

ART AND CHIEFTAINCY IN AHWIAA CULTURE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work towards the award of Doctor of
Philosophy in African Art and Culture and that, to the best of my knowledge, it
contains neither 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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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my loving mother, Madam Rose Omane of blessed memory, whose inspiration right from my childhood, enabled me to reach where I am now. May her soul rest in perfect peace.

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ABSTRACT

The study, explored the role of Art and Chieftaincy in Ahwiaa Culture. The prime intention of the study stems from the fact that although a great deal of arts pervades the chieftaincy heritage of Ahwiaa, little recognition has been given to these arts in scholarly circles. Ahwiaa, a town that is predominantly a carving community, serves as a place where wooden artefacts are produced for the *Asantehene* (the King of Asante) and other prominent chiefs. In-depth observation and analysis of the chieftaincy heritage of Ahwiaa culture reveals that art, among the culture of the people, is the most significant phenomenon that makes the chieftaincy of the people

outstanding. Data were collected through observation, structured and unstructured interviews and also the administering of questionnaire. The stratified random sampling was used to divide the population into heterogeneous units since the population had much dissimilarity and thus lowered the variance of the population. The main findings of the study indicated that the arts are highly functional and symbolic to Ahwiaa chieftaincy and the latter can neither exist nor operate without its arts. The arts pervade the other aspects of the culture of the people and therefore play economic, religious, social, political and medical roles in the Ahwiaa community. Chieftaincy of Ahwiaa will cease if the chief stops his carvers from carving stools and other needed wood products for the king and other chiefs of Asante because the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa was created to carve stools for the said king and chiefs. Finally, the Ahwiaa chieftaincy system itself is predominantly artistic, and that, when the *Ahwiaahene*, his sub-chiefs and the Queenmother appear formally at a public function, they are fully decorated with artefacts. The study therefore recommends that the *Ahwiaahene* and his sub-chiefs should establish an institute that would research and document its arts and cultural activities and the *Asanteman* Council should also give all the necessary assistance to these people to enable them expand this profession to earn more foreign exchange for the region and the country as a whole to enhance its socio-cultural heritage.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Ahwiaa chieftaincy is never devoid of its stupendous artistic creations. Ahwiaa is a town in the northern part of Kumasi in which the people are predominantly carvers. According to oral traditions, the people who have 'naturalised' as Asantes were brought from Denkyira by the first Asante King, Nana Osei Tutu I, specifically to carve stools and other wood artefacts for him and all other paramount chiefs of the Asante Kingdom in Ghana. The principal motivation of this study stems from the fact that although a great deal of art pervades the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa culture, it has received little recognition in scholarly circles. Furthermore, an in-depth research on the role of art and chieftaincy in the cultural system of Ahwiaa enables and even excites comparison between the culture of Ahwiaa and that of other towns where the cultural system is dominated by art and chieftaincy. Even where it may not be dominated so much by art, it is assumed that the study will have a universal appeal since art is a universal phenomenon.

The study seeks to bring to fore that without the various forms of art there may not be any chieftaincy in Ahwiaa culture. To the present researcher, although it appears the various arts have received little recognition, it is the arts among other cultural elements which are the most significant that make Ahwiaa chieftaincy splendid and unique. In short, the arts are a mirror reflecting the traditions of the people. As mentioned earlier, the people are predominantly carvers and customarily their duty is to produce all wooden artefacts for the *Asantehene* and the paramount chiefs of the Asante Kingdom. In this vein, it is worthy of note that it is a prerequisite that any

Ahwiaa royal who ascends the Agyebi Nti Stool must be a very good carver. According to Nana Kusi Asiamah Yeboa I, the *Ahwiaahene*, all past chiefs of this town had quite high knowledge in carving.

This artistic nature of the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa, therefore, forms the basis of the life of these people, and it is of great importance to them. This importance is indicative of the extent of appreciation that the people will accord this study as it takes a quantum leap in documenting the political arts of the people and in preserving it for eternity before inroads of technological advancement erode the great heritage of Ahwiaa. Furthermore, the people of Ahwiaa would also be appreciative to know that the role that their art and chieftaincy play in their cultural system has been documented for academic purposes.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Like other Akan settlements in Ghana, art plays a significant role in the various departments of chieftaincy of Ahwiaa. By the term ‘various departments’, the researcher means, the institutions of the chief, queenmother and the sub-chiefs of the town. A careful review of available literature reveals that although writers have written considerably on Asante culture in general, little have been said about the people of Ahwiaa whose carvings play a preponderant role in the chieftaincy system of Asantes. Though the royal arts and their functions seem to be indispensable in Ahwiaa traditional politics, no writer seems to have seriously written to acknowledge this. This is why the present researcher has undertaken this project to fill the vacuum which has been created by previous writers. In this circumstance, the researcher has

placed a searchlight on the various chieftaincy activities of the people with the view to studying the roles of the arts in their chieftaincy.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this thesis is to study and report on the chieftaincy system in Ahwiaa culture, with the view to:

- a. identifying the arts that are associated with the chieftaincy system
- b. investigating how the arts are involved in the system;
- c. examining the roles which the arts play in Ahwiaa chieftaincy; and
- d. ascertaining the importance of the arts in the chieftaincy system.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What categories and forms of Ahwiaa royal arts are associated with the Ahwiaa chieftaincy system?
2. How do the arts feature in the various stages of the installation, lifestyle, administrative activities and death of the chief and other members of the ruling class?
3. What roles do the arts play in the religious, political, social, economic and other activities of the chief of Ahwiaa?
4. Can it be said that art is important and therefore indispensable to Ahwiaa chieftaincy?

1.5 Reasons for writing

The principal motivation for the writing of this thesis stems from the fact that the people of Ahwiaa have received little recognition in terms of scholarly writings

although the people have contributed immensely to the development of the Asante kingdom. It is also meant to draw attention of the people of Ahwiaa and any other reader into the important role that art and chieftaincy play in the culture of Ahwiaa.

Another reason for writing is that the findings of the study would better establish among the people of Ahwiaa a sense of belongingness and cultural awareness. In this vein, the people would be better aware of the indispensable role of the political arts in their chieftaincy system.

In addition, many people are unaware that Ahwiaa's culture is mainly depended on her Art and Chieftaincy. It is also important to write this thesis because many Ghanaians, especially the youth appear to be unaware that most of the chieftaincy (black) stools and other wood products found in many Akan traditional areas of this country are produced in Ahwiaa with the consent of the Ahwiaa stool. The study is, therefore, to draw more attention to this unique role being played by the chiefs and people, for more than two centuries now, to encourage and urge the *Asanteman* Council and the Government of Ghana, assist them produce more to earn more foreign exchange for the nation and promote cross cultural activities.

1.6 Statements of Assumption

- a) This study assumes that Ahwiaa arts and chieftaincy are prominent parts of Ahwiaa culture.
- b) The study also assumes that an improvement of the arts will lead to the development of the Ahwiaa Township and the people.

c) Furthermore, it is assumed that the sustenance of the art and chieftaincy will boost cross cultural activities in Ahwiaa, Asante and Ghana at large.

1.7 Delimitation (Scope of the Study)

This research is confined to the study of art and chieftaincy in Ahwiaa culture. However, in the review of related literature, the researcher has worked way down (around the sixteenth to the eighteenth century) through Africa to the Akan of Ghana in the nineteenth century to date and then to Asante within whose culture that of Ahwiaa is now incorporated and integrated to the present day.

1.8 Limitations

In the course of writing this thesis, the writer encountered the following problems: Firstly, the chief, some of his sub-chiefs and other people involved in the interview were not willing to release their personal photographs and other needed information. The data gathered from the field were personal views of the researcher's informants. Most of the respondents and informants were more personal and biased in their answers and few data were contradictory. In this vein, careful editing and coding were done to ascertain the relevant data. There were also difficulties for some of the respondents and informants to back their submissions with facts since it was mostly oral tradition. However, this information was well winnowed since it contains a kernel of truth. Most photographs needed to support this thesis, which would have made the thesis more appealing to readers, could not be obtained.

1.9 Importance of the Study

This thesis is a contribution to the documentation of the Art, Chieftaincy and Cultural heritage of Ahwiaa and Asante in general. Again, the study will be of much help to

institutions such as the Centres for National Culture (C.N.C) in all the ten regions of the country, as this document could be used as a source of reference material by visitors to those regions of the country, and even Ghanaians, who will need more information about Ahwiaa Art, Chieftaincy and its Culture in general.

It will also help the people of Ahwiaa and Asante in particular, since it is likely to attract tourists who obviously will bring foreign exchange into Ahwiaa, Asante and Ghana as a whole. The study also plays a distinguishing role in providing beneficial information to Anthropologists, Art Historians, Ethnographers, Educationists, Artisans, Academicians, the Ghana Tourist Board and the National Museum and Monuments Board.

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 be beneficial to students in all educational spheres. On the whole, it will serve as a source of document, where information can be sought.

1.10 Methodology

Qualitative Research methodology was adopted for this research. The study gathered much information through interviews, personal observations and questionnaire. Again, there were visits to a number of places to gather data on the thesis. Since the study was primarily focused on the description of the various observances in the chieftaincy system of the Ahwiaa people and the role of the arts, the research was mainly based on a qualitative research approach.

Observation formed a bulk of the method of gathering data with the aid of digital camera, still camera, structured and unstructured interviews. Two types of data were used in the writing of the study namely primary data and secondary data. Secondary data were sought from literary sources such as books, journals, brochures and magazines, unpublished theses and periodicals. The various observances and data gathered from informants served as primary data. Discussion also formed a major part of the primary data. The information obtained was evaluated and analysed to make the information needed complete. The stratified random sampling was employed to reduce the variance of the population.

1.11 Facilities Available

The following facilities were available to the researcher. The Manhyia Palace in Kumasi, Ahwiaa *Abusuapanin's* residence and the *Ahwiaahene's* residence. Main Library, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Libraries of the College of Art and Social Sciences, KNUST, Kumasi, Kumasi Polytechnic Library, Kwabre District Library, Mampong, the Institute of African Studies Library, Legon, Accra, the Centre for National Culture Library, Kumasi, Manhyia Palace Museum, Kumasi, Regional Archives, Kumasi, the Okomfo Anokye Museum, KATH, Kumasi, the search engines of Internet among others.

1.12 Ethnographic account of Ahwiaa

According to the *Gyaasehene* of Ahwiaa, Nana Kwaku Bonsu, Ahwiaa was established in the year 1702 by a group of migrants from Denkyira in the present-day Central Region of the Republic of Ghana, after the Asante war of independence

fought between 1699 and 1701. According to the *Gyaasehene*, the people who founded this town arrived from Denkyira Abankeseeso in two groups. Each of the groups was led by a person of the *Asona* lineage whose members were the leading stool carvers of the then king of Denkyira, Ntim Gyakari. The first group was led by Nana Agyebi Nti, the *Abusuapanin* (lineage head) of the *Asona* lineage. The second group was led by Nana Boa Asiri, Agyebi Nti's younger brother who was, at that time, their deputy lineage head. Unfortunately, Nana Agyebi Nti died on the way. To show appreciation for sacrificing his life for them, the people of Ahwiaa named their supreme stool, the Agyebi Nti Stool. According to the *Gyaasehene* of Ahwiaa, Nana Kwaku Bonsu, the people were specifically brought by the first Asante King, Nana Osei Tutu I, to come and carve stool and other artefacts for him, after the defeat of Denkyira in their war with Asante.

The present *Ahwiaahene*, Nana Kusi Asiamah Yeboa I informed the researcher that the ancestors of the people of Ahwiaa first settled at Aduaben, then they moved to Nsensanso, then to Tebitia (all in the present day Ashanti Region), then to their present settlement. They had to move from Nsensanso because there occurred a plague there. This plague caused them to send a group of their royals to Abirem (another town in the Kwabre District of the Ashanti Region), to be protected by a powerful deity there called Kwabena Abena. The group that resettled at Abirem was led by Nana Osei Kwame. An Ahwiaa royal from Abirem can, therefore, become a chief at Ahwiaa up till this day. Moreover, *Asona* lineage members of Abirem are still kingmakers at Ahwiaa.

According to Nana Kwaku Bonsu, Nana Osei Tutu I, the first King of Asante (*Asantehene*), ordered the people to move from Tebitia to their present settlement and again ordered them to stay on his own land close to Kumasi, his capital, so that he could feed them. To be fed by someone else means *hwia* in Akan, hence Ahwiaa, (those fed by someone else). The Akan lineages present at Ahwiaa are *Asona*, *Asakyiri*, *Aduana*, *Agona*, *Bretuo*, *Oyoko*, *Ekuona* and *Asenie*. A look at the hierarchy of the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa indicates that the next chief after Nana Agyebi Nti was Boa Asiri, while the present chief is Nana Kusi Yeboa Asiamana, who has occupied the stool since 1982.

Ahwiaa has three public schools (Government assisted Primary and Junior High Schools and one privately-owned basic school). The public ones include the Methodist, Roman Catholic and the District Assembly Schools, while the private is the La Fontaine International School. Christian churches in the town include the Methodist, Catholic, The Church of Pentecost, Christ Apostolic, The Seventh Day Adventist, Deeper Life Bible Church among others. There are two shrines in the town, *Taa Dwomo* and *Baanie*. These schools in the town have helped to educate many of the townsfolk, while the churches have also promoted the spiritual growth of the people.

The main occupation of the people is carving. However, others also engage in petty trading, apart from other residents who are salaried workers. The Ahwiaa Wood Products Company Limited, a subsidiary company which was in charge of exporting wood products from the town has folded up for sometime now.

research objectives, the thesis has mainly given an account of the role which Art and Chieftaincy play in the culture of the Ahwiaa people.

The thesis comprises six chapters. Chapter One introduces the study to the reader and is made up of the Background to the Study, Statement of the Problem, Hypothesis, Research Questions, Objectives of the Study, Importance of the Study, Delimitation, Limitations, Ethnographic background of Ahwiaa, and the Definition of terms.

Chapter Two is devoted to the Review of Related Literature. This chapter discusses some of the materials that other scholars have already documented on art and its involvement in chieftaincy in order to know the vacuum left. Chapter Three discusses the Methodology used in the writing of the study. This includes the Research Design, Population of the Study, Sampling size and technique used, Library and Archival research and data analyses plan.

The fourth chapter is made up of the Presentation and Discussion of Findings. These include the role of Art in the nomination, acceptance, swearing-in-ceremony, outdooring and enstoolment of the chief of Ahwiaa. Others include the role that art plays when the *Ahwiaahene* is dying, when he is laid-in-state, when he is being interred and finally, when his final funeral rites are being observed.

The final chapter deals with the Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations. The summary touches on the salient points raised in the study. The chapter again, upon the findings of the study, offers conclusion to the study and lays bare beneficial

recommendations. It is worth noting that each chapter begins with an overview and ends with a summary of discussion. References on quotations taken from other documented materials to substantiate points in this thesis have been given a place after the end of the thesis. After this, there is a section for glossary where one can find the English versions of some local languages used.

1. 14 Definition of Terms

For the purpose of easy understanding of the text of this thesis, the following technical words in this work have been defined:

Aesthetics	-	The formal study of art, especially in relation to beauty
Ancestor	-	A forerunner of a person. .
Art	-	Anything understood through its function, usefulness and its role in the daily life of the people made by man.
Art form	-	An expression having artistic qualities.
Artefact	-	A man-made object, example an art work.
Body Arts	-	Body art forms could be temporary or permanent. Temporary body arts forms are those used on the body after which they are removed e.g. art works such as beads and jewellerys, <i>kente</i> , <i>adinkra</i> , <i>batakari</i> and other types of costumes, as well as beautiful sandals worn for festivals, durbars and other occasions while permanent body art forms are those found permanently on the body such as tattoos, scarification, tribal marks among others. .
Chieftaincy	-	Chieftaincy is the rank, dignity, office, or simply put, the rule of a chieftain.
Culture	-	The way of life of a people. For example their way of dressing, philosophies, language, arts, religion, social, economic, medicinal, political, morality, etc. Culture is the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief and behaviour.
Creativity	-	The ability to design and develop new and original ideas especially in an artistic way.

Destoolment	-	Removal of a chief/king from the royal stool.
Enstoolment	-	It is the processes one goes through before one acquires political authority to rule as a king/chief.
Indigenous	-	Concepts and ideas that pertain to an ethnic group, a region or country before the advent of foreign influences.
Invocation	-	A prayer calling on the Almighty God, the deities and ancestors for a purpose.
Lifestyle	-	A person's way of life or the things a group of people normally do.
Paraphernalia	-	They are objects such as spokesmen's staffs, crowns, drums, ornaments, costumes etc. associated with royal ceremonies.
Performing Arts-		Art forms perceived by our senses of hearing, and seeing. Music, dance and drama are forms of performing art.
Purification	-	Washing and cleansing to make pure.
Sacrifice	-	Offerings involving blood made to God, deities and ancestors.
Scarification	-	They are small cuts made by using sharp instruments on an area of the skin as decorative or identification purposes.
Significance	-	Symbolic meanings of some artefacts.
Stratified Random	-	Small proportion of a population randomly Sampling selected or chosen for interviews and analysis to ascertain what the rest is or should be like.
Stratification	-	Arrangement of people in different layers or groups or in accordance with their characteristics.
Symbol	-	A symbol is a sign, shape or object that is used to represent something else. It could be in an animate or inanimate form. E.g. geometric form, like the cross used by Christians and the star and crescent moon used by Moslems.
Symbolism	-	The use of artefacts or symbols to express things or represent ideas.

Veneration	-	The act of paying homage to the lesser gods and ancestors.
Verbal Arts	-	Spoken arts such as poetry, lyrics, idioms, proverbs.
Visual Arts	-	These are art works that can be physically seen or perceived by touching.

Abbreviations Used

C.N.C	-	Centre for National Culture
KATH	-	Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital
KNUST	-	Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology.
U.E.W	-	University of Education, Winneba
U.C.C	-	University of Cape Coast

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Overview

This chapter presents to the reader literary materials (such as books, magazines, journals, brochures, etc.) on what other authors have already written on the topic in hand. These pieces of literary information have been accepted for this chapter because they have a bearing on art and its influence on chieftaincy, especially Akan chieftaincy of which Ahwiaa chieftaincy is an integral part. The information obtained from literature has been critically analysed in appreciation of what other writers have written in relationship to the study.

This review has enabled the researcher to fill up some academic vacuum that has been created by the previous writers in respect of art and chieftaincy. Also, this review has assisted the researcher to compare and contrast the data collected from his field research and those from the literary sources.

Furthermore, this review has been advantageous because, apart from the vacuum it has identified, it has enabled the researcher to feed the academic world with fresh food for thought and finally make a humble contribution to the growth of knowledge. This chapter also establishes that all forms of art – visual, verbal, body and performing have a role to play in the chieftaincy system of the Akan, as Ashong (1961) opined that among the Akans, chieftaincy and the ancestral veneration are the principal institutions for which art is produced.

2.2 The role of the Stool in the Chieftaincy of the Akan of Ghana

One important artefact in chieftaincy of the Akan is the stool. The stool falls under carving because it is usually hewn out of a piece of wood as evident in Plate 2.1. It is worthy of note that the major reason why the people of Ahwiaa, on whom this research has been conducted, came from their original home, Denkyira, to their present settlement, Ahwiaa, was to carve stools and other wood products for the *Asantehene* (King of Asante). Carving has been the major occupation of these people right from Denkyira. Since then, carving has become the major occupation of the people of Ahwiaa. The role of the stool in Akan chieftaincy cannot be overemphasised since it is a seat of wisdom and power. This assertion is substantiated by Rooney (1988) who states that: ‘The chief occupies the tribal stool, the main symbol of power and of the beliefs and customs of the tribe.’

This statement made by Rooney (1988) on the Akan that ‘the stool is the main symbol of the chief’s power,’ is shared by Osei Agyeman, the researcher’s PhD professor, in his lecture that in a war between two Akan states, the state that captures the other’s most important black stool becomes the victor. This is because the black stool is a symbol of sovereignty and political unity. Indeed writing about Asantes, Rooney categorically points out that: ‘Nobody can be proclaimed king without the Golden Stool which enshrines the soul of the Ashanti (Asante) nation’. If the Golden Stool enshrines the soul of the Asante kingdom, as it is believed, then it is reasonable to say that without the Golden Stool, there can hardly exist any Asante nation for anybody to be a king/ chief in it.



Plate 2.1 A stool hewn out of a piece of wood: A symbol of authority in the Akan chieftaincy system

**Source: Culled from a Souvenir Brochure on
Asanteman Adaekese – May, 2004**

This indeed portrays the vitality of the role of the stool in the chieftaincy of the Akan. Moreover, Sarpong (1971) states that: 'the occupant of the royal stool is spiritually elevated to a sacred realm thus enabling him to be worthy of direct communication with the ancestors and the gods and the goddesses'.

The inference could also be drawn that the stool is the chieftaincy symbol of authority, symbol of status and essence of his chiefship. Kyeremateng (1980) laid bare that before one becomes qualified to rule as the King of the Asante, one swears the oath of allegiance to the Golden Stool, the head stool of Asante, with the *Busumuru* sword (the leading state sword) as he would to a human being. Indeed, among the Akan, he who is enstooled is the ruler. Although the symbol of authority of the Asante is the stool, Lamin Yakubu, a Graduate Tutor of Obuasi Senior High Technical School, informed the researcher that this is different from his community. Lamin who hails from Tamale in the Northern Region of Ghana informed the researcher that the symbol of rulership of a chief of Dagbon of Northern Ghana is the

skin. Their chiefs are, therefore, said to be enskinned when they are empowered to rule. The appreciation here that different people have different symbols of authority for their chiefs may be enhanced by the following information given by Adi Darko (1988): 'Among the Bakuba (of the Democratic Republic of Congo), the drum is the symbol of office of the king and each, at his installation, chooses a particular geometric pattern to be carved on his drum'.

Parrinder (1976), also states the reasons why an Akan chief is said to be enstooled. According to him, 'The chief is taken to the house where the blackened stools of his ancestors are. He is placed upon a stool of his most renowned ancestor, and lifted up three times and thus; the Akan royal becomes a chief'.

However, it must be hastily corrected from Parrinder's assertion that the buttocks of the appointed chief must not touch the blackened stool, or any other stool in the enstoolment process. Rather, his buttocks are lowered three times over the stages. This is because, it is believed that the chief will be erotically impotent or may lose his libido altogether when his buttocks touch the stool. One's appreciation of the vital role of the stool, an artistic creation, in Akan chieftaincy is further increased if one considers Opoku's (1980) information that every chief who is enstooled orders a new stool to be carved for him to use as his personal stool during his lifetime. When that chief dies, he is placed upon this stool and bathed before he is laid in state. The stool is then kept in a safe place until the time comes for a blackening ceremony of the stool.

Opoku continues that the Akan believe that the blackened stools are saturated with the spirits of the departed chiefs. Hence, they are regarded as the shrines or the temporary abodes of the spirits of the stool ancestors

It must be noted that what Opoku (1980) calls blackened stools are the state stools which are symbols of authority of Akan chiefs. These are different from ordinary stools meant for domestic use. While the domestic stool may serve the chief while he lives and rules, the blackened one continues to serve him even after death as a symbol of his ancestral presence. In the olden days, chiefs in their daily activities sat on the stool at meetings with their council, at the bathroom while bathing, in the dining hall while taking meal, in the parlour while playing games, but in present times, they sit on *Asipim* chairs. The domestic stool does not only offer the chief comfort and dignity, but also preserves his sacredness since his buttocks are customarily not allowed to touch the ground. This assertion of the preservation of the sacredness of the stool is cognate with other African societies. In the past, members of the family of the King of Kuba were not permitted to sit on the ground. Instead they sat on animal skins or chairs or as in the case of King Kwete Peshanga of Nsheng, (Democratic Republic of Congo) on a slave (Bocolo, 1995).

Opoku's assertion on the rationale behind the blackening of the stool is substantiated by Rooney's (1988) reference to the blackening of the stool as the main symbol of the chief's authority. However, Opoku points out in his submissions that, the chief derives his power from the blackened stool because it is supposed to be 'the shrine or the abodes of the ancestral spirits'. Thus, the stool's artistic outlook is perhaps enhanced through blackening, its spiritual and religious role among the Akan chief

particularly also increases. This Akan phenomenon is similar to the double decker stool of the Mangbetu chief, Danga, in Rungu in the, Democratic Republic of Congo which is a symbol of his power (Bocolo, 1995).

Antubam (1962) writes that blackened stools or state stools are carried in a procession on state occasions and placed besides the chief. However, the statement by Antubam is repugned by Dr. Opamhyen Osei Agyeman, a senior lecturer at the KNUST, who insists in his lectures that blackened stools are brought out only once a year when they are being carried, usually in the night, to the stream for ritual cleansing. Readers may, however, agree that the Akan submits himself to major state stools as without these stools there may not be an Akan chief or king. The stool therefore gives authority to its occupant.

In the case of the Golden Stool, however, each hand of the carrier rings a bell. (See Plate 2.2 on the next page). It may be noticed that in keeping their distance from the stool on hearing the bells on the stool, the women give a wide space to the chief. Thus the stool, through its bells, is believed to contribute to the protection of the sacredness of the chief.

Appiah Asare (Unpublished Thesis 1966) expresses the view that the ringing of the bell serves to alert the crowd generally of the approaching chief so that they clear the way for him. The researcher agrees with Appiah Asare's view and would like to add that those cleared off the way of the chief may include bad spirits.

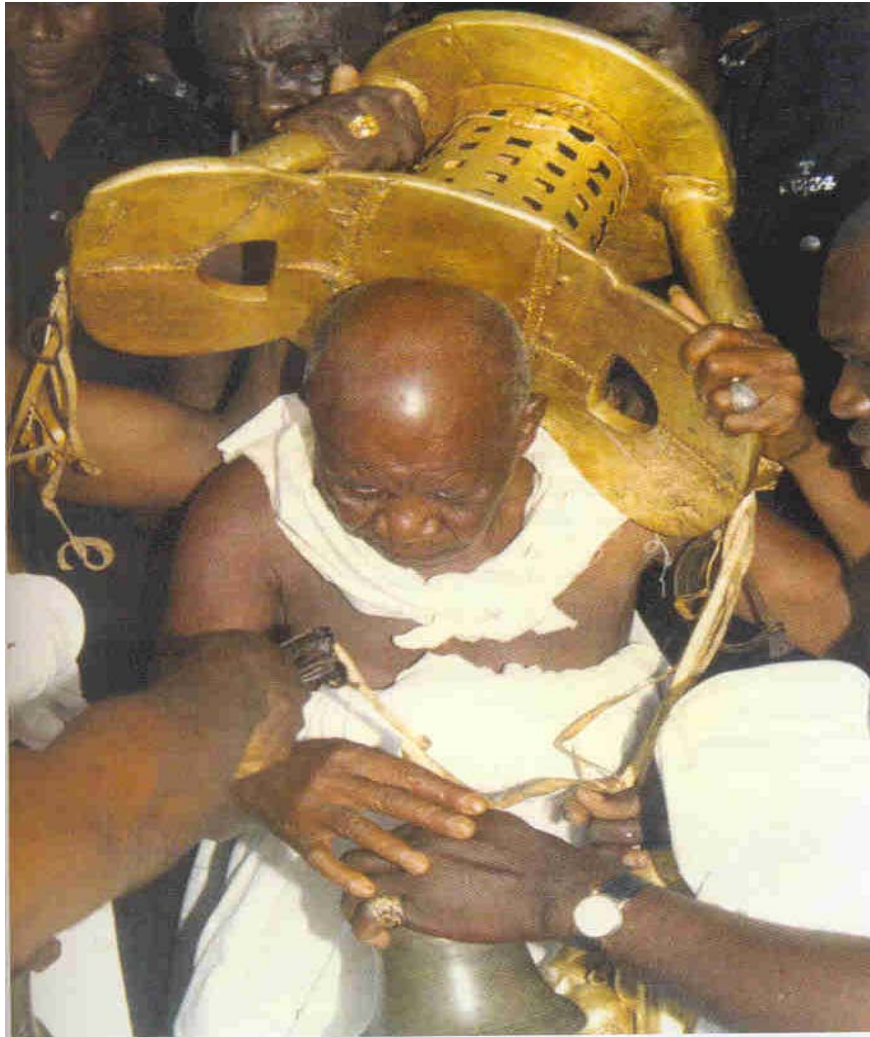


Plate 2.2 The Asante Golden Stool with its bells.
Source: Culled from an old Asante Calendar

On the removal of the Akan chief from office, Rooney (1988) states that when a chief is removed from office (among the Akan) he is said to be destooled. Destoolment may be achieved by the removal of the stool under the buttocks of a seated chief to make him sit on the ground and desecrate himself. It may, therefore, be appreciated that among the Akan, the role of the stool which is an example of a visual art object is very significant since it can do or undo a chief. It must be quickly added that in order to desecrate an Akan chief and destool him, his pair of sandals, which are art works, are also removed so that his bare soles touch the earth.

