals and other ceremonies is the *Sebo* (leopard). This is draped or decorated with a leopard's skin, but this leopard's skin is not seen by the general public, as it is covered with clothing materials when it is in public. This very palanquin is still to be found at the Manhyia Palace.

Palanquins were used and are still being used by almost all the *Amanhene* and other sub-chiefs on the Kingdom during occasions, thus adding pageantry to the Asante culture. At festivals like *Adaekese*, the way the king rides in his palanquin and dances to the tune of *fantomfrom*, *kete*, and other drums with his chiefs, add colour and pomp to the beauty of Asante's culture. This has also added glory to the culture of the empire. From the foregoing discussions, one can see that the above-mentioned visual arts contributed and still contribute to the glory of Asante chieftaincy. (see plate 15 for a picture of a palanquin of the chief of Edweso).

Plate 15



A palanquin of the chief of Edweso

Source: (Photograph taken by the Researcher from *Edwesohene's* Palace)

4.2.2 Body Arts that glorify Asante

The glory of Asante did not and does not depend on its visual arts alone, but also on its body arts. The body arts that make the *Asantehene* and his sub-chiefs prestigious include head crowns/gears, necklaces, wristlets, finger rings, beautiful *kente* and other types of cloth, as well as beautiful sandals.

On *kente* cloths and other special cloths worn by the *Asantehene*, the paramount chiefs and other sub-chiefs, several factors might generally give rise to the use of such cloths, the world over. The communicative, expressive and symbolic nature of the body arts, seen in wars, festivals and other occasions among Asantes in the past, to a very large extent, portrayed the way of life of the people. As pointed out earlier, Asante, in building her empire, fought so many wars defeating their enemies on most occasions and annexing their lands, culture and everything to theirs.

Today, some of the dresses worn for wars and other occasions, have become ceremonial dresses; and at "state" functions like *Adae*, *Obwira*, funerals, among others. They are put on to portray the prowess of Asante people in the past, and to exhibit the glorious nature of the culture of the people. To climax the *Adae* festival, the *Asantehene*, his paramount chiefs, chiefs and the people always make sure they are in their best cloths and dresses. In this case, as partly stated earlier in this chapter, the chiefs and people mostly wear beautifully-designed woven *Kente*, *Adinkra*, etc, cloths to suit the occasion.

At Bekwai, it came to light that the *Kente* cloth *yokoman* was specially designed for all the *Ayokoo* rulers in Asante, comprising the *Asantehene*, *Dwabenene*, *Bekwaihene*, *Kokofuhene* and *Nsutahene*¹². The way and manner in which these cloths and other body arts are displayed at such functions and their glamorous nature, add more glory to the culture of the people.

Jewellery and some Ornamental accessories worn by the *Asantehene* and other Asante chiefs

During Asante festivals like *Adaeke*, *Odwira*, among others, wearers of jewellery bring into display assortments of gold, silver and other metallic ornaments which have been fashioned into representational and non-representational bracelets, necklaces, leglets, finger rings etc.

The splendour of the golden ceremonial crowns, footwears and the jewellery of the *Asantehene*, his *Amanhene* (paramount chiefs), *Abrempon*, sub-chiefs (*adikro*), etc, which is enhanced by stately gestures on this occasion, becomes a spectacular scene to watch. As the visual focus of court panoply, the body adornments of the *Asantehene* and his chiefs consist of ornamented finger rings, sandals, crowns, gold and bead bracelets and amulets. (see plate 16 for pictures of bracelets and necklace)



A typical example of gold bracelets, necklaces and *bodua* (fly whisk), which is believed to ward off bad spirits, being displayed by the *Asantehene*

Source: (Culled from *A Souvenir Brochure on Asanteman Adaekese*.
Kumasi, April, 2004)

The history of wearing jewellery is generally old and not limited to Asante. Apart from their decorative value, ornaments have been worn as charms and amulets from ancient times. In Persia, Arabia and China, green stones were placed in the mouths of the dead because the stones were supposed to contain a life-giving substance¹³. This

old conception about the use of the green stone is believed to be persisting, though in a modified form ¹⁴.

Similarly, certain ornamental rings (like the *Akrakonmu*), used by the *Mamponihene* and his sub-chiefs during the Asante wars, were believed to have some magical powers which enabled the bullets to reach out to the enemy without fail. The *Asantehene* and other Asante chiefs also used the *Akrakonmu* during wars. Today, it is used during festivals like *Adackese* as body ornament. Moreover, in India, those who wear gold ornaments are said to live longer in the abode of the gods whilst the Egyptians and the Sumerians are said to have decorated themselves with gold and silver ornaments because of their beliefs in magical powers associated with them. The *Asantehene* is said to wear certain rings and amulets, which ward off evil spirits from him ¹⁵. However, in addition, they portray the glory of Asante.

The instances cited show some of the significance and reasons attached to the wearing of ornamental jewellery. Irrespective of the purposes for which they are worn, one fact stands out clearly that when they are not used on occasions, they lose much of the awe they are intended to inspire.

Those of the *Asantehene* and his chiefs bespeak of some of the attributes of jewellery. Some special ornaments symbolise the sagacity, wealth, authority and security of the wearer, especially, of the *Asantehene*. (see plate 17 for a photograph of the *Akrakonmu*)

Plate 17



The *Kontihene* of Mampon (a centenarian) in his war dress and the *Akrakonmu* and talisman on his body

Source: (Photograph taken by the Researcher from the *Kontihene's* Palace, Asante Mampon)

Asantehene's Ceremonial Crowns/Headgear

The *Asantehene's* crown which adds to the glory of Asante is locally called *abotire* or *ahenkye*. Crowns of this form, according to Kyerematen, were unknown in Ghana before the arrival of the white man. In view of this, hats of skin with silver or gold decorations of some historical or symbolic significance served the purposes of a crown. These are said to have been used by rulers on their installations, but in modern times, Asante crowns are said to imitate European type¹⁶. Some of the headcrowns used by the *Asantehene* are *Sebekro* headgear, and this normally displays one cowry found in front of the head of the *Asantehene*. Another type of headgear used by the *Asantehene* is *Obi nkaa obia obi nka bi* (sika abotire) gold headgear (if you do not offend me, I will not offend you). This is an *abotire* dotted with gold. This particular headgear is put on only when the *Asantehene* is in a *kente* cloth (as found in plate 18).

Plate 18



Obi nkaa obi a obia nka hi (if you do not offend me I will not offend you) *abotire*
(a gold studded headgear)

Source: (Culled from *A Souvenir Brochure on Asanteman Adaeke*.
Kumasi, April, 2004)

The use of the headgear at the installation of a new *Asantehene* is believed to symbolically instil the spirit of fearlessness in him so as to enable him stand firm in the time of upheavals that might arise during the course of his rule¹⁷.

Similarly, some ornamental amulets like the *sebe* which are of great value and said to give the *Asantehene* and his chiefs the power to control people as well as to protect them against any spiritual attack, find expression during festivals like *Adaeke*. Like the amulets on the *batakarikese*, these are various talismans which enclose Islamic writings believed to be made by Moslems who are employed to produce this type of mystical protection. Some of the amulets are thought to perform both decorative and protective functions just as the rings do. Whatever the purpose of the talismans, they

also have decorative functions and therefore depict the glory of the *Asantehene* and *Asanteman* as a whole.

Rings

The ostentatious display of different gold rings some of which are of animal motifs have certain proverbial and symbolic associations which allude to some of the virtues of the chiefs. They signify how powerful the king is and how he is revered by his people. These finger-rings are worn on different ceremonial occasions like *Adankese* and *Odwira* festivals, *durbars*, during settlements of disputes among others. Examples of some rings used by the *Asantehene* are the *sika patia* (gold ring) with the scorpion emblem on it. There are other finger-rings with the emblems of the *Kotoko* (porcupine) an animal, *gyata* (lion), etc. These rings, which are specially used by the *Asantehene* during occasions like the King's installation, funerals, *Adaes*, etc, add splendour to whatever the occasion is, thereby portraying the glory of the Asante people. (refer to Plate 18 for a picture of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II displaying some finger rings)

Sandals

Whenever the *Asantehene*, his paramount chiefs and other sub-chiefs put on cloths, they are obliged to put on traditional sandals (*ahenema*) and as stated earlier, anytime the *Asantehene* puts on the *batakarikesee*, he also puts on the *mpaboakesee*, which means 'big sandals'. This simply means that special sandals are put on by the King or any of his chiefs to match certain cloths on certain occasions.

Also, there are sandals with gold studded straps. And whenever the *Asantehene* is wearing a pair of sandals, on any occasion or for a journey, spare sandals are always held in readiness for the King to wear immediately if those he is wearing become damaged. Spare sandals must always be ready for the *Asantehene* to wear because it is a taboo for his feet to touch the ground, as is the case of any Akan chief. This taboo is strictly observed by Asante and other Akan chiefs because it is the belief of the people that if the feet of a chief touch the ground, disasters will occur in his chieftdom.

4.2.3 Performing Arts

Performing arts that are part of the culture and make Asante great and glorious include instrumental and vocal music as well as various types of Asante dances and drama. Among Asante people, instrumental and vocal music have played an important role to make the kingdom glorious. During festivals like *Adaekele*, music plays an important role, as without it, the 'beauty' of the festival would not be perfectly glorious. It is the music and dance which make the festival attractive. The numerous visitors who throng to the festival grounds to witness such ceremonies do so mostly because of the presence of the various musical groups, not only at festivals, but at funerals, durbars, among others.

The courts of the *Asantehene* and his high officials were and still are, centres of the performing arts, featuring great drum and horn orchestras and singers of poems praising great men and women of Asante history.

