

ART: AN EXPRESSION OF THE GHANAIAN WAY OF LIFE

G. W. A. Owusu

BA (ART), DIP ART EDUCATION, KUMASI
LECTURER IN GRAPHIC COMMUNICATION,
DEPARTMENT OF ARCHITECTURE, U.S.T., KUMASI, GHANA

ABSTRACT

This is an exposition of the indigenous art of the people of Ghana. It begins with an attempt to describe the rôle of art in education, referring to the system by which the child is made to play with toys, games and other objects of art in the nursery and infant school, to develop his senses and general appreciation of colour, form and space.

The paper discusses the main traditional crafts as practised by the artists, traces their relevance to the socio-economic life of the people and hopes for their development into big industries. It then makes a comprehensive survey of the textile industries of Ghana and their impact on the Ghanaian economy.

KEYWORDS

LAMINATED WOOD, FUUGU, NSAMANFO,
SUPERSTRUCTURE, LEATHER-DRY, KUNKUMA,
SGRAFFITO, PITO-BREWING POT, NYAMEDUA.

INTRODUCTION

Art is a discipline for the development of the intellect. The development of the senses of sight, feeling, beauty, balance, order and appreciation which is necessary for the promotion of learning, is made possible through artistic training. Art is therefore an essential tool in education. For this reason, in modern educational systems, the informal pre-school teaching of the child in the home or nursery is characterized by extensive use of toys, games, pictures, coloured forms and play things. These offer the child the opportunity of handling, examining and creating forms for the development of his mental faculties.

In Ghana, the terminology 'art' is broadly used to cover all forms of crafts whose practice require special skills. These include weaving, fabric printing, carving, pottery, basketry, leather work and jewellery, each of which covers a broad spectrum of activities.

Weaving in the context of this paper applies mainly to the production of kente cloth with cotton and silk yarn. These days the scarcity of silk imposes on the

weaver the use of imitation silk and other synthetic fibres. Weaving with other natural fibres is also in practice. Under this falls rug-making, weaving of carpets, sack-cloth and door-mats with sisal hemp, jute and coconut fibre. Similarly the carving of cups from coconut shells and bamboo, and of designs on calabashes and gourds which has been recently introduced into the decorative tradition of this country, should be encouraged. Most of the country's 360 species of timber, [1] are suitable for this art. In addition, beautiful laminated wood made from different pieces of colourful timber species, is now a popular choice for the carving of stools, ash-trays, flower vases and fruit-bowls for interior decoration. It is also noteworthy that clay, the main material for pottery, is utilized by students for model making.

Blacksmithing and bronze work are other forms of metal-work. While the former is a service to the farmer, the latter is a decorative art. Today, miniature figures of bronze such as drummers, dancers, musicians, animals masks and objects which portray Ghanaian culture, are among the decorative items found on table-tops in many homes. Unfortunately the vigilance with which the Government is combating the smuggling of gold is becoming a threat to the survival of goldsmithing in this country. Nevertheless art, a way of life of the people of Ghana, should be encouraged, developed and diversified if we are to enjoy the full benefits of the inventions of modern science and technology.

WEAVING

Weaving is a national craft in Ghana. It is popular not only among the Ashantis, but also in the Northern, Upper and Volta regions. It is one of the most economically viable crafts in this country. In Ashanti, it is the main industry of the rural people and operates in Bonwire and other villages. Its popularity attracts a great number of apprentices who serve for many years under distinguished weavers who design and produce the gorgeous kente cloths and smocks worn by Ghanaians on ceremonial occasions. Besides cloths and smocks, articles such as scarves, stoles, ties, towels, napkins, blankets and carpets are woven.

It is believed that weaving started in Mesopotamia, the ancient civilization that thrived between the Tigris and Euphrates, in modern Iraq, and spread to Europe, Africa and other parts of the world [2]. The art might have been first introduced into Northern Ghana by the Arabs through their social and trade contacts with this country [3]. Now there are kente weavers in almost every corner of Ghana. There is marked difference between the Ewe and Ashanti kente designs. The strips of the Ewe kente are generally plain, striped or checked without special designs at the ends like those of Ashanti. The northern designs which are similar in their simplicity to the

Ewes, are further decorated with fabulous embroidery after they have been made into the 'Fuugu' (smocks). Figures 1, 2 and 3.