As mentioned earlier, Opoku (1980) stated that when a chief dies, he is placed upon his 'personal' stool and bathed and the stool is kept in a safe place until the time

comes for blackening it. It is also believed that the blackened stools are saturated with the spirits of the departed chiefs. This means that the people always 'see' the departed chief in his blackened stool. The stool therefore helps to perpetuate the presence of the chief among his people. It is, therefore, a symbol of immortality of the Akan chief. It can, therefore be concluded that the role that the stool plays in the life of an Akan chief when he is alive is almost as important as when he is dead.

2.2.1 The role of the *Asipim* and *Hwedom* Chairs in Akan chieftaincy

Athough, the Akan chief is enstooled on a stool, the usual seat for him on ceremonial occasions is the *asipim* chair. Initially, the Akan chief did not have *asipim* chairs and therefore sat on stools for all ceremonies. Today, these two main ceremonial chairs (*asipim* and *hwedom*) are used at all functions by chiefs. They are therefore dispensable. According to Appiah Asare (1966), the back and seat of these chairs (*asipim*) may be covered with silver repousse (ornamental patterns). (See Plate 2.3) These decorations on the chair do not only make them beautiful, they also enhance the dignity of the chief who sits on them.

According to Kyeremateng (1980), *asipim* may be interpreted as 'sturdy' or 'well established'. This could mean that the chief is well established at his office or that his state is well established. Today, the *asipim* seems to be used at all traditional functions more than the *hwedom*.



Plate 2. 3 The *Asipim* Chair

Source: Culled from Unpublished M.A. Thesis ('Asante Art and Culture: The Mainspring of Asante's Greatness and Glory' by Nana Kwaku Asiedu. Dated: 2005)

2.2.2 *Hwedom*

The back of the *hwedom* chair may be about a 30cm higher than that of the *asipim* chair. *Hwedom* literally means 'looking at' the enemy or crowd' because it is a compound of *hwe* 'to look at and *dom* 'enemy' or 'crowd'. About the *hwedom* chair, Appiah Asare (1966) states: 'When a chief sits on the *hwedom* chair he becomes the embodiment of *obarima* (man) or *okofo* (fighter)'. Appiah Asare's meaning of *hwedom* is 'to rout the enemy'. According to Appiah Asare, therefore, *hwedom* is a

chair that imbues the chief who sits on it with self confidence to rule his people. Kyeremateng on his part interprets *hwedom* as ‘facing the enemy’. Kyeremateng’s meaning has the potentiality to ignite bravery in a chief. Perhaps that is why on ceremonial occasions, the Golden Stool of the Asante people rests on a *hwedom* chair beside the king of Asante. The researcher agrees more with Kyeremateng’s interpretation of *hwedom* than that of Appiah Asare. This is because Appiah Asare seems to have mistaken the Twi word *hwe* to ‘look at’ for *hwe* ‘to beat’.

2.3 The Role of Architecture in Chieftaincy and Kingship

Nnamdi (1974), in the introduction of his book, *African Architecture*, informs readers that: ‘architecture is the art of designing buildings’. Therefore, the *ahenfie* or palace can be classified under visual or environmental arts or applied arts. It is in this artistic creation that the chief lives, where his paraphernalia are kept, and where he adjudicates matters concerning his people. Thus architectural art provides the chief with a house and an office as a whole. The ground plan of the Manhyia Palace of the *Asantehene* is here reproduced to vividly illustrate its nature. According to Kyeremateng (1980), the function of each section will allow us to appreciate the role that the art of architecture plays in Akan chieftaincy:

1. *Sumpreso*: This is the court in front of the main entrance. It contains *Bogyawe* the smaller dais and grounds where the *Asantehene* sits on some festive occasions.
2. *Pramakeseeso*: (The big courtyard). This is where the *Asantehene* normally sits to settle cases, receive visitors and where new chiefs swear the oath of allegiance to him. The general public is met at *Pramakeseeso*.
3. *Asennie*: (The court) Serious cases not involving the general public are settled

here.

4. *Ntwenedanmu* (Drums room). This is where the various drums played in the service of the king are kept
5. *Nkyiniyeddanmu* (Umbrella Room). This is where the various umbrellas of the king – from large canopies to small sun shades are kept.
6. *Patokromu*: Patio. This where the *Asantehene* sits to relax. He may take a snack here or play a game here.
7. *Adwiradanmu*: (Room for cleansing the Golden Stool). This room is, therefore, of great religious importance to the *Asantehene*
8. *Akrafieso* (Souls room). This is the *Asantehene*'s personal shrine.
9. *Nsumanfieso*: (The Shrine). This is a state shrine housed at the Manhyia Palace, a piece of art work.
10. *Abanase*: (The Wardrobe). This is where the king's clothing is kept. Thus The elegance with which the *Asantehene* will grace any occasion is, to a great extent, determined in this room, another art work.
11. *Adidiease*: (Dining Hall). This is where the king takes his meals in comfort and dignity.
12. *Kwaakrom*: (Reception). This is where private visitors are received and entertained.
13. *Asankroase*: (Where palm wine is kept). This place is where the king's visitors served palm wine from.
14. *Nkonnwafieso*: (Stool Room). This is where the sacred stools of the ancestors are kept. This room is therefore, considered a major shrine for the *Asantehene* because libation is poured on these ancestral stools regularly.
15. *Damponmu*: (Big Room). This is the resting room for the king. He

may discuss private matters with any of his subjects here.

16. *Sanaafieso* (Treasure Bag room). This is like the bank of the king.
17. *Afenaafieso*: (State Swords Room). This is where the *Asantehene's* state swords are kept.
18. *Soodo*: (Kitchen). This is where food is prepared for the *Asantehene* – food without which the king would die within days.
19. *Aduanekorafieso*: (Pantry). This is where foodstuffs are kept.
20. *Kaneasofieso*: (Room for one in charge of lamps). The lamps provided from this room, an art work, does not only give light during the night but also contribute immensely to the security duties at the palace. These days, however, the lanterns have been replaced by electric lamps.
21. *Safieso*: (Where counsel is taken for war). We appreciate from here that the wars through which the Asante Empire was built were decided in an artistic enclosure.
22. *Sumpiekeseeso*: Court in front of second main entrance. This place contains a bigger dais on which the *Asantehene* sits when a very large number of people are expected by him especially, on festive days.
23. *Bogyawe*: (Where funerals are held). Considering the fact that a funeral is a religious and social rite among the Akan, it is notable that the form of art called architecture also contributes to the fulfilment of the *Asantehene's* religious and social duties to his kingdom.

It is common knowledge that both kings and subjects feel proud of their palaces, therefore, many people have gone to great pains to provide their kings with mighty palaces as their technology would allow. Examples are the Buckingham Palace in

England, the King's Palace at Buake, La Cote d'Ivoire and the Emir's Palace in Kano, Northern Nigeria. Moreover, some of these palaces are adorned with elaborate and intricate decorations. All these great palaces are intended to provide shelter and security for their various chiefs/kings. Again, they provide dignity and comfort to those chiefs/kings occupying them. Another form of architectural art deeply involved in chieftaincy is mausoleums or places where the mortal remains of kings and their queens are finally laid to rest. Today, these mausoleums do not provide only resting places for these kings and queens, but are also serving as a source of tourists attractions, earning more money for their countries. It is interesting to mention the pyramids of Egypt inside which mummified corpses of pharaohs have been discovered by archaeologists. The pyramid of Kuffu is acclaimed to be the biggest in the world. Ceram (n.d) states:

The pyramid's bulk waxed tremendously. Using nothing but the power of human hands and backs, 23,000 blocks of stones were dragged to the site and piled one atop the other. Each of the four sides of the base was more than 736 feet in length. When the last block was in place, the peak of the tower towered 467 feet in the air. The grave of the Pharaoh is almost as tall as the tower of the cathedral of Cologne, higher than the tower of St. Stephen's in Vienna, much higher than the dome of St. Peter's in Rome, largest church of Christendom. All of St. Paul's in London could be comfortably accommodated within the pyramid. The total mass of masonry, quarried out of the cliff and limestone beds on both sides of the Nile, contained 3,277 cubic yards of material, piled up on surface covering 64, 942 square feet.

Although in bulk, the Pyramid of Kuffu (Greek: Cheops) is incomparable in beauty, the Taj Mahal appears to be supreme. According to the New Encyclopaedia

Britannica, the Taj Mahal, a mausoleum complex in Agra, north India, on the southern bank of the Yamuna (Jamuna) River was built by Mughal emperor Shah Tahan who reigned from 1628 to 1658. It was built to immortalise his favourite wife, Mumtaz Mahal or 'The Chosen One' who died in childbirth. It is the title Mumtaz Mahal (The Chosen One) which became the name of the mausoleum and which was corrupted by the British to Taj Mahal. Praising the Taj Mahal, the New Encyclopaedia Britannica states: In its harmonious proportions and fluid incorporation of decorative elements, the Taj Mahal is the first example of Mughal architecture, blending Indian, Persian and Islamic styles. One of the most beautiful structures in the world, the Taj Mahal was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1983.

It is notable now to mention the tomb that gave rise to the name Mausoleum. This tomb, according to the New Standard Encyclopaedia, was built to the memory of Mausoleus, king of Caris by his wife Artemisia, at Hemicarsus, in Asia Minor in 350 B.C. According to the New Standard Encyclopaedia, this is the tomb that gave mankind the word Mausoleum which now refers to all monumental tombs. Finally to be cited among monumental royal tombs is the *Osibreketi A Osi Bantama Kurotia*. The name of this Mausoleum may be glossed as 'That which stands spread like a mat at the junction of Bantama'. Baafuo Boaten I (1993) says this about the mausoleum: 'This wonderful building is sited at the outskirts of Bantama. This mausoleum was constructed in 1935 by King Osei Agyeman Prempe II to store the mortal remains of departed Kings. The *Sibreketi a Osi Bantama Kurotia* is now a monument because its function as the final resting place of the kings of Asante has been taken over by the Breman Royal Mausoleum'.

2.4 The Functions of the Akan State Sword and Chieftaincy

A state sword used by the Akan chief is an artefact meant for ceremonial display and to serve in other state functions too, but not for wars as it was previously known. Gillon (1974) gives the following information to readers about the state sword: ‘Ceremonial state swords, part of *Asantehene*’s regalia, are used in ceremonies of occasion of chiefs and variety of state and religious functions. They are symbols of royal messengers and ambassadors or are handed to generals on appointment as emblems of office’.

This very quotation informs readers a lot about the important role that the state sword plays in Akan chieftaincy. As part of a chief’s regalia, the state sword enhances dignity. As symbols of royal messengers they lend royal authority and credence to the messages delivered by the sword-bearing messengers. As emblems of ambassadors, they are symbols of accreditation. The state sword is, therefore, the chief’s honour invested in his ambassador which excites respect in diplomatic circles wherever the ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary may be stationed. As a symbol of office and honour for Generals, state swords inspired bravery and gallantry in the chief’s soldiers and helped them to be victorious during the war periods.

Indeed, the importance of the role that the state sword plays in Akan chieftaincy may be acknowledged when the fact is considered that the authority to rule and induction into office of a new Akan chief or king is achieved through a state sword. For instance, Kyeremateng (1980) informs readers that the *Busumuru* sword is used during the induction of the *Asantehene* into office. According to him, the chief of

Adwumakaase, unsheathes the *Busumuru* sword and hands it over to the *Asantehene*-elect three times, each time, saying to the latter: (Twi words)

*Mede wo tumi ma wo.
Wo Nana Osei Tutu ne Busumuru
a ode dii akoo ni
mede hye wo nsa*

English version:

I pass on to you your authority. This is the
Busumuru Sword with which your ancestor Osei
Tutu waged wars. I hand it over to you

On each occasion the *Asantehene*-elect responds: *megye* (I accept it) until he takes that piece of artefact finally on the third attempt. Kyeremateng acknowledges the *Busumuru* sword is a religious object through whose power, authority and office are transferred from a dead *Asantehene* to a new one so that a new *Asantehene* becomes imbued with the military valour, administrative excellence and religious zeal of his predecessor. Kyeremateng, considering state swords as royal objects that play great roles in the rule of the *Asantehene*, mentions the following examples and states their specific functions. :

a) *Keteanofena* State Swords

According to Kyeremateng (1980), each time the *Asantehene* rides in a palanquin, six men walk in a procession on either side of it. Each of them holds in his hand the blade of a *keteanofena* (mat edge) state sword. These swords are lifted up in such a way that their hilts line up on either fringe of the palanquin. The *keteanofena* state swords so displayed constitute a symbol of security which puts the *Asantehene* on his toes in connection with his military responsibilities towards the Asante Kingdom.

b) *Domfosan* State Swords:

In his *Chieftaincy and 'Ceremony in Ashanti,'* Kyeremateng (1980) states: 'These state swords are used by Asante soldiers to swear the oath of allegiance to the *Asantehene* before a battle'. The artefacts called *domfosan* or military swords are, therefore, weapons that help to increase the sense of mutual responsibility for defence between the *Asantehene* and his soldiers. For, the Asante have a saying that *se odehyee anko a, akoo dwane* (if the royal refuses to fight, the subject will take to his heels).

c) *Afenatene* State Swords

This state sword has two meanings: firstly a straight sword and secondly a right sword. This is because the word *tene* may be glossed as either 'straight' or 'right'. The *afenatene* sword may have two or three blades fixed on the hilt. According to Kyeremateng, an *afenatene* sword may be placed at the harem of an Akan chief to warn all men that they risk death by proposing love to any lady of the household. Moreover, if a chief desires a woman from any house, an *afenatene* state sword is placed in front of that house to keep away men with amorous intentions who may stray towards the chief's intended wife. Thus, the *afenatene* sword helps the Akan chief to avoid marital rivalry. Moreover, the *afenatene* speaks for the Akan chief without the chief opening his mouth. This gives him the peace of mind to concentrate on regal duties.

d) *Asomfofena* State Swords

Asomfofena state swords are the type of swords carried by the messengers of an Akan chief when they are sent to summon someone to court or to deliver an important

message. In this regard, the sword offers symbolic authority to the messengers. At the same time the artefacts serve as the messengers' credentials. On the death of an *Asantehene*, the messengers who are sent to inform the other chiefs of the death bear *asomfofena* (servant state swords). According to Kyeremateng: 'The delegation will be headed by a spokesman and will include a sword bearer, a court crier and one of the elephant tail whisk bearers'. (Kyeremateng 1980) In this respect, the swords pave a way for the messengers to deliver their messages. They also help addressees to believe the messages.

e) *Abrafoofena* State Swords

Abrafoofena state swords are the ceremonial swords of the chief's executioner. They are blunt as the other state swords and, therefore, cannot be used for decapitation. During funerals of chiefs, the executioners cut capers while they dance with the *abrafoofena* state swords in their hands. The swords therefore help Akan citizens to identify executioners.

f) The *Busumuru* and *Mpomponsuo* State Swords

These are the two leading state swords in Asante. The *Busumuru* is used by the *Asantehene* to swear the oath of allegiance before the Golden Stool (the leading symbol of authority in Asante). The *Mpomponsuo* is used by the *Asantehene* to swear the same oath to the Kumasi chiefs since he also doubles as the paramount chief of the Kumasi Traditional Area and the chiefs in turn swear to him. But the *Asantehene* again uses the *Busumuru* to swear the oath of allegiance to the paramount chiefs of Asante, while they also use the *Mpomponsuo* to swear to him. These swords therefore make the swearing-in-ceremonies possible and authoritative. Kyeremateng (1980)

tells us that when a dead *Asantehene* is laid in state, all the state swords except the *Busumuru* and the *Mpomponsuo* are laid at the edge of the bed. The swords silently speak of the deceased king's authority and also beautify his death bed. The two leading state swords are excluded because they are involved in the rites for the sanctification of the soul and spirit of the king. This is certainly another important role of the sword in Akan chieftaincy.

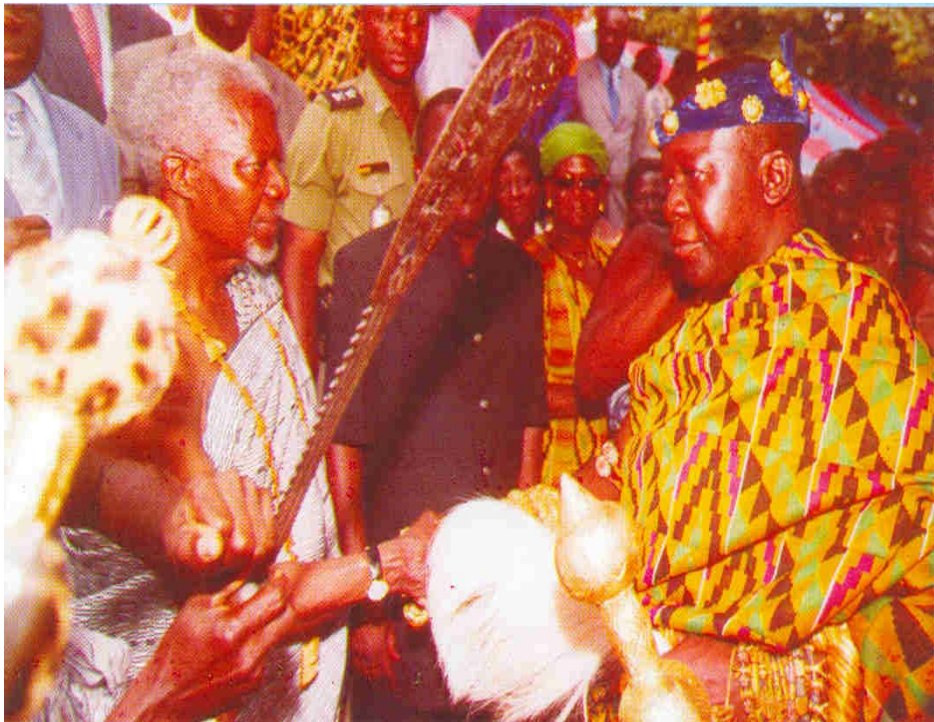


Plate 2.4 The *Busumuru* Sword of Asante. The most revered sword in Asante

Source: Culled from Ghana Review International News Magazine)
2004 Edition. Issue no 106

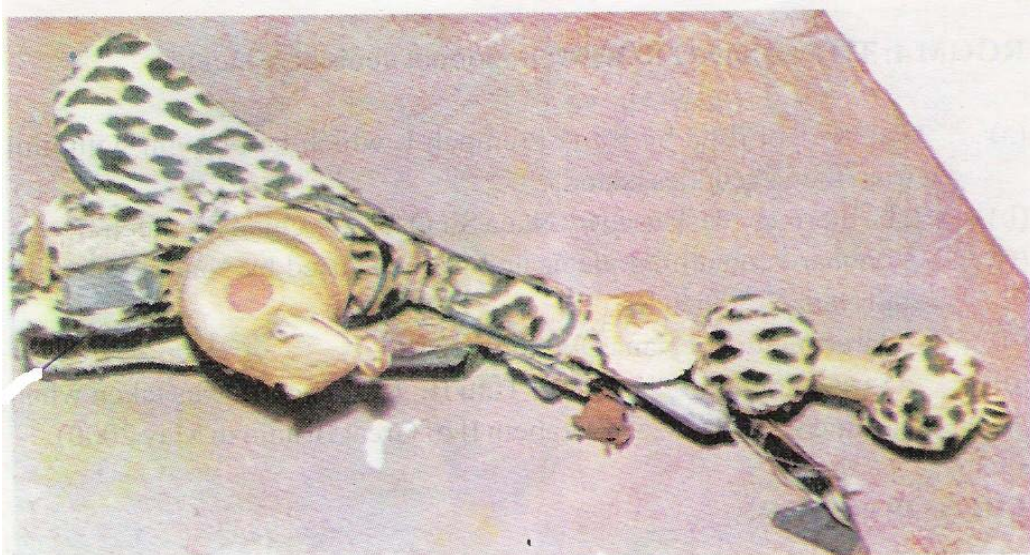


Plate 2.5 The *Mpomponsuo* Sword of Asante. The original *Mpomponsuo* is believed to be at the British Museum of Mankind, London

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

2.5. The Functions of Body Arts in Chieftaincy

The institution of chieftaincy is tied to body arts. Therefore decoration of the body from head to toe is an inseparable characteristic of chieftaincy throughout the world. Among the Akan districts of Ghana where Ahwiaa is located, various art objects are involved in the dressing of the body. The most prominent ones are discussed below:

2.5.1 The Cloth and Chieftaincy

One of the most important roles that art plays in chieftaincy is acknowledged by appreciating the type of outfit the chief steps out wearing. This outfit is made with textile material. Akan chiefs are normally found with well-designed and beautiful *kente* or *adinkra* cloths. There is an Akan proverb that says *anomaa ahoofe ne ne ntakra*. ‘The beauty of the bird depends on its plumage’

a. The *Kente* cloth

Among the Akan, the chief loves to step out gorgeously dressed. He usually steps out resplendent in a colourful and beautiful designed *kente* cloth. (See Plate 2.6) The manner in which an Akan chief dies is described vividly by the magazine *Awake!* thus: ‘Adorned with heavy gold jewelry (jewellery) and wrapped in special woven cloth (*kente*), these kings and their prominent chiefs make a display on their wealth, power and authority before their subjects’. (*Awake!* The Ridgeway, London, August, 2003, pg 19). It is noticed from this quotation that the cloths that Akan chiefs wear are a symbol of power and authority. This is exactly what Gillon meant when he wrote that dress was a symbol of rank and status from early days in the hierarchical societies or the Akan kingdoms.

This statement is emphasised by the *Awake* Magazine when it states that ‘for the Ashanti [Asante] kings *kente* cloth came to represent prestige and royal status’.



Plate 2.6 Otumfuo Opoku Ware II in a beautifully-designed *kente* cloth

Source: Culled from an old Asante Calendar

b. The *Adinkra* cloth

As already alluded, *adinkra* (see Plate 2: 7) is another type of cloth that symbolises status for the Akan chief. Gillon describes the *adinkra* cloth thus: ‘*Adinkra* cloth is traditionally made from single dyed strips sewn together and hand stamped with great varieties of patterns or decorated with linear designs drawn on the cloth’. He goes on to state: ‘There is usually a verbal interpretation for each pattern. Later multicoloured strips were used, and some were ornamented with embroidery’.

It must be added that there are some *adinkra* cloths which are made of non-strip full textile materials to correct the erroneous impression created by Gillon. It is seen from Gillon’s statement that the *adinkra* cloth is traditionally made and not foreign. Thus, it helps the chief not only by ensuring that he steps out decently but also as a means of communication to his people, as the symbols in his cloth carries a message. The

manufacturing of *adinkra* cloths also contributes duly towards economic growth of Akan chiefdoms by offering employment to many. The numerous people, who help to sell *adinkra* cloths and indeed, *kente* too, help to reduce unemployment and increase the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Akan areas.

All the workers involved in the manufacturing and distribution of *kente* and *adinkra* cloths can contribute financially towards any development project which, in the end, glorifies the chief. *Adinkra* symbols are also proverbial. This means they serve as a means of communication and also a store of knowledge for the chief and his people. Indeed *adinkra* designs are ideographic because many tutored Akans know the meanings of many of them. They therefore virtually offer the chiefs the chance to speak symbolically to their people. For example Opoku (1980) states that:

The *adinkra* symbols express certain notions about God and His attributes. Among them are *Gye Nyame* which expresses God's omnipotence, *Onyamedua* which expresses our dependence on God, and *Nyame biribi wo soro, na ma no mmeka me nsa*, God there is something (blessing) above (in heaven), let it reach me, which is a prayer to God who is the source of all blessing.

Opoku also shows that the Akan chief can communicate with his people through symbols in his *adinkra* cloths. This confirms for us that the symbols in an *adinkra* cloth are ideographic.



Plate 2.7 The Asantehene in an *adinkra* cloth
Source: Culled from an old Asante Calendar

c. Akunintam

Akunintam (cloths of the noble) is the third type of cloth favoured by Akan chiefs. *Akunintam* is very popular among Fante chiefs whose regal pomp is enhanced by this type of textile art work. Gillon (1974) says the following about *Akunintam*: ‘They consist of appliqué or embroidered fabrics. They are usually made of imported damask or felt and the appliqué technique may well have been influenced by the

Republic of Benin, while the embroidered gowns probably have an earlier Islamic origin’.

This *Akunintam* is obviously imported since its type is not manufactured anywhere in Akanland. This indeed shows that the Akan chief also believes in international trade based on comparative advantage. Through such commercial activities, new ideas can be borrowed into his town for the artistic development of his people.

d. Batakari (Smock)

Another significant attire often used by the Akan chief is the *batakari* (smock). The *batakari* as evident on Plate 2: 8 is an importation from the Northern section of Ghana where it is manufactured for general wear. In the past, Akans used the *batakari* as a military dress. Gillon (1974) describes the *batakari* thus: ‘War shirts called *batakari*, hung with amulets and charms are certainly of northern origin (northern part of present day Ghana) and may have been used by the Akan as early as 1602 when de Marees made an oblique reference to it’.

The *batakari* certainly made the chief and his army smarter than what wrapped cloth did for them during war. In his *Akwasidae Kesse*, Boaten I (1993) says that *batakari* was the battle dress of the chiefs and that talismans studded in them are of Muslim origin. Whether the protective charms believed to be in the talismans are potent or not, is worthy of contemplation, however, what interests the researcher more is that they are art forms that, previously, helped the Akan chief to rule because it helped him to raise an army to wage wars against those who desired to conquer his territory to end his reign.

.It may interest the reader to know that in South Africa, beautiful outfits are fashioned out of tiger skins for their chiefs to wear. The tiger skin may be a symbol of power for a South African chief. The Kumasi Mail of Wednesday the 6th of August to Sunday the 10th of August, 2003, reported that during a Pan African Festival (PANAFEST) of 2003, the President of the South African House of Chiefs, Nkosi Mpiyezintombi Nzimela graced the two- day conference (July 31 – August 1) of African traditional rulers in Kumasi with a beautiful tiger skin dress.



Plate 2.8 **An Akan chief in a *batakari***
 (a war dress with talisman decoration)
Source: **Picture taken from an old Asante Calendar**

e. Suit

In the Ghana Review of July 2001 Issue No. 82, it is observed that the outfit of Prince Charles of England was unique and was appreciated for the fact that the conventional white man's suit is also the kingly outfit of British monarchs and heirs apparent. Such suits, like *kente*, are a form of artwork which helps to bring decency dignity and confidence to rulers who use them (See Plate 2.9)



Plate 2.9 A photograph of the Prince of Wales, Prince Charles (second from right), in a well-tailored suit, alongside the Duchess of Wales, and the then American first family, Mr and Mrs Bush.