Drumming

Drumming which depicts the glory of Asante, portrays certain styles. Some of the drums and other musical instruments are sounded to imitate certain speech patterns to make signals as well as to provide music for the people to dance. During musical performances, several drums and other musical instruments are played together to provide the requisite rhythm and tempo to direct the movements and gestures of the dancers. Some of the drums are *fontomfrom*, *mpintin* and *akomo*. In Asante, the *atumpan* drum is played in two different ways: when it plays alone, it serves as a talking drum. The drummer talks with it. He says something about the king/chief. He also says something to those who have come to the occasion, be it a festival, funeral, etc. He drums for a purpose. When he plays with the other drummers, he plays in a different style, for he has to play music for the dance. The *atumpan* drum may be used as a talking drum and as a musical instrument¹⁸. These testify to the richness of Asante culture which has made Asante glorious.

At festivals, when such drums are beaten, the way the people dance to its tune add colour to the occasion in question. It is indeed interesting and it attracts a lot of people. Furthermore, in Asante, drums are beaten when there is danger such as war and epidemic outbreaks.

The *Bekwaihene* also possesses the following drums; the *nkrwiri* and the *mmidie* (this type of drum, the *mmidie*, is said to be owned by only the *Bekwaihene* and *Asantehene*). They number fourteen in all, and are used for major functions like *Adae*, *Odwira*, etc. The *Bekwaihene* also has the *nimsaakakyi - me hu ye anka* (had I known is always at last). Only the *Bekwaihene* possesses this drum, and is beaten

whenever there is trouble in Bekwai, such as the death of a royal person, his burial, war, among others. He also has *atumpan* and the *fontomfrom* drums.

During festivals like *Adaekese*, as a prelude to *fontomfrom* drumming, the chief drummer plays a number of texts on the *atumpan* (talking drum) to mimic (as done in a play) the appellation of the *Asantehene*.

Dr. A.A.Y. Kyerematen quotes R. S. Rattray in his book, *Ashanti*, as stating that:

The mechanism of the speech music of the *atumpan*, is not based on any system of Morse code or signalling familiar to Europeans, but on an imitation by means of the sounds of words spoken by a human voice. This is done by copying the accent on a particular syllable stress or emphasis on a particular word, by pauses, stops or punctuation, by the speed with which words or sentences are uttered and by gestures of the hands, Arms, feet and head²⁰.

This, according to Kyerematen is facilitated partly by the tonal nature of Akan language. This is to emphasise the fact that the meaning of a word depends on the tone or pitch at which the syllables of the words are spoken and partly by the fact that the words are better understood in a sentence than as they stand by themselves.

The *fontomfrom* drum which glorifies ceremonial occasions, is a big drum used by the *Asantehene*, his chiefs and other Akan chiefs like the *Okyekene*, *Okuapehene*, etc, when they ride in a palanquin during funerals, festivals and other occasions. The *fontomfrom* drum used in the Manhyia Palace today, originally belonged to the

Tafohene, but was captured by the *Asantehene* during the Asante-Tafo war²¹. In a nutshell, *fontomfrom* drums are used for dancing. It is also played for the *Asantehene* and highly ranked chiefs. It is more popularly known as *fontomfrom* which is a corrupted version of *fentemfrem*.

In Asante and any other Akan states, whenever there is a grand occasion like a chief's funeral, a festival like *Adae*, etc, the *dawuro* players (wrongly referred to as gong-gong by the Europeans) start playing. The *dawuro* sound is followed by the *atumpam* drums. The *donno* (hour-glass shaped drum) starts playing a rhythm whose main beat always staggers with that of the *dawuro*. One of the two *bomaa* (tall cylindrical drums) comes in with a long irregular pattern which rhythmically crosses the other drums. Finally, the other pair reply to the first *bomaa* drumming pattern. These entire musical instrument and their musical sounds, combined with vocal songs and dance patterns, greatly depict the glory of Asante. (See plate 19 for pictures of some *atumpam* drums found in the palace of the chief of Edweso).

Plate 19



Some *atumpan* drums found in the Palace of the chief of Edweso

Source: (Photograph taken by the Researcher from *Edwesohene's* Palace)

Another important drum used by the 'occupant' of the Golden Stool is that of the *Apirede* drum. It is only the *Asantehene* who has got this drum, throughout the kingdom. This very drum was said to have been used during the (2004) *Adoekese* festival. This is the drum which when the *Asantehene* wants to dance, is beaten, so also the *Deeboasohene* (a sub chief found in the palace) and the *Abrafoo* (state executioners). They alone can dance to the tune of the *Apirede* drum.

With the sword in the right hand, the *Asantehene* makes artistic gesticulations pointing both hands to the western, eastern, northern and southern directions after which the left hand and the sword are brought towards his chest, thus signifying the

fact that all the towns in the Kingdom are under his absolute hegemony. The dances performed at the durbar on the other hand, are quite distinct and elegant.

The *mpintin* drums like the *fontomfrom* are also capable of producing beats of different pitches and qualities depending on the manner in which the drums are played. At the Manhyia Palace, the *mpintin* drums are used during *Adae* festivals and are beaten solely by the Asante royals and the sons and grandsons of the previous and current *Asantehenes*²². The *mpintin* drums are always accompanied by the *mpintin ntrowa*, made of calabash.

Another type of *mpintin* drums found in the *Asantehene*'s court is the *gyamaduku* and finally the *donno* drums. All these set of drums found in the palace, according to Opanin Kwabena Asamoah, were donated to the then *Asantehene*, Nana Opoku Ware I, by the then Dagomba chief in about 1740.

When musical instruments are being played, the ear picks out the notes of about the same pitch level and perceives them as a group. This psychological perception of a 'gestalt' (inherent note pattern) therefore becomes an important element in listening to the music of these instruments during the festival.

The drummers of the *fontomfrom*, *mpintin* and in the case of the *mmenson* (seven ivory trumpets), the masterhornblower, are able to communicate with the celebrants by way of manipulating the tonal accents of the musical instruments to mimic certain laid down drum texts that are understood by those who are well-versed in drum languages. Such drum languages are texts that contain certain vital poetic elements

like similes, metaphors, mixed metaphors, allegories, personifications, paradoxes, epigrams, hyperbole, eulogies and panegyrics, innuendoes, ironies, onomatopoeias and some euphemistic texts which are employed by the drummers to make drumming very artistic. All these artistic phenomena are appreciated by visitors who come to Asante, and they speak immensely about the glory of the Kingdom.

Dance, as an expression of social organisation, generally safeguards the traditionally established social and political hierarchy and consequently the standards of behaviour and morality within the Asante society as it does in others. It is often performed either by individual dancers or groups of dancers in Asante and defines their position in the society. In this regard, the social qualities expected of the members of Asante communities are expressed by their dance movements.

During Asante festivals like *Adaekese*, *Odwira*, etc, the ritual and social activities associated with the celebrants are expressed in their dances during the phases of the celebration. Dances performed during festivals, funerals, marriages, etc, in Asante include: *kete*, *adowa*, *nwomkro*, etc. Dance postures like *adowa* are loose-limbed, joyous and free just to suit the desire of the celebrants. Some are characterised by the subtle flexions of the hands and feet, thrusting of arms, stamping of feet, leaps, bend and turns as well as halting of steps that make Asante dances glorious and highly enjoyable. (See plate 20 for a picture of a woman dancing to the music of *adowa*)



Dancing to the music of adowa. You can see the atumpan drums behind the dancer.

An Asante woman dancing to the music of *adowa* while *atumpan* drums are being played.

Source: (Culled from *Traditional Art of Ghana*, Kojo Fosu, Kumasi, 1995)

4.2.4 Verbal Art

Verbal arts also that are cultural phenomena, and which contribute to the glory of Asante are: proverbs, idioms, panegyrics, *ananse* stories, among others. This section is concerned with the verbal arts, some of which always concomitantly complement some aspects of the performing arts in particular and festivals, funerals etc, in general.

Specifically, this section makes both objective and subjective artistic appraisal of some of the songs, libations and the appellations that manifest in all the phases of the

Asante culture. During a festival like *Akwasidae*, *Wukudae*, *Odwira*, etc, songs are sung by the various vocal groups around which the occasion revolves. Libation is poured with incantations, invoking the spirits of the dead, and appellations also are said to praise the King or chiefs and their subjects.

Most of the appellations (or sometimes poetic recitals) are to make all present realise that the *Asantehene* is supreme and is the owner of the land. Not only the *Asantehene*, but his paramount chiefs and other leading royals as well are praised in the same way. This situation pertains in almost all the other Akan states and even many non-Akan ethnic groups in Ghana. Anytime any of them gets up from his stool to dance, the singers or drummers, in one way or the other give appellations to him, thus making him feel 'too big' and swollen headed.

Again; during festivals, funerals, and durbars, the 'occupant' of the Golden Stool, when at the durbar grounds, is heralded into his seat with such encomiums:

*Krobia Asante Kotokohene na
eba no!
Twum ne Antwi nana na eba no!
asase wura na eba no oo!*²³

Translated as

Here comes the Asante Kotoko king!
The grandson of Twum and Antwi is
the one coming oo!
He who "occupies" the Golden Stool
Is the one coming oo!

Such encomiums make all present realise that Asante, over the years, has had great kings/chiefs who really have contributed to what is being witnessed today, thus

adding glory to the culture of the people. It also tells us that, the Asante people have not thrown their culture, as well as their identity away, and it is always delightful to watch when it comes to such occasions.

Not only at festivals, but during the era of wars, many songs and appellations were sung and said about their king/chiefs. Some of the recitals (encomiums) recall the memory of the vigilance and alertness that were exercised by the past kings/chiefs of Asante. This is said to have been necessitated by the rampant outbreaks of battles with their associated problems. The appellations therefore put the Asante warriors in a state of constant alertness, thus making them ready for battles at all times. However, today, since there is no war such appellations are said during occasions like the great funeral of the king/chief, queenmother, festivals, etc, reminding the people of the greatness of their leaders, while at the same time adding pageantry to the occasion, leading to the glory of the culture of the people, as seen by outsiders (visitors).

