

DOCUMENTATION OF THE BASSARI FIRE DANCE

By

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DECLARATION

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

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ABSTRACT

This thesis sought to document the fire dance of the Bassari people of Ghana. It aims at educating the general public, students of visual art, art educationists and experts in art about the educational significance of the fire dance.

Chapter one deals with the Objectives of the study, the Problem setting, and the importance of the study. The main objectives were to identify and describe the Bassari people of Northern Ghana and their Fire dance, and also, to determine the educational and socio-cultural significance of the fire dance. It was important to conduct the study because the outcome of the study would enhance the transmission of the Bassari cultural values in Ghana and beyond. Also, the outcome of the study would be used as tourist attraction to promote cultural tourism in Ghana, particularly in the Northern Region.

Chapter two dealt with the review of related literature. These include the Background of the Bassari people, the significance of culture, Documentation of information on art and culture, education and culture, and indigenous festivals.

Chapter three explains the Procedure used in getting the research completed. The Qualitative research design was adopted to enable the researcher to provide a narrative description of observations in their natural setting. The research instruments employed in the collection of data include Informal interview, Open-ended questionnaire, Group discussion and Participant observation. The study area was Tatala in the Northern Region of Ghana. The study population

comprised fire Priests, Singers, Drummers and those who make the art forms or costume. These made up to 100 respondents, out of which 30% was sampled for interview and observation. The Simple Random sampling technique was used to get a fair representation of the study population. The Cluster or Area sampling technique was also adopted to enable the researcher obtain information from key fire priests living outside the study area.

Chapter four presents the main findings. The study found out that the Bassari people live in Tatale in the Northern Region of Ghana. The traditional fire dance is an initiation fire festival into divination. However, the dance could be performed as a cultural fire dance for entertainment.

Chapter five discusses the results of the main findings. The study revealed that the Bassari people are Ghanaians living in the Northern Region of Ghana, and Tatale is their hometown. Information on the Bassari people including their fire dance is non-available in all the libraries, and Art Centres visited. The study also established that the fire dance has symbolic, religious, historical, socio-cultural, economical and psychological significance to the Bassari people. The fire dance has implications for public education in terms of cultural tourism. It also has implications for Art Education in terms of the visual art forms involved in it.

Chapter six presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations. The study concluded that the Bassari fire dance is fascinating. It is culturally rich to be adopted as a cultural tourist attraction to enhance cultural tourism in Ghana, particularly in the Northern Region. It is recommended that the researcher should

make available information on the Fire dance to the National Commission on Culture, and the Tourist Board to be promoted as a cultural tourist attraction. The researcher should provide Authors and Publishers of textbooks on Ghanaian heritage of art and culture extracts on the Bassari fire dance for publication in textbooks for public consumption in order to enhance the transmission of the Bassari cultural values. Finally, the researcher should organize seminars to create public awareness about the cultural values of the fire dance.

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