Source: Picture captured on the internet by researcher.

f. Combinations of cloths

Among the Ewe and Ga of Ghana the chief may wear a combination of a jumper, fashioned from calico, with a *kente* cloth worn over it. The Fante (another group of the Akan found along the western coast of Ghana) also wear similar combinations as that of the Ewe and Ga, but their jumpers are normally made with laces.

g. The role of headgears (body arts) in chieftaincy

The headgear is another artistic creation which is probably used by chiefs all over the world. In Ghana, apart from making the chief appear dignified, Antubam (1962) points out that the headgear is also a medium of communication between the Ghanaian chief and his subjects. He states: 'Royal headgear of chiefs in Ghana is a source of symbolic art. Symbols in these headgears which are always done in gold may be representation for *Kyekye pe aware*, (a crescent moon with a star), signifying faithfulness, *funtumfunafu* (symbol made up of two crocodiles, sharing one stomach)

signifying unity in diversity.’ The prevalence of the headgear among traditional rulers seems to have existed since ancient times, and all over the world. Example is what is portrayed in plate 2. 6 which depicts Otumfuo Opoku Ware II of Asante in the Republic of Ghana. Different headgears are worn on special occasions. Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain wears special crowns on different occasions. (See Plate 2.10)



Plate 2.10 A photograph of Queen Elizabeth II of Great Britain with a crown on.

Source: Picture captured on the internet by researcher.

i. The functions of the footwear and chieftaincy

In a personal communication with Osei Kwadwo (Curator, Manhyia Palace Museum in Kumasi), he informed this researcher that sandals are very important art works in the service of the Akan king/ chief. They make the chief appear decent.

Indeed, among the Akan, it is a taboo for the chief to take a step unshod; the sandals, therefore, protect his sacredness. An Akan chief could be destooled if he is found walking about without footwear beneath his feet. Because of this, a sandals' bearer carries at least a pair of spare sandals among the retinue of the chief on all occasions. Boaten I (1993) writes the following: 'Following the prempa drums are sandals with gold studded straps. The sandals' bearers, *mpaboa kurafuo* are led by their chief *mpaboakurafohene*'. (with reference to the *Asantehene*'s procession).

Baafuo Boaten I continues:

These extra golden sandals should always be held
in readiness for the king whose feet must never touch
the ground. Among the king's sandals are the *Mpaboakesee*,
the greatest sandals. These sandals are believed to
contain medicine and are worn by the king on
very special occasions, such as business meeting of
the state.

2. 6. The Functions of the chief's Spokesman's Staff in Chieftaincy

The staff of the *Okyeame*, the chief's spokesman, wrongly referred to as linguist, (see plate 2.11) is a very important form of visual art that plays a vital role in the functions of the Akan chief. Ross (1980), apart from confirming that the chief's spokesman's staff is an artistic creation, gives a lot on the role it plays in Akan chieftaincy. He states: 'Although the staff of the *Okyeame*'s badge of office, the subject matter of the carved finial almost always refers to the chief and state linguist's staffs are first and foremost political art forms'. The researcher is of the view that what Ross calls linguist staff is rather the spokesman's staff since a linguist is someone who must be able to speak more than one language and not one as normally found in Akan traditional areas.

The quotation from Ross points out that the staff is the chief's spokesman's symbol of office and therefore depicts his hierarchal position. It also suggests that the finial on top of it enables the chief to speak to his subjects about himself and about matters concerning his jurisdiction. Thus the spokesman's staff serves the Akan chief as a medium of communication with his people. Indigenously, among the Akan, the chief cannot speak in public unless through his spokesman. Therefore, this artistic creation called the spokesman's staff is a symbol of the *okyeame's* office. It helps to establish the medium through which the chief communicates with the public. Opoku (1980) states that: 'Some regalia found at the chief's palace also embody the treasured knowledge, experience and wisdom of the land and of particular significance among them is the linguist [SIC] staff or umbrella tops'. It is deduced from Opoku's statement that the spokesman's staff also serves the chief as a storehouse of knowledge or library. Thus, it serves as a channel for the preservation of Akan custom for posterity. In short, the chief partially depends on the spokesman's staff, to make his people knowledgeable on state history and politics.

In his unpublished works *Bisa Aberewa*, Crakye Denteh, a late senior lecturer of the University of Ghana informs us that the three sections of the *okyeame's* staff represent the head, mid section and the legs of a man respectively. He explains that because of these divisions, when a culprit sees a chief's spokesman with the staff, he responds without delay to the call. This explanation given by Crakye Denteh, to me, is not logical, as a mere presence of this figure should make someone follow the spokesman. Rather this staff carries with it power from the chief as well as the spirits of the ancestors and therefore to whom ever it is presented to must respond quickly to the call. Regarding the three divisions of the staff, it is interesting to come across a

different explanation given by Nana J.V.A. Owusu-Ansah, [a Prince of the Golden Stool and a former lecturer of the College of Art and Social Sciences, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST)], that the upper section of the staff represents heaven, the middle section the earth and the lower section *asamando* or the Akan underworld. His view about the three divisions is that the work of the chief's spokesman is approved by God in heaven, by man on earth and by ancestors in *asamando*.



Plate 2.11 The Spokesman's 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.

2.7 The Ring, its role in Akan Chieftaincy

The ring has served various kings since ancient days as a symbol of authority. For instance, in the Bible, Genesis Chapter 41 verse 42, it is read: 'The king removed

from his finger the ring engraved with the royal seal and put it on Joseph's finger, he put a fine robe on him and placed a gold chain around his neck'.

The quotation gives us a lot of information on how the ring serves the African king, the Pharaoh of Egypt. Also, the Akan king in Asante uses it extravagantly. The extravagant use of the ring by the Asante King and other Akan chiefs may be appreciated in plate 2. 6 in which the *Asantehene*, Otumfuo Opoku Ware II is shown with rings on eight of his ten fingers. The ring is a symbol of status and authority. Some of the rings are believed to have spiritual connotations and therefore gives power and authority to the chief/king who wears them. Various symbols on the rings carry a message to the people. On the ring may be engraved the royal seal. It certainly enhances the image of the king or chief.

According to Antubam (1962), Akan chiefs and queenmothers wear rings not only on fingers but also on toes. He continues to inform readers that on top of these rings may be found symbols like *pitre* (fish) signifying total ownership, *abuburo* (dove) signifying hope or love and finally *abubumaa* (twig-covered catapier) signifying inextricability. These symbols mentioned by Antubam, are identified with Akans of Ghana as it adds dignity to their personality. It makes the chief/king look handsome at functions.

2.8. The Functions of Umbrellas in Akan chieftaincy

Earlier on in this chapter, while discussing the chief's spokesman's staff, the researcher mentioned Opoku's (1980) statement which includes the information that chiefs' umbrellas have tops which philosophically embody the treasured knowledge,

experience and wisdom of the land. It is remarkable to learn that umbrellas also serve the chief as a means of communication because chiefs and their tutored subjects understand the proverbs carried by the finials on top of these umbrellas.

Gillon (1974) too has the following to say about Akan state umbrellas: ‘State umbrellas used by kings and chiefs for ceremonial purpose were said to have been made of imported silks and relevant cloths. Later, brightly coloured home-woven fabrics were used. They were like the counsellor’s staffs, topped with golden or silver finials but fewer motifs were used’.

The brightly coloured home-woven fabric mentioned by Gillon certainly brings to mind the *Yokoman* (an umbrella of the *Asantehene*) mentioned supra. Some of the finials that may be found on top of the *Asantehene*’s umbrellas are: a cobra ready to strike, signifying that the Asante King is always ready to defend his people whenever its enemies attacked his state. *Prekese* (Galbanum for English and *tetrapleura tetraptera* for scientific name) depicting the omnipresence of the chief as embodied in the Akan proverb *Prekese gyinaku, ofiti kurotia a na ne ho bon afie mu* (*Prekese* of all pervading aroma which reaches every house even when it has reached only the outskirts of the town). The King’s presence is felt wherever he may be. The umbrella gives protection to the Akan chief/king at all gatherings, especially during the era of wars, as the chief/king will not be identified easily. Again, while under the umbrella, the king is always surrounded by his people, thus the king not being exposed easily. Furthermore, the umbrella prevents the king/chief from being beaten by rain when there is rainfall or the rays of the scorching sun.

2.9. The Role of the Palanquin and Chieftaincy

The palanquin is an elongated basket, and therefore an art creation, in which the Akan chief is carried about on state occasions. As Kyeremateng (1980) informs readers, after the election of the *Asantehene*, he is presented to his people in a palanquin at a place called Bampanase which is at the Manhyia Palace. He states: ‘The king elect in his palanquin arises at Bampanase to demonstrate that he would be capable of commanding the Asante forces’ The palanquin is a symbol of high office of Akan chiefs; so only paramount chiefs and kings’ ride in them. Blankson (1973) states the following about how the chief of Oguaa (Cape Coast) rides in a palanquin during the annual *Fetu Afahye* (festival): (See Plate 2.12).

The august *Omanhene*, centre of attraction, with his
retinue and a large crowd of women hailing,
eulogizing and fanning him with cover clothes,
dances gracefully in a beautifully decorated
palanquin under the shade of a brightly coloured umbrella.

It is noticed from the foregoing quotation that the palanquin is among the paraphernalia of the Akan chief that boosts his ego. Ansah (1999) informs us in his book *Kundum Festival*, of how the paramount chief of Axim rides in a palanquin during the festival: ‘The chief rides in a palanquin borne shoulder high by four strong men’. The palanquin helps a crowd to see a chief/king more vividly when he is carried in it. Again, it proclaims the grandeur of the chief/king, emphasising that he is superior to his subjects. Furthermore, it prevents the chief from getting tired which would result from walking, etc. Moreover, Akuffo (1976), discussing a festival celebration in his book, *Ahenfie Adesua*, informs readers that the chief rides in a palanquin to the durbar grounds and back to the palace.

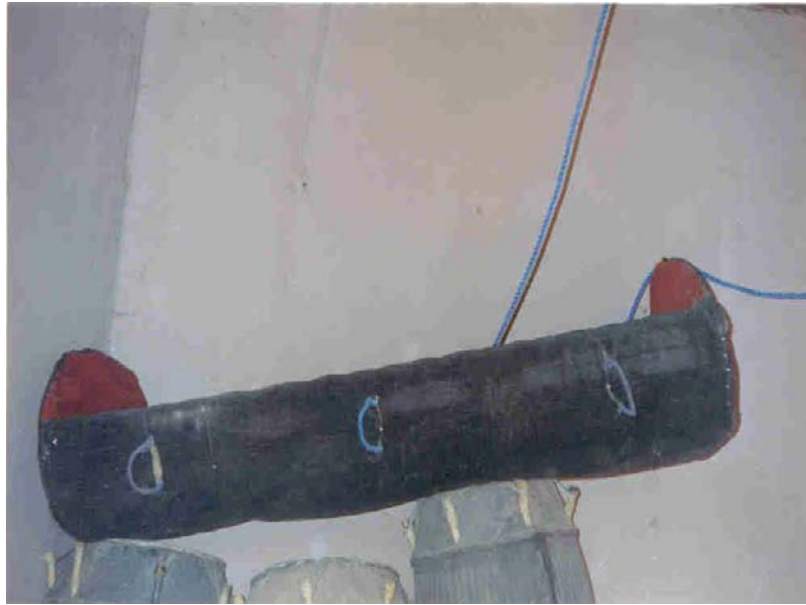


Plate 2.12 A palanquin of an Akan Chief
Source: Culled from an unpublished M.A.Thesis
Dated 2005 by Nana Kwaku Asiedu

2.10 Music, Dance and the Institution of Chieftaincy

2.10.1 Music/Lyrics

According to Akuffo (1976) when the Akan are going to install a chief, they start by playing music:

Music and dance are forms of performing art that play very important roles in chieftaincy. It forms the most interesting facet of the entire chieftaincy process of the people. It could also be said that although music and dance play an educative and entertaining role, it takes away the monotony or boredom that occasionally characterises the various celebrations.

*Se Akanfo rebesi ohene a ...asafo ko a owo ahenfie no si won
 asafo twene so fre oman no mu adehye. Afei Ahenemmahene,
 Gyaasehene, Ankobeahene, Apesemakahene Gyaase fekuwo a
 wofre won Gyaasepon tena ahenfie anim ho a won agoru apesemaka
 gu so a enye agoru koraa.*

English version:

If the Akan are going to install a chief, the association present at the palace beats the association drums to call the royals of the town. Now all the subgroups of the chieftaincy system and their associations duly invited meet at the palace and play the music called *Apesemaka* with all seriousness.

Although the music mentioned supra is an all men's affair, Kyerematten (1980) has laid bare the installation of the *Asantehene* that: 'before the swearing, the only music played is that of the Queenmother, the *akwadwum* (dirge) and other musical ensemble held in abeyance until after the swearing'.

It is noticed from here that music which is a form of art plays a role in Akan chieftaincy right from the beginning of kingmaking till the king dies. About the *akwadum* music which according to Kyeremateng, belongs to the Queenmother supreme of Asante, this plays a decisive role in the chieftaincy institution as it cannot be done away with whether during installation or funeral of a late chief/ king. Antubam (1962) also states that: 'the Kumasi *akwadwum* is unique because it is the only one in Akanland that has survived to the troubles of the years'.

Music entertains the chief and also helps to boost his ego as the ruler of the people. It could be understood that among the Akan, there are different musical instruments for different types of music. Indeed, some of the instruments confer their names on the type of music in which they are played. For example, the *fontomfrom* drums are played on the *fontomfrom* music considered to be the music of chiefs and warriors. Antubam calls the *fontomfrom* the great state drum orchestra. According to Baafuo Boaten I, (1993) some of the drums played for the *Asantehene* are *Atwenesin* which

are used to recite verses which have their origin in the history of the royal stool house to which it belong. (See Plate 2.13).



Plate 2.13 *Atwenesin*: captured from an Old Asante Calendar

According to Nketia (1998), there is also the *Etwie* drum which is wrapped in a leopard skin. It imitates the snarls of leopards, indicating the fierceness of the *Asantehene* when he needs to appear so. There is also *Kwantenponmuta* drum. These are twin drums which during procession are paraded immediately after the *Okymfoo* (shield bearers). *Otwea* is a drum and is also known as *Owuo* (death). This sound imitates the bark of a dog. *Otwea* in the olden days was used to announce the impending execution of an evil doer.

The *Aprède*, *Mpebi*, and *Nkrawiri* drums also follow the Golden Stool during procession. But Nketia (1998) states that the *mpebi* and *nkrawiri* are signal drums that are played at the court of the *Asantehene*. Whereas the *mpebi* was created by the first *Asantehene*, Opemsuo Osei Tutu I, the *nkrawiri* was the brain child of Nana Opoku Ware I. Today, these drums can be found at the courts of all paramount chiefs in the Asante Kingdom and beyond. According to Baafuo Boaten I (1993) other

very important drums that are used in disseminating information by chiefs is the popular *atumpan* or talking drums as these drums speak timpano-phonetically. They are used by all Akan chiefs to relay messages to their subjects because their sounds can travel up to several miles. When played in music, the talking drums are used to recite praises to the king thereby boosting his ego. Apart from drums, Baafuo Boaten I mentions the uses of some horns played for the *Asantehene*:

Nketia (1998) states: flutes also play an indispensable role in the chieftaincy system of the Akan. The *durugga* flute was introduced by the *Asantehene* OseiTutu I. It is usually played to the accompaniment of a *kwadwom* (dirge). *Mmentia* flutes are also used to play songs of appellation to the king. *Asokoben*, also called *ntahara* or *mmenson* that are played are seven horns. These repeat the same catch phrases like the *mmentia* which remind the people and the chief of some historical feat they should feel elated or proud of.

All these musical instruments which are good examples of stupendous artistic creations are played with dexterity and panache to provide music for the Akan chief for his entertainment, or the elevation of his spirit, for the upliftment of his ego and for the boosting of his personality. They, therefore, encourage the chief in different ways to perform his duties as a chief with delight.

a) Lyrics

Lyrics are the words of a song and play an important role in chieftaincy, as it is a form of music (Nketia 1998). The late Maame Afua Basa, then leader of the Manhyia Tete Nwonkro Group composed the following song:

*Kronkron se twie
Ey a na m'ani o!
Osei 'See dooso
Me ware Osei Bonsu*

English version:

With springy steps like a tiger
O how I miss him
There are different types of Osei
Osei Bonsu is the man for me

These lyrics are acknowledged as a form of performing art. They serve to boost the ego of the Akan chief and also to entertain him. The wording of the music may advise the chief or tell of his prowess and powers. It could be seen that it is not only the application of the voice in singing praises but the admiration lies in the quality of libretto or words used to evaluate a leader. It is all these qualities of words capable of winning the admiration of all that connoisseurs classify as artistic creations.

2.10.2 Dance:

According to Akuffo (1976) dancing plays a major role in the Akan chieftaincy system. Though the Akan chief seldom dances, however, when the occasion demands, he steps out to dance to the admiration of spectators. Chiefs normally dance during occasions such as festivals, funerals of royals and other very important occasions. Whenever an Akan chief is dancing, a whole crowd of his supporters surround him and dance with him. This ensures the chief of the support of his people and, therefore, gives him the peace of mind to rule.

2.11. Drum Language and the Institution of Chieftaincy

Equally good to be mentioned among the instrumental arts which enhance the ego of the Akan chief, and motivate him to set himself greater goals in the interest of his people, is the drum language. The drum language is, therefore, another form of art that permeates chieftaincy. Rattray (1979) has written that he was able to gather seventy-seven examples of drum recitals including: *Se aboa bi dore sraddee a osua prako* which is literary translated as ‘when some other beast becomes fat, it is only copying the ‘village’ pig’. *Twen boo wo nsuo ase a, n’egyai wo mu* (The flint may be at the bottom of water but it does not lose power to strike fire.)

According to Crakye Denteh (n.d), the following recitals are beaten off drums during festivals:

Twí version: *Osei Tutu kantankrakyi*
 wotwaa bi guu Hwaamani ani,
 Wo ho ye hu dodo Osei
 Wotwaa bi guu Hwaamani ani Dee!

English version:

Osei Tutu the complex one,
You cut some unto the surface of Hwaamani (the name of a stream)
You are to be dreaded indeed, Osei
You cut some unto the surface of Hwaamani Dee (an exclamation)

Although this poem of appellation was created for Otumfuo Osei Tutu I who ruled from 1698–1710, whenever it is recited on the drum it praises the ruling *Asantehene* as though it was originally made for him. According to Osei Kwadwo, Curator, Manhyia Palace Museum, this recital reminds the ruling *Asantehene* of the bravery with which Osei Tutu I decapitated a man with one swing of a machete, in self defence when soldiers from Denkyira were about to capture him. Such drum recitals

can be decoded by the chief to mean that he is the greatest on earth and that any other chief trying to be great will only be emulating him. Drum recitals are, therefore, some of the most ego-boosting forms of art that serve the Akan chief.

2.12 The Functions of Pots in Chieftaincy

The Longman Active Dictionary defines ‘a pot’ as ‘a round vessel of baked clay, metal or glass, etc used to contain liquids or solids’. A pot helps the chief in his effort at self preservation or survival. Gillon (1974) talks about a brass pot called *puduo* or *kuduo* in Twi. The *kuduo* or *puduo* serves Akan chiefs as pouches in which gold dust or other precious objects may be kept. The *Asantehene*’s silver treasure bag is therefore, called *kuduo*. About this silver *kuduo* of the *Asantehene*, Baafuo Boaten I (1993) states this:

As soon as an Asante sees a silver casket tied with white net and placed in a small brass container then he knows that the *Asantehene* is coming. It leads the King anytime he is going on official duties. It is said to contain symbolically gold dust which he must use as and when the need arose. At the installation of an individual as an *Asantehene*, the *dwete kuduo* (treasure pot) is the last stool regalia to be handed over to him. It is an important insignia of his authority. Whenever the *Asantehene* sits in state it is put on his right hand side’.

The reason why the *kuduo* is the last item to be given to the *Asantehene* is to tell him that he has now taken over all the administration of Asante, including financing. Nana Boaten I has pointed out that apart from serving as a treasure bag, the *Asantehene*’s *dwete kuduo*, is a symbol of his authority. From the foregoing account, one appreciates considerably that the *kuduo* has a major role to play in the life of an

Asantehene. Gillon, (1974) on his part, makes the following statement about the *kuduo*: ‘The Akan metal vessel is the *kuduo*, cast by the lost wax method and though like the *forowa*, it is used to hold valuables, it serves much ritual purposes’. It is believed to have been used in soul-washing (cleansing the soul), female puberty rites and other ceremonies.

Among the Akan, the chief, more than anybody else needs to regenerate the powers of his ancestors, therefore, the pottery art work called *kuduo* has a very important role to play in Akan chieftaincy. Apart from the *kuduo*, Gillon (1974) again mentions the *forowa* which may serve an Akan chief in a similar manner as the *kuduo*. Another type of pot which plays a role in Akan chieftaincy, even in the death of the chief, is the *abusuakuruwa*. Opamshen Osei Agyeman, a Senior Lecturer at the College of Art and Social Sciences of KNUST informs us that the *abusuakuruwa* is a funerary object used among Kwawus, a sub group of the Akans, found in the Eastern Region of Ghana. According to the Senior Lecturer, it is found in a set of funerary objects which include a *dwaasen* (bathing bowl), *osempon* (a human figure), *abusuakuruwa* (the lineage cup) and *nsukuruwa* (water cup). He continues: The funerary figure known as *osempon*, serves as a receptacle for the soul of dead chiefs, stool occupants and mediums.

The supply of pots and other wood or metal products to the dead is believed to be a device to provide comfort to the souls of the departed chiefs/kings. This ceremony involving the figures takes place during the final rites of the deceased person. Thus even when the chief is dead, his comfort is sought by his subjects. The *osempon* is, therefore, a great incentive for the Akan chief to rule well.

2.13 Summary of discussion

The chapter has been mostly devoted to literary materials. These include books, magazines, journals, and unpublished thesis. The review has established the fact that art is, indeed, vitally involved in chieftaincy. Moreover, this involvement is not limited to the Akan to whom the people of Ahwiaa belong. It is universal. It is now clear that the various forms of art, namely visual, verbal, body and performing arts play a vital role in the chieftaincy system of the Akan of Ghana and other chieftaincy institutions in Africa.

The visual arts that help to make the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa and of course that of Asante and the whole Ghana include stools, state swords, weapons for wars, umbrellas, spokesman's staffs, palanquins, architectural structures, etc. The researcher's study of documented materials have helped to establish the fact that palaces and mausoleums which are forms of visual or environmental art, allow the Akan king/chief to have his peace of mind to rule, and also provides some amount of security to the chief. It also provides a place for the storage of the stool's paraphernalia, while mausoleums like the Breman One in Kumasi and other places provide the final resting place for the departed kings/chiefs.

Body arts include cloths worn by the chiefs and their subordinates, such as *kente*, *adinkra*, and *batakari*. Sandals, headgears, rings among others, help in making the king/chief dignified. When one considers the performing arts, it is noted that Asante music and dance play a significant role in the installation, death, burial and final funeral rites of the *Ahwiaahene* as well as those of the *Asantehene*. It is learnt, moreover, that there are different musical instruments for different types of music,

some of which are *fontomfrom* drums that are a symbol of status.

Drum language is also valued as a form of art that helps the chief to recall the history of his people. It is also used to recite praises of the chief especially among the Akan.

To sum up, the researcher is in a position to state, without any fear of gainsaying, that the literature review undertaken in this chapter, has put readers in a position to conclude that art indeed has a vital role to play in chieftaincy.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Overview

Writing a thesis of this calibre requires a good methodology in order to show readers how the data necessary for the accomplishment of the study were gathered and analysed. The methodology deals with the research approaches employed to gather and process the necessary data in order to contribute effectively to the promotion of knowledge.

The methodology has played an enormous role to the researcher because it has enabled him to successfully obtain the essential data for the accomplishment of the thesis. It has also helped him to do the necessary analyses and discussion of the data. The methodology has enabled him to arrive at informed conclusions and validate his hypothesis, and has finally assisted him to offer beneficial recommendations. The chapter includes the following subheadings such as Research Design, Library Research Population, Sample and Sampling procedures, Data collection techniques, Survey instruments and Data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The main method adopted for the research is the qualitative research methodology.

The various techniques employed by the researcher in gathering the necessary information were interviews, questionnaire and observations of the roles of art in the chieftaincy system of the Ahwiaa people. Since the study was primarily focused on the description of the various arts in the Chieftaincy of the Ahwiaa people, the research problem was best answered by a qualitative research approach. The research

design allows the researcher to meet the purpose of the research. Thus, the research design refers to the overall plan employed by the researcher to obtain answers to the research questions and for testing the research questions formulated (Agyedu *et al*, 2007).

3.3 Library Research

In comparing what previous writers have written on the topic, library research played a very important role in the accomplishment of this thesis. In other words, in making room for comparison and scholarly presentation of ideas, the researcher conducted extensive library research to gather secondary data for this writing. The following facilities were contacted for relevant literature: Main Library of the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST), Kumasi, Libraries, College of Art and Social Sciences, KNUST, Kumasi, the Balme Library of the University of Ghana, Legon, Accra, the National Museum and Monuments Board, Accra, Ashanti Regional Library, Kumasi. Others included, Kumasi Polytechnic Library, Kumasi and the Kwabre District Library, Mampong. Relentless efforts were made to collect these secondary data from journal articles, magazines, unpublished theses and books.

3.4 Archival Research

Several efforts were made by the researcher during his numerous visits to the Ashanti Regional Archives and the Manhyia Palace Archives, both in Kumasi to elicit information on the study, but to the dismay of the researcher not a single document or information on it was available. An interview with the Manhyia Palace Archivist, Mr. Thomas K Aning, revealed that there was not a single paper containing any information on Ahwii culture, which includes its art and chieftaincy. The researcher,

therefore, gathered some information on Asante art and culture, of which Ahwiaa is an integral part and the information gathered was very useful to the research.

3.5 Study Zone (Area of the research)

Ahwiaa is a town found in the Kwabre District of the Ashanti Region of the Republic of Ghana. It is situated on the main Kumasi-Mampon road. It is about some twenty-five minutes drive from the Ashanti Regional capital of Kumasi. According to the *Gyaasehene* of the town, Nana Kwaku Bonsu, until recently, it used to be a farming community, but due to the acute shortage of accommodation in the Kumasi Metropolis, a lot of people have settled there, thereby forcing the traditional authorities to sell most of their farm lands for building purposes. This has indeed led to it becoming more of a municipal nature with a population of over fourteen thousand people as indicated in the census report of the year 2000.

Like any other Asante town or village, it has a rainy and dry season, with tree shrubs and grassland nature, as its original forest have been depleted. As already indicated in Chapter One of this thesis, the people settled there from Denkyira in the present-day Central Region of the Republic of Ghana, after the Asante war of independence from Denkyira.

The major occupation of the people is carving. As indicated earlier, this was the very work they were doing in Denkyira before settling at their present home. They carved all sorts of artistic materials from wood. They have lived with this kind of job for centuries and are well known with it beyond the borders of Asante. Apart from carving and selling of these products, majority of the people do petty trading. A few

are also engaged in farming on their pieces of land left at Nsensanso (their original settlement), Ahafo and the Sehwi areas of the Ashanti and Western Regions respectively.

3.6 Population for the study

According to Fox (1969:94), the population, the universe, the accepted sample and the data –producing sample are the stages or the elements in the sampling process. In his view, universe stands for all possible respondents or measures of a certain kind. The population was the portion of the universe that was accessible to the researcher. The term population refers to the complete set of individuals (subjects), objects or events having common observable characteristics in which the researcher is interested in studying (Agyedu *et. al*; 2007).

It was realised upon the information gathered and the number of respondents from the categories of the population, coupled with research time constraints that prompted the researcher to take forty percent of the entire population. The researcher chose forty percent of the population because Agyedu *et. al*; (2007) quoted Nwana (1992) that if the population is few hundreds, then a 40 percent or more sample size will do for a quality research. This therefore became the targeted and accessible population.

Therefore, the researcher targeted the following: The chiefs and stool royals, wood carvers and sellers of wood products, town folks, both male and female, tertiary institution students, basic school teachers and salaried workers of Ahwiaa for this study. The population in terms of numbers is represented as 240 people as against the targeted number of 300. It was based on the information gathered and the number

of respondents from the categories of the population that enabled the researcher to arrive at the present 240 target.