4.3 Other cultural aspects that have contributed to the glory of Asante

4.3.1 Religion

At religious festivals like *Odwira*, *Aidze*, etc, priests/priestesses dressed in their cassocks, dance to the tune of the music provided. These priests/priestesses display their powers to the admiration of all present. As the king/chiefs still depend on the powers of these priests in the administration of their chiefdoms, the rulers have great respect for them. Their appearance at such festivals with their kind of music, dance

and dresses is very interesting and make the people know that Asante has something to display. Not only the Asante have these priests/priestesses functioning at festivals, but the Ewe people of Ghana also portray similar cultural practice, as my personal observation at the *Hogbetsotsoza* festival of the chiefs and people of the Anlo traditional area in the Volta Region, tells the same story. (see plate 21 for a picture of a traditional priestess at an *Adaekese* festival in Asante.

Plate 21



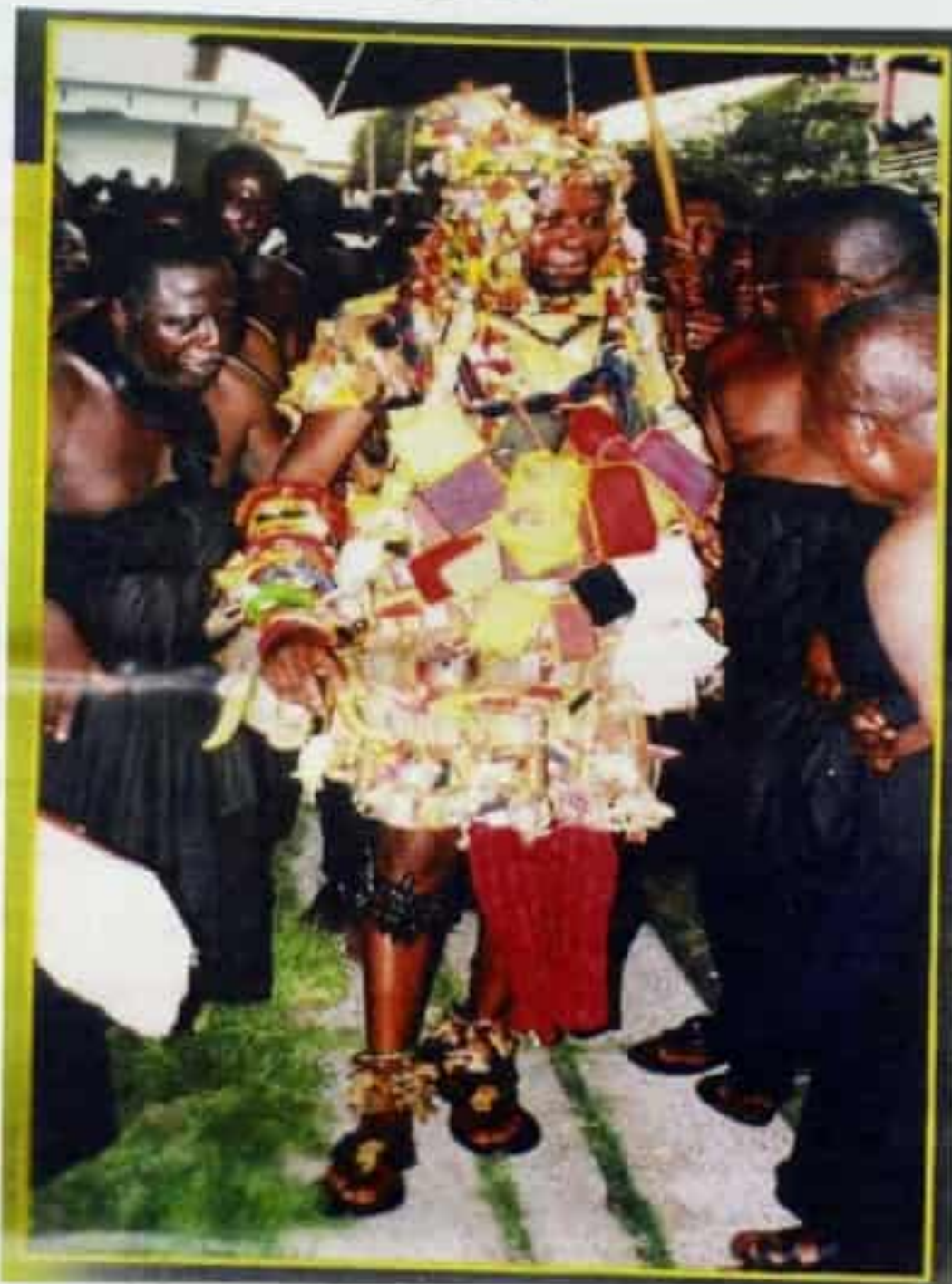
An Asante traditional priestess at an *Adaekese* festival

Source: (Culled from *Ghana Review International* (a News Magazine)
Issue No. 106, London, 2004)

Another unique feature at religious festivals like *Adaekese*, etc, is the appearance of the *Asantehene* donned in the *batakarikesee*, as stated earlier. This particular 'war' dress has today, become a source of tourists attraction, as whenever it is worn, all and

sundry want to catch a glimpse of. It is found on many Asante calendars, thereby adding glory to the culture of the Asante people. (See Plate 22 for the *batakarikesee*)

Plate 22



Otumfuo Osei Tutu II donning the *batakarikesee*, the ancient War dress.

Source: (Photograph taken from an old Asante Calendar)

Interestingly, it was not only the *Asantehene* who wore *batakarikesee* for occasions, but according to Oheneba Okyere Adjei Diatuo I, the *Tuffuhene* of Kumawu Traditional Area, the *Kumawuhene* also used this type of dress for other occasions. This is also said to be fortified with medicines and charms. Talismans and other medicines were put around the chief and other warriors' waists to ward off any evil spirit that may have the intention of attacking the Chief. Today, the *batakarikesee* of the *Kumawuhene* is no more worn for wars but during religious festivals like *Papa Nantwi*. It is indeed beautiful to watch the chief donned in this dress, at this great festival, which attracts a lot of people. This is indeed glorious.

4.3.2 Some political arts that have also contributed to the glory of Asante culture

At darbars and festivals like *Adiakese*, etc, one may be able to see the type of stool a particular chief is occupying through the way he is dressed. In Asante, at such festivals, any visitor to the darbar grounds would quickly identify the 'occupant' of the Golden Stool, by his dressing. The *Asantehene* always stands out unique among the chiefs present at such occasions, as from his feet to the head, he simply looks gorgeous. He is adorned with foot rings, beautiful sandals and a *Kese*, *Adinkra* or any prestigious cloth to match. As pointed out earlier, he is also decorated with wristlets, finger rings, necklace and finally, headercrown/gear. (refer to plate 4 for a photograph of the *Asantehene*)

The *Asantehene* dresses to signify the stool he is 'occupying' (his political office) at occasions. And his gorgeous dress proclaims the fame of his stool. The *Ananhiene* also dress befitting their positions²⁴. At the Manhyia Palace, the Curator of the

Manhyia Palace Museum, Osei Kwadwo, had this to say about Asante stool which proclaims the glory of the chieftaincy of Asante.

Among the Asante, the symbol of the authority of the traditional ruler is the stool. The occupant of the stool is the political, cultural and spiritual (religious) head of his community; and the importance of the stool which he occupies is that it gives a community its group identity with the land which has nurtured it and provides it with not only its sustenance, but also, it links with its past and future. It is therefore central in the life of the community, and the stool holder, that is traditional ruler, is at once, and in a real sense, a temporal and spiritual leader.²⁵

Not only does the stool proclaim the glory of the King and Asante as a whole but also, it confers divine leadership on its 'occupants' who derive their right to rule from the position they have come to occupy. The ruler becomes a Nana, a revered person whose status and positions are above every one else in the community. His person becomes 'inviolable'.

It is the Golden Stool, which places the *Asantehene* above all the other chiefs in Asante, and thus makes him glorious. Although, it is not the regular stool used by the *Asantehene*, the myth surrounding its descent and faith the people had in it in the olden days made Asantes treat the Golden Stool reverently like the Ark of the Covenant of the Israelites. To date, it gives its "occupants" the power to rule every part of the Ashanti Region traditionally. The "occupant" is highly revered by the people who believe that their king is the symbol of the glory of Asante. Information

about this sacred stool has travelled far and wide, and encyclopaedias give information about this stool. On great occasions like the installations of the *Asantehene* when it is brought out (see plate 1b for the Golden Stool), everybody (even including Asante royals) would like to catch a glimpse of it. Because of its significance and glorious nature. Indeed, it has carved a niche for itself. Popularly referred to as *Sika Dwa Kofi*, it has added "beauty" to the Asante culture, thereby making Asante glorious.

Another important stool held in very high esteem in Asante is the Silver Stool of Asante Mampon. This stool was created on the orders of King Osei Tutu I for the *Mamponhene*, Boahen Anantuo, for accepting to lead the Asante nation to the Denkyira war of liberation. Since then, its 'occupants' have been ranked next to the *Asantehene*. And the Silver Stool proclaims the glory of the chief and his people of Mampon.

Kokofu, Bekwai, Kumawu and Edweso (areas visited for data collection) are all paramountcies and occupy very important stools. Not these alone, all the other paramountcies in Asante, have stools which are equally revered by their people. It is these stools which give power and authority to their occupants and make them popular in Asante as stated earlier. Those occupying these stools always avail themselves at such gatherings like *Adaekese*, *Odvira* and great funerals, adding beauty and pomp to the occasion, especially those occupying stools whose past leaders played decisive roles in Asante wars – for example, Kumawu, Edweso²⁶ and Dwaben. In fact, the pomp and pageantry of the chiefs on occasions make the Asante culture glorious and famous.

Again, at funerals the way the people (especially the women, if the funeral has a royal touch) dress is something to be commented on. Many of the women wear red cloths. They clad their necks with *nyanya* leaves and raffia twine with their foreheads smeared with red clay styled to reach the shoulders. At the peak of the celebration, the wives of the sons and nephews of the deceased mount exhibitions to show the cordial relationship between the deceased and the in-laws. Each of the women mounts something called *adaso*, which is made of items like *kente* cloths, beads, necklaces, flat plates, handkerchiefs and silk materials. All the items are arranged in a brass pan and made to look like a human being sitting in the brass pan²⁷. This is displayed on the funeral grounds in the course of the celebration. Such a display adds colour to the funeral and therefore speaks of the glorious nature of Asante culture.