Fig. 1: Ashanti Kente cloth with special end-designs

Research into textile technology in this University by individual members of staff has resulted in many improvements in the design of the traditional loom. It was traditional to spread the warp of the cloth over a distance of many meters and thereby expose it to dust and other forms of atmospheric pollution. Now weavers could work indoors within a limited space by having the whole warp wound on a large spool on the loom. Also invalids with infirmities in the legs, could use looms with hand-operated heddles. Much credit must be given to the late Mr. L.K. Idan, the pioneer of these developments. Mr. Idan who was a senior lecturer and the head of the Rural Art and Industry section of the Department of Painting, Sculpture, Rural Art and Industry of the College of Art, also invented the 'Betty loom' - a broad loom that could weave all the intricate designs of the kente cloth, which could formerly be woven only in narrow strips on the traditional loom.

Weaving and the other small home industries such as pottery and woodwork have been greatly encouraged by the country's industrialization programme which has resulted in the establishment of many big factories. In addition to the existing rural weaving enterprises, the country has had many big textile factories, most of which are engaged in both weaving and printing. The Ghana Textile Manufacturing Corporation, Ghana Textile Factory, State Textile Printing Corporation and Akosombo Textiles are only few of these. The importation of raw materials such as cotton and constant supply of electricity from the Akosombo Dam are some of the factors which promote this industrial growth, and enable the factories to operate continuously. Currently feasibility studies are being carried out by a team of electrical en-



Fig. 2: Imported-imitation Kente cloths with colourful designs



Figure 3: Fuugu - The ceremonial dress of Northern Ghana

gineers led by Mr. Tsibu and Mr. T. A. Koram of Asare-Tsibu & Partners, P. O. Box 3083, Accra for the future establishment of more power stations in the regions to encourage the expansion of the existing industries and the establishment of new ones.

The Government of Ghana unfortunately spends huge amounts of foreign exchange on the importation of the raw materials. According to figures released from the External Trade Statistics of Ghana, the country imported in 1973, a total of 11,768,023.2 kg of cotton at C12,301,562.00 from Togo, Mexico, Turkey, the United States of America and Nicaragua [4]. The following year

it imported from seven countries including the United States of America and three African countries, a total of 5,753,912.8 kg at C11,811,433.00, [5]. In 1975 the supply from the United States, United Kingdom and three new sources totalled 8,787,942.8 kg and cost C11,791,344.00 [6]. The above figures and the following for 1976 in Table 1 [7] show that for four consecutive years, the United States was Ghana's heaviest and most regular supplier of cotton.

It is also observed that in the short period under review: 1973-76, the Government of Ghana spent as much as C44,791,539.00 on the importation of cotton only.

To reduce the expenditure on the importation of cotton and save money for other national commitments, the Government is encouraging local production of cotton and

TABLE 1: Ghana's Importation of Cotton for 1976.

COUNTRY	WEIGHT (KG)	COST (C)
The United Kingdom	729,600	1,560,550.00
Brazil	397,400	554,010.00
Mexico	1,029,400	1,825,716.00
Mozambique	34,100	62,728.00
The United States	6,696,700	12,018,057.00
TOTAL	8,887,200	16,021,061.00

the chiefs who are the custodians of land in this country are releasing vast farmlands for the cultivation of this crop. In response to this, the Loyal Industries Ltd., has established a cotton farm at Agotime, Adidome in the Volta Region. The project was carried out under the direction of Mr. B. B. Lal, the consultant for the Ministry of Agriculture on cotton development in Ghana. Similarly, the Ghana Cotton Company has established large cotton farms at Wa, Bolgatanga, Tumu, Tamale, Ejura, Atebubu and Ho.