Since the people involved in this interview were all not concentrated at a particular place, time was taken to contact these people at various times. The first category consists of the Chiefs and Stool Royals who are directly involved in the processes of their chieftaincy system. The second category was the wood carvers and sellers of wood products. These carvers have indeed made a name for this town so far as Ahwiaa art and chieftaincy are concerned. The third category included town folks (men and women). They are always involved in the performance of most of these cultural activities of the town and can therefore, provide practical experience of the art and culture of the town. The fourth category consists of teachers and students of the various tertiary institutions (Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education) and salaried workers. They were grouped together simply because they can read and write and may therefore provide any necessary information needed easily. In all, a total of two hundred and forty people, as indicated earlier, were interviewed for the research as against the supposed three hundred people targeted.

The essence of this categorisation is that it has enabled the researcher to find out the adequacy of the already existing literature and tapped new information that relates to the art and chieftaincy of Ahwiaa culture. Through this, the people interviewed had the opportunity to give their knowledge on the issue at stake to enable such vital information to be documented for future reference by people who bother to know something about Ahwiaa art and chieftaincy. The table below shows the number of population the researcher interviewed.

Table 1: Categorisation of population and number of targeted interviewees

Item	Category of Population	No of Targeted Population	Accessible population
(a)	Category A Chiefs and Stool Royals	30	30
(b)	Category B Wood Carvers and Sellers of wood products	80	30
(c)	Category C Town Folks (male and female)	90	80
(d)	Category D Teachers, Students and other salaried workers	100	100

- The total potential population for this research was therefore 300 respondents aged twenty-one years and above

Table 2: Schematic Overview of Stratified Random Sampling Design

POPULATION	CATEGORY A – (30)			
	CATEGORY B – (80) WOOD CARVERS/SELFERS – STRATUM			
	CATEGORY C – (90) TOWN FOLKS – STRATUM 3			
	CATEGORY D – (100)			
EQUALIZATION LEVEL	A 30 30	B 80 80	C 90 90	D 100 100
RANDOMIZATION LEVEL 40%	12	32	36	40
SAMPLE	A + B + C + D 12 + 32 + 36 + 40			
DATA LEVEL	120 Respondents			

When considering the population and sampling design, the researcher first of all determined his population universe and outlined the parameters of the population the researcher wanted to study. Table 2 is the schematic overview of the stratified random sampling. Due to the dissimilarities of elements or individuals, the stratified random

sampling was adopted and the population was divided into various strata. The stratified random sampling helped the researcher in lowering the variance in the population.

As already mentioned, (Agyedu, *et.al*; 2007) quoted Nwana (1992) that for a population of few hundreds; forty percent will do for a quality research. This technique was therefore employed to select the sample of 120 (40%) of the total population of the respondents. (The targeted population was 300, while the respondents stood at 120, representing 40 %.). Each stratum is homogenous and the total sample was shared among the four strata of the total population.

Below is a table showing the percentage of the respondents in each stratum. The formula to which the percentages were derived is also indicated in the table:

Table 3: Percentage of sample

Status	No of Sample	Percentage (%)
Chiefs and Stool Royals	12	10
Wood Carvers and Sellers	32	26.67
Town Folks	36	30
Basic School Teachers and Students	40	33.33

The formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Number of Sample}}{\text{Total Number}} \times 100\%$$

3.7 Survey Instruments and data collection

The research instruments used for primary data collection included observation and both structured and unstructured interviews. These were the methods used by the researcher to obtain the needed information from those interviewed, and to come out with any hidden information on the topic (Art and Chieftaincy of Ahwiaa Culture) and how it has benefitted the people economically

3.8 Interviews

Agyedu *et. al*; (2007:104) define research interview as ‘a face-to-face’ meeting between the questioner and a respondent, or an oral presentation of an opinionaire or attitude scale. It was noted by the researcher that the response rate was very high and more clarified as compared to any other survey instruments. The interviews were more rewarding than any of the survey instruments (gathering devices) employed. This was probably due to the fact that the respondents or interviewees were more willing to talk in order to express themselves than to write. While talking, they got the opportunity to elaborate on their opinions. Interviews are suitable for some category of people, especially illiterates and semi-literate who prefer talking to writing (Manford, 1995).

Apart from the elements of Category D where the English Language was mostly used in asking the questions, the researcher used the Asante Twi language in eliciting the necessary data from the interviewees and informants. This was simply because the people could best express themselves in the local language. Even in the cases where the interviews could have been in the English language especially with the Basic School Teachers and Students, it was realised that both the researcher and

interviewees enjoyed speaking Twi although they intermittently spoke the English language. Although it was very difficult to get the interviewees to collect data, it was worth it and the interviewees were directed to talk on the issue on board.

3.9 Observation

Observation is using one's sense to see, smell, touch, occasionally taste and to listen to what is going on in a given social setting (Agyedu, *et. al*; 2007). Another writer called Nisbet (1977:15) has emphasised that observation is not a 'natural gift' but a highly skilled activity for which an extensive background knowledge and understanding are required and also a capacity for original thinking and the ability to spot significant events. Without observatory participation, the researcher would not be able to ascertain the authenticity of the data gathered from the interviewees. It furthermore gave the researcher the opportunity to gain affinity with the carvers and traditional rulers.

In the course of the data collection, the researcher observed how the carvers go about carving their stools, dolls, finials of umbrellas among others. At a point in time the researcher had to ask questions where the need arose and various answers were given to substantiate the issue at stake. The observations were made to enable the researcher see, touch, and take pictures and notes. In short, the observation, therefore, gave first hand information to the researcher.

3.10 Questionnaire Design and Validation

In order to gather data from respondents, it was expedient to design a questionnaire capable of collecting the necessary data from the researcher's respondents which

obviously would contribute effectively to the promotion of knowledge. The questions were a mixture of open and close- ended types in which the respondents had the opportunity of scoring by ticking the answers and also stating their opinions where suitable. For this reason, boxes were provided for such scoring.

The precise and concise questionnaire was validated by the researcher's Supervisor and few PhD. colleagues to verify whether the questions were capable of eliciting the necessary data.

3.11 Administering of Questionnaire

The questionnaire was self administered to the prospective respondents apart from a few that was mailed to the respondents due to distance. The respondents were allowed fifteen days to answer the questions. The researcher observed that the category D which comprised students and Basic School teachers worked within the stipulated time. The other categories although answered the questionnaire, it was after persistent reminders.

3.12 Summary of discussion

In summing up, it is evident that the researcher has laid down bare the processes he followed in gathering data for the research and the reasons for writing the methodology aspect of this thesis. The field works carried out show and clearly demonstrate the level of in depth research carried out throughout the study. Additional information retrieved from some official curators of museums and archivists of archives helped to boost up the relevant information needed in the study. The library research also points to the fact that all will not be well with a study such

as this if it does not include what others have done in the related field of study. This study has clearly demonstrated that the data collection instrument employed here, the interview method, was more successful as compared to the others. Furthermore, the information gathered here, will be compared and contrasted with the researcher's findings from the books and other literature and the necessary criticisms raised.

Finally, having obtained the needed information from the field, the next chapter, Chapter Four presents the findings of the study gathered by the use of the research methods and tools that have been discussed in this chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Overview

This chapter presents and discusses the findings of the research. Apart from the discussions, it identifies the arts that are associated with Ahwiaa chieftaincy, shows how the arts feature in the various departments of the institution, examines the roles which the arts play in the different segments of the chieftaincy system, and points out that the arts are so important in Ahwiaa chieftaincy that they are indispensable to it.

4.2 The Arts that are associated with Ahwiaa Chieftaincy

The arts that are involved in Ahwiaa chieftaincy are categorised as follows: visual arts, body arts, performing arts, and verbal arts.

4.2.1 Visual Art

By visual arts the researcher means the arts we perceive with our eyes. Examples are the palace, stools, chairs, state swords, ceremonial umbrellas, spokesmen's staves and other creative works of interest and which are found in an environmental setting. (See Plate 4.3). Other examples are the decorations on ceremonial grounds and musical instruments not being played. For, when they are being played, to produce music, they are categorised under performing arts. At Ahwiaa, the *Ahenfie* (palace) the Agyebi Nti Stool and other royal stools as seen below (Plates 4.1 and 4.2) are some of the visual arts found in the chieftaincy system of the this town. Others include small umbrellas, drums, chairs, spokesmen's' staves, etc. Apart from those visual arts found with the chieftaincy, the carvers of Ahwiaa, who have carved a niche

for themselves in the field of carving also, have the artefacts on the plates found below: Plate 4.4, Plate 4.5 and 4.6. This stool (Plate 4.6) is a royal male stool, carved specifically for kings, chiefs and other stool royals.



Plate 4.1 A Royal Stool – *Afena Stool*. A product of Ahwiaa
Source: Picture given to researcher by Ahwiaa Abusuapanin



Plate 4.2 Another Royal Stool from Ahwiaa: *Gye Nyame* (Except God)
Source: Picture given to researcher by Ahwiaa Abusuapanin



Plate 4.3 Flamboyant umbrellas, spokesmen's staves and other artefacts
at a durbar grounds

Source: Captured from www.ghanaweb.com by researcher



Plate 4.4 *Akuaba* dolls (Asante dolls) manufactured by some carvers from Ahwiaa. They are produced for commercial purposes.

Source: Picture captured by researcher from the net, www.ghanaweb.com



Plate 4.5 A product of Ahwiaa, the 'Mask', also produced for sale.
Source: Photograph taken from the net, www.ghanaweb.com by researcher



**Plate 4.6 An Asante Male ‘Silver’/White Stool. A product of Ahwiaa.
C. 1895 – 1910**

Sheet Silver decorations

Length: 24”

Max. Height: 14”

Max. Width: 12”

**Source: Martha J. Ehrlich - Southern Illinois University
(www.yahoo.com – Ancient Asante Stools/Chairs)**

4.2.2 Body Arts

Besides visual arts, body arts are heavily involved in Ahwiaa chieftaincy. Body arts involved in Ahwiaa chieftaincy are the regalia found on the bodies of the chief, the queenmother and the sub-chiefs, identifying them as members of a ruling class. Such arts include the headgear, finger-rings, wristlets, necklaces, beautiful *kente*, *adinkra* and other types of cloths, as well as beautiful sandals. Other forms of body arts associated with Ahwiaa chieftaincy are the regalia held in the hands of the ruling class when performing their official duties. Examples of such body arts are fly whisks, state swords and spokesmen’s staves found in the hands of ranking officers of the chieftaincy systems, while performing their official duties. It is to be noted that, when

the body arts are removed from the human body and placed in an environment, within or outside a house, they are at that moment regarded as visual or environmental arts.

In the various departments of chieftaincy of Ahwiaa culture, dressing is not devoid of ornamentations such as headbands. Specific headbands are worn to depict the sentiments of the occasion. The chief sometimes wears a headband artistically fashioned in red or black cloth and this is to depict his state of mourning a dead one. The headband affords people the opportunity to easily identify the chief and customarily accord him the needed reverence.

The costumes or dressing for the chiefs during any departments of the chieftaincy procedure of the Ahwiaa people is never complete without the holding of flywhisks. The flywhisk of the *Ahwiaahene* or Asante chief is derived from the tails of a horse, cow or donkey and its use dates back from the ancient times. Again, just as mentioned earlier that the colours of the artefacts depict the nature of the ceremony, a white flywhisk is used during joyous functions such as festivals whilst dark colours are used during funerals and destoolment of a chief. (Since a photograph of the chief of Ahwiaa holding a flywhisk could not be obtained by the researcher, a picture of the *Asantehene*, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II was used to enable readers see the picture of a flywhisk). See Plate 4.7

The significance of the flywhisk to the chief is derived from a known fact that the tail of a horse or donkey from which the artefact is made is indeed a humble animal, resourceful and very hardworking. In these good virtues of the animal, the people

believe the flywhisk which is held by the chief of Ahwiaa is to symbolise his humility, his dedication and commitment and also to portray hardwork.



Plate 4.7 The *Asantehene*, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II with a white flywhisk in hand.

Source: Culled from Ghana Review International News Magazine. Issue No 106, 2004 edition

4.2.3 Performing Arts

Performing arts also feature prominently in Ahwiaa chieftaincy, as they do in other chieftaincy systems in the rest of Ghana and Africa. Performing arts in this thesis refer to the arts performed or expressed with the body. The performing arts are royal music, dance and drama (See Plate 4.8). These arts in the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa culture form the most interesting and fascinating phenomena of the various artistic creations in the chieftaincy institution.



Plate 4.8 An Asante woman dancing to the tune of *adowa* music while *atumpan* drums were being played.
Source: Culled from 'Our Drums and Drummers'

4.2.4 Verbal Arts

Finally, verbal arts also are the special artistic words spoken in connection with chieftaincy. These comprise proverbs, idioms among others, spoken in connection with chieftaincy, especially during durbars. Verbal arts cannot be secluded from the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa culture. They are spoken arts that have aesthetic qualities as had already been indicated above. Pouring of libation which serves as a form of communication of re-union between the people and their ancestors, as pointed out earlier and below, is concurrently performed with poetic prayers that are artistic in nature. The pouring of libation is usually accompanied by the uttering of artistic prayers and appellations. The prayers and appellations are forms of verbal arts that

permeate the chieftaincy system in Ahwiaa culture. The people use these forms of artistic creations to flatter the spirits, compose the encomiums and sound the praise names of the spirits to influence them to respond to the requests of devotees. The words used during prayers are carefully chosen or designed to yield pleasing results which probably are observed without much attention; it is through these poetic and sounding of appellations that lyrical expressions of preconscious knowledge are created.

Moreover, by the use of such verbal arts, long stories or long sentences are cut very short and easily kept in memory. It is safe to assert that these artistic utterances which connoisseurs classify as verbal arts are believed to flatter the spirits and ‘manipulate’ them to help the people achieve their objectives. It can then be accentuated that within the significance and approbation of the Ahwiaa culture, verbal arts work hand in hand with the various departments of the chieftaincy activities and are thought to have the power to attract the benevolent spirits and repel bad omens that wish to taunt the image of the festival or spoil the joy of its celebration. It must be said that the pouring of libation, in this thesis, is the act of pouring of distilleries or water out on an altar or the ground in honour of a spiritual power. The researcher is aware that not pouring of the libation *per se* which is art but the dramatic act in pouring the liquid makes it artistic.

The artistic act of pouring libation underlines the dramatic rudiments of the Ahwiaa culture. Through the pouring of libation and poetic prayers, the people portray their symbolic and religious beliefs for the renewal of their sense of security, survival, balance and continuity with the past, thus reinforcing their affiliation with their

divinities and ancestors. This is seen through the pouring of libation and the reciting of poetic words to invoke the benevolent divinities to possess their mediums and express their gratitude to ancestors and divinities. The lyrics that go together with the pouring of libation, the proverbs said to shorten long sentences and the appellations sounded during the celebrations all increase the artistic dimension of their rich culture.

4.3 Artistic aspects of the Nomination and Acceptance of the Chief of Ahwiaa

Art plays a significant role in the nomination and acceptance of the Ahwiaa chief, because the queenmother who nominates the chief to fill a vacant Ahwiaa stool, does so in the palace at Ahwiaa which, as have already been acknowledged in chapter two, is a form of architectural art. According to Nana Kofi Kakari, the *Abusuapanin* of the ruling *Asona* clan of Ahwiaa, as happens in all Akan areas, whenever the chief of Ahwiaa goes to the 'village' (dies) the queenmother is given the option to choose a befitting male royal to occupy the vacant stool. The big question is, is the queenmother given the sole chance to do this nomination or even if she is allowed to nominate, is her choice accepted as it used to be the case in the past whenever the stool becomes vacant? At Ahwiaa, during this period, a lot of talking as well as discussion takes place in the palace and outside the palace concerning the nominee in question. The sub-chiefs and leading family members may be wondering whether the queenmother has made the right choice or not. Again, whether the nominee would be appealing to the citizenry. All these discussions take the form of verbal art. Greetings are exchanged at such gatherings and this act constitutes a performing art. Recently in many Akan areas, whenever the stool becomes vacant there may be a struggle over who will be the next to occupy it and sometimes the rivals include non-royals. Even

among the royals, it has been observed that the highest bidder (the rich or well educated ones) even though he may not be the right choice, are nominated, sometimes ignoring the queenmother's choice and that of the majority. These circumstances have led to numerous chieftaincy disputes in most Akan areas including Ahwiaa.

During the nomination, the palace provides an accommodation, a sense of security and solemnity to the queenmother and other kingmakers. The cloth, the sandals and the jewellery worn by them, are all body arts, which enhance the dignity of the nominee and provide an aesthetic spectacle that makes the atmosphere really serene during the nomination of the chief. The stools and chairs on which they sit do not only make them more comfortable, but they are also visual arts which provide dignity and furthermore help to preserve the sacredness of the queenmother and members of her council. This is because, as already mentioned in Chapter Two, it is a taboo for the Akan queenmother or chief to sit on the bare earth or allow their bare feet touch the ground. It is a taboo especially when people are around. In this regard, if mistakenly he or she is found with bare feet on the ground it can be used as a charge to destool him or her. Furthermore, those who meet to approve the nomination employ the same or similar art work.

As indicated earlier, the nomination of the *Ahwiaahene*, involves a great deal of verbal and performing arts as during this process, the Queenmother sends her spokesman to invite the *Gyaasehene* of the town and his entourage who are the official representatives of the Ahwiaa citizenry. Before the *Gyaasehene* and his entourage arrive at the palace, the Queenmother and the elders of the royal *Asona* lineage would have sat in a semi-circle way with the Queenmother occupying the

central position. The sitting arrangement itself is a form of performing art and is done this way to facilitate easy greetings on the part of those who will arrive later and may want to exchange greetings with those already seated. Again, it exhibits the ranks and hierarchy of the Queenmother, the various chiefs and the elders present to the outside world. As noted earlier, the stools and chairs on which the Queenmother and her council sat provide some amount of comfort for the council to discuss the issue at stake well. When the invitees arrive, they greet the seated elders and shake hands with them beginning from the person on the far right to the last person on the left. The greetings (shaking of hands) and the words accompanying it constitute both performing and verbal arts, as they pave way for the whole ceremony to start. After the greetings, the *Gyaasehene* and his entourage are offered seats, on the right hand side of the Queenmother.

The council gets up and reciprocates the extra-linguistic phatic communion. When they are back on their seats, the Queenmother invites her spokesman to pour libation and pray to invite Ahwiaa ancestors and divinities to be present. The words that accompany the libation pouring are verbal art, while the libation pouring itself is a performing art. The spokesman, with a glass in his right hand, gets up with alacrity. Another young man quickly takes a bottle of schnapps lying by his side, opens it and, in three attempts, pours enough of the alcoholic drink into the glass. The queenmother's gestures artistically for silence and utters the following poetic which is therefore an artistic prayer:

Otwedumpon nsa o!
Asaase Yaa Amponyinaoa, nsa!
Abosom nnuasa nsa o !
Dwomo nsa nie !
Asonafoo nsamfoo nsa o !

*Nana Agyebi Nti begye nsa
 Ye ahyia mo dinmu se yede ohene
 a ye ayi no rebekyere omanfoo
 ye sre momma nhyiamu yi
 nwie nkonimidie mu
 Yen a ye ahyia mu ha yi nkwa so
 Ahwiaaman yen akyi akyigyina pa
 Obiara a ompe Ahwiaaman yie dee
 Momma ne nkonkomu nwoso mmo ne tiri so*

English version:

God Almighty, a drink for you o!
 other earth, all accommodating, drink for you!
 ye thousand gods, drink for you o!
 Dwomo, drink for you
 Ancestors of the *Asona* lineage, drink for you o!
 Nana Agyebi Nti, come and receive your drink!
 we have here gathered in your name
 to introduce the nominated chief to the people
 We pray that this meeting end successfully.
 life to all here in gathered
 Life to the town of Ahwiaa
 stand behind us with a good standing
 to anyone who wishes ill to the Ahwiaa town
 May his own curses heap upon his head

As the queenmother's spokesman recites these artistic words, he punctuates them with the pouring of libation. Another punctuation comes from the young man who holds the bottle of schnapps and stands close to the queenmother's spokesman. While the spokesman is praying and pouring down the schnapps, the attendant holding the bottle shouts *sion* when the spokesman finishes every sentence in the prayer. At the end of the libation prayer, the young man says '*mo ne kasa*' (well spoken) in appreciation of the verbally artistic effort with which the tone has been set for proceedings.

At Ahwiaa and in all the other Akan areas, the libation prayer which takes the form of verbal and performing arts, is the medium through which God, the earth, the deities

and the ancestors are formally invited to ‘participate’ in and become witnesses to the nomination and acceptance of the chief. The libation and artistic prayer, therefore, gives the new chief of Ahwiaa a spiritual foundation, social and legal acceptance and thus emphasises the importance of verbal art at this stage of the enstoolment process of a chief at Ahwiaa. But whether these spiritual powers actually ‘participate’ in the process or not, it is difficult to know it.

According to Nana Kofi Kakari, the *Asona Abusuapanin* of Ahwiaa, after the libation prayer, the young man who poured the drink serves the rest of the drink for everybody present to have a taste of it. Thus, the mortal participants drink after God, the earth, the deities and the ancestors are believed to have taken a few sips. After the drink, the Queenmother employs verbal arts to request her spokesman to ask the *Gyaasehene* and his entourage about the reason for their coming to her palace. The *Gyaasehene*, while replying on behalf of the other members of his group, gestures artistically with his right hand and says:

*Nana hema wosoma be see yen se
woanya obi a obehwe Ahwiaa Kuro
yi so ama yen, enti ye bom gyina
omanfoo anan mu mmehwe se
yebe gye no ato mu a. Eno nti
na yenam. Yenkuta no bone.*

English version:

Nana Queenmother, you sent to inform us that you
have gotten someone to look after this town for us
so we should come, and on behalf of the Ahwiaa citizenry
see if we shall approve of him. That is why we are here,
we bear no bad news.

The Queenmother then orders the nominee to stand up: She then says: *Nea manya no no ni na mose sen?* (This is the one I have got, what do you say of him?) The

Gyaasehene then calls the nominated *Ahwiaahene* into a room in the palace an artistic enclosure, of course, and examines him to make sure that he does not have any deformity or any skin disease. When the *Gyaasehene* ascertains that the nominated chief is without blemish, he brings him back and with an artistic gesture, declares: *Ye peno* (We approve of him). After the nominee has been accepted at Ahwiaa as it happens in the other Akan areas, an artefact is again relied on to initiate the next stage of introduction. A *gong*, which is an art object, is beaten to invite all citizens of Ahwiaa to assemble at the palace to see their new chief. The gong beater goes from street to street and to all quarters of the Ahwiaa town to make the announcement poetically or artistically. At each point, after ensuring that he has got the attention of the Ahwiaa people, he beats the gong a couple of times. The actions of the *gong* beater underline the dramatic rudiments and make the activity a whole scenario of artistic creation. This is how he makes the announcement:

Ahwiaafoo ei! Nana hema se oma mo akye o!
Ose wanya ohene foforo ama yen, enti obiara
mme hwe no, na nea owo ne ho asem no, ommeka

English version:

People of Ahwiaa, the Queenmother says ‘good morning to you’
 it is her wish that I inform you, that she has got a new chief for us
 therefore you should all come and see him, so that whoever may have
 objection against him may raise it.

Soon after the *gong* has been beaten all around the town, the palace suddenly becomes so full of people chanting songs with joy to welcome their new chief. Since the establishment of Ahwiaa, as narrated by Nana Kwaku Bonsu, the *Gyaasehene* of the town, there has never been an occasion when an objection has been raised against a

chosen chief at this stage of introduction. The crowd which throngs to the palace are just curious to catch a glimpse of the nominated chief and express their joy of having a new chief.

After the appointed Ahwiaa chief has been accepted, he is confined in a special room at the Ahwiaa palace for a week. The fact that this confinement takes place in a room gives an additional example of the role art plays in the chieftaincy of Ahwiaa. Akuffo (1976) points out that Akuapem people also confine their new chosen chiefs. However, he states that the confinement takes place in the stool room. One will be tempted to ask at this point whether in recent times confinement of the chief of Ahwiaa and other Akan areas are necessary, looking at the way royals struggle to occupy stools when they are vacant. To the researcher it is not necessary, since the motive behind this confinement in the past was to prevent prospective chiefs from running away. On the other hand, others too feel there is the need for this confinement since the idea is not only to prevent the prospective chief from running away but to use the period to educate and teach the candidate the rudiments of the chieftaincy system in general.

The late *Kontihene* of Asante Mampon, Nana Yaw Kodua informed the researcher that traditional Asantes consider a circumcised person as deformed. He continued that after the nomination of the late Otumfuo Osei Agyeman Prempe II, some fussy chiefs asked that he be medically examined by an independent doctor at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (then Kumasi Central Hospital) to ensure that he was not circumcised. He continued, just as he (Nana Osei Agyeman Prempe II) was climbing up the staircase to the doctor's consulting room, he turned in anger and said: 'What is

all this fuss for? Let *Asanteman* take her Golden Stool so that I may be free to lead my life as I please'. Immediately those insisting on the examination compromised and the medical examination was ignored. When asked why not the kingmakers do this inspection themselves, but refer the then King-elect to a medical officer at the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital, the late *Kontihene* added that it is not an ideal thing for the kingmakers to see the nakedness of the King whilst alive, hence a neutral person doing this inspection on behalf of the *Asanteman* Council.

In this case, we notice a slight difference in the mode of inspecting the chief/king elect in the same area, Asante (Kumasi and Ahwiaa) for their approval to become kings/chiefs. Whereas at Ahwiaa, the chief-elect is inspected physically by the *Gyaasehene* of the town before confinement, in Kumasi the story is different.

According to the ruling *Asona Abusuapanin* (Head of *Asona* family), Nana Kofi Kakari of Ahwiaa, art plays a similar role in the acceptance of a nominated chief of Ahwiaa as it does during the nomination. The Queenmother and the council of elders after deliberate discussions arrive at a conclusion on who should be the next chief. Once again, these discussions and the acceptance of the new chief by the council take place in the same palace, which provide security to the Queenmother and her council. The acceptance of the nominee by the Queenmother and her council takes the form of a speech and it is a verbal art. So through verbal art, Ahwiaa is able to accept a chief. The various stools and chairs that these elders sit on have all been classified as Environmental or Visual art objects and they compliment the dignified nature of the nomination/acceptance processes. This council, according to Nana Kofi Kakari, includes the *Abusuapanin*, the *Ohemaa Kyeame* (the spokesman of the Queenmother),

the *Kontihene* (army captain), the *Nifahene* (right wing chief) and the *Gyaasehene* (overseer of the chief's palace but in Ahwiaa he doubles as the representative of the youth of the town). Concerning this representation, Akuffo (1976), talking of the Akuapem people states: *Baabi mpo de Asonafo ne Ohemaa nyinaa na bom paw Ohen yi'* (Somewhere, representatives from the *Asona* lineage and the queenmother take counsel to nominate a chief). Therefore, comparing what takes place in the nomination of the Akan chief, this may differ slightly from one area to another. Whereas in Ahwiaa the nomination is done by the Queenmother, *Abusuapanin*, the Spokesman of the queenmother, the *Kontihene*, *Nifahene* and the *Gyaasehene*, in Akuapem this is done by the *Asona* lineage and the Queenmother.

It must be noted that the nomination and the acceptance processes of the queenmother and the sub-chiefs of Ahwiaa almost go through the same process as that of the Ahwiaa chief, as would be seen in detail in subsequent pages of this thesis.

Thus the decision to nominate the chief at Ahwiaa is somehow taken democratically. It may, therefore, be seen as ironical that Nana Kusi Asiamah Yeboa, the current *Ahwiaahene* was not nominated by a queenmother because the queenmother's stool was vacant at the time of his nomination. Instead he was nominated by Nana Kwadwo Fordjour, an *Abusuapanin* from Abira (another town in the Kwabre District of Asante), where some of the relatives of the *Asona* people of Ahwiaa are located, as stated earlier in Chapter One. This means there can be deviations at times in the nomination of the Akan chief depending on the circumstance prevailing at the time. But this nomination by the Abira *Asona Abusuapanin* did not go well with majority of the people of Ahwiaa and this has led to a long standing chieftaincy dispute in the

town, as to whether Nana Kusi AsiamaYeboa, was properly nominated and installed.