Another colourful aspect of the funeral is the women who clad in *awisiado*. This is where women mourners clad in special cloths with some special leaves around the neck and other parts of the body. Such women are close relatives of the deceased king/chief. Muskets are fired during the wake-keeping. This cultural practice, indeed adds colour to the whole funeral, as people who throng to the funeral grounds have something to watch. They are really beautiful looking at the way they are displayed, thus adding glory to the culture of the people.

4.4 Summary of the Chapter

In summing up, the role of Asante art and culture in the glory of Asante cannot be over-emphasised, as the glorious nature of the Kingdom's culture remains focused throughout the history of Asante, Ghana and the world at large. It would be ideal if these cultural practices could be sustained for the generation yet unborn.

References and notes

1. Personal Interview, Osei Kwadwo, Curator, Manhyia Palace Museum, 26th August, 2004 at 9.15 am at Manhyia Palace, Kumasi. His age is 69.
2. Ibid.
3. Personal Interview, Opanin Kwabena Asamoah, attendant, Manhyia Palace, on 23rd August, 2004 at 10.30 a. m. He is 60 years old.
4. *A guide to the Manhyia Palace Museum*. Otumfuo Opoku Ware II Jubilee Foundation and Printed by City Press, Kumasi p. 6.
5. A. S. Y. Andoh, *A Souvenir Brochure on Asanteman Adaeke* published by the *Adaeke* Planning Committee. Kumasi (April 2004) p. 17.
6. Personal Interview, Okyeame Yaw Akuoku, Senior Spokesman, Edweso Traditional Area, at 10.45 am at Edweso. His age was 64, on 27th September, 2004.
7. Nsenie is a town within the Kumasi Metropolis. The Nsenie people are among *Asantehene*'s carriers at Manhyia Palace.
8. Kojo Fosu, *Traditional Art of Ghana*, Published by Design Press, College of Art, KNUST, 1995, Kumasi p.65
9. Personal Interview, Oheneba Okyere Adjei Diatuo I, *Tuffuhene*; Kumawu Traditional Area, on 30th August, 2004, at 11.13 am, at Bodomoase. Aged 72 years.
10. A. S. Y. Andoh, *A Souvenir Brochure on Asanteman Adaeke*. Published by the *Adaeke* Planning Committee. Kumasi (April 2004). p 19.

11. Ibid
12. Personal Interview, Nana Oppon Panin I, *Ntrenchene*, Bekwai, at 10.15 am on 24th August, 2004 at Bekwai. Aged 68 years.
13. Williams Benton, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, volume 12, Publishers Chicago 1968, p. 1030
14. Ibid.
15. Personal Interview, Opanin Kwabena Asamoah attendant, Manhyia Palace, 23rd August 2004 at 10.30 am at Manhyia Palace. Aged 60 years.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. J.H. Kwabena Nketia, *Our drums and Drummers*, Ghana Publishing Corporation, Tema, Printed by Field Publications Ltd in 1998. P.7
19. Personal Interview, Nana Yaw Kodua, *Kontihene*, Asante Mampon, on 13th August, 2004, 1.05 pm at his palace, Mampon. Aged 100 years.
20. A.A. Kyerematen, *Panoply of Ghana*, Longman (Dateless) p.62.
21. Personal Interview, Opanin Kwabena Asamoah, attendant, Manhyia Palace, on 23rd August, 2004, at 10.30 am at Manhyia Palace. Aged 60 years.
22. Ibid
23. Ibid
24. The paramount chiefs should ensure that they do not dress to surpass that of the 'occupant' of the Golden Stool, as that would be subject to some amount of insubordination and the guilty chief could be charged. (Opanin Kwabena Asamoah, Manhyia Palace)
25. Personal Interview, Osei Kwadwo, Curator, Manhyia Palace Museum, Kumasi, on 26th August 2004 at 9.15 am, at Manhyia. Aged 69 years.
26. Edweso – the official name for this town is spelt 'Ejisu', but this is wrong. The actual spelling should be Edweso, and I opted for this Akan version throughout this book (thesis)
27. Osei Kwadwo, *Asante Culture*. O Kwadwo Enterprise. Kumasi. 2002. P 58

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, SUGGESTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, A SUMMARY AND A CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter discusses some of the points raised so far in the previous chapters and comes out with suggestions and recommendations based on the title. This chapter also summarises the entire thesis and ends the whole work with a brief conclusion.

As shown already, Asante art and culture have been the mainspring of the greatness and glory of the Asante Kingdom. As pointed out already, Asante's fame has gone beyond the borders of the continent of Africa, but little do people know that this fame came about as a result of this Kingdom's art and culture.

5.2 Discussions

That Asante Art and Culture helped Asante to be great and glorious

Indeed, from the discussions carried out so far, Asante art and culture have helped the Kingdom to be great and glorious. It is important to emphasise that initially, the culture of the people easily brought them together, and through this, they were able to forge ahead with whatever plans they had. But the major question is: did this culture originate from Asantes themselves? Evidence shows that, some aspects of the culture came from outside Asante. As shown already, Asantes fought several wars and won most of them, and in the preceding chapters, it has been clearly established that any

time Asante won its wars, people from the defeated states were brought under the control of Asante. Such people came into the Kingdom with their own cultural aspects which were directly and indirectly introduced into the Kingdom. A good example is the people of Ahwiaa in the present day Kwabre District of Asante. One of the versions of my data alleges that the people of Ahwiaa were brought from Denkyira, after the Denkyira-Asante war of liberation fought between 1699 and 1701. The people of Ahwiaa are well-known for their excellent wood carving. They were brought in purposely to carve stools for the *Asantehene*, and to day, it is apparent that their expertise has been introduced to the other parts of the Kingdom, and Asantes are known to be good carvers almost the world over. Another version states that after the defeat of the Denkyira people, a section of them considered it more secure to come to settle in Asante. Therefore, they moved by themselves to settle at the present-day Ahwiaa, under the permission of Nana Osci Tutu 1, who commissioned them to carve stools for him.

Also, some Asantes believe that the *kente*, *adinkra*, and other important traditional cloths woven in Ghana today, originated from Asante. But the people of Bonwire, who are known to produce *kente* cloths, claim that their forefathers came from Denkyira to produce *kente* cloths for the *Asantehene* and his chiefs. Today, it is believed that the best woven cloths are produced by Asantes. With respect to the acquisition of *kente* weaving technology, some Ewes of Ghana contend that Asantes learnt *kente* weaving from the Ewe ethnic group. Still, some other people argue that Asantes learnt *kente* weaving from some Malians. The *adinkra* cloth is believed to originate from Gyaaman in the Bono. The Gyaaman chief, Adinkra, was said to be wearing one [*adinkra* cloth] when captured and beheaded by Asantes. Although, how

the knowledge of *kente* weaving reached Asante still remains unresolved, many people believe that the *kente* weaving technology is one of the aspects of the culture borrowed by Asantes.

Not only from Denkyira were people brought or did come into the Kingdom to produce stools and other carvings, as well as cloths, but also some people came from the Bono, Dagomba and even Mali. According to Rattray, in his book, *Ashanti*, all the goldsmiths of Asante trace their origin to one Fosu Kwabi. He brought his bellows and a few of the weights and tools of his trade, along with this *Obusom* (a shrine of god), Taa Yao, to Bekwai in Asante. Since then, according to Rattray, this shrine has become the goldsmith's particular shrine.¹ Gradually, goldsmithing extended to other parts of Asante. Goldsmithing was therefore alleged to have come to Asante from the Bono Kingdom.

Another source indicating that goldsmithing was introduced into Asante from the Bono Kingdom was from *Our Country 2* (An Environmental Studies Programme for Schools in Ghana). It states that:

The Bono Kingdom was conquered by Asante between 1720 and 1725 by Nana Opoku Ware I. The Asante, after this defeat, took to Kumasi many members of the Bono royal house. These people

were alleged to have taught the Asante how to rule, with great power, in glory and in wealth. The Asante also took along the goldsmiths and silversmiths of Bono to teach them [Asante] how to make gold and silver ornaments.²

The Dagombas were also said to have introduced certain kinds of drums and other clothing materials into the Kingdom. According to Opanin Kwabena Asamoah, an attendant at the Manhyia Palace, the drum called *gyamaduku*, was presented to the *Asantehene* around the seventeenth century by the Dagomba chief. Since then, this type of drum is used in all parts of Asante.

The type of cloth for lining referred to as *Nsaa*, used to decorate some palanquins is also believed to have been obtained from Mali. This and more articles came into the Kingdom through people who were brought into it after their defeat by Asante in the various wars, or people who came to settle in the Kingdom on their own. All these people contributed to the growth of Asante art and culture, which have made the Kingdom great and glorious today. Again, the position of Asante attracted many traders, visitors, etc, into the Kingdom. Some of these traders chose to make the Kingdom their permanent place of settlement, introducing some aspects of their culture into it.

The Golden Stool and Asante rulers as factors of the greatness of Asante

Politically, as observed, the Golden Stool has been a great unifying force among Asantes. Having been made aware by the great priest, Okomfo Anokye, that the stool came from 'heaven', and that it was the source of the hope, vitality and 'soul' of the Kingdom, the people highly revered and still respect it, and its 'occupant', the *Asantehene*.

It has been pointed out already that, culturally, Asantes are the type of people who have great respect for their chiefs. And because of this, in the past they were prepared to do whatever their leaders told them, even if the King requested them to sacrifice themselves for the Kingdom, as Tweneboa Kodua (the paramount chief of Kumawu) and other chiefs did, as pointed out before. Inspiration from the King and the chiefs therefore, pushed the people to win many wars that brought the Kingdom to its level of greatness.

Was the Golden Stool which contributed to the greatness of Asante really from Heaven as the people were made to believe?