As a result of these agricultural ventures, the Ghana Cotton Development Company which also buys cotton from individual farmers, could supply 2187 tons of seed cotton and 875 tons of lint cotton in the 1974-75 season. These figures and the following in Table 2 representing the Company's yearly supplies for the period 1985-88, which were released by the office of the Consultant on the National Cotton Development project of the Ministry of Agriculture in Accra, show a steady increase in the Company's yearly supply.

The latest published figures indicate that the survival of Ghana's textile industries still depends to a great extent on the importation of cotton. In 1982 the country imported 1,728,400 kg of raw cotton at C10,770,507 [8] and in 1983 it imported 778,400 kg at C68,185,953 [9]. However, the importation of old clothing and other textile waste into the country, has substantially

TABLE 2: Cotton Production in Ghana.

YEAR	OUTPUT		
	SEED COTTON	LINT COTTON	TOTAL
1985	1,000 Tons	360 Tons	1,360 Tons
1986	7,343 Tons	2,744 Tons	10,087 Tons
1987	7,370 Tons	2,732 Tons	10,102 Tons
1988	7,428 Tons	2,836 Tons	10,265 Tons

eased the pressure of demand on these industries for textile products. In 1978 Ghana imported 1,836,000 kg of old clothing and other textile waste valued at C2,443,183.00 [10]. In 1979 she imported 1,834,700 kg at C4,163,292.00 [11]. Then in 1982 and 1983 she imported 3,248,200 kg at C7,873,253.00 [8], and 778,400 kg at C68,185,953.00 [9] respectively.

FABRIC PRINTING

Closely allied to the weaving industry is 'Adinkra Printing'. It is customary in Ghana to wear 'Adinkra' cloth to funerals which due to their importance in the Ghanaian culture, are recognised as major week-end activities of the people. People travel long distances on Saturdays and Sundays to attend funeral celebrations and memorial services for lost relations and friends. This happens because of the ancient belief which many people still adhere to, that after a man's death, his soul continues to live among men to protect them with its supernatural power, from evil forces, danger and misfortunes. These spirits known as 'nananom nsamanfo' are therefore treated with great respect and kindness. At funerals, dirges full of appellations, praises and condolences, are sung by women or played on the talking drums in memory of them. Also at festivals and all important occasions, libation is poured to invite them to food and drinks.

There are two different types of 'Adinkra' cloth: the plain and printed. The plain cloth which has no designs, or textures may be 'kuntunkuni' (black), 'kobene' (red) or 'brisi' (a shade of indigo) with designs of 'Adinkra' symbols superimposed on it. Various shades of brown may also be used as base colours for 'Adinkra' Printing.

To dye the cloth in preparation for the printing, the artist uses vegetable dyes which he laboriously prepares from herbs, leaves, barks, roots and fruits. The vegetables are chopped into little pieces or pounded and boiled with water in drums for several hours. After the resultant liquor has cooled, it is strained and stored for use. The dyeing process is that the cloth is boiled in the dye stuff for about two and a half hours, cooled and buried in the mud to darken the colour. It is believed that while the cloth is in the mud, the iron contents in the soil, having reacted with the water in the mud containing dissolved oxygen, act on the colour of the cloth to make it fast [12]. The 'Adinkra' printer extracts his black colour from the bark of the

'Kuntuntuni-dua' - a species of the mahogany known as *senegalensis*. He obtains his red from 'Pam-fuluo' (*feruginea*) and brown from the 'Badie' [3]. Now acid, sulphur and other mineral dyes are also used.