Plate 4.9 The chief of Ahwiaa (middle), some family members and some sub-chiefs during his nomination process at Ahwiaa.
Source: Photograph given to researcher by Nana Ahwiaahene

According to Nana Kofi Kakari, the involvement of the kingmakers is important in the nomination/acceptance processes because they are those who examine the new chief and make sure that he is not deformed nor does he have any skin disease. It is therefore, gathered from this information that being a royal does not automatically qualify one to be a chief at Ahwiaa nor anywhere among the Akan, hence the care ‘to find out the wishes of the people and to ensure wholeness’. In a nutshell, the prospective Ahwiaa Chief must therefore, not be found to be deformed.

Another peculiar mode or one of the qualifications needed by an Ahwiaa royal which is unusual with other Akan areas is at Ahwiaa, as stated earlier, before an *Asona* royal is accepted as a chief, the potential chief’s ability to carve stools and other wood products is paramount. According to Nana Kusi Asiama Yeboa, the present *Ahwiaahene*, one needs to be a good carver before he will be fully accepted by the

Queenmother and the Kingmakers. When asked whether he has the ability to carve, he replied in the positive and even went to the extent of showing this researcher some stools he had carved and those in the process. A reason behind this according to Nana Asiamah Yeboa is that since the Ahwiaa stool was purposely created to do this job, it is a must for its occupant to have a thorough knowledge in carving. Furthermore, presently the *Ahwiaahene* also doubles as the *Asenehene* (chief of carvers) of the Asante Kingdom and the chief in his capacity as a good carver, must be able to supervise all carvers in the town and the Kingdom as a whole. This process of nomination somehow differs from what happens among the Danga of the Republic of Congo, where, as Bocolo (1995) informs readers: 'The King's right to rule is not derived only from his nomination by a direct ancestor, but it also depends on the recognition of the secrete society'.

However, according to Opanin Kwabena Adu of Ahwiaa, the present Ahwiaa chief, Nana Kusi Asiamah Yeboa was not confined. Opanin Adu further explains this by saying that in the olden days the chiefs were actually captured in their attempt to escape. The confinement was, therefore, part of the effort of the Ahwiaa people to ensure that their nominated chief did not escape. In those days, there was no contest to the stool, and the possibility that the right heir to the throne might not be interested in the chiefship, hence the decision to capture and confine him as indicated above. Opanin Adu went on: 'These days when royals contest for the stool, what is the need for the confinement?' Indeed, he substantiated his point by saying that the current *Asantehene*, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, was also not confined for the same reason.

On an appointed day, the nominated chief of Ahwiaa is taken to the residence of the *Atipimhene* (a sub-chief of *Asantehene* and the overlord of Ahwiaa) of Kumasi by the

Queenmother and the kingmakers. This thirteen kilometre journey from Ahwiaa to the *Atipimhene*'s residence is achieved through the involvement of art because they are conveyed there by a means of transport (see plate 4.10), a piece of industrial art. It is the *Atipimhene* who takes the *Ahwiaahene* to the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi to introduce him to the *Asantehene* and secures a date for the *Ahwiaahene*'s swearing-in ceremony. This is because the *Atipimhene* is considered the overlord of the *Ahwiaahene* in Asante's administrative organisation.



Plate 4.10 **The *Ahwiaahene* and his entourage about to commute to Manhyia for swearing- in- ceremony**

Source: **Picture given to researcher by Nana *Ahwiaahene***

The introduction of the *Ahwiaahene* to the *Asantehene* is done only after the *Atipimhene* and his elders have ascertained, through strict interviews, that the appointed *Ahwiaahene* has undergone every rite necessary for his nomination and acceptance. That the *Atipimhene* was satisfied with the *Ahwiaahene*'s nomination and acceptance seem to confirm Opanin Kwabena Adu's view that the confinement stage

can be overlooked at Ahwiaa.

4.4 Art and the Installation (Swearing-in-ceremony) of the Chief of Ahwiaa

On a fixed day, the overlord of the *Ahwiaahene*, the *Atipimhene* and his entourage, appear in traditional outfits to suit the occasion, which is a body art, and presents the *Ahwiaahene* to the *Asantehene* and the *Asanteman* Council for the swearing-in-ceremony. The sitting arrangement at the *Asantehene's* Palace (Manhyia), brings into focus stupendous artistic creations. The sitting arrangements conform to the principle of design that is order, balance, harmony, etc. In a nutshell, there is order in the arrangement since the *Asantehene* sits in the middle of the meeting, surrounded by his chiefs. His *kyeame* (spokesman) for the ceremony stands on his right hand side with his staff of office in his hand. An umbrella is spread upon the head of the *Asantehene* although he sits in a sheltered enclosure (*patom*). The whole scene is artistically colourful.

The *Atipimhene* then stands in front of the *Asantehene* with the Queenmother of Ahwiaa, the Ahwiaa *Gyaasehene* and the appointed chief behind him. The men on the mission lower their cloths to the waist level while in front of the *Asantehene*. This gesture, according to Nana Osei Kwadwo, the Curator of the Manhyia Palace Museum, indicates that the men in front of the *Asantehene*, occupant of the Golden Stool, have a clean heart, meaning, they abhor no ill motive in their heart. Furthermore, it's a sign of humility on the part of the men towards the king. This is another manner in which cloth, being another art work, as indicated earlier, serves the Ahwiaa chieftaincy system and the Asante King in general. Shifting the cloth from the shoulder this way, (See Plate 4.11) can be compared to an Englishman doffing off

his hat in courtesy to his king or queen. After baring his shoulder, the *Atipimhene* bows before the *Asantehene* till the top of his head become visible to the *Asantehene*. Nana Osei Kwadwo explains this to mean ‘my thoughts are clean’, that is, the *Atipimhene* has no bad intentions for the *Asantehene*, the overlord of *Asanteman* (the Asante Kingdom). Then speaking audibly, but not in a shouting manner, the *Atipimhene* informs him (*Asantehene*) through his spokesman: ‘*Otumfuo, w’adaworom enne na mede Ahwiaahene aba se ommesuae nkyere wo*’ translated as ‘(Otumfuo, by your grace, today I have brought before you the chief of Ahwiaa to swear to you’).

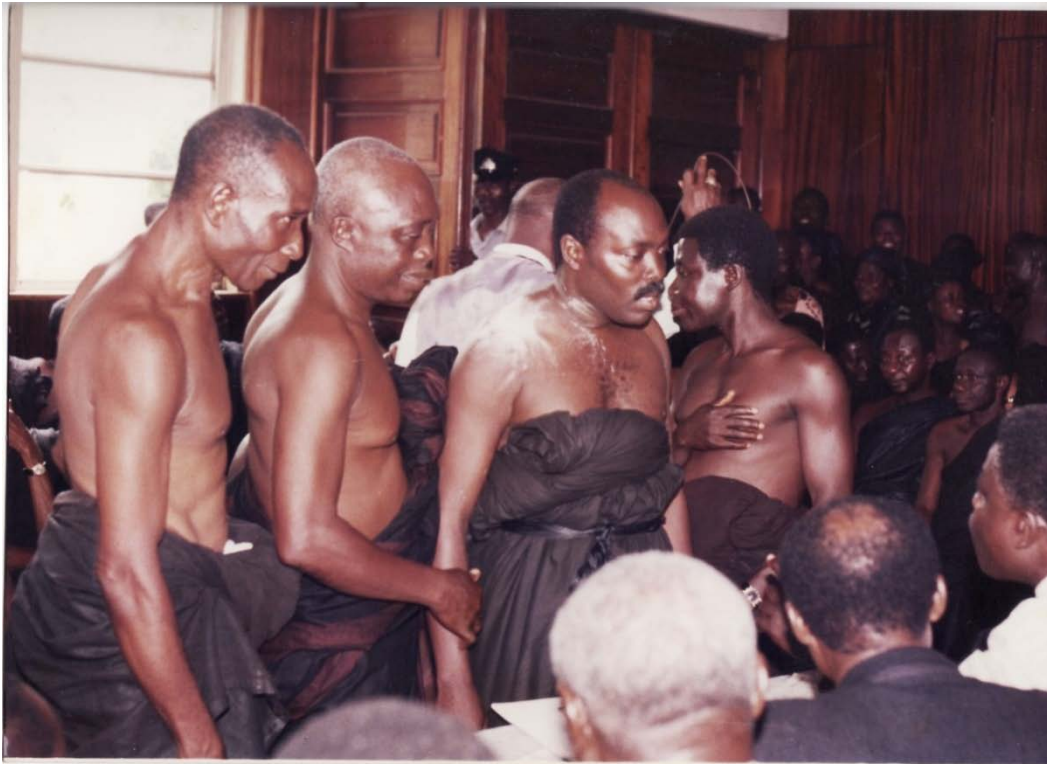


Plate 4.11 The *Ahwiaahene*-elect with the cloth shifted from the shoulder to chest before the *Asantehene*: Behind him is the *Gyaasehene* , who gives him support.
Source: Photograph provided by Nana *Ahwiaahene*.

At this stage, as the *Abusuapanin* of Ahwiaa, Nana Kofi Kakari discloses, the

Mpomponsuo sword, which has been mentioned in chapter two of this thesis, is presented to the *Atipimhene* by the chief custodian of the *Asantehene*'s state swords.

The *Atipimhene* swears to the *Asantehene* and his sub chiefs and subjects thus:

Otumfuo, w'adaworoma, Ahwiaa dehyee kronkron a ye ayi no se ommhwe Ahwiaa kuro no so mfa mmesom wo nie. Ahwiaa hema oyii no nie na Ahwiaa Gyaasehene a ogyina Ahwiaaman ana mu ka se: Ahwiaaman agye no ato mu nso nie Otumfuo, w'adaworoma, mene w'atipimhene, Ahwiaahene wura a w'adaworoma merebesre ama Ahwiaahene foforo a ye ayi no yi asuae akyere wo Otumfuo: se mede nsuo gyina m'nomu kasa kyere Otumfuo ne Asanteman da biara da, meka Ntam Kesie. Mesuae a meyi, yaree, se Otumfuo fre me anopa, awia anaa anadwo na se maama, me ka Ntam Kesie.

English version:

Otumfuo, by your grace, this is the true royal blood from Ahwiaa whom we have chosen to come and serve your dynasty. Present here is the Queenmother of Ahwiaa, who chose him and the Ahwiaa *Gyaasehene*, who spoke on behalf of the Ahwiaa citizenry that they have indeed accepted him. Otumfuo, by your grace I am your *Atipimhene* the overlord of Ahwiaa, and I 'm here to plead on behalf of the new *Ahwiaahene* to swear the oath of allegiance to you Otumfuo: that anytime I 'filled my mouth' with water to speak to you Otumfuo and *Asanteman*, I break the Great Oath (*Ntam Kesie*). I swear that apart from sickness if I refuse your call in the morning, afternoon or evening, I break the Great Oath.

After this, the *Gyaasehene* of Ahwiaa is given the *Ahwebaa* state sword by the *Asantehene*'s chief custodian of state swords. The *Gyaasehene* also swears to the *Asantehene* that the appointed Ahwiaa chief is a true royal who has undergone the due rites to qualify him to swear the oath of allegiance to the *Asantehene* and the people of Asante. Nana Kakari points out that at this stage the *Ahwiaahene*-elect is called to stand in front of the *Asantehene* and swear the oath of allegiance. The *Ahwiaahene* rolls his cloth into a knot upon his waist. The *Gyaasehene* of Ahwiaa takes hold of

his waist as a sign of support and the chief custodian of *Asantehene*'s state swords, hands him the *Ahwebaa* sword. He moves his right leg a step forward in a dramatic manner as a sign of respect and at the same time raises the *Ahwebaa* sword towards the *Asantehene* (See Plate 4.12) with his right hand clutching the hilt; then he says:

Nana Otumfuo, Nana Agyebi Nti nana ne me. Nana Owusuaa nana ne me. Enti meye Ahwiaa dehyee kronkron a mefiri Asona Abusua mu. Me na Ahwiaa hemmaa, Nana Asomasi ayi me se memme tena me nananom ngonwa so mfa mom nsom woo, ene Ahwiaaman agye me atom u. Enti enne, w'adaworoma mereda meho adi akyere wo Otumfuo ne Asanteman se Ahwiaahene. Enti, Otumfuo, w'adaworoma, efiri nne rekoro, mene wo ngonwasenefoo nyinaa ti. Mesuae se me osompa, nokore ne adwuma den be som. Otumfuo sedee me nananom somoe no. Se Otumfuo fre me anopa o, awiao, anadwo o, meba. Mesuae yi yaree. Se mede nsuo gyina m'anom kasa kyere Otumfuo a, meto Ntam Kese.

English version:

Nana Otumfuo, I am the grandchild of Nana Agyebi Nti. I am the grandchild of Nana Owusuaa. Therefore, I am true royal of Ahwiaa, hailing from the *Asona* lineage. I am the one appointed by the Queenmother of Ahwiaa. Nana 'so and so', to sit on the stool of my ancestors and from thence serve you and the people of Ahwiaa have duly accepted me. Therefore, Otumfuo, by your grace, I hereby present myself to you and to *Asanteman* as the head of all your stool carvers, thereby swear that with good service, honesty and hard work will I serve Otumfuo in the manner served by my forbearers. Whether Otumfuo calls me in the morning, in the afternoon, or in the night I respond, except when I am indisposed. Should I ever speak lies to Otumfuo I break by the Great Oath.



Plate 4.12 The *Ahwiaahene*, swearing the Oath of Allegiance with the *Ahwebaa* sword to the *Asantehene* at the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi.

Source: Photograph was provided by Nana *Ahwiaahene*

So far it can be concluded that through art (sword) one can be made a chief. In Ahwiaa's case it is the *Ahwebaa* sword which makes one become a chief. The sword (an artwork) therefore plays a major role in the swearing-in- ceremony of the Ahwiaa chief and for that matter the Akan chief/king in general. In the first place, the state sword (*Ahwebaa*) opens the way for the *Ahwiaahene* to speak. In other words, without this sword the Ahwiaa chief cannot speak with authority to his people. Again, the sword paves a way for the crowd to keep quiet and listen to the *Ahwiaahene*-elect. That is this state sword helps to draw the people's attention to what the *Ahwiaahene*-elect is about to say. Furthermore, this state sword symbolically ratifies what the *Ahwiaahene* says and finally, the sword makes the words of the *Ahwiaahene* binding on him. If he later goes contrary to his words, he will be punished by the *Asantehene*.

Nana Kakari states that after a new *Ahwiaahene* has been successfully sworn in, the *Asantehene* invites him to shake hands with him (See Plate 4.13). This signifies that he has been accepted into the fraternity of Asante chiefs. The *Asantehene* then says: *Efiri nne reko, wo ne Ahwiaahene. Besom osom pa ma Asanteman nko so*: translated into English as: 'From today, you are the chief of Ahwiaa come and serve diligently for the development of Asante'.

Immediately after Otumfuo's declaration, *Ahwiaahene's* supporters throw powder unto the nape of his neck. The involvement of art in the chieftaincy of Ahwiaa continues throughout the swearing-in-ceremony. This is because, until powder has been thrown on the nape of the new *Ahwiaahene's* neck, the *Ahwiaahene* and every member of his entourage are clothed in black. About the black cloths in which these people are clothed, Antubam (1963) points out that during that period, everybody is in a solemn state, just like being in the state of mourning the dead. The application of powder on the elected *Ahwiaahene* symbolises victory. The black colour, in this case, symbolises death.



Plate 4.13 **The Asantehene shaking hands with the Ahwiaahene, after the swearing-in-ceremony. Note the various swords at display.**
Source: **Picture given by Nana Ahwiaahene**

The *Abusuapanin* further states that on a successful swearing-in of a chief of Ahwiaa, the women among his supporters burst into a song of praise to God:

*Osee yee yieie! yie yie! Otwieduampon e!
yeda wo ase oo! Yeda wo ase Amen o
yen na yen ni o!*

English version:

Hurray! Hurray!
Thou Mighty God.
We thank thee, we thank thee o! Amen
how happy we are today!

Following this outburst of joyous spontaneity, as narrated by Nana Kofi Kakari, the *Asona Abusuapanin* of Ahwiaa, the new chief and his entourage change into white cloths. (See Plate 4.14) The white cloth does not only signify that the new chief has been successful in his efforts to be sworn in, it also signifies that the former

Ahwiaahene who died has resurrected in the new chief.



Plate 4.14 **The *Ahwiaahene* (middle) flanked on the right by the *Gyaasehene* and left by the *Kontihene*, changes into white cloths after swearing the oath of allegiance to the *Asantehene* at Manhyia palace.**

Source: **Picture provided by Nana *Ahwiaahene*.**

Another significance of the women shouting and thanking the Omnipotent God through songs is that now they have a leader who will lead them in case of any eventuality, more especially in the olden days when wars were rampant, when a town did not have a chief, it could be easily attacked. Even in this modern era a town needs a chief to drive its activities such as communal labour, development projects, speaking on their behalf among others successfully.

Death, which this colour signifies is acknowledged among the Asante because, as Kyeremateng states, until a new king is enstooled to replace a dead *Asantehene* people

move about in mourning cloths. Every week, on the day that the former king had passed away, the people gather at the precincts of the palace. There is drumming and dancing and subdued wailing all over the place.

Kyeremateng (1980) discusses that during the interregnum between nomination and swearing-in-ceremony, an appointed *Asantehene* is entitled *Akwankwaahene* (chief of the youth or ordinary people). During this time, the *Asantehene* to be is assigned menial duties like any ordinary person. For example, he works among the youth to raise sheds. Akuffo (1976) also states that among the Akuapem too, the chief is entitled *Nkwankwaahene* with the same meaning as among the Asante. But according to the Ahwiaa *Gyaasehene*, this does not happen to the *Ahwiaahene*-elect since his stool is a lower stool as compared to that of Asante which is a kingdom and Akuapem, paramountcy.

According to Kyeremateng (1980) concerning the swearing-in-ceremony of the *Asantehene*, on the appointed day, the *Mpomponsuohene*, the custodian of the *Mpomponsuo* state sword, demands a fee before he releases the sword. The fee is called *ademadee*. The *Asantehene*-elect pays an agreed fee. After all these payments have been made by the *Asantehene*-elect, the *Asantehemaa* takes her seat at the centre, just as the *Asantehene* would have done if he were alive. On her left is seated the *Kokufuhemaa* (*Asantehemaa*'s own place when there is an *Asantehene*). The *Kokufuhene* with other *Oyoko* chiefs sits on her left. The other chiefs retain their usual positions for a state sitting. The same sitting arrangement is seen when there is no chief for Ahwiaa, as the Queenmother sits at the exact place where the semi-circle *Ahwiaahene* would have sat if alive, surrounded by the subchiefs of the town in a

position. This sitting arrangement is seen at Plate 4.15.



Plate 4.15 **The *Ahwiaahene* (seated) with an umbrella over his head) with his Elders and some stool royal members at the palace.**
Source: **Picture provided by Nana *Ahwiaahene***

Opanin Kwabena Adu (spokesman for the carvers) further points out that until a new *Ahwiaahene* is enstooled, the Ahwiaa town is administered by the *Kontihene* with the support of the previous chief's council, but this seems to be a bit different from the situation where the Asante is concerned because as Kyeremateng makes known to us: 'when the king has been laid to rest, the queenmother becomes the regent until the new king has been elected, installed and enstooled'.

4.5 Artistic aspects of the Outdooring ceremony of the chief of Ahwiaa

From the Manhyia Palace and in the very joyous mood described supra, the *Ahwiaahene* and his supporters ride back to their town aboard buses. Readers of this thesis may be mindful of the fact that these vehicles constitute industrial arts. And as Nana Kakari points out, this is the time when the new chief of Ahwiaa is formally introduced to his people. The new *Ahwiaahene* is carried shoulder high and paraded through the principal streets of the town amid singing and dancing. This singing and dancing among the people add pomp and pageant to the whole outdooring ceremony and it constitute verbal and performing arts. At this stage, an umbrella is spread over the new *Ahwiaahene*. This umbrella over the chief signifies that he has protection from the sunshine and in case there is a rain. Again, it gives the chief honour and prestige. It further makes the chief stand tall among all present at the ceremony and it is a visual art. One of the songs sung by the crowd that follow the chief of Ahwiaa, according to Nana Kakari is: *Atadwe, enne yeate de nne Atadwe, enne yeate de nne*: literally translated as: Tiger nuts, today, we have heard good news (today). These songs bring back joy to the people after a long period without a chief. It also signifies that there is now hope for the townsfolk as there is a chief who will lead them to initiate development projects in the town. Finally, the singing of such songs suggests that the people love their new chief and will forever support him.

After this introduction, according to Opanin Kwabena Adu, the new chief of Ahwiaa is customarily required to live at the palace (See Plate 4.16), just like the *Asantehene* to the Manhyia Palace, as said by Nana Osei Kwadwo, a renowned Historian and Curator of the Manhyia Palace Museum. A similar process takes place among the Akuapem because Akuffo says of them that after the swearing-in-ceremony, *Ohene yi*

hyen ahemfi kotena ho se nankasane fi. (The chief enters the palace and takes his residence there as his own house).



Plate 4.16 **The Ahwiaahene arriving at the palace after being paraded through the principal streets of the town.**
Source: **Photograph provided by Nana Ahwiaahene.**

According to Lamin Yakubu, an informant from the Dagbon area, a similar event takes place at Dagbon during the installation of a Dagbon chief. But over there the chief rides on a horseback, not on the shoulders of a man. According to Kyeremateng (1980), the *Asantehene* rides in a palanquin at a similar stage of introduction.

Madam Grace Genu also points out that among her people, the Anlos, when a chief is being introduced the new chief rides on guns. Three long-barrelled guns are tied together and placed on the shoulders of young men. The new chief rides on these while holding on to the shoulders of the young men. The people of the town follow the chief with music and dancing through the principal streets of the town. This, according to Madam Genu, indicates that the chief is also their military leader.

4.6 The role of Art and the Enstoolment of an Ahwiaa chief

In the night of the same day, the *Gyaasehene* and the elders of the royal *Asona* lineage of Ahwiaa take the new chief to the Ahwiaa palace. Libation is poured and a prayer said to thank God, the earth, the gods and the ancestors for the successful swearing in of the *Ahwiaahene*. These ‘spiritual’ beings mentioned above are also invited to supervise the last ceremony of the process for the enstoolment of an Ahwiaa chief. Customarily, a sheep is slaughtered in front of the stool room. The blood from the slaughtered sheep is made to flow onto the feet of the new chief. According to Akuffo (1976), among the Akuapem, this sheep is slaughtered in broad daylight immediately after the swearing-in-ceremony. After these events, as narrated by Nana Kakari, the elders of the royal *Asona* lineage enter the *nkondwadanmu* (stool room) of Ahwiaa with the new chief. In the stool room, the elders mentioned earlier, get the buttocks of the new *Ahwiaahene* three times close to the Agyebi Nti Stool. It is through this process that involves a piece of art work, that the new chief is enstooled. Through this process, it is believed, the new chief becomes imbued with the spirit of the previous chiefs, especially, that of Nana Agyebi Nti, the first chief of Ahwiaa. Both verbal and performing arts play a major role in this enstoolment process as the libation poured signifies that the new chief has the full support of the Omnipotent

God, the earth, the gods and the ancestors. Again, readers' attention is drawn to the fact that the stool (art) makes one the chief of Ahwiaa. Without this stool, one cannot call himself *Ahwiaahene*. It is this artwork which makes the people of Ahwiaa to accept this royal to become a chief and also give him the power to rule.

During the rite of enstoolment, care is taken that the buttocks of the chief does not touch the Agyebi Nti Stool because, according to Nana Kakari, this can cause the new chief to be sexually impotent which can, in turn cause his destoolment. This situation also applies to the occupant of the Golden Stool and other chiefs of the rest of Akan areas in Ghana, as their buttocks are not supposed to touch their black stools and the *Sika Dwa Kofi* (Golden Stool) respectively. Akuffo (1976) points out concerning the Akuapem method of enstoolment rite: The elders to the stool hold the hands of the new chief and pretend as if he is going to sit on the stool but this is never done, as customary his buttocks are not supposed to touch the stool, hence he becomes impotent.

We acknowledge from our discussion here that among the Akan (which include Ahwiaa), power from the ancestral chiefs to a new chief may be transmitted through the *Busumuru* Sword in the case of the *Asantehene*, the blackened stool in the case of some other chiefs, and other types of sword in the case of some Akyem and Akuapem chiefs, while among the Swazi of South Africa, this power is transmitted through the *assagai*.

In the case of Ahwiaa, as narrated by the chief of the town, the source of power of the *Ahwiaahene* is the *Asenehene Poma* (Carvers Stick).

4.7 Art and the choice of a name for the chief of Ahwiaa

According to Nana Kwaku Bonsu, the *Gyaasehene* of Ahwiaa, after enstoolment, a new Ahwiaa chief is blindfolded and left in the stool room to go and touch one of the blackened stools. The stool bearing the name of a deceased chief which he touches becomes his stool name. This tells us that even in choosing a name for the chief of Ahwiaa, art has a role to play in it. However, the current chief of Ahwiaa, called Nana Kusi Asiama Yeboa I, does not have a stool name. When the researcher asked Nana Kofi Kakari, the *Asona Abusuapanin* about why the Ahwiaa chief does not have a stool name, he replied that in the Asante kingdom, a chief may drop his stool name after he has chosen one through the blindfolding process described above. To substantiate his point, Nana Kakari referred to the late *Asantehene*, Nana Osei Agyeman Prempe I and affirmed that he dropped his stool name, Kwaku Dua III, after going through the enstoolment process, and took the name Osei Agyeman Prempe I.

Infact, this method of choosing a stool name, as described above, is not peculiar to Asantes. For Akuffo (1976), the already mentioned writer, points out that the same system is operative in other Akan areas of Ghana.

4.8 The Functions of Art in the installation of a queenmother at Ahwiaa

When the stool of the queenmother of Ahwiaa becomes vacant either by the death or destoolment of the previous queenmother, it is the Ahwiaa chief who nominates a woman from the royal *Asona* lineage to occupy the stool. According to Nana Kwaku Bonsu, the *Gyaasehene* of Ahwiaa, this nomination is done in consultation with elders

of the royal lineage and it occurs at the *Ahwiaahene's* palace. It has already been noted that the palace is a piece of architectural art. During this period, the palace provides shelter and security for the chief and his people. It also serves as a storage place for the stools and other paraphernalia involved in this enstoolment process. Furthermore, it serves as a source of wisdom repository where vital information on previous chiefs/queenmothers of this town could be sought. Finally, it is in this palace where the Ahwiaa chief sits to adjudicate cases brought before him. During the enstoolment of a queenmother at Ahwiaa, stools, clothing, sandals, etc do not play so much importance as they do during the enstoolment of a chief. In the enstoolment process of the chief, it has been observed that cloths keep on changing from one situation to the other. However, in both enstoolment processes (the chief and the queenmother), after the swearing-in, cloths are changed from black to white. Among the Akan who practise matrilineal inheritance, the queenmother, according to Meyerowitz (1958), is the owner of the state, and not the chief. According to the *Asona Abusuapanin* of Ahwiaa, Nana Kofi Kakari, the queenmother's stool is very important as it enables her to nominate a chief when the chief's stool becomes vacant. Again, as already stated, since the stool is a matrilineal one, it makes her the custodian of the land. The Ahwiaa queenmother has the freedom and traditional powers to scold the chief and deal with him as no one else can. Moreover, the stool gives her the power to destool the *Ahwiaahene* when he goes contrary to the laws of Ahwiaa. The Akan queenmother's importance to the state is again emphasised by Meyerowitz's statement that in public the queenmother sits close to the king/chief but a step behind him on the left, so that in an emergency, the king/chief can throw himself before her and shield her with his body.