Although many Asantes believe that the Golden Stool came from heaven, as Okomfo Anokye claimed, it is doubtful to many scholars of today. Analysing the whole situation today, one may conclude that, probably, the priest, Okomfo Anokye, made this stool himself and placed it somewhere or he might have commissioned someone else to do it for him, and on the appointed day, he magically commanded the stool to come and rest on the laps of Nana Osei Tutu I³. Crafty and cunning as the two great men (Okomfo Anokye and Osei Tutu I) were, and probably playing on the ignorance of the chiefs and people at that time, they made the citizens believe that the stool was from heaven.

As we recall, Okomfo Anokye informed the people of Asante that the Golden Stool had come from God. This seems to mean that the Golden Stool is God's gift to Asantes. This idea may be puzzling. Therefore, the questions we are asking here are: Was Asante a special nation before God in those days? Why did God not offer a Golden Stool to any other people, such as the Israelites, whom the Bible and many

people claim to have been God's chosen people? It is on account of such questions that one may be inclined to think that Okomfo Anokye employed magical means to conjure up a man-made Golden Stool for the Asante nation.

Another question is: Why did the Stool land on the laps of Nana Osei Tutu I, Okomfo Anokye's great friend, and not on the laps of any other chief? This is a question which needs to be looked into carefully. Scholastically, it seems impossible for a stool to come from heaven. But all the same, it was the presence of this stool, which psychologically prepared the peoples' minds for the numerous wars, most of which Asantes were able to win, thereby making Asante great and glorious.

Why Asante's Greatness lasted long without a major internal rebellion.

The greatness of Asante lasted for a long time without a major internal rebellion because whenever a 'state' was defeated in a war by Asante, as shown earlier, the chief of the defeated 'state' was allowed to rule his people, but that state was incorporated into the Union. However, that state was made to contribute warriors to Asante in times of war. Since the defeated states were thus accommodated, and were usually not maltreated, they gladly accepted Asante suzerainty and much of Asante culture. In the past, news about the culturally accommodating attitude of the Kingdom, as well as its fame and greatness, made many oppressed people flee from oppression in their states to seek refuge in Asante. There were occasions too where ambassadors were appointed by the *Asantehene* to oversee the affairs of the defeated states. These developments at a point in time strengthened the powers of the

Kingdom. To the people, their source of strength was the Golden Stool brought from 'heaven'.

Is it really true that the deities helped Asante to win her wars?

Many Asantes believe that their deities helped their forefathers to win their wars. This belief is, however, sceptical. Because on certain occasions, as already noted, Asantes lost their wars despite the existence of their numerous deities. Considering these, we may argue that, probably the divinities did not help them spiritually in their wars. But we are inclined to believe that the consultations with the deities prepared them (Asantes) psychologically for their wars. Even, during the Nsamankow war of 1824, Asantes were defeated by combined forces of some British soldiers and their allies from the Gold Coast. Also, at the Akatamanso war at Dodowa in 1826, Asante forces were routed, and the Golden Stool was nearly taken away, if it had not been because of the bravery of the *Dwabenhene*, Nana Kwasi Boateng and the *Kuntanasehene*, Nana Antwi, who fought back to retrieve the stool. Why should such defeat happen to Asante, with all the protection and fortification from the gods? Most of these shrine owners (priests/priestesses) perhaps played on the ignorance of the people and probably made some fortunes out of their roles in these wars. Moreover, Nana Yaa Asantewaa, the legend Queenmother from Edweso, was believed to have consulted the deity, Taa Kwadwo, before embarking on her war against the British in 1900, when Nana Prempe I, was captured by the British, and taken away from Kumasi to Elmina. But Nana Yaa Asantewaa lost the war. She was also captured and she and Prempe I were deported finally to the Seychelles, where she died. However, Prempe I was brought back by the British in 1924.

Asantes themselves might be very strong and probably prepared well before embarking on every war, as with the case of Denkyira. It therefore, appears that they won their wars because of their thorough preparations, numerical strength and courage.

The chiefs and people of Bekwai, in the past, believed that the *Amansie Pramire* (a visible snake believed to be embodied by a spirit), was their source of power in winning their wars. In this case, it is alleged that after invoking it to come out of its hole to be fed with mashed yam and eggs, the people were assured of victory by the spirit of the snake. And the question is: How can a reptile (snake), naturally help someone to win a war? Scientifically, this has no basis. But probably the people's belief in such rituals, psychologically prepared their minds to win their wars, or whatever they intended doing at that time. Notwithstanding these scholarly arguments, it is difficult to state categorically that the greatness of Asante was completely devoid of spiritual influence.

Asante Confederacy as a major factor of the greatness of Asante

As alluded to already, one of the main factors which made Asante great was the Confederacy. If Asante neighbouring states at that period had formed strong unions or confederations like the Asante Kingdom, her supremacy would perhaps have been suppressed at that time. It was certain that the Fantes formed a loose confederation which was short-lived, and therefore became no threat to Asante. States like Akyem, Abuakwa, Akuapem, Ga, etc, could have formed strong and permanent alliances to

minimise Asante's dominance, but they failed to do so. It is noted that it was on account of such short-lived alliances in 1824 and 1826 that however, Asantes were defeated in those years. That is, it was when states like Ga, Fante, Denkyira, Akyem, Akuapem and Akwamu, plus soldiers called from British West African states came together, and outnumbered Asantes at Dodowa that they easily defeated Asante.

Furthermore, in 1874, when all the coastal states, once more came together with the British forces from West Africa, they were able to defeat Asantes, and this led to the signing of the famous Treaty of Fomena in 1874, urging Asante to denounce all her vassal states. Unity therefore, as they say, is strength.

From the above discussions so far, it is obvious that the Golden Stool, together with its strong Confederacy, put Asante ahead of all the other ethnic groups around Asante during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These went a long way to make Asante great and glorious in the past, and today, have made it glorious as its arts and culture continue to be displayed at all functions.

5.3 Contribution of Findings to the Growth of Knowledge

During the research into Asante art and culture which helped in making the nation great and glorious, the following findings, which of course, add up to the growth of knowledge have been made:

First, it is a fact that most of the people still have confidence in their art and culture. Some Asantes still believe in its ethnic-god, *APAFRAM*, who was believed to have

helped the Kingdom to become great and glorious. For this reason, they shout out this name for deliverance in times of danger.

Again, the research discovered that the people believe it was through the instrumentality of this race-god that Nana Prempe I returned to Kumasi after his deportation to Seychelles Island and it is the same god who brought the legendary Okomfo Anokye down to Asante to build the Asante Kingdom. Though this is doubtful, as there is no scholastic basis for these stories, to the ordinary Asante man it is true. But during the research, when I asked about the whereabouts of the shrine of *Apafram*, no one was prepared to give an answer, but on a personal chat with the *Kontihene* of Asante Mampon, Nana Yaw Kodua, (a centenarian), it came to light that the shrine of *Apafram*, the Asante war shrine, and its accompanying *odossu* (a war shrine) which became an abode of spiritual entities when invoked, were captured by the Akuapem people during the Akatamanso war, fought in the year 1826.

This gave the Akuapem the spiritual authority to celebrate the *Odwira* festival, since *Apafram* is a god of *Odwira*, but Asantes no more celebrate *Odwira*, probably because the shrine *Apafram* is no more with them. However, as shown already, the *Adaekese* is celebrated, instead of *Odwira*, in Asante.

Secondly, the belief that the deities helped Asantes to win their wars is still prevalent even among the educated *Amanhene* and their subjects. In all the traditional areas, the paramount chiefs have special regards for their deities. At Kokofu, the Palace god, *Ateakosua*, which the sources claimed, helped the people in the past to become great, is still revered by the *Omanhene*, Barima Offe Akwasi Okogyeeasuo II. Also, at

Bekwai, the *Apem anka* god is widely respected by the *Omanhene* and his people, for helping them to become great.

The *Nyɔnampon Atoku* shrine of Asante Mampon, *Taa Kwachwo* shrine and *River Bafo* of Edweso, and the *Naglo* shrine at Kumawu, were all believed to have helped the people in the past to become great and glorious.

On the artistic side, the various Asante 'states' possess various artefacts which were used either in times of war or occasions like festivals. In all these, the states took pride, and in one way or the other, they have made Asante great and famous. It is only the Kumawu 'state' which possesses the umbrella called *Prekese gyinaku*, which has the *prekese* emblem on top of it. This umbrella was said to have been made during the era of Nana Asumadu I of Kumawu, in the late nineteenth century, and was used during occasions like the *Adaekese* festival. Though the *Asantehene* also has an umbrella with the carving of a pod of *prekese* on its top, it is simply called *Prekese* and not *Prekese gyinaku*.

The umbrella named *Amanɔe Prantire* was owned only by the *Bekvalhene* until the *Asantehene* caused one to be made for him because of its beauty. This umbrella is used during great occasions in Asante.

The 'occupant' of the Silver Stool, the *Mamponhene*, also uses the *Frumakro* umbrella during festivals and other occasions. Allegedly, this umbrella was first used by Nana Amaniampon I in the seventeenth century. Finally, the *Asantehene* (the 'occupant' of the Golden Stool) also uses the *Boaman* umbrella during festive

occasions like *Adaeke*, funerals, etc. All these umbrellas add colour and beauty to occasions, making Asante art famous. From the above revelations, one can clearly conclude that various Asante arts and cultural practices have aided the Asante Kingdom to become great and glorious, not forgetting the famous Golden Stool which is the main instrument in Asante's greatness and glory.

5.4 Comparison between Literature Review and Research Findings

In the first place, most of the authors of books about Asante mainly give historical information about this Kingdom and its people. Almost all of them have failed to highlight Asante art and culture. And even, none of them seems to have considered the role that Asante art and culture have played in making Asante great and glorious.

On the contrary in this thesis, the researcher have shown the role which Asante art and culture have played in making Asante great and glorious. For instance, it has been noted already that some writers have stated that Nana Osei Tutu I commissioned certain state swords to be made for him, but as to what role the swords were to play, were not stated by them. But from the research findings, the roles of the swords have been made known. It has in this case been pointed out that the *Busumuru* Sword was made for the founder of the Asante nation (Nana Osei Tutu I) to use to swear to the nation, on his installation as the *Asantehene*, after the unification of the Asante states. Today, the *Busumuru* Sword, being the most revered among the swords of Asante, is used once in a King's life time; that is when he is swearing to *Asanteman*, during his installation.