It is remarkable to note that as the queenmother performs her day-to-day royal duties, she sits on a stool which is an artefact. It is this stool which makes her queenmother and gives her the power to rule her people. Moreover, she is decently clad in a traditional outfit which involves textile art, and distinguishes her from other women of the town. Her clothes, apart from covering her nakedness, also give her pride and dignity to attract the needed respect from her people. Furthermore, these cloths provide protection to the queenmother from getting cold. Thus the important role that art plays in facilitating the functions of the queenmother cannot be gainsaid on her administrative functions. Owusu (1998) writes:

*Oman no mu mmaa nyinaa hye n'ase. N'adwuma
ne se otu ohene fo. Ono na okyerekyere ohene
foforo adwa no ho mpaninsem...Oye obaatan
a oyen mma na onim adehyee suban nyinaa*²⁴

English version:

She is in charge of all the women in the state. It
is her responsibility to advise the chief. She is the
one who tells any new chief the history of the stool.
She is a mother who knows the character of all
members of the royal household.

The researcher wishes to draw attention to the fact that without exception, queenmothers go about their duties well dressed as stated earlier. Moreover, they are followed by decently dressed girls who fan them with *ohemaa papa* (the queenmother's fans), another form of artefact. The shaking of the fans minimise the heat that makes her uncomfortable. Thus we can state without fear of contradiction that art plays very important roles in the life of an Akan queenmother as it does an Akan chief.

4.9 The role of Art and the installation of a sub-chief at Ahwiaa

As might have been noticed already, the position of *Gyaasehene* and other sub-chiefs of Ahwiaa are stool positions. The *Gyaasehene* is the sub-chief responsible for the chief's palace. The other sub-chiefs available at Ahwiaa are: *Nifahene* (right-wing chief), *Benkumhene* (left-wing chief), *Kontihene* (army captain) and Ahwiaa *Asenfoohene* (chief of the Ahwiaa carver).

Nana Kwaku Bonsu, the *Gyaasehene* of Ahwiaa, states that a sub-chief is nominated by the council of elders of his lineage. For example, the *Nifahene* is nominated by the *Agona* lineage, the *Benkumhene* by the *Ekuona* lineage, and the *Kontihene* by the *Aduana* lineage, all of Ahwiaa. After approval by the members of the lineage, the nominated sub-chief is presented to the *Ahwiaahene* to whom he swears the oath of allegiance. This swearing is done by the use of a ceremonial sword which, according to Nana Bonsu, is called *afena*. Since Nana could not mention a specific name of the sword after much persistence, it is assumed that the sword in question has no name, because *afena* is the generic name for all swords. But the researcher was fortunate to have been shown some of the swords which are normally used in swearing by these sub-chiefs by the *Abusuapanin*, Nana Kofi Kakari. (See Plate 4.17)

Art therefore plays the same role as happens when the *Ahwiaahene* is also swearing. These sub chiefs almost go through the same process at the chief's palace. As told by the *Ahwiaahene* himself, on the day of swearing, these sub-chiefs don black cloths, but after the swearing-in-ceremony, powders are thrown on their nape amid shouting, singing and dancing by their supporters. They are carried shoulder high in the midst of jubilation, after which they quickly changed the black cloths into white. But unlike

the *Ahwiaahene*, they do not go to Manhyia. The whole ceremony ends at Ahwiaa. As already mentioned, Rattray (1979) declares that the stools of the sub-chiefs are no less important than that of the ruling stool because they were of equal status before one of them was chosen to be the *primus inter pares*. This shows that each of the sub stools, by mere chance could also have been the ruling stool. The importance of the sub-chiefs may be well noted from the following information offered us by Owusu (1998) concerning the *Gyaasehene*: *One ahemfie enwumayefoo no nyinaa sahene ono na otumi ma ohene gye obi dibea wo ahenfie ho firi ne nsam. Gyaase ne ne dom na wotumi gye obi tom wo adidie mu* (He is the captain of all the workers at the palace. He can influence the chief to take anybody's post from him at the palace. *Gyaase* and his group reverse the right to admit anybody to the palace dining table).



Plate 4.17 **The *afena* (sword) used by Ahwiaa sub-chiefs during their swearing-in**
Source: **Picture provided by Ahwiaa *Abusuapanin***

So far in this chapter, it has been established that art has, indeed, a significant role to play at each stage of the process for the establishment of a chief of Ahwiaa. The process discussed here includes nomination and acceptance, swearing-in-ceremony, outdooing and enstoolment and choosing a name for the new *Ahwiaahene*. Going through these stages it is remarkable to note that architecture, the stool, the state sword, clothing, music, jewellery, libation prayers, umbrellas, etc, all of which have been acknowledged as art works, play a vital role in the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa, as found in other Akan areas including Asante itself. The stool, for instance, finally establishes the *Ahwiaahene* and his sub-chiefs and gives them a name.

In all, it is undoubtedly shown that art plays no mean a role at every stage of the process that establishes a chief at Ahwiaa. However, it is realised that the use of art in establishing a chief is not only peculiar to Ahwiaa. It appears to be worldwide. Also, it has been established that in the enstoolment of the queenmother and the sub-chiefs of Ahwiaa art plays very vital roles. These roles do not end with the establishment of these traditional rulers, but they continue also in their administrative and other functions.

4.10 The Role of Art in the functions of an *Ahwiaahene* and his sub-chiefs

Like any other Akan ruler, the *Ahwiaahene* and his sub-chiefs have religious, political, judicial, social, military and economic duties to perform in the fulfilment of their functions to their people or, as Parrinder (1976) puts it in connection with the king of the Asante: ‘The *Asantehene* performs rites for the welfare of the people as chief priest. He has administrative, executive, judiciary and military functions.’

4.11 The role of Art and the Religious duties of the *Ahwiaahene* and his

Sub-chiefs

The chief of Ahwiaa and his sub-chiefs have religious or spiritual responsibilities towards their subjects because they assume the role of chief priests of their people. For this reason, their position makes them a point of contact between the mortals under their rules and the royal ancestors of Ahwiaa who are believed to be controlling their rule and to both of whom they are accountable.

One of the most important religious duties of the chief of Ahwiaa is to sustain his source of power to rule. This is done by purifying and spiritually ‘feeding’ (performing the necessary rituals on the stool) the Agyebi Nti Stool and the other blackened stools of his predecessors every *Akwasidae* (the forty-second day of the Akan calendar) and once a year. It is hereby reiterated that these stools are artefacts. The regularity for the purification and ‘feeding’ of the blackened stools depend on the Akan calendar which divides the year into nine months of forty days each. At the end of each year, which usually falls on a Sunday, there is a festival called *Adaekesee* during which all the blackened stools are ritually cleansed. This cleansing entails the carrying of these stools to the Akwaasua stream near the town, in the night, to be sprinkled with water from that stream.

Apart from the *Ahwiaahene*, as Opanin Kwaku Bonsu, the *Gyaasehene* points out, each of the sub-chiefs of Ahwiaa also cleanses his blackened stools and ‘feeds’ them every *Akwasidae* and annually through rites similar to that of the *Ahwiaahene*.

According to Baafuo Boaten I, (1993) the Golden Stool and the blackened ‘national’ stools of Asante are not carried to any stream, instead, water from the shrines of the following streams are fetched in brass bowls, taken to Kumasi and sprinkled on the stools:

Adanse Bona of Akrokyere

Fagyare of Beposo

Tano of Tanoso

Tano of Buoyam

Oda Amaniampon of Esreso

After the cleansing of the artefacts, libation is poured and a libation prayer said again to give thanks to the powers that be for the success of the purification rites. According to Akuffo (1976) the blackened stools may also be cleansed with lake water if that is what is available. Back at the Ahwiaa palace, when the day breaks, the stools are ‘fed’ by placing a bowl of *fufu* before them on the floor of the stoolroom. The preparation of the food involves *l’arte Cuisenaire*. The food, *fufu* with light soup and mutton, is presented in an earthenware bowl which is also an art creation. According to the *Gyaasehene* of Ahwiaa, Nana Kwaku Bonsu, a mussel of *fufu*, pounded yam or plantain served with soup, which is prepared by the oldest woman in the royal clan, is taken by the chief of Ahwiaa, dipped in soup and placed in front of the Agyebi Nti stool with a piece of meat. He then pours libation on the blackened stool while saying ‘*Nana Agyebi Nti, afe ano ahyia. Begye wei di na hyirahyira yen.*’ (Translated into English as: ‘Nana Agyebi Nti, another year has ended, come for this food and bless us’.) This food is believed to be eaten ‘spiritually’ by Nana Agyebi Nti and other stool ancestors.

This indeed shows that the chiefs themselves pour libation and offer poetic prayers. Everybody involved in this annual *Akwasidae* ritual is well dressed and as noted already, clothing is art. The regular ‘feeding’ of the stool, which involves art, is supposed to make the ancestors respond with alacrity wherever and whenever, they may be called upon for assistance. In preparing this food (*fufu*), mortar, pestle and cooking pots are involved. Again, the earthenware used to serve the food, cups for water, laddle for soup are all artworks which assist to make these rituals ‘successful’ according to the believe of the people. Apart from the enshrined ancestors, there are two deities at Ahwiaa as mentioned in Chapter One of this thesis, Dwomo and Baanie. These two deities are each housed in a small round room, which are all art works and they are believed to provide protection to the chiefs and people of Ahwiaa. The *Ahwiaahene*, dressed decently in a cloth, goes to consult these deities on behalf of the town whenever the need arises. The decent cloth put on by the Ahwiaa chief to consult these deities adds dignity to the chief’s status.

During these consultations, libation prayers, a form of verbal art, are said. It is worthy to note that the pouring of libation is not art *per se* but it is the dramatic act of pouring that makes it an artistic creation. A small bell, another form of art work produced by Akan blacksmiths, is rung, with a musical, and therefore artistic, consistency in order to invite the deity. This is similar to Christians resorting to organ music to invite the spirit of God to their worship. Dwomo and Baanie have each a priestess who wraps a piece of cloth over her breasts. Although these priestesses usually go barefooted, a building serves them as a house and office. This piece of architectural art which gives them the needed comfort and dignity to work before the deities could therefore be likened to the mission house of Christians.

Apart from the Ahwiaa chief going to consult these deities in times of need on behalf of his town, the priest can also foresee an impending calamity and inform the chief of it. The chief of Ahwiaa will, in consultation with members of his council cause the required rites to be performed to forestall the supposed impending calamity. These rites invariably involve the artistic libation prayer. The role of the shrine where the priestess of Dwomo meets the deity in the service of Ahwiaa chieftaincy is that it serves as an accommodation for the deity during rituals and this could be rightly considered an art work, if the Ark of God of Israel, described in the Bible at Exodus 25: 10 – 22 is anything to go by. This is because at that place, the God of Israel, ordered Moses to construct an ark (which is an art work). He finally assured Moses with the words ‘There I will meet with you.’ (The Bible – Revised Standard Version).

4.12 The Role of Art in the Social Functions of the *Ahwiaahene*

At Ahwiaa the chief of the town and his council of elders meet every fortnight in the palace (architectural art), to deliberate on issues concerning the town. According to Nana Kwaku Bonsu, the *Gyaasehene*, members of this council are the queenmother, the sub-chiefs and these days, the Assemblyman for the town. The decent dresses of all present, covering their nakedness and making them appear decently at these meetings also attest to the role that art plays in these matters, since none of them could have attended the meeting nakedly, without wearing the artistic materials. At such meetings too, the chief of Ahwiaa speaks through his spokesman as noticed in Chapter One of this thesis. It is this same spokesman who uses the artistic staff with the communicative finial as a symbol of office. At such meetings too the arts of sandals, stools and chairs play similar roles as have been acknowledged in previous chapters of this thesis. (See Plate 4.18).

During the meetings, topics that come up for discussion include the clearing of bush paths leading to farms and to sources of water. After a decision on such a matter has been taken, the *gong* beater is sent to inform the whole town of it and of the date for a communal labour. The *gong* beater, holding this art, stands at vantage points at Ahwiaa and gives a conventional beat with a *gong* stick to attract the attention of the citizens. Then as loud as possible, he informs the people of the decision taken at the chief's palace. Thus this important public relations' duty on behalf of the chief and his council is achieved through the involvement of art. This is because the *gong*, as said above, is an art work; also, the stick used to beat the *gong* is a piece of art work since the stick has been carved out of wood. The conventional beats that attract the attention of the people are musical to the ears of the citizens tutored to understand them. In the morning of the appointed day, the *gong* beater reminds the people of Ahwiaa with the same musical instrument to go for the communal labour. In this regard, the *gong* plays a communicative role, and facilitates the announcement of the *gong* beater.

The clearing of the bush paths is achieved by the use of cutlasses, hoes, and axes all of which are pieces of industrial or practical arts. Once a while, the *Ahwiaahene* and his council are called upon to resolve an emergency situation. For example, a farmer may fail to return from the farm at the right time or a hunter may fail to come back from the bush. In such cases, the *Ahwiaahene* and his council convene emergency meetings and the chief's drummer is asked to beat drums (all being art creations) to summon the male youth and adults of the town to go to retrieve the lost person from the bush, dead or alive. Other social functions performed by the *Ahwiaahene* include attending funerals and other social gatherings of his fellow chiefs, his subjects and

friends. (See Plate 4.19), the chief of Ahwiaa in his war dress during the final funeral rites of the late Otumfuo Opoku Ware II at the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi.



Plate 4.18 The *Ahwiaahene* (in white cloth) with his elders at one of their usual fortnight meetings in front of the palace.
Source: Photograph provided by Nana *Ahwiaahene*



Plate 4.19 The *Ahwiaahene* (in a *bata kari* decorated with talismans) seated right with some sub-chiefs of Asante, during the final funeral rites of the late Otumfuo Opoku Ware II, at the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi.
Source: Picture provided by Nana *Ahwiaahene*

4.13 The role of Art and the Judicial duties of the *Ahwiaahene*

One of the major functions of the *Ahwiaahene* is the administration of justice. Sometimes, an aggrieved person may lodge a complaint with the chief who later summons the defendant. The *Ahwiaahene* may send his spokesman who, with his spokesman's staff, will go to the house of the defendant. When the defendant sees the chief spokesman with his staff of office, he immediately responds to the call. It must still be remembered that the spokesman's staff is another work of art. Sometimes, instead of the spokesman's staff, some local herbs, called in Akan as *emena* is used. One of the significant parts played by art here is that the artistic spokesman's staff is held by the spokesman when the *Ahwiaahene* speaks to both the plaintiff and the defendant through the spokesman. After the plaintiff and the defendant have spoken and judgement is to be given, the *Ahwiaahene* again speaks through the spokesman to invite the *Nifahene* (right wing chief), *Benkumhene* (left wing chief), and the *Kontihene* (army captain) to comment on the case before he sums up and gives judgement.

Each of the sub-chiefs mentioned above has a stool as a symbol of authority. It is the stool that empowers each of them to sit in adjudication like the *Ahwiaahene*. They appoint ad-hoc spokesmen without starves when they sit in judgement upon cases. Yet, art plays a role in these cases since they handle the cases in an architectural artistic setting and since they are decently dressed and sit on the *Asipim* chair, all of which have been mentioned earlier in this thesis to be forms of art work. Again, through verbal art, the elders use proverbial sayings to make things plain and short to the people.

The social responsibilities of the *Ahwiaahene* to his people include attendance to funerals and in which the chief employs various forms of art during this ceremony. When the *Ahwiaahene* appears at a funeral of a deceased subject, he is led by a male attendant who wraps dark cloths around himself and has tied two upper ends of it behind his neck. This kind of dressing is known in Akan circles as *koola*. This male attendant carries on his head the chair (usually a foldable chair) on which the chief is to sit. Following the attendant is the *Ahwiaahene* and his Queenmother. Behind them are the sub-chiefs all in black cloths. The chief wears a headband of red cloth and a red or black bangle on the left ankle which distinguishes him from his sub-chiefs. Another attendant holds an open umbrella over the chief throughout the funeral and walks behind the chief as he goes round greeting the bereaved family and other people already seated at the funeral grounds. This umbrella gives protection to the chief as it ensures that Nana is not beaten by the rain in case it rains or for him to suffer from the rays of the scorching sun. Furthermore, the umbrella enables non-Ahwiaa citizens at the funeral identify him as a chief.

The *Ahwiaahene* seldom sits at a funeral without taking a few majestic steps to dance to the tempo of music played at the funeral. According to Nana Kusi Asiamah Yeboa I, the current *Ahwiaahene*, whenever he is dancing at funerals, many of his subjects surround him and dance along with him as normally occurs in other Akan areas of Ghana. The music provided at the funeral and the reciprocal dancing of the chief and indeed any other persons at the funeral are complimentary forms of art – which enable the chief to show his affection, therefore, sympathy for his subjects. This show of solidarity attracts love and respect from Ahwiaa citizens to the chief.

All people throughout the world have their festivals and the Ahwiaa people are no exception. Indeed the annual *Akwasidae* mentioned earlier on is one of these festivals at Ahwiaa, however, the end of Easter festivities now overshadows all others. It is during such occasions that the *Ahwiaahene* really steps out in full pomp and pageantry. A beautiful *Asipim* chair carried by a young male attendant leads the Ahwiaa chief to the durbar grounds. The chief follows his chair in a bright *kente* or any dignified cloth. His headband is usually simple as he is not a paramount chief. Oftentimes, the chief is decorated in a gold chain. He also wears a conglomeration of rings on the fingers. The Queenmother seldom wears rings on her fingers, however, it is unusual to find an *Ahwiaahene* without wearing a ring on, at least on one finger at a festival or a durbar, as told by Nana Asiama Yeboa.

The festival itself, apart from speeches and an appeal for fund, is marked by music and dancing. Indeed the totality of the festival or durbar is dramatic since it enacts the past get-together of the forefathers of Ahwiaa. And drama, as we know from Chapter Two of this thesis is staged. This is the time that the chief and people of Ahwiaa are able to come together, renew the bond with their chief and take stock of the previous year's activities.

4.14 Artistic aspects and the Economic functions of the *Ahwiaahene*

Art helps the *Ahwiaahene* to fulfil his economic responsibilities towards his people. In the first place, as we have known, the whole Ahwiaa land is vested in the Agyebi Nti Stool, which as pointed out already is an art creation. This authority enables him (the Ahwiaa chief) to lease the plots of Ahwiaa and also collect taxes and use some of this revenue for developmental projects. This contrasts with what happens in the

Gyaaman Traditional Area in the present-day Brong Ahafo Region of the Republic of Ghana where land is never leased or sold, but just given out for the farming season after which the traditional authorities take over this land and give it out to another person.

According to Nana Osei Antwi, a Graduate Tutor at Berekum Senior High School who hails from the area, the land is not even distributed among the various lineages as done among Asantes. Again, at Suma Ahenkro near Sampa in the same region he informed the researcher that at the beginning of each farming season, each citizen goes to mark out as much land as he or she can clear. This shows the regulatory power of the stool, an art creation, as after harvesting your produce, the land returns to the stool. It is only the stool which has absolute authority over the land and not the lineages. At Ahwiaa, a lot of the stool land has been leased to non-Ahwiaa citizens to build their houses on. Some of the monies collected have gone into development projects such as a Carver's Centre where a new building has been initiated. This centre, when finished, may boost general commercial activities at Ahwiaa.

We have earlier mentioned an appeal for fund during annual festivals. The money raised during such occasions is used to develop the town. And all these become possible because the people have confidence and trust in the Agyebi Nti Stool. And the confidence and trust are not misplaced because many chiefs in Ghana have actually led their people to economic prosperity. For example, the paramount chief of Dwaben Traditional Area in Asante, Nana Otuo Serebour II, has established a big palm oil extracting factory, fed by a big palm oil plantation, which has employed hundreds of young men and women from the traditional area and elsewhere. It also

supplies palm oil for the manufacture of soaps and other items to soap manufacturing industries and educational institutions across the region and beyond. At Ahwiaa, therefore, the positive influence of the stool, a piece of art work, which vitally affects the economic life of the people, is noticeable.

4.15 Art and the functions of the ruling *Asona Abusuapanin* (Head of Family) of Ahwiaa

In the Akan Traditional set up, one cannot talk of the role of the chief without mentioning the *Abusuapanin* (head of family). Like any other Akan institution, the role of the Ahwiaa *Abusuapanin* is as follows: he occupies the *Asona* lineage stool of Ahwiaa and like all other lineage heads in the Akan traditional set up advises the chief whenever there is the need for him to do so. If he is in existence before the chief is nominated, installed and enstooled, he takes time off to educate the chief about the rudiments and history of the stool and what is expected of the new chief. The *Abusuapanin* uses verbal art in this form of education. . He presides over all meetings of the family, especially those relating to marriage, divorce, funerals, festivals among others. All these consist of the culture of the people.

4.16 Art and the functions of the sub-chiefs of Ahwiaa

Having known the role of the *Abusuapanin* in the traditional set up of the Ahwiaa chieftaincy, it will also be prudent to know something about the role of the sub-chiefs of Ahwiaa. It is the foremost advisory body of the town, composed of the various lineage elders, supposed to be the most intelligent people in the society. When the chief sits in state he is flanked closely by these elders so that they can prompt or correct him as he speaks, sometimes employing verbal arts. The situation is

facilitated by the slow manner in which the chief is trained to speak.

Like all other Akan town and village chiefs, the chief of Ahwiaa is supposed to be assisted in the administration of the town by various sub-chiefs. As head of the ruling *Asona* lineage and the current chief of Ahwiaa informed the researcher, these sub-chiefs' system is not well developed in Ahwiaa as found in the other Akan districts of Ghana. But despite all these shortfalls, these sub-chiefs are found to be part of the traditional administration of the town: *Gyaase*, *Nifa*, *Benkum*, *Kontire* and *Asenfoo*.

a). The *Gyaasehene*

This is the sub-chief who is always found in the chief's palace. Akans attach pomp and dignity to the office of the *Gyaasehene*. He occupies the *Gyaase* stool. This situation always calls for the maintenance of a big household of attendants who should put the palace in order and here it is the *Gyaasehene* who organises this body. The organisation of the attendants normally takes the form of both verbal and performing arts, as he demonstrates and explains the various activities to them. Nana Kwaku Bonsu, the current *Gyaasehene*, also informed the researcher during the field trip that his great grand uncle, Nana Kwame Dakwa, brought the shrines of the Tano gods, Taa Dwomo and Barnie from Denkyira in the present Central Region, when they migrated from that town to Asante. These visual art forms (the shrines of the gods) are all under his care. The *Gyaase* stool also belongs to the *Asona* lineage of Ahwiaa. (See Plate 4.20). The photograph of Nana Kwaku Bonsu, the *Gyaasehene* of Ahwiaa).



Plate 4.20 The *Gyaasehene* of Ahwiaa. See the fly whisk in his hand and his stool beside him.
Source: Picture provided by Nana *Gyaasehene*

b). *Kontihene* (*Abontendomhene*)

According to Nana Kusi Asiama Yeboa I, the *Ahwiaahene*, there is no substantive *Kontihene* (also referred to as *Abontendomhene*) in Ahwiaa at the moment. A *Kontihene* occupies the *Kontire* stool. He gave the functions of the *Kontihene* of Ahwiaa as follows: so far as the actual governance of the Ahwiaa town is concerned, the *Kontihene* is regarded as the most important figure after the Ahwiaa chief. In modern day administrative circles, the *Kontihene* would have been referred to as the deputy chief of the town, as on the demise, destoolment or abdication of the chief, he (*Kontihene*) act as the chief of Ahwiaa until a substantive chief is install. The *Kontihene* of Ahwiaa always sat on cases brought before the *Ahwiaahene* in his

residence (palace) for settlement. During the olden days when wars were rampant, the *Kontihene* always fought on the side of the *Bantamahene* (who is the *Kontihene* of the Kumasi Traditional Area) within the Asante army. Again, in Ahwiaa, the *Kontihene* is referred to as the opposition leader, as one of his roles is to oppose any negative decision taken by the *Ahwiaahene*.

c). *Nifahene* (right-wing chief)

Nana Kusi Yeboa, the current *Ahwiaahene*, further informed the researcher that the Ahwiaa *Nifahene* doubles as the Nsensanso *Odikro* (Head chief of Nsensanso). The *Nifahene* occupies the Kwaku Anane stool (visual art). Nsensanso is presently a village near Ahwiaa, where the people of Ahwiaa first settled after migrating from Denkyira. During the war era, the Ahwiaa *Nifahene* (Right Wing Chief) occupied the right wing of the Ahwiaa army. Today, the Ahwiaa *Nifahene* plays a major role in adjudicating cases brought before him from his lineage and also assists the *Ahwiaahene* to solve problems brought to the palace of the Ahwiaa chief.

d) *The Benkumhene* (left-wing chief)

Today, like the *Nifahene*, the *Benkumhene* of Ahwiaa is part of the decision-making process of the town. The *Benkumhene* is supposed to command the Left-wing guard of the Ahwiaa army. His duty was especially important in the olden days when wars were frequent. He also assists to arbitrate cases brought before the occupant of the Agyebi Nti Stool. Nana Kwame Panin is the current occupant of the *Benkum* stool of Ahwiaa. The *Ekunas* are the owners of this stool.

e). *Asenfoohene* of Ahwiaa (chief carver of Ahwiaa)

Nana Kusi Asiama Yeboa I the chief of Ahwiaa, claims to be the *Asenehene* of the entire Asante Kingdom. This is a unique stool position occupied by the Ahwiaa chief only, since some carvers of Ahwiaa carve the wooden regalia of the Asante King.

Apart from the *Ahwiaahene*, being the occupant of this stool in the Kingdom, the Ahwiaa town also has an *Asenfoohene*. When the researcher enquired about the role of the Ahwiaa *Asenfoohene*, Nana Yeboa said he is the sub-chief in charge of all the carvers in the town. He ensures that the right thing is done among the carvers. By this he supervises the carvers to ensure that matured and the right piece of wood is used in all their work. Since it is a taboo that no carver touches a tool to work on every *Fofie* that occurs on every forty-second Friday, it is his duty to ensure that this rule is adhered to by all. When asked whether this stool also belongs to any particular lineage (or house) the *Ahwiaahene* quickly replied in the negative. He said the four leading stool elders (*Gyaase, Kontire, Nifa* and *Benkum*) have to agree on the carvers' choice after which the nominee is introduced to the *Atipimhene* for onward introduction to the occupant of the Golden Stool. He informed this researcher that the mode of nominating this chief is through acclamation among the carvers themselves. When a substantive *Asenfoohene* passes away the group (carvers) meet to nominate the best and most hardworking carver among them to succeed their departed leader.

Again, when asked about whom this sub-chief owes allegiance to, Nana Yeboa informed the researcher that the *Asenfoohene* always swears his oath of allegiance to the *Ahwiaahene* but during the absence of a substantive *Ahwiaahene* (after the death of Nana Osei Kwame Bonsu for instance), when no new chief had been nominated,

installed and enstooled, the current Ahwiaa *Asenfoohene* swore his oath of allegiance to the *Asantehene*. This really shows how significant this stool is to the Golden Kingdom. The present *Asenfoohene* is Nana Frimpong Boadu. The symbol of office of the Ahwiaa *Asenfoohene* is a staff called *Asenfoohene poma* and the stool is an *asipim* chair. These two artworks give him the power to rule the carvers. Now on the role of art in the duties of the *Asenfoohene*, as indicated earlier, apart from being the leading carver, he supervises the other carvers to do good and not sub-standard jobs. Medically, he also assists the carvers from taking a day's rest to have rejuvenation. Other than this some of them work throughout the whole year.

Carvers from Ahwiaa are known to have carved several important stools for many traditional areas in the Akan society of Ghana with the permission of the Ahwiaa chieftaincy. Not that alone but according to Nana Kusi Yeboa 1, most stools found at the seat of government (Osu Castle) that are normally presented to dignitaries and other foreigners by various Ghanaian Heads of State are all artistic products of Ahwiaa carvers. The same situation occurs at the Manhyia Palace, the seat of the Asante King. Below are models (designs) of stools of some traditional areas carved by Ahwiaa craftsmen as presented by Nana Kusi Yeboa, the *Ahwiaahene*, to the researcher (see plate 4.21). These include a model of the *Sikadwa Kofi* (Golden Stool), Dwaben, Edweso, Berekum, Kenyase and Kokofu stools.

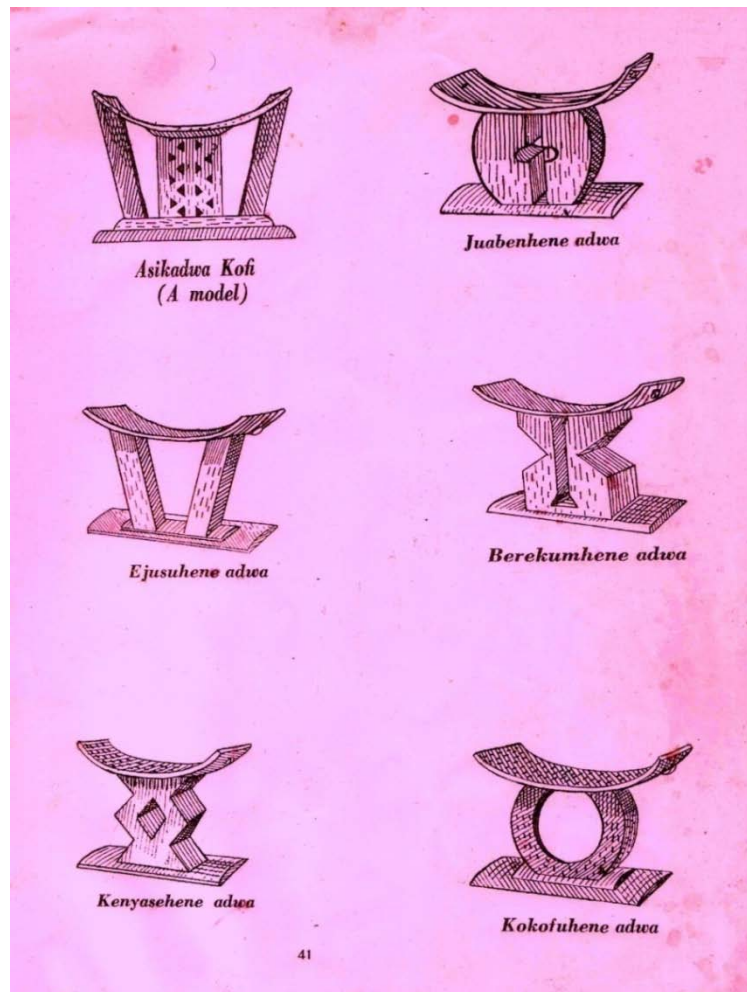


Plate 4.21 The above are model stools of some paramountcies designed by Ahwiaa carvers: they include The Golden Stool of Asante, Dwaben, Edweso, Berekum, Kenyase and Kokofu.

Source: Photograph provided by Nana Ahwiaahene.

4.17 The role of Art and the dying, laying-in-state, burial and funeral rites of the Ahwiaahene

Here the researcher examines the role that art plays in the dying, laying- in- state, burial and final funeral rites of the chief of Ahwiaa. This examination helps readers to appreciate how the health of the chief of Ahwiaa partly depends on art while medical officers struggling to save his life, when he is finally giving up the ghost, when he is laid in state and when his funeral rites are performed.

Before the chief breathes out his final breath, he is required to be given a sip of water contained in such an art work as a cup or glass. The water is believed to sustain him on his journey into the spirit world. The chief's death is not announced immediately. This is to allow the family enough time to prepare well for the funeral. Messages have to be sent to relatives, far and wide. Akans, whom Ahwiaa people is part of, regard such a death as *Abodwo wuo*, natural death, an information given by Nana Osei Kwadwo, the Curator of the Manhyia Palace Museum, Kumasi.

4.17.1 Art and the dying of an *Ahwiaahene*

According to the current *Ahwiaahene*, before the second half of the twentieth century whenever an *Ahwiaahene* was sick, a herbalist was invited to attend to him at the palace. Since the second half of the twentieth century, an *Ahwiaahene* who is taken ill is taken to the Komfo Anokye Teaching Hospital (KATH) in Kumasi or any other well established medical centre for medical attention. It was during the reign of Nana Akwawua Addae that the trend changed.

Whether the chief of Ahwiaa was taken to a herbalist or to an orthodox hospital, he was offered the due medical attention in a consulting room which is a piece of architectural art work. Should it become necessary to hospitalise the chief, he might then be transferred into a ward, a similar art creation, as the consulting room. There is no doubt that the hospital buildings give a better aesthetic appeal than the herbalists' environment, hence in recent times the need to take the sick chief there. Either the herbalist or the doctor applies his physician's trade of medical practice, this medical practice (herbal) has been proved to be a form of art by Dr. Opamshen Osei Agyeman. In his doctoral thesis in 1992, Dr. Osei Agyeman, has taken pains to

reiterate, and explain and prove that unscientific medicine is an art, and it is more artistic and less scientific, an idea, accepted by many other writers. Admittedly, scientific or hospital medicine is not devoid of art. In view of these, many dictionaries and encyclopaedias define medicine as a science and art that treats and prevents sickness. It is in view of this that the researcher has earlier stated that the medical treatment of the chief of Ahwiaa depends partly on art.

According to the *Ahwiaahene*, Nana Kusi Asiamah Yeboa I, should the illness of the Ahwiaa chief require a surgical operation, that form of medical treatment would be completely rejected. This according to the chief is because an *Ahwiaahene* with surgical wounds would be completely rejected by his subjects as pertains in almost all Akan areas in Ghana. This is because an *Ahwiaahene* with surgical wounds would be considered deformed and, therefore, disqualified to continue to 'sit' on the Agyebi Nti Stool. According to Nana Asiamah Yeboa I, the *Ahwiaahene*, an *Ahwiaahene* who dies after surgical operation would not be buried at the Ahwiaa royal cemetery. The loathing of a disfigured chief, dead or alive, by the people of Ahwiaa contradicts the behaviour of some Raingers who, as Parrinder (1976) informs us cut up their dead chiefs, remove their hearts and use them to prepare a ritual meal for their successors.

This statement was also accepted by Nana Osei Kwadwo, the renowned Curator and Historian at the Manhyia Palace Museum in Kumasi, that if an *Asantehene* dies after surgical operation, the body would be considered desecrated through mutilation, and therefore, unfit to be buried at the royal mausoleum at the Breman cemetery.

According to Nana Yeboa when the then chief of Ahwiaa, Nana Akwawua Addae's sickness was declared terminal by doctors, the chief was transferred back to the palace at Ahwiaa. This is because in all cases, apart from war, every effort is made to ensure that the *Ahwiaahene* dies at his palace. One of the last rites for a dying chief of Ahwiaa is called *anomunsuogu* (pouring water into the mouth). According to Nana Yeboa Asiamah this is the major reason why a chief of Ahwiaa must die at the palace. The pouring of water into the mouth of the dying *Ahwiaahene* is administered by the Queenmother of the Ahwiaa town. This pouring of water is administered from a small earthenware pot while the dying chief rests in the bosom of the Queenmother. This water, poured from this artefact, is believed to refresh him throughout his journey from here to the hereafter. Dying at the palace also enables the chief's death to be surrounded by ceremony and dignity. The palace is therefore seen as an art work which gives the chief of Ahwiaa dignity both in life and death.

The death of the Ahwiaa chief at the palace also enables the elders of the town to keep the bad news a secret for a few days as custom demands. Keeping the death of a chief secret for some days seems to be a prevalent practice in Africa because Parrinder (1976) informs readers that among the Swazi of South Africa, when the king dies, it is kept secret until his successor is installed. As Parrinder says, People are told: 'The King is busy'. For if the king's death were known, the country would be thrown into a state of despair. But according to Nana Asiamah Yeboa, in recent times since most chiefs' die in hospitals knowledge of their deaths is revealed to the general public immediately, thus breaking the custom.

4.17.2 The role of Art and the Laying-in-State of a dead *Ahwiaahene*

Before the body of a dead Ahwiaa chief is laid in state it has to be washed as it is the case of the corpses of all Akan chiefs. He is bathed with a new sponge, a new cake of soap, water in a new pot and his body dried with a new towel. These are supplied by his wife/wives, as custom demands. The pot, however, is without doubt a work of art. It holds the water used to make the corpse of the *Ahwiaahene* ritually clean as already indicated above. This cleanliness is supposed to qualify the dead chief to sit among the ancestors. According to Kyerematten (2008), it is the responsibility of the male royal family members of the lineage to do the washing. Hot water is preferable, and a new sponge, towel and soap are used. Kyerematten further goes on to inform readers that as custom demands, the body has to be washed three times before it is dried with the towel. According to him, in the olden days lime was used as perfume, but today, with the advent of modern antiseptics, the latter is used. After the washing, the head is shaved and trimmed. Next the finger and toe nails are cut with a special knife. All this is done by a member of the royal lineage with the use of the above-mentioned art materials to ensure that the deceased chief embarks on his journey in neatness.

On the day the dead *Ahwiaahene* is laid in state people from all walks of life dressed mainly in black cloths, depicting their mournful state, come to pay their last respect to him. The scene is therefore a mournful 'sea of black'. This may be described as a mournful art. Music is played outside the palace throughout the time the chief lies in state. This time, the musical art is not to entertain him but to enhance his send-off ceremony and to ensure a big welcome in the spiritual world.

According to the *Ahwiaahene*, Nana Kusi AsiamaYeboa I, when the *Ahwiaahene* is laid in state, the room where the corpse lies is decorated with well-carved stools and other wood products to indicate that the *Asantehene's Asenehene* (chief of carvers) is dead. Not that alone, but the room is also decorated with beautiful *kente* and *adinkra* cloths. The bed on which lies the corpse is well decorated with quality white lace to match the *kente* and *adinkra* cloths on the walls of the room. Furthermore, the corpse is also dressed in a beautiful *kente* cloth with a golden necklace, rings and a headgear to match. All these art works, both visual and body, help to lift the image of the Ahwiaa stool, says Nana Asiama Yeboa I, the *Ahwiaahene*.

According to Nana Asiama Yeboa, before the late chief is buried, all the carvers in the town and beyond have to swear before the body, as a sign of respect to their departed chief, thus: 'As you are about to leave for the other world, ensure that the work you are leaving behind (carving) grows from strength to strength. We will continue to respect you as our leader. We assure you that we will never forget you. May the spirits of Nana Agyebi Nti and the rest receive you into eternity.' This oath swearing which is done with the *Asenehene Poma* (the staff of office of the Ahwiaa chief) is pointed over to the corpse, and then followed by the words.

These artistic verbal words from the carvers are believed to improve upon the carvers work after the late chief has been buried, and that if such words are not spoken, the dead chief's spirit, according to the belief of the carvers, 'will carry away the carving profession.' Note has to be taken here. For the fact that the Ahwiaa stool is lower in status in terms of the chieftaincy hierarchy, and furthermore, that carving is strongly attached to this stool, a sword is not used to swear this oath, as compared to that of

the *Asantehene* and the paramount chiefs across the Ashanti Region and the entire Akanland where important swords are used.

The Akan spiritual world, *Asamando*, has already been mentioned on two occasions in connection with the death of the *Ahwiaahene* so it is proper for it to be explained further. Rattray (1979) states that Asantes believe that there is a world of the dead built on much the same as that of this world and that when a person dies he goes to his ancestors. The chief of Ahwiaa is therefore considered to go to his ancestors at his death; and he needs some ceremonies to help him arrive safely at the abodes of his forebears. Therefore, the dirges sung by women when the chief's corpse lies in state, during the funeral, constitute music and therefore, a form of art which also adds colour to the 'send-off ceremony' of the chief. The importance of the dirges and the dirge singer at a funeral such as that of an *Ahwiaahene* is highlighted on by Nketia (1969) when he states: 'The singers of the dirge rarely sit down. They pace up and down the place of the funeral, thanked on all sides by members of the lineage, friends and sympathisers'. In death, the *Ahwiaahene* is praised by singers in a similar manner as drums are used to praise him when he is alive.

According to Kyerematten (2008), the body of a late chief is laid in state for wake-keeping to be observed. He went further to explain that: 'Wake-keeping is said to have originated because in the olden days there existed the danger of the body being carried away to be eaten by wild animals hence it being watched overnight'.

But Nana Osei Kwadwo, the Curator of the Manhyia Palace Museum holds a contrary view to what Kyerematten has said. According to the renowned Historian and

Curator, wake-keeping was being observed in the olden days with the hope that the dead person would resurrect since it was the belief of the people that the late person might have fallen into comma or deep sleep. He further states that that is why a dead person was always bathed with very hot water, hoping that the heat would invigorate the body to let him come back to life in case he had fallen into comma as stated earlier.

According to Nana Kofi Kakari, the Ahwiaa *Abusuapanin*, wake-keeping for the late chief of Ahwiaa is marked with drumming, singing of dirges, weeping, drinking and dancing which continue into the next day. Mourners appear in cloth of dark-red, brown, maroon or ochre in colour. It is observed that art really plays a major role in the lying- in- state of a dead Ahwiaa chief as happens with other Akan chiefs. Not only are blood relations of the late chief are expected to paint parts of their body (foreheads, cheeks, arms) in red clay while the body lies in state, but they are also to shave and heap their hair, which is a form of body art, at the entrance of the palace where the celebration is being observed.



Plate 4.22 The *Ahwiaahene*, on his way to swear the oath of allegiance to the late Otumfuo Opoku Ware II at the Manhyia Palace in Kumasi when the latter died in 1999.

Source: Picture given by Nana *Ahwiaahene*

4.17.3 Art and the Burial of the *Ahwiaahene* and his sub-chiefs

Before the dead chief of Ahwiaa is put into a coffin and taken to the royal burial grounds just behind the palace, libation is poured and a libation prayer is said. This libation prayer, a form of verbal art, is believed to cause the dead chief to be accepted into the company of the deceased royal ancestors. A fasting of seven days preceding the funeral rites is part of these prayers.

It must be mentioned that the coffin in which the *Ahwiaahene* is put for burial has been artistically made. Although the coffin is not meant to preserve the corpse from decomposition, it certainly enhances the dignity surrounding the whole process of burial. For this reason people compete for the chance of providing coffins for the dead chiefs.

The method of burying the *Ahwiaahene* in a coffin contrasts clearly with that of Ghanaian chiefs who follow the Muslim religion. According to Lamin Yakubu, a Graduate Tutor of the Obuasi Senior High Technical School, a Muslim, these chiefs are wrapped in a white shroud and buried without a coffin. According to the same informant the dead chief is buried sitting down facing Mecca. This contrasts greatly with the Ahwiaa chief who is buried lying full length in a coffin. Moreover, inside the coffin of a dead chief of Ahwiaa, such art works as handkerchiefs, pieces of cloth and some coins are put in the coffin. On the fortieth day of the celebration of the death of the *Ahwiaahene*, *fufu* with soup is served in a new dish (an art work of course) and put on his tomb. This is believed to be eaten by the dead chief, now an ancestor.

Again, during this fortieth day celebration, the late chief's stool is sent to the stool room and blackened in his honour since he had died a natural death and placed alongside his departed colleagues.

4.17.4 Art and the main Funeral rites of the *Ahwiaahene*

After the burial of the *Ahwiaahene*, a date is fixed for his final funeral rites. This date can only be fixed after a new chief has been enstooled. Since it is the duty of this new chief to organise this funeral, he automatically becomes the chief mourner. During this final funeral rite of the departed chief, at the funeral grounds, the new chief sits in the middle of the elders of the royal *Asona* lineage. The new chief (who is the chief mourner) dresses in a black piece of cloth with another piece of red cloth tied around his neck. He is also seen in a red headgear tied around his forehead. At the funeral grounds, the *Ahwiaahene* and his elders sit among a large crowd of people mostly

dressed in black with a few clad in red. These colours (black and red) found on the *Ahwiaahene* and his people signify solemnity. The materials in which the *Ahwiaahene* is clad constitute art. This type of art does not only make the *Ahwiaahene* and the other mourners appear decent, it also depicts a mournful state. The large mourning crowd forms a circle with musical groups performing here and there. It is to be emphasised that the members of these musical groups are dressed in black cloths, and these are textile arts. Apart from their voices for singing and their hands for clapping, the sticks, drums, *gongs* rattles, etc, are different types of art used to fulfil the musical aspect of the funeral of the dead chief of Ahwiaa.

As earlier on mentioned, the new *Ahwiaahene* dances on this occasion, with the throwing of his hands to the right and left and then resting both hands on his head, indicating that he is really sad. With this the chief fulfils an artistic task at the funeral. This funeral, fully supported by different forms of art, is the last responsibility of the new *Ahwiaahene* in partial fulfilment of the prerequisites of his enstoolment as a chief. Unfortunately, pictures covering these events were not available, as the chief and his elders seemed not to give out such photographs.

4.18 Importance of Arts in Ahwiaa Chieftaincy

As part of the objectives of this thesis, the arts were seen to be playing a very important role in the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa. Artefacts such as the palace, the stool, umbrellas, the headgear, spokesmen's stave among others were very significant in the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa.

As already indicated in this thesis, the Ahwiaa palace is the venue where the queenmother, the sub-chiefs and the elders of Ahwiaa meet to nominate a befitting royal to occupy the Agyebi Nti Stool when the stool becomes vacant. It is at this venue where the Ahwiaa citizenry converge to approve or disapprove of the queenmother's nomination. This environmental art material makes one to be accepted as a chief of Ahwiaa since such an important meeting could not have taken place in an open space or in public.

Another very important art material in the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa is the Agyebi Nti Stool. As stated earlier in this thesis, it is this piece of art material which makes one becomes the chief of Ahwiaa. This art work gives authority to an Ahwiaa royal to rule his people. The *Asenehene Poma* also makes one the chief carver of the Asante Kingdom. All these art works are connected with the chieftaincy institution of Ahwiaa.

The *Ahwebaa* State Sword has also been seen to enable an Ahwiaa royal to swear an oath of allegiance to the *Asantehene* to become the chief of this town. There was no way one could have become an *Ahwiaahene* if not this art material. It also enabled one to be accepted into the fraternity of Asante chiefs. Back home at Ahwiaa, the sub-chiefs also use the *afena* (sword) to swear an oath to the *Ahwiaahene*, whenever their stools also become vacant.

The importance of the umbrella cannot be overemphasised so far as the Ahwiaa chieftaincy system is concerned. It is through the umbrella that the *Ahwiaahene* is easily identified by strangers whenever there is a function at Ahwiaa or any other

public place.

The special headgear worn by the *Ahwiaahene* on occasions such as festivals, funerals, etc, is so important that once again, it makes him to be singled out easily among the lot by outsiders as the chief of this very important town when there are such occasions.

Another very important artefact found in the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa is the spokesman's stave. This symbolic art object, as already stated in this thesis, sometimes carries a message itself from its finial. It makes the people feel the chief's presence (although he may not be there physically) whenever it is found with its bearer.

Specially-designed stools used to decorate the room where the mortal remains of the *Ahwiaahene* is laid when he dies also play a significant role in the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa as it adds colour to the funeral decorations of the late chief.

With the body arts, dignified cloths such as *kente*, *adinkra* and other special cloths worn by the *Ahwiaahene*, makes him unique during functions at Ahwiaa and other places. Also the gold necklace, finger-rings, sandals among others, add to the pomp and pageant of the chief and therefore makes him stand tall among his sub-chiefs and the Ahwiaa citizenry whenever there is a function as already been indicated in the thesis.

From the above mentioned artefacts, one may be tempted to conclude that, probably, there could not have been a chief of Ahwiaa without its arts. Ahwiaa arts are

indispensable because from the beginning to the end, it is the arts which go to make a chief at Ahwiaa.

4.19 Discussions of Findings

From the findings so far treated, it has become obvious that the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa and its arts are preponderant in Ahwiaa culture. Also, it is evident from the thesis that Ahwiaa art cannot be separated from its chieftaincy. The dependencies of the chieftaincy on its art emanate from the fact that there can never be an Ahwiaa chief without arts. Since one of the qualifications of a royal from Ahwiaa to become a chief of Ahwiaa is his ability to carve for the *Asantehene* and his chiefs (including the paramount chiefs), it can clearly be seen that Ahwiaa's chieftaincy system is tied to its art which is an aspect of Ahwiaa culture. Furthermore, as already noted, the arts start right from the nomination and acceptance stages through the swearing of the oath of allegiance and outdoorings stages to the enstoolment and final funeral rites of the previous chief. In all these stages, the study has revealed the fact that wood carvings, metalworks, textiles, music, leatherworks, architecture and many other forms of art have very important roles to play.

Woodwork and chieftaincy provide the Agyebi Nti Stool and the *Asenehene Poma* which are the symbols and staff of office and authority of the chief of Ahwiaa respectively. Chieftaincy, which has already been defined in Chapter One of this thesis, also plays a significant role in the people's culture. The Agyebi Nti Stool gives much power to the chief of this town. There are laid down procedures, which are followed to elect a new chief to occupy a stool. Therefore, whenever this pattern changes trouble tends to brew at such places, as happened at the aftermath of the

nomination of the present chief of Ahwiaa. Chieftaincy tends to promote peaceful transfer of power. The stool unites the people around the chieftaincy, thereby fostering unity among the Ahwiaa people. Furthermore, the stool tends to preserve the culture of this people. There are some cultural elements embodied in the stool. These include the mode of selecting a chief to occupy it (stool), enstoolment and destoolment processes, dressing among others. Again, the stool promotes stability and development in the Ahwiaa community.

The occupant of the Agyebi Nti Stool sees to it that there is always peace in the society. This he does with his elders by adjudicating cases brought before it judiciously by his citizens and other residents of the town. The chief and his elders also ensure that development projects are carried out well. Finally, by the authority of the stool, the chief ensures that there is a social control mechanism within the chieftaincy. The *Ahwiaahene* is always seen by his subjects as having a source of power, authority and control over them. The people therefore respect his office, thereby trying to avoid deviant behaviours that will lead them into trouble and be summoned to his palace to be sanctioned or fined.

Metalworks provide the *Ahwebaa* sword with which the chief of Ahwiaa swears the oath of allegiance to the *Asantehene*. The *Afena* (sword), which the sub-chiefs also use comes from metalworks. Textiles provide the *kente*, *adinkra*, and other dignified cloths, which give the chief of Ahwiaa dignity among his people and everywhere else. Leatherworks thus provide the sandals, the talisman etc, found in his *batakari* (smock) among others, which adds to the pageantry of the chief. Architecture helps to provide the *ahenfie* (palace) of the chief of Ahwiaa, a sense of security to the stool. It

also provides shelter to the chief whenever he organises meetings with elders and the citizenry. He also receives and entertains visitors who pay courtesy calls on him in this palace. Apart from the role that the above-mentioned forms of art play in the chieftaincy of Ahwiaa in particular and Asante in general, it was established that music, dancing, oral art, (i.e. poetry in the form of libation prayer) have each a vital role to play in the chieftaincy system under discussion.

Since without the stool there can be no chieftaincy at Ahwiaa, it has been proved that art is a major pre-requisite to be fulfilled if there should be a chief in that town. Since in the past, without the chief's spokesman with his staff, the chief of Ahwiaa could not open his mouth and address his people, it is obvious that the Ahwiaa chieftaincy system cannot operate without art.

The important role that the stool plays in the chieftaincy of Ahwiaa and the other Akan settlements is acknowledged is the fact that in the past, during a war between two Akan groups, the one who captured the other's blackened stool, or the stool signifying the highest authority became the victor while the one who lost such a stool became vassal.

Indeed the importance of the stool is born out by history if the fact is noted that the Asante are said to have fought and conquered the Gyaaman people all because the latter had made a replica of the Golden Stool of Asante. In a personal communication with Osei Kwadwo, the Curator of Manhyia Palace Museum in Kumasi, he informed this researcher that history has it that the Asante were so bent on capturing any replica of the Golden Stool that one Nana Batukwa of Asante was sent to Gyaaman

to bring it. Before Nana Batuakwa was sent he was bathed with herbal medicines for two weeks. After that, he walked from Kumasi to Bonduokou, the capital of the then Gyaaman chiefdom. It is said that the first words he spoke after leaving Kumasi were to Adinkra Kofi, the chief of the Gyaaman people and the words were: *Nana Bonsu se me ngye wo Sika adwa no mmere no*: translated into English as: ‘Nana Bonsu says I must get your Golden Stool and take it to him’.

Immediately, Adinkra Kofi entered his stool room and gave the ‘Golden Stool’ to Batuakwa. It may interest readers to know that Batuakwa was honoured with the title *Asantehene Akyeamehene* (Head of the Spokesmen of the *Asantehene*) for the role he played in securing Adinkra Kofi’s ‘Golden Stool’ as told by Osei Kwadwo. This is the title that his great grandson, the late Okyeame Akoto reportedly inherited. This Okyeame Akoto was acknowledged in Asante as the chief among *Asantehene*’s spokesmen till his death in the year 2000.

The next item of the regalia of the chief of Ahwiaa to be discussed is his state sword. The important role played by the state sword in Ahwiaa chieftaincy system has been noted already. Through this discussion it is established that before the *Ahwiaahene* becomes a full chief, he has to swear the oath of allegiance to the *Asantehene* with the *Ahwebaa* sword. It is therefore to be noted that it is partly through this art object that power is initially transferred to this chief.

From the discussion so far made in this thesis one acknowledges the roles that the stool, sandals and footstools play in the preservation of Ahwiaa chieftaincy in particular and that of Akan in general. The arts partly help the *Ahwiaahene* to keep his

sacredness, the sacredness acquired through his relationship with his royal ancestors upon his enstoolment.

Music, another art form in Ahwiaa chieftaincy, has earlier been discussed and analysed as an enhancing factor of the ego of the chief of Ahwiaa. The art of poetry recital on drums and flutes serves as a source of classified information while the finials on top of umbrellas and the spokesman's staff as well as motifs in *adinkra* cloths constitute packages of information.

Pottery is established in this thesis as the art that helps the *Ahwiaahene* in the feeding and washing of his soul and his body. Writers such as Gillon (1974) state that when an Akan chief (including the Ahwiaa chief) dies, his mortal remains are buried with some funerary objects which include the *abusuakuruwa*, a piece of artefact. Where the chief is put on a rack, as it is done in respect of the *Asantehene*, the *abusuakuruwa* (family pot) is placed by his corpse. But upon a personal communication with Nana Osei Kwadwo at Manhyia, as to whether the *abusuakuruwa* remains on the side of the dead Asante king forever, he informed the researcher that he cannot confirm this, but thinks that cannot be possible as the object is a family object and cannot remain with one dead king for good. This object is supposed to contain the cut off nails and hairs of all the late kings of the stool. The *abusuakuruwa* is believed to represent the ancestral spirits of the concerned royal family with the sitting chief/king, serving as the main link between these ancestors and the people. Among the Kuba of the Democratic Republic of Congo, an artefact is similarly used when the peaceful 'sleeping of the soul of the chief' is achieved by sacrifice. Writing about this Kuban custom, Cornet (1971) stated:

A statue is carved to represent a living king
When the king dies, the statue is buried 'alive'
Head first as a sacrifice

This type of sacrifice for the dead appears to be more 'civilised' than the human sacrifice that previously accompanied dead Akan chiefs and royals, especially among Akyems and Asantes of Ghana. In Asante for instance, this bad practice existed until Nana Osei Agyeman Prempe II abolished it before his death in 1969. About this human sacrifice, Freeman (1844) informs us:

When an Ashanti [Asante] of any distinction dies
several of the deceased's slaves are sacrificed.
This horrible custom originates in some shadowy
ideas of future state of existence, in which they
imagine that those who have departed hence,
stand in need of food, cloth among others.

In discussing the various forms of art that lull kings to eternal rest, the present researcher mentioned the various mausoleums and the great pyramids of Egypt. Another impressive burial chamber, according to Philips' (n.d) in his 'The Egyptians and the Valley of the Kings', is that of Seti I who ruled ancient Egypt in the XVII Dynasty, about 1370. This chamber could be reached only through a hundred metre long tunnel with all kinds of hidden stairs and deep shafts. The *Osibreketete a osi Bantama kutotia*, cannot be forgotten. Another magnificent edifice once used as a burial place for late Asante kings in the Kumasi Metropolis.