Also, the research findings have highlighted some performing arts, such as songs, which most writers on Asante failed to highlight. For example, it has already been noted that the *Kontihene* of Asante Mampon, Nana Yaw Kodua, makes mention of a song like this:

Kotoko kru kuo!
Kotoko kru kuo!!
Mensuro here wo ha.

Such a song and others are usually not found in the review because the former writers on Asante did not seem to have conducted researches into them.

Furthermore, some previous writers as shown already, have stated that the Asante Confederation was formed at Asantemanso, but from these research findings, it has come to light that the formation of the Confederacy started after the migration from Asantemanso.

Again, during the review, it was pointed out that some writers give wrong information in relationship with Asante culture, for example, Elizabeth Isichei (History of West Africa since 1800), wrongly refers to the *Gyasehene* as *Gyaasewahene*. In Asante and other Akan states, there is no chief with the title *Gyaasewahene*. Again, the *Gyasehene* is not the Finance Minister, as Isichei has stated. The Finance Minister is titled *Samaahene*.

Finally, almost all the writers still have in their books that, no *Asantehene* crosses the Pra River, but from the research findings, this taboo no longer holds. Most of the books reviewed did not indicate that this taboo no longer holds, as Asante Kings now

cross this river. Professor Adu Boahen and other writers still have in their books that it is a taboo for an *Asantehene* to cross the Pra River. This belief among Asante Kings stemmed from the fact that, the founder of the Asante Kingdom, Nana Osei Tutu I, was killed by snipers whilst he was crossing the Pra River in a war with the Akyem Abuakwa. But oral sources from almost all the traditional areas the researcher visited indicate that this taboo no longer holds, as the *Asantehene* now crosses this river, as indicated earlier. The sources further say that the first *Asantehene* to cross this river was Nana Sir Osei Agyeman Prempe II, but before he crossed this river, special rituals were performed. This ritual is performed anytime an Asante King has to cross this river, the source indicated.

Summing up the comparison between the Literature Review and Research Findings, the researcher has realised that the books do not provide enough information about how Asante art has made Asante great and glorious. But the researcher has written much about this subject. However, unearthed information on the field is so much that it will take years for other authors to compile it.

5.5 Suggestions/Recommendations

This section offers suggestions and recommendations about how to enhance the greatness and glory of Asante through the improvement of Asante art and culture. First, certain Asante art materials need to be improved. In recent times, we are witnesses to the adulteration of art objects like the spokesmen's staves, finials of umbrellas, necklaces, rings, etc, which hitherto, used to be made of pure gold, but today most of them no longer testify to its pure gold nature, but just decorated in gold

plaited colours to deceive the public. This indeed has brought certain aspects of the rich culture of Asante art into disrepute. It will therefore, be appropriate, if pure gold, which lasts for a longer period and also sustains the beauty of the material, is used to enhance the rich culture of Asante.

Also, the improvement of the arts will lead to the development of the Asante society, as this will bring in more foreign exchange for the socio-economic development of the people and raise their standard of living. That is, the money will be used in building more schools, hospitals and constructing more roads, which will eventually improve the standard of living of the people

Again, during the data collection on the field, the researcher noticed that certain aspects of Asante dances are 'dying' out. There is the need to resuscitate these dances like *adakum*, *abaadam*, etc. If these dances are available, its beauty will be portrayed, in addition to dances like *adowa*, *kete*, etc, to make the festival more grand.

Furthermore, during festivals like *Adaeke*, the *Asantehene* and the Planning Committee of this festival could extend a hand of invitation to other ethnic groups like the Anlo, Ga, Dagbon, Krobo, etc, to perform their traditional dances like *boboobo*, *agbadza*, *kpaalogo*, *dumba*, *baamaaya*, etc, in addition to the rich Asante *adowa*, *mwomkro*, *kete*, etc, to make the festival more beautiful. Not only the beauty aspects of the festival will be enhanced, but at the same time, it will be forging a sense of strong unity between Asante and the other ethnic groups of the country.

Also, certain cultural practices displayed during occasions like *Adoekese*, installation of the King / chiefs, state funerals, etc, should be improved upon or done away with. For instance, during such occasions, the role of state executioners (*abrafoo*), frightens spectators, including foreigners, who have come to witness the beauty of Asante culture, by their performances such as dances, which include holding of art materials like swords, cutlasses, etc, which they grate on the ground for it to spark fire, to scare away people. The fact that they paint their faces black and wear unpleasant attires should be stopped to attract more tourists to watch the occasion.

Looking at the rich arts and culture of Asante people, it would be prudent if the various traditional areas in the Kingdom could collate information about their artistic and cultural materials, bind them together and be made readily available to anyone who want to conduct research into them. By so doing, the rich art and culture of the Asante people would be sustained

The researcher also suggest that each traditional area in Asante is to train young people to inform researchers and tourists about how the art and culture of every Asante traditional area have contributed to make Asante great and glorious. This suggestion is important because the elderly people, who are aware of this, are passing away with time, and it may be impossible to get anybody to talk about how Asante art and culture have made Asante great and glorious.

Again, since Asante art and culture have contributed to the greatness and glory of the Kingdom, it would be laudable if these artistic and cultural aspects are taught widely in basic, second cycle and tertiary institutions in Asante, and Ghana as a whole, so

that the future generation of students will grow to know more about Asante art and culture. Although Asante history is taught in Ghanaian schools, not much emphasis is placed on its art and culture, which have been the mainspring of its greatness and glory.

Furthermore, more foreign exchange could be earned by the nation if a special gallery or museum, well stuffed with Asante artefacts were to be established to portray the rich art and cultural aspects of Asante. The current museums at the Ghana National Cultural Centre in Kumasi and that of the Manhyia Palace lack many artefacts. These two museums, especially the cultural centre one seems to be 'dying' as it lacks many of Asante artworks. That museum shows a few artefacts mainly from the Manhyia Palace. Apart from those at the Cultural Centre and the Manhyia Palace, the various traditional councils in Asante could also establish museums (to be attached to the various palaces), to display Asante artefacts. In line with this suggestion was the erstwhile Yaa Asantewaa Museum at Edweso. This attracted many people, including foreigners, until it got burnt in July, 2004. The sustenance of the art and culture will boost tourism in Asante and the country as a whole.

The Manhyia Palace, as a matter of urgency, ought to sponsor some of its traditionalists (chiefs, palace attendants, etc), to visit some of our institutions to exhibit and if possible, explain the uses of Asante art works to students, and let them know how Asante art and culture helped Asante in the past to attain glory and success. This could be done periodically to sustain the interest of people so far as Asante art and culture are concerned. It would also be beneficial for Asante and other Ghanaian institutions like the National Commission on Culture (N.C.C.), which is being

encouraged indirectly by the government of Ghana to promote the country's culture, themselves to invite such people to deliver seminars on how Asante art and culture have helped to make Asante great and glorious. The success of such seminars will doubtlessly help the entire Ghanaian country to be conscious of the importance of art and culture in the life of a society.

Internationally, this information on Asante art and culture must be placed on the internet. This will attract more non-Ghanaians to know more about Asante art and culture, which aided the people in the past to achieve a name. The same information can be broadcasted on popular stations like the C.N.N, B.B.C, V.O.A, Radio Deutschwelle (Germany), among others.

Theatre houses, drama troupes, clubs and institutions could in a dramatic form, exhibit some aspects of Asante culture, such as the organisation of Asante funerals and preparation for war. This will indeed send more information about these people to foreigners and the rest of Ghanaians, who do not know much about Asante people.

Finally, the situation whereby all people connected with these artistic and cultural materials are sometimes branded as 'pagans' should be discarded. Much education should be given to the general public that such people would be there only to explain things to people and not that they would be worshipping before the art objects. If today, far away in Europe and Americas, Asante and other African arts are being exhibited in museums and other galleries for money and fame, why can we not do the same in Ghana, but rather look down upon our own art and culture?

In summing up, since Asante art and culture made the people famous almost throughout the black world and beyond, the artistic and cultural materials should be sustained and not allowed to go waste. Much of Asante culture would be lost if greater care is not given to the Asante art and culture.

5.6 Summary of the Thesis

This thesis has shown that Asante art and culture have made Asante great and glorious. The fame of Asante has spread beyond the borders of Ghana, to almost all parts of the world, mostly because of the influence of the Kingdom's art and culture. This achievement is realised in Asante history. But as to the role played by art and culture in making Asante great and glorious, many writers are silent on this issue. For instance, as we have noted, the writers are silent on the fact that it was the common cultural elements, especially the various stools that helped to unify all Asantes and also spurred them to fight courageously to build the Asante Empire, and thereby made Asante great and glorious.

Art played and continues to play an important role in Asante's greatness and glory as seen in the previous chapters. The visual arts' role in making Asante great has already been mentioned, as Asantes were unified with the help of the Golden Stool, which is a visual art work, and which spurred them to fight to build a large and powerful empire whose greatness and glory spread to almost all parts of the world.

Again, it is the same Golden Stool and also the Silver Stool of Asante Mampon and the Blackened Stools of the various paramountcies, as art works, that believably

enabled Asantes to solicit the aid of their ancestors to win their wars. Other art works such as state swords, spokesmen's staves, umbrellas and palanquins, which are used by Asante rulers, which depict the greatness and glory of Asante, all helped in building the empire.

The body arts that make the *Asantehene*, the *Amanhene*, and the sub-chiefs prestigious include headcrowns or gears, necklaces, wristlets, finger rings, cloths, and beautiful sandals to match. The *batakarikese* with its *mpaboakese* are also not left out. It is mostly these body arts that made and continue to make Asante glorious.

The performing arts are also important in Asantes' greatness and glory. The instrumental and vocal music, various types of Asante dances and drama, all helped and still help in lifting the image of Asante.