Now the important question one would be tempted to ask is 'What have these arts done for the people of Ahwiaa?' The research showed that art played and continues to play important roles in the lives of the chiefs and people of Ahwiaa as seen in the

previous chapters of this thesis, as it is the major occupation of the people. Through Ahwiaa carvings, many of the people of Ahwiaa are today well off in terms of riches in this town and leading a meaningful life as narrated by the *Ahwiaahene* himself. He confided in this researcher that many of the storey buildings found in the town were as a result of the hard work of the people through carvings. Some also own a fleet of transport.

Furthermore, according to the chief, through the arts, many people have been able to give quality education to their children, something these carvers themselves could not benefit. A classmate of this researcher, Mr. Daniel Afrifa, an Accountant, from Ahwiaa, also informed this writer that though his father never had any formal education, but through carving, he was able to see him (Mr Afrifa) and his siblings through to the university and other tertiary institutions. So today, Ahwiaa can boast of many scholars and other prominent people, all through these arts.

Again, many of the carvers after securing enough money went to the Ahafo and the Sehwi areas of the Brong-Ahafo and Western Regions respectively to acquire land for farming purposes. Though they never abandoned their carving work, they travelled to these farmlands during the farming seasons. Today, as told by Mr. Afrifa, these categories of carvers are all rich and leading decent lives.

4.20 Summary of discussion

This chapter of the study has presented the findings of the thesis based on the objectives and the research questions. The role that art plays at each stage of the enstoolment process of the chief of Ahwiaa, the queenmother and his sub-chiefs have

also been highlighted. Through the arts, many people who would have been poor today are all rich and owned several assets now. From the discussion, it could be concluded that art plays a great role and it is important in Ahwiaa culture, particularly, its chieftaincy because without the arts its chieftaincy system might not exist.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Overview

The previous chapters have presented and interpreted the stupendous artistic creations in the chieftaincy system of the Ahwiaa culture. The study has laid bare that art, among the other cultural components, is the most significant phenomenon in the chieftaincy system of the people. This final chapter of the study is a summary of the salient points raised in the study and offers a conclusion based on the findings, with the major findings of the research superseding them all. The chapter ends with some recommendations.

5.2 Summary of the Thesis

The study has observed the paramount role that art plays in the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa culture. It has related its findings to pertinent information in some literary books in order to fill the noted gaps that necessitated this research. Mention on the various aspects of Asante culture and how they come together to affect the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa positively have been brought to the fore. The positive economic activities of the people with support of the chief and his sub-chiefs have also been discussed.

It has been evidently clear that Ahwiaa's chieftaincy system is purely surrounded with art, especially stools of many kinds as well as other wood products such as the *Akuaba* (Asante fertility doll), as in the past, women who had problems with child-bearing were made to carry these dolls as if they were humans, and by so doing and

their belief, some were able to bear children; spokesmen's staves and finials of umbrellas among others. The sub-chiefs of Ahwiaa also play a very important role in the art industry, especially the carving, as even the *Nifahene* of the town owns an art gallery. The data collected from respondents attested to this claim as nearly one hundred percent of those interviewed agreed to it that Ahwiaa's art and chieftaincy conspicuously feature in Ahwiaa culture. The *Asenfoohene* (chief of the carvers) of Ahwiaa also plays a vital role among the numerous wood carvers of the town by ensuring that sanity prevails among the carvers.

This thesis has also established, point, by point the role that art plays in the social, spiritual, political and judicial functions of the chief of Ahwiaa. The thesis has also touched on the artistic aspects of art in the death, burial and funeral rites of the chief of Ahwiaa and his sub-chiefs. Again, the findings have made the point that the *Ahwiaahene* plays a spiritual role in the Ahwiaa society as the priest of his people and point of contact between the mortal progeny and the immortal ancestors; and to a large extent, he employs a great deal of art in his religious duties. This is because the symbol of authority of the *Ahwiaahene* is the Agyebi Nti Stool which, as a shrine, is involved in religious ceremonies conducted by the chief. This stool is also the symbol of immortality of Nana Agyebi Nti who volunteered to bring the people of Ahwiaa from Denkyira to Asante.

It has been established that when the chief of Ahwiaa is ill, he is nursed through medical art within architectural art environments. Before he dies, an art object is used to give him water, and for this matter, it is preferred that he dies in his palace. After death, art is greatly involved in the bathing, laying-in-state and burial of the chief of

Ahwiaa. It is finally established that the final funeral rites of the chief of Ahwiaa involves libation prayer, music and dance, all of which are forms of art.

Another interesting observation made during the study was that the present *Ahwiaahene*, Nana Kusi Asiamah Yeboa and his people of Ahwiaa have never considered the possibility of packaging chieftaincy for commercial gain. Moreover, the study revealed that some aspects of European culture have made inroads into the Ahwiaa culture and generally into the culture of the Asante Kingdom in so far as the dead Asante king and chiefs are sent to churches for a requiem mass before internment is made. Again, chiefs are sent to hospitals for treatment when taken ill and even their bodies placed in morgues after death. A practice which was not in existence. Moreover it is of common knowledge that some Akan chiefs have formed an Association of Christian Chiefs.

It is heart warming, however, to observe that the *Ahwiaahene* and the other Akan chiefs have not stopped the pouring of libation and the regular purification of their blackened stools. Neither has the *Ahwiaahene* stopped putting on cloth and native sandals for a traditional function nor appearance. He regularly observed important occasions such as the *akwasidae*, *awukudae*, *fofie*, among others on the Akan calendar. He plays his role as a subordinate chief towards his superior chiefs/king such as the *Atipimhene* (who is the overlord of Ahwiaa and the *Asantehene* (the King of Asante). Thus, the Ahwiaa chieftaincy system moves from strength to strength.

It is observed that as far as Ahwiaa chieftaincy is concerned, music is not involved in the nomination, acceptance and the swearing of the oath of allegiance to the *Asantehene*.

It is also observed that the *gong* is a very important piece of art work to the chief of Ahwiaa as it is to other Akan chiefs, because it is one of the means through which the chief informs his people of coming events and also rallies his people for communal labour and other activities.

Concluding, the arts have been found to be part of the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa, as it permeates all angles of the people's culture. This is evidently clear from a random sampling interview conducted by this researcher during one of the field trips, to verify whether truly art plays a great role and is important in Ahwiaa culture, particularly, chieftaincy.

a) **Major Findings**

The study followed the systematic approach to research and since participatory observations were made of the various chieftaincy departments of the people's culture and personal interviews rendered to the researcher's informants who are custodians of the various rites, the study revealed findings hitherto unrecorded, as shown below:

Firstly, the study has revealed that the carvers of Ahwiaa do not only carve artefacts for religious and socio-economic reasons but also produce most of the stools that are presented to outgoing envoys and other foreign dignitaries who pay courtesy calls on Ghanaian Heads of State at the Christiansburg Castle, Osu. This means that the arts of

Ahwiaa play a great role in preserving and promoting the culture of the people and the country at large. However, it is worthy to note that these artefacts are produced with the consent of the Ahwiaa chief and his elders.

Again, the research discovered that some of the stools, spokesmen's staves, and other wood products of the various traditional areas in Asante, parts of the Bono- Ahafo, and some areas of the Eastern Region are all manufactured from Ahwiaa with the permission of the *Ahwiaahene* and his elders.

Furthermore, not only into the homes of Ghanaians do these Ahwiaa wood products find their way, but also, they find their way into the homes of some African-American citizens who believe in the African Traditional Religion since they place special orders for stools and other wood products such as the *Akuaba* (Asante fertility doll) (Refer to plates 4.4 and 4.5) which are shipped to America with the consent of the Ahwiaa stool. All these indirectly earn the Ghanaian nation some foreign exchange.

Whereas in many Akan areas in Ghana the symbol of office of the chief is only the stool, in Ahwiaa apart from the Agyebi Nti Stool, another symbol (or staff) of office of the *Ahwiaahene* is the *Asenehene Poma* (chief carvers' stick) This is because the *Ahwiaahene* doubles as the *Asenehene* (chief of the carvers) of Asante.

The study has in addition revealed that unlike other Akan areas where a royal could be taken through the rudiments in chieftaincy to become a future chief, an Ahwiaa royal should as a pre-requisite, be trained in carving, to become a good carver before

ascending to the Agyebi Nti Stool. This is to emphasise the importance of art to the people of Ahwiaa.

Also, the study has revealed that although it is required by law in Ghana that every worker pays income tax to the government of Ghana, Ahwiaa carvers are exempted from this because of their royal carvings. This clearly shows that the government of Ghana acknowledges the immense contribution which Ahwiaa arts makes to the development of the country.

Finally, unlike many Akan areas where stools were created either through wars or important roles such as bravery exhibited in wars by the people, the chieftaincy system of Ahwiaa was created out of carvings as without these royal carvings, the stool would not have been in existence. Therefore, the day the *Ahwiaahene* will order his carvers to stop carving for the *Asantehene* and his chiefs, the Ahwiaa stool will come to an end. This means there will not be a chief for this town, but this condition is not found in any part of Asante. Ahwiaa arts are so tied to its chieftaincy that there can never be an *Ahwiaahene* without its arts.

It is evidently clear from the number of findings presented so far that the study has indeed contributed effectively to the growth of knowledge in Art and Chieftaincy of Ahwiaa cultural heritage.

5.3 Conclusion.

As indicated in the first chapter, it has been the primary objective of this thesis to study and report on the chieftaincy system in Ahwiaa culture, with the view to

identifying the arts that are associated with the system, examining the roles which the arts play in Ahwiaa chieftaincy, and ascertaining the importance of the arts in the chieftaincy system. From the presentation and discussions of the research in the fourth chapter, all these objectives have obviously been fulfilled.

The research has shown that, from the time of the nominated processes of the chief of Ahwiaa, through his installation, enstoolment, lifestyle, administrative activities, to his death and burial, the royal arts are so important, preponderant and so much interlinked with the functions that they are indispensable to Ahwiaa chieftaincy. This observation has also been made in connection with the queenmother and the sub-chiefs of Ahwiaa, and it is established in this thesis that the chieftaincy system itself is highly artistic.

It has been indicated that it is the arts, especially, the Agyebi Nti Stool, that empower the chief to perform his political, religious, economic, social, preventive, protective and other functions in the Ahwiaa community. It has also been demonstrated that the purpose of establishing the Ahwiaa chieftaincy was the production of some arts --- carvings --- for the *Asantehene* and his sub-chiefs. And should the Ahwiaa people fail to execute this duty, the chieftaincy of the town would cease forthwith. It has been noted already that it is for this particular duty that the *Ahwiaahene* singularly owns the *Asenehene Poma* mentioned in this thesis.

Besides the fulfilment of the objectives, the kingpin of this thesis, all the research questions posed on page three (3) have been answered. And the researcher is confident that he has satisfactorily accomplished the task he initially set for himself.

5.4 Recommendations

The researcher recommends that the *Ahwiaahene* and his sub-chiefs should establish an art institute that would research and document its arts and cultural activities. The results of the researches should be published and made available to institutions of learning in this country and abroad to enable the academic community of this world to be more conversant with Ahwiaa art, chieftaincy and other aspects of Ahwiaa culture. The chief and elders of Ahwiaa should open a website for Ahwiaa to popularise the Ahwiaa town, its chieftaincy and arts to attract more tourists into the town to boost its economic activities. Doubtlessly, the information to be placed on the website will create on-line commercial activities between Ahwiaa and the other parts of the world. This is likely to bring an economic boom to Ahwiaa and Ghana in general. It may promote developmental activities at Ahwiaa and other parts of this country and may help to raise the standard of living of Ghanaians in general.

The researcher again recommends that the *Ahwiaahene* should establish an annual stools and other wood products festival. This should include a trade fair to display Ahwiaa artefacts which will obviously attract foreigners from other countries for Ahwiaa and the rest of Ghana to achieve what have been stated above. The stool festival and exhibitions will not only help to promote Ahwiaa culture, but also they will help to preserve it, and make Ahwiaa a far more interesting place to live. The preservation of the culture may largely resist acculturation at Ahwiaa and may remain a precious legacy or hereditary for the future generations of Ahwiaa.

Again, the researcher recommends that the artefacts, after the suggested festival, should be kept at a museum to be built at Ahwiaa to promote the people's cultural heritage and always remind visitors of the existence of such artefacts at Ahwiaa.

Since the continuance of Ahwiaa chieftaincy depends on the sustainability of woodcarving in the town, the chief should financially support the carvers. He should help promote the carvers' association to secure loans from the government of Ghana, available banks and elsewhere to promote their work, grow more strongly in their financial standing and improve their standard of living. Also, since the carvers have partly been carving for the *Asantehene* and his chiefs, these rulers should support them financially.

The *Ahwiaahene* and his chiefs should levy the carvers for developmental purposes. They can, for instance, build more schools to ease congestion in the existing public schools in the town, and also renovate these schools. By so doing they will be easing the burden on the Kwabre District Assembly in the provision of these facilities. A health facility to cater for the needs of the carvers as well as the entire populace of Ahwiaa need to be established since there is no public health facility in the town.

Again, Ahwiaa carvers, with the consent of the Agyebi Nti Stool, should be ready to share their knowledge and experience acquired in the carving industry with carvers from around the country and also learn diverse methods from others too in order to sustain this industry which is also tied to their chieftaincy. By so doing, there will be cross-cultural activities in the carving industry in Ahwiaa and the country as a whole.

Furthermore, the carvers' association of Ahwiaa should organise periodic seminars and workshops on business management and investment for their members in particular and Asante craftsmen in general. This would grow their businesses and uplift their living standard.

Moreover, since Ahwiaa carvers depend on raw wood products for their carvings, it would be proper if the chieftaincy allocates parts of its stool lands (if some are still available) or acquire a tract of land in the Ahafo or Sehwi area in the Brong Ahafo and Western Regions respectively to plant various tree species use in their work, as a time will come when this raw material will replenish. Here, not only will they get more raw materials for future use, but the ecology would also be restored.

The researcher wishes to appeal to the current chief of Ahwiaa, Nana Kusi Asiamah Yeboa I, to fill the vacant queenmother's stool of the town. The installation of a queenmother in the town will help solve the rift that has been created in the chieftaincy system. The current situation seems to have hindered major developmental activities in the town, especially within the carving industry.

Finally, the researcher wishes to appeal to future researchers to research deeply into Ahwiaa carvings in particular for proper documentation on Ahwiaa arts, as there seems to be more information on that aspect of art for proper documentation and future benefit.

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GLOSSARY

<i>Asantehene</i>	-	The title of the king of the Asante people of Ghana.
<i>Ahwiaahene</i>	-	The title of the chief of Ahwiaa.
<i>Ahwiaahemaa</i>	-	The title of the queenmother of Ahwiaa.
<i>Asenehene</i>	-	Head of carvers' of the Asante Kingdom
<i>Asenfoohene</i>	-	Head of Ahwiaa carvers'
<i>Abusuapanin</i>	-	Lineage head of the various clans
<i>Atipimhene</i>	-	A sub chief of Kumasi and the overlord of Ahwiaa
<i>Adwumakaasehene</i>	-	Chief of a town called Adwumakaase
<i>Akwankwaahene</i>	-	Chief of the youth or ordinary people
<i>Asona</i>	-	Akan lineage
<i>Aduana</i>	-	Akan lineage
<i>Agona</i>	-	Akan lineage
<i>Asakyiri</i>	-	Akan lineage
<i>Asenie</i>	-	Akan lineage
<i>Adinkra</i>	-	Asante symbols used in cloths, finials of umbrellas, stools.
<i>Ademadee</i>	-	A fee paid before the <i>Mpomponsuo</i> is released to the <i>Asantehene</i> -elect.
<i>Adowa</i>	-	An Akan traditional dance
<i>Afena</i>	-	A sword

<i>Ahwebaa</i>	-	Sword used by the <i>Ahwiaahene</i> -elect to swear his oath of allegiance to the <i>Asantehene</i> .
<i>Akondwasoafoo</i>	-	The man who bears the chief's stool
<i>Adwa</i>	-	A stool
<i>Asenehene Poma</i>	-	Chief carvers' sword of office
<i>Asipim</i>	-	A chair
<i>Ahenfie</i>	-	A palace
<i>Anomaa ahoofe ne ne ntakra</i>	-	'The beauty of the bird depends on its plumage'
<i>Adinkra fufuo</i>	-	White <i>adinkra</i> cloth.
<i>Akunintam</i>	-	Cloth of the noble.
<i>Akuaba</i>	-	An Asante (fertility) doll.
<i>Akwasidae</i>	-	Fortieth day on the Akan calendar
<i>Asamando</i>	-	The Akan underworld
<i>Abuburo</i>	-	Dove
<i>Abubumaa</i>	-	Twig-covered catapier
<i>Afahye</i>	-	Festival
<i>Aprade, Mpebi and Nkrawiri</i>	-	These are drums which follow the Golden Stool in a procession.
<i>Akwadwum</i>	-	A musical ensemble of the Asante Queenmother
<i>Atwenesin</i>	-	Drums used to recite verses for the chief/king
<i>Bretuo</i>	-	Akan lineage
<i>Bantamahene</i>	-	<i>Kontihene</i> of Kumasi and head of the kingmaker to the stool of <i>Asantehene</i> .
<i>Batakari</i>	-	Northern smock used in wars in the olden days.
<i>Benkumhene</i>	-	Left-wing chief
<i>Braye</i>	-	Menstruation

<i>Busumuru</i>	-	The leading state sword of the <i>Asantehene</i>
<i>Ekuona</i>	-	Akan lineage
<i>Etwie</i>	-	Drum which when beaten sounds like the snarls of leopard.
<i>Fekutiri</i>	-	Head of clans of the Kumasi Kingmakers
<i>fontomfrom</i>	-	A kind of drum
<i>Fufu</i>	-	An Akan traditional dish made with pounded yam, cocoyam or plantain.
<i>Gyaasehene</i>	-	A sub chief in charge of the palace, the youth and the citizenry of Ahwiaa.
<i>Gye Nyame</i>	-	Except God (an Akan symbol)
<i>Gong</i>	-	A piece of metal, beaten to invite, send a message, etc to the people.
<i>Hwedom</i>	-	A chair
<i>Kete</i>	-	A kind of Akan traditional dance
<i>Kente</i>	-	A dignified traditional cloth in Ghana
<i>Ko asuo n'ebo ahina</i>	-	The water fetcher normally breaks the pot
<i>Kokofuhene</i>	-	The chief of a town called Kokofu.
<i>Kokofuhemaa</i>	-	Queenmother of Kokofu
<i>Mmaa</i>	-	women
<i>Mamponhene</i>	-	Chief of a town called Mampon. He also occupies the Silver Stool of <i>Asanteman</i>
<i>Mpomponsuo</i>	-	A leading state sword of the <i>Asantehene</i>
<i>Nwomkro</i>	-	A typical Akan lyrics

<i>Mo ne kasa</i>	-	Well spoken
<i>Nkondwasoafopuaa</i>	-	The stool bearer's hair design
<i>Nkondwadanmu</i>	-	Stool room
<i>Nkosuohene</i>	-	A chief in charge of development of a town
<i>Oyoko</i>	-	An Akan lineage
<i>Ohene</i>	-	Title for an Akan chief
<i>Ohenekomfoo</i>	-	The chief's first oracle
<i>Ohemaa</i>	-	Queenmother
<i>Oman bosomfoo</i>	-	The state traditional priest
<i>Okyeame</i>	-	The chief's spokesman
<i>Pitre</i>	-	A kind of fish
<i>Prekese</i>	-	Galbanum. A spiced fruit
<i>Wo fro dua pa na ye pia wo</i>	-	If you climb a good tree you deserve to be pushed.
<i>Yokoman</i>	-	A state umbrella of the <i>Asantehene</i>
<i>Etwie</i>	-	A drum wrapped in a leopard skin
<i>Kwantenponmuta</i>	-	Twin drums which when in a procession come immediately after the shield bearers
<i>Okyemfuo</i>	-	Shield bearers
<i>Kwadmom</i>	-	Dirge
<i>Mmentia</i>	-	A flute used to play songs of appellation
<i>Funtumfunafu</i>	-	Symbol made up of two crocodiles with one stomach signifying unity in diversity
<i>Mpaboakurafuo</i>	-	Bearers of the kings' sandals

<i>Mpaboakurafuohene</i>	-	Chief bearer of the kings' sandals
<i>Mpaboakesee</i>	-	The greatest of the kings' sandals
<i>Kuduo</i>	-	The treasure bag (The silver treasure bag of the <i>Asantehene</i>)
<i>Abusuakuruwa</i>	-	A funerary object used among Kwawus (an Akan group found in the Eastern Region)
<i>Nifahene</i>	-	Right wing chief
<i>Ohemaa Kyeame</i>	-	Spokesman of the Queenmother
<i>Kontihene</i>	-	Army captain

APPENDIX A

PERSONAL INTERVIEWS

Personal Interview with Nana J.V.A. Owusu-Ansah, (a retired Senior Lecturer, African Art and Culture section, College of Art and Social Sciences, KNUST, Kumasi) at the Centre for Cultural Studies, KNUST, on Thursday, 28th August, 2008 at 11:15 am.

Personal Interview, Nana Kofi Kakari, *Asona Abusuapanin* of Ahwiaa, 27th March, 2008 at 12: 35 p.m at Ahwiaa in the Kwabre District of Asante. His age was 68. A retired Police Officer and currently a farmer.

Personal Interview, Opanin Kwabena Adu, Spokesman for the Ahwiaa Carvers on 27th March, 2008 at Ahwiaa at 10. 42 a.m. He was 45 years old.

Personal Interview, Nana Kusi Asiamah Yeboa 1, *Ahwiaahene* and *Asenehene* of *Asanteman*, 24th October, 2008, at his personal residence, Patase Estate, Kumasi at 10.15 am. Nana was 52years old.

Personal Interview, Nana Osei Kwadwo, Curator and Historian, Manhyia Palace Museum, 3rd October, 2008, at 9.15 am at Manhyia Palace, Kumasi. His age was 73.

Personal Interview, Nana Kwaku Bonsu, *Gyaasehene* of Ahwiaa, 29th March, 2008 at Taa Dwomo's House, Ahwiaa at 2.20 pm. Nana was 75 years.

Personal Interview with the *Kontihene*, Nana Yaw Boaten, on 30th March, 2008, at Family house, at Ahwiaa 10. 44 a.m. Aged 60.

Extra-linguistic phatic communion: This refers to greetings through the presentation of water, cola, milk, wine, coconut juice or shaking of the hands, embracing or even saluting, instead of uttering words

APPENDIX B
LETTER OF PERMISSION PRESENTED TO RESPONDENTS OF
THE RESEARCHER'S QUESTIONNAIRES

Department of General Art Studies

College of Art and Social Sciences

KNUST

Kumasi

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am a PhD student of the above-mentioned Department, writing on the topic 'Art and Chieftaincy in Ahwiaa Culture'. I would be very grateful if you could give your candid opinion to the following questions.

Thank you very much

Yours faithfully

Nana Kwaku Asiedu

SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A

Personal information

1. Name

2. Age

3. Position/Status

1. Why the name Ahwiaa?

2. From where did you come to settle at your present destination (Ahwiaa)?

3. What was your main occupation at that time?

Carving ☐ Farming ☐

d. Can you please tell me why the major occupation of the Ahwiaa people is so to date?

e. What impact has this carving had on the people? (In other words, what is the role of Ahwiaa carving)?

f. What relationship exists between the Ahwiaa Art (carving) and the Chieftaincy?

g. Does the Art play any role in the nomination and acceptance, swearing-in-ceremony, (Installation) outdoorings and enstoolment of the Ahwiaa chief and his sub-chiefs?

a. Yes ☐ b. No ☐

2. What role does Art perform in the functions of the chief of Ahwiaa, the queenmother and the sub-chiefs.
 - b. What role does Art plays when the *Ahwiaahene* dies and is lay in state?
 - c. What about his burial?
 - d. And the final funeral rites

APPENDIX C



Plate 1. A photograph of the *Ahwiaahene* and the Researcher during the latter's field trip to the chief's residence at the Patasi Estate in Kumasi.

Source: Picture taken by researcher's friend.

APPENDIX D

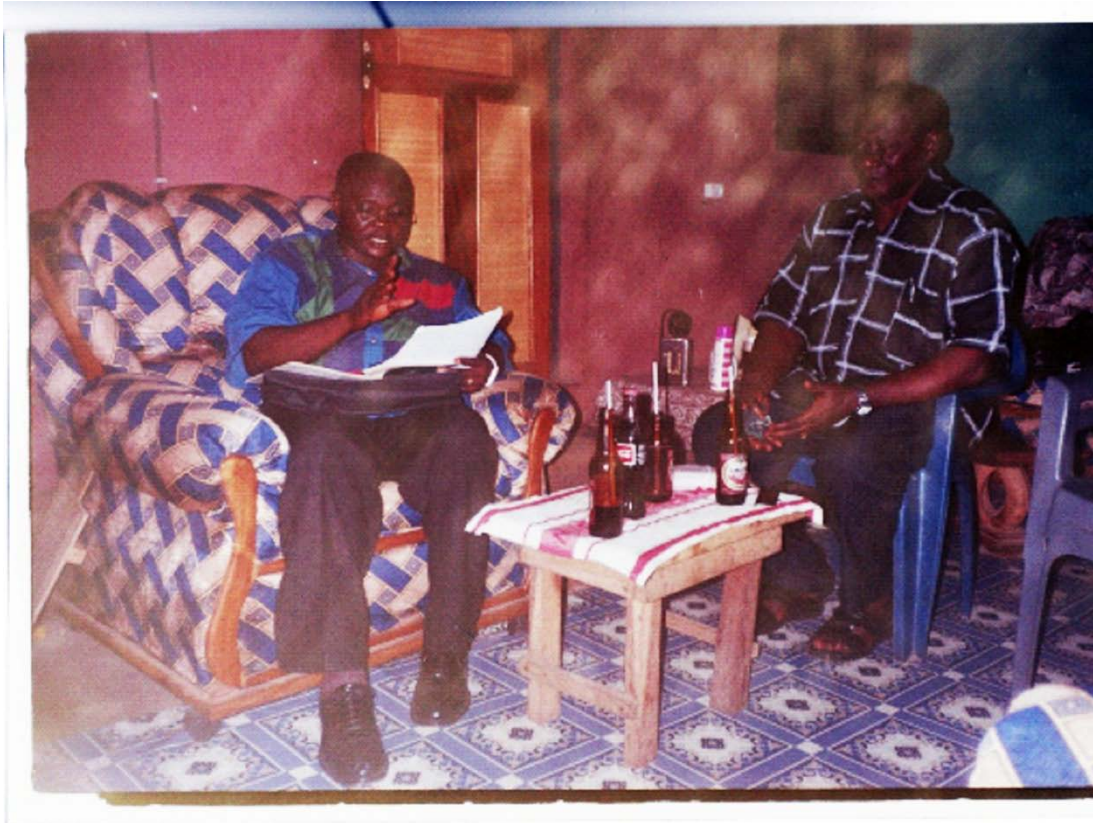


Plate 2. The Researcher interviewing the *Asona Abusuapanin* of Ahwiaa during the field trip.

Source: Photograph taken by researcher's friend

APPENDIX E



Plate 3. *Nkabomu ma Nkosoo* (unity brings prosperity)
This complex stool was carved by Opanin Kwabena Adu of Ahwiaa
Source: Photograph taken by researcher during the field trip

APPENDIX F



Plate 4. A boy from Ahwiaa carving a stool made from the *Sese* tree

Source: Photograph captured by the researcher
www.ghanaweb.com

APPENDIX 'G'



Plate 5 : A Hand-Carved Asante Traditional Stool from Ahwiaa.
Source: Picture captured from www.yahoo.com by researcher.

APPENDIX 'H'



Plate 6: Asante *Akuaba* (Asante fertility doll) from Ahwiaa
Source: Photograph captured on the net www.yahoo.com by researcher.

APPENDIX 'I'



Plate 7. Another Asante *Akuaba* (fertility doll) from Ahwiaa
Source: Picture taken from the net www.yahoo.com by researcher.