Finally, the verbal arts also that are cultural phenomena and which have contributed to the greatness and glory of Asante are proverbs, idioms, panegyrics, *amanse* stories, among others. Other Asante cultural phenomena that have made Asante great and glorious are Asante chieftaincy, social relationships, traditional religion, medical systems, economic activities, philosophy, etc.

Concluding, these art works and cultural practices of the Asante people, all contributed to the successes chalked by Asante during its works of expansion, which made and still make the people great and glorious to day.

STATISTICAL TABLE ONE

STATISTICAL DATA FOR VERIFYING WHETHER ASANTE'S GREATNESS AND GLORY IN THE PAST AND PRESENT HAVE MAINLY DEPENDED ON HER ART AND CULTURE

The social statuses of the people interviewed	Number of those interviewed	Number of those who gave affirmative answers	Number of those who gave negative answers	Percentage (%) of those who gave affirmative answers	Percentage(%) of those who gave negative answers
Palace attendants	8	8	-	100	0
SSS students	30	30	-	100	0
Town folks (males)	20	19	1	95	5
Towns folks (females)	41	41	-	100	0
University students	10	10	-	100	0
Graduate teachers	8	8	-	100	0
Chiefs and stool royals	13	13	-	100	0
Totals	130	129	1	99.231	0.769

As noticed in the statistical table one, one hundred and twenty nine people, out of the hundred and thirty people the researcher interviewed agreed that, indeed Asante art

and culture have helped to make Asante great and glorious. It is therefore clear that really Asante art and culture have made Asante great and glorious to date.

As shown in the statistics, those who agree that, Asante art and culture have made Asante great and glorious comprise eight Palace Attendants making up - 100%, thirty Senior Secondary School Students (S.S.S.) - 100% , nineteen town folks (males) - 95% and forty-one town folks (females) - 100% . Others the researcher interviewed included ten University Students - 100%, eight Graduate Teachers - 100% and thirteen Chiefs and Stool Royals - 100%.

From the interview granted, since one hundred and twenty-nine out of the hundred and thirty interviewed confirmed that, Asante's greatness and glory have depended on her art and culture, then, they join the researcher in confirming the above hypothesis.

Laying emphasis on the authenticity of the hypothesis, the thesis has further disclosed that without art and culture, Asante's greatness and glory would not have been manifest or made possible, as its fame today, would not have been known at all.

Beside the conclusions reiterated above, the thesis has shown that Asante art and culture have been growing from strength to strength, as is being encouraged indirectly by the government, through the National Commission on Culture (N.C.C), since the government believes in the maintenance and promotion of the country's rich cultural heritage.

Furthermore, as more foreign exchange could be obtained from the country's rich art and culture, it is ideally in the right direction if the Ghana government finds it necessary to encourage the promotion of Asante art and culture.

With the institution of the National Commission on Culture by the government of Ghana, it would be prudent if the rich culture of Ghana is preserved for the future brand of generation to see, since a country which has no culture for its youth to study from, cannot be branded as any serious minded country, and it is here that I want to commend the N.C.C for the periodically held National Festival of Arts and Culture in the country.

Finally, considering the interviews the researcher conducted to find out the views of a cross-section of Ghanaians, as to whether Asante art and culture have really made Asante great and glorious or not, the affirmative answers provided, indicate that, Asante's greatness and glory to day, have depended mostly on her art and culture.

5.7 Conclusion

From the viewpoint of the objectives, assumptions and the hypothesis outlined in Chapter One, the main introduction, this thesis has shown that Asante art and culture have been the mainspring of Asante's greatness and glory. In this regard, the objectives of this thesis have been achieved, the assumptions have been established to be true and the hypothesis has been found to be valid.

In accordance with the objectives, the author has successfully studied how Asante art and culture contributed to the building, greatness and glory of the Asante Empire in the past, and how they are still contributing to the glory of the Kingdom. The thesis has in this respect, shown that, in the past, Asante art, especially the Golden Stool, as well as Asante culture, contributed immensely to unite the people, inspire and encourage them to win most of their wars which aided them to establish a large empire whose greatness and glory reached almost all the corners of the world. Still, the splendour of the arts and culture continues to make Asante glorious. In view of these, many tourists from far and wide have from time immemorial, been arriving in Asante to watch and appreciate Asante art and culture.

Also, in line with one of the objectives, this thesis has offered useful suggestions for the promotion of the study of Asante art and culture in Ghana and other parts of the globe, in order to attract more tourists to visit Asante and Ghana as a whole to boost the economy and raise the standard of living of the people. Again, to show that the assumptions that have been established are true, the thesis has pointed out that, in the past, Asante's greatness depended on her art and culture. Also, the improvement of the arts will lead to the development of the Asante society, and the sustenance of the art and culture will boost tourism in Asante and Ghana as a whole.

Most importantly, the hypothesis 'That Asante's greatness and glory in the past and present have mainly depended on her art and culture' has been proved to be valid. As seen in Statistical Table One, the validity of the hypothesis has been tested and found to be true. The table shows that 130 people were interviewed in connection with this. 129 respondents have shown that Asante's greatness and glory depended mainly on

her art and culture in the past. This represents 99.231% of the respondents who agree with the hypothesis. Only one person, representing 0.769% of the respondents, disagrees with the hypothesis. It is therefore obvious from the statistics that the hypothesis is valid.

In view of the wealth of information contained in this thesis, and in view of the richness of the suggestions offered on this work, it is hoped that this study will greatly help educational institutions in Ghana and abroad to know more about Asante art and culture. Furthermore, researchers from Ghana and abroad, who require information about Asante art and culture, will find this thesis useful. And it is the suggestion of the author that future researchers should endeavour to study other parts of Asante, which he could not cover, to unearth more information about how Asante art and culture have contributed and still contribute to make Asante great and glorious.

References and notes

1. R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, Oxford University Press, London. 1955, P 301
2. Ministry of Education, Ghana. *Our Country II*. Curriculum Research and Development Division (C.R.D.D.), Accra. 1977. P 54
3. Osei Kwadwo, *An Outline of Asante History*. O Enterprise, Wiamease-Ashanti, 1994. P 5

APPENDIX I

In Asante, on these feast days, traditional religious veneration takes place, and religious ceremonies are performed in the morning in 'chapels'. The 'chapels' are called *Nkondwalamu* and are located in the Palace, and at *Baamu* (the mausoleum, the burial and final resting place of the mortal remains of the departed rulers). These 'chapels' are the repositories of black stool. The rites performed in the 'chapels' are not open to the public and attendance is severely restricted to the 'occupants' of the stool (king or chief) and functionaries who hold positions or perform duties which qualify or entitle them to perform to be present, and these are *Nyamankwaaahene* and his people (courtesy: Osei Kwadwo, Curator, Manhyia Palace Museum, Kumasi)

The stool therefore, confers on its occupant the glory of the community's past and it is believed that all the good things achieved by the past occupants of the stool, pass on to the reigning king or chief. It also symbolises the Akan belief in the eternity of life; the power of the spirit over matter, and of the departed or dead over the living. A traditional ruler, who dies in harness, while still a chief, is believed to continue, even in the spirit world, to be a chief. He is therefore thought to be immortalised. His spirit is remembered and honoured with a blackened stool (*akomwa tumtum*), specially carved for him into which his departed spirit is invoked. He is always remembered especially on *Adae* and other religious feast days, when departed spirits are invoked and propitiated, and asked to bestow blessings on, and ward off disaster from the living.

APPENDIX TWO

SAMPLES OF THE RESEARCHER'S QUESTIONNAIRE

1. What made Asante great?
 - a) Can you tell me some of the artistic materials (example, guns, war dresses like cloths, sandals, talismans / amulets, wristlets, necklaces, etc) that you took to the wars?
 - b) Do you still have some of these items in your archives?
 - c) What were some of the artistic shrines/deities that were contacted before the wars (to mention some names of the priests/priestesses, deities, and their locations and indicate whether some of the shrine houses, deities are still in existence)?
 - d) Can you please tell me some of the drums, songs, recitations, etc, that were beaten, sung or recited during the wars that made you win some of those wars (Cultural / beliefs)?
 - e) What do you think was the secret behind the winning of most wars fought by your ancestors?
 - f) What role did the deities, *nananom nsamanfoo* (ancestors), etc, play in making you win your wars, and thereby becoming a great nation?
2. What made Asante glorious?
 - a) What do you think apart from the numerous wars fought, made Asante great and glorious to date? (example, Asante proverbs, idioms, panegyrics, ananse stories, among others).
 - b) Asante Kings/chiefs are known all over the world to be rich in the arts, like the state swords, umbrellas, spokesmen's staves, headcrowns/gears, gold finger rings, necklaces, etc. Can you please tell me some of the body arts that assisted your people in winning their wars and at the same time making them glorious today during occasions like festivals, funerals, etc?
 - c) Do you still retain some of these original artworks and if not, where are they now?
 - d) What are their significance to your stool and the promotion of the Asante art and culture in general?

APPENDIX 3

a)



The *Asantehene* in an *Adinkra* cloth (see the sandals, *dvwete-kuduo*, foot rest, flywhisk, etc, all resting on the *Banwoma* (elephant skin))

Source: (Culled from an old Asante Calendar)

b)



The famous sword of Okomfo Anokye. The sword is believed to have been planted at its present location around 1695.

Source: (Culled from *A Guide to the Manhyia Palace* by Otumfuo Opoku Ware II Jubilee Foundation. Kumasi, 2003)

c)



A typical shrine house at Tano Boase in which the Tano god was consulted by Asantes during war times.

Source: (Culled from *Ashanti* by R.S. Rattray. London, 1955)

GLOSSARY

<i>Abotenafuo</i>	Functionaries of the royal household in Asante.
<i>Abrempon</i>	Chiefs, almost in ranks to that of Paramount (chiefs)
<i>Abrosanase</i>	Downstairs of a storey- building.
<i>Abusuapamin</i>	The title given to the Akan lineage head.
<i>Adae</i>	A place for sleeping; a suffix added to the names of two festivals that occur every forty--second Wednesday or Sunday. Thus it becomes <i>Awukudae</i> and <i>Akwaidae</i> .
<i>Adaekese</i>	A festival celebrated with much pomp by Asantes.
<i>Adinkra</i>	A name given to a particular cloth of the Akans. It is a symbolic cloth and believed to have been named after the Gyaaman chief, Adinkra, who was wearing a sample when he was captured and killed by Asantes in a war in the mid-eighteenth century.
<i>Adontenhene</i>	A war leader (a sub chief) who commands the vanguard during wars. The <i>Adontenhene</i> is also a chief who supervises the vanguard division of the Asante Kingdom.
<i>Adowa</i>	A traditional dance
<i>Aduana</i>	The name of one of the matrilineal clans of the Akans.
<i>Adukromu nsuo</i>	Water trapped between buttresses of trees.
<i>Adwumakasekesehene</i>	The chief of the town called Adwumakasekese
<i>Afodoo</i>	Military kit
<i>Agona</i>	The name of one of the matrilineal clans of the Akans.

<i>Ahafo</i>	Hunters
<i>Ahenemna</i>	Children of 'occupants' of the Golden Stool or children of chiefs
<i>Ako - tadie</i>	Military dress
<i>Akokobaatan ne ne mma</i>	(The hen and her chicks.) A sword of the <i>Asantehene</i>
<i>Akrafieso</i>	A 'chapel' where rites are performed during the purification of souls and spirits of the kings.
<i>Akrakonmu</i>	A kind of body art worn around the neck.
<i>Akroponkyiniwa</i>	Small umbrella.
<i>Akuma</i>	Axe
<i>Akwasi a ote apem soo</i>	A shrine of a god at Nintin
<i>Akwasiɔɔɛ</i>	A festival celebrated on every forty-second Sunday in honour of the ancestors of the Akan.
<i>Akyeame poma</i>	Spokesmen's staves
<i>Akyempim</i>	Another title of the <i>Kyidombene</i> (the leader of the rear guard)
<i>Amanhene</i>	Paramount chiefs.
<i>Amaniampon Stool</i>	Title of the stool of Asante Mampon (It is also the Silver Stool of Asante). This stool was named after Nana Amaniampon, the first chief of Asante Mampon.
<i>Amansie Pramire</i>	A visible snake believed to be embodied by a spirit, found at Bekwai.
<i>Amiam</i>	War
<i>Ananse</i>	Spider
<i>Apagyɔ</i>	Stool in Asante.
<i>Apakan</i>	A palanquin.
<i>Apedie</i>	A shrine of a god at Kumawu.

<i>Apem anka</i> shrine	A shrine of a god at Bekwai
<i>Apemasanta</i>	A special type of shield
<i>Apirede</i>	A type of drum
<i>Aprede</i>	A kind of music.
<i>Asakyire</i>	The name of one of the matrilineal clans of Akans.
<i>Asamando</i>	The world of the dead
<i>Asantehene</i>	The title of the King of the Asante kingdom.
<i>Asantemanhyiamu</i>	The Asante National Assembly. It is composed of all the territorial chiefs (<i>Amanhene</i>) of Asante.
<i>Asenie</i>	One of the Akan matrilineal groups.
<i>Asipim</i>	A kind of ceremonial chair looking like a table chair. It has a seat and backrest made of animal hides; and its framework is decorated with silver or brass studs.
<i>Asomfofena</i>	Courier swords.
<i>Asona</i>	The Akans have eight matrilineal clans. The Asona is one of the clans
<i>Ateakosua</i>	A shrine of a deity in the Kokofu Palace.
<i>Atipim</i>	A stool in Asante.
<i>Atumpan</i>	Talking drums
<i>Atuntufoo</i>	Gun carriers of Asante chiefs
<i>Awisiado</i>	Body decoration (body art) displayed during funerals by women.
<i>Awukudae</i>	A festival observed on every forty-second Wednesday in honour of the ancestors of the Akan.
<i>Boaman</i>	One of the <i>Asantehene</i> 's umbrellas
<i>Bobadua</i>	A tree

<i>Batakarikese</i>	War dress used by the <i>Asantehene</i> . It was originally made for Nana Opoku Ware I by Okomfo Anokye
<i>Bekwaihene</i>	The chief of the town called Bekwai
<i>Benkumlene</i>	A chief who is the head of the left wing of Asante, and who leads the left flank of the war.
<i>Boakwa</i>	Another shrine of a god at Mampon.
<i>Boha</i>	Leather sheaths
<i>Bosompra</i>	A sword of the <i>Asantehene</i> .
<i>Bosomtvi</i>	The only natural lake found in Asante. It is also the <i>Asantehene</i> 's sacred lake.
<i>Botoku</i>	A shrine of a deity in the Mampon traditional area.
<i>Bretuo</i>	One of the Akan matrilineal groups.
<i>Busumuru</i>	The most revered sword in Asante.
<i>Dawuro</i>	Gong
<i>Deeboosohene</i>	A sub-chief found at the Manhyia Palace.
<i>Denkyemkye</i>	A cap. It is a leather cap, embodying the horns of a ram, the tail of a leopard and the head of a crown bird.
<i>Doku</i>	A type of gun
<i>Domeakwaehene</i>	A sub- chief in the Kumawu traditional area.
<i>Donno</i>	An hour drum
<i>Dwaberem</i>	A foreground of Manhyia and other palaces in Asante, where durbars and festivals take place.
<i>Dwabenhene</i>	The chief of the town called Dwaben
<i>Ebaamu</i>	A sacred place for burying the royal family members in Akan societies (a mausoleum).
<i>Ebi da bi akyi</i>	One thing follows another (an umbrella of the <i>Mamponhene</i>)

<i>Edwesohene</i>	The chief of the town called Edweso
<i>Ekuona</i>	Another Akan matrilineal group.
<i>Etwie</i>	A type of drum
<i>Fontomfram</i>	Large and tall drums used mainly in the palaces of important chiefs.
<i>Frumakro</i>	One navel (an umbrella of the <i>Mamponhene</i>).
<i>Fufuo</i>	White
<i>Funtunfunafu ne Denkyemfunafu</i>	(two crocodiles with one stomach) A type of sword
<i>Gyabom</i>	A silver container containing special herbs.
<i>Gyahyetoa</i>	A type of gun
<i>Gyamaduku</i>	A type of drum
<i>Gyasehene</i>	A person who is the general supervisor of the duties of an Akan chief's palace.
<i>Gyata</i>	A lion
<i>Kente cloth</i>	A traditional cloth of Akans.
<i>Kete</i>	Type of a traditional dance.
<i>Koha ntoma</i>	Lowering a cloth to the waist
<i>Kokofuhene</i>	The chief of the town called Kokofu
<i>Kontihene</i>	A sub-chief who acts in the absence of the chief.
<i>Kum apem a apem beba</i>	If you kill a thousand, a thousand will come.
<i>Kumavuhene</i>	The chief of Kumawu
<i>Kunnini tree</i>	A type of tree
<i>Kuntunkuni</i>	A black mourning cloth.
<i>Kwadum</i>	A stringed or wind instrument

<i>Kyidomhene</i>	A chief who heads and commands the rear guard.
<i>Mamponhene</i>	The chief of the town called Mampon
<i>Memeneda Dapaa</i>	Saturday preceding <i>Akwaxidae</i> .
<i>Mmidie</i>	A drum used by the Bekwaihene
<i>Momome</i>	Special song mostly sung by women.
<i>Mpaboakesee</i>	Big sandals
<i>Mpebi</i>	A type of drum used in wars by Asantes
<i>Mpintin</i>	A type of drum
<i>Mponponsuo</i>	A sword of the Asantehene.
<i>Nhinkwaa</i>	Palace attendants
<i>Nifahene</i>	The chief and commander of the right wing.
<i>Nimsaakakyi</i>	(had I known is always at last) A type of drum
<i>Nkonwafie</i>	Stool house
<i>Nkraviri</i>	A type of drum
<i>Nsumankwaahene</i>	The chief in charge of medicine in Asante.
<i>Nsudahene</i>	The chief of the town called Nsuta
<i>Ntnehene</i>	A sub-chief of Bekwai traditional area.
<i>Nwomkro</i>	Traditional music
<i>Nyankonton</i>	Rainbow
<i>Nyanya</i>	A type of leaves.
<i>Nyinamampon Atoko</i>	A shrine of a divinity in the Mampon traditional area.
<i>Obi nkaa obia obi nka bi abotire</i>	(If you do not offend me, I will not offend you) A type of headgear
<i>Otudo</i>	A concoction of herbs.

<i>Odwira</i>	A festival of some Akan states, such as Akuapem, Akyem etc. It was instituted in Asante by Okomfo Anokye. It was an annual festival, but these days, Asantes no longer celebrate it.
<i>Ofin</i>	The name of one of the big rivers found in Asante.
<i>Okomfo baa</i>	A traditional Priestess
<i>Onyankopon</i>	Omnipotent God.
<i>Oto</i>	Mashed yam or plantain.
<i>Owabi</i>	A river found in Asante.
<i>Oyoko</i>	One of the Akan matrilineal groups.
<i>Oyokoman</i>	One of the <i>Asantehene's</i> umbrellas.
<i>Pampazo</i>	A ward in Kumasi.
<i>Papa Nantwi</i>	A festival celebrated at Kumawu.
<i>Patokromu</i>	A place for court sitting, for the king of Asante.
<i>Pra</i>	Another river found in Asante.
<i>Prankeseeso</i>	A large rectangular enclosure at the Manhyia Palace.
<i>Prekese gyinaku</i>	An umbrella of the chief of Kumawu
<i>Sadwa</i>	A meeting place for drinking.
<i>Samanka</i>	A brass pan used by traditional healers
<i>Sankofa</i>	Return to take it
<i>Sebe</i>	A kind of body charm.
<i>Sebekro</i>	A type of headgear
<i>Sebetie Takora</i>	A shrine of a deity at Kokofu.
<i>Sedee</i>	Cowries
<i>Seko</i>	Sedan chair