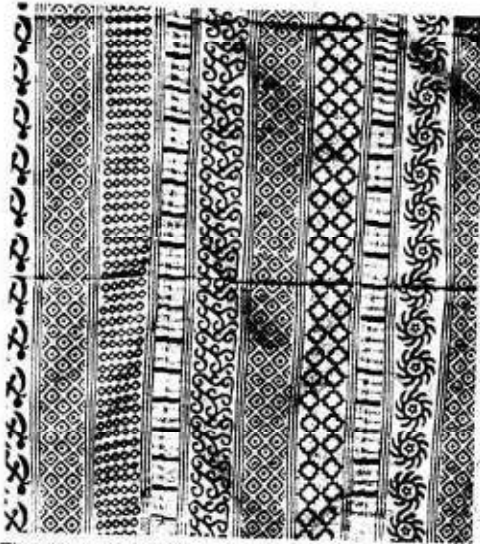


Figure 4: Printed Adinkra Cloth with Adinkra designs and Nwomu on Brisi

CARVING

Carving is another popular Ghanaian art. Like weaving it provides many of the basic needs of the people. A carver may specialise in the making of traditional stools (*asesegua*), the main objects of furniture in the traditional homes. There are stools for the kitchen, the *pato* where visitors are received and the bedroom. There are also sacred stools for the institution of chieftaincy. Every chief has a stool which is his office authority. Therefore besides its meaning as a piece of furniture for sitting on, the word 'stool' has a figurative connotation denoting the office of the Akan ruler. The expressions 'Akuapem Stool', 'Stool lands' and 'Stool Property' are therefore common in the Akan and Guan languages like Twi and Ewe. The stool is also a symbol of unity and the autonomy of the state. Because of the many functions it performs, the stool has survived the introduction into this country of the most comfortable European chairs.

The stool has a structure generally made up of three distinct parts: a flat rectangular base with little or no designs on, bearing four or five perpendicular supporters on which the top rests [13]. The top which is also basically rectangular, has a concave form which makes sitting on comfortable. The middle portion may be of other interesting designs like the form of some animal, an Adinkra symbol or any arbitrary design. It is the design of this portion which shows the ingenuity of the artist in giving

character to the stool to suggest its function. 'Ahenemagua', 'Mmarimagua' and 'Mmaagua' as their names imply are meant for the use of 'ahenemma' (princes) 'mmarima' (men) and 'mmaa' (women). Similarly, 'Obi-te-obi-so', 'Nyansapow' and 'Dame-dame' are designs showing a superstructure of two stools, the knot of wisdom and the draught-board design respectively.

Other carvers produce 'akuaba' or statuettes: semi-abstract human figures with broad flat heads, ringed necks and outstretched hands, which were formerly used at religious functions of fetish priests, but are now sold as works of art, together with masks, traditional drums, walking sticks and combs in artshops to promote the tourist industry. Moreover the use of modern machinery, preservatives and adhesive enable the artist to manufacture laminated wood products like lecterns, flower vases, ash-trays and fruit-bowls for local use (Figures 5, 6, 7 & 8).

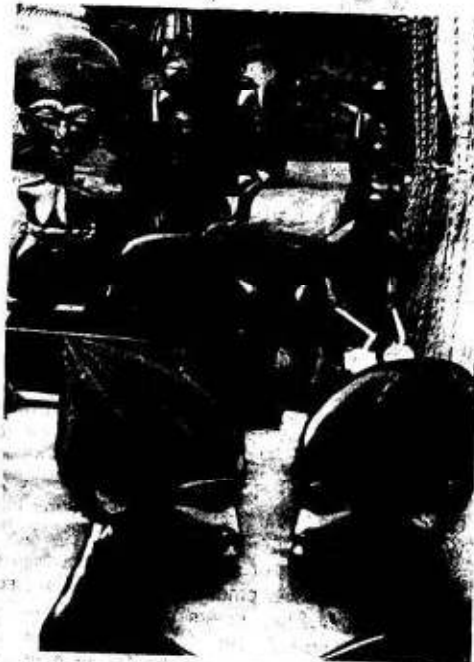


Figure 5: Heads, Statuettes and Akuaba Dolls carved from Ebony

Though there is a wide variety of wood to choose from for this art, the 'osese' (*holarrhena floribunda*) is the most popularly used for carving traditional stools. Its brightness, softness and lightness make it attractive and easy to transport. 'Odum' (*Chlorophora excelsa*) 'Mahogany' (*Khaya avorensis* and *Khaya granifoliola*), 'Papao' (*afzelia*) [14] and other red and black woods are also used because of their beauty and durability, for the other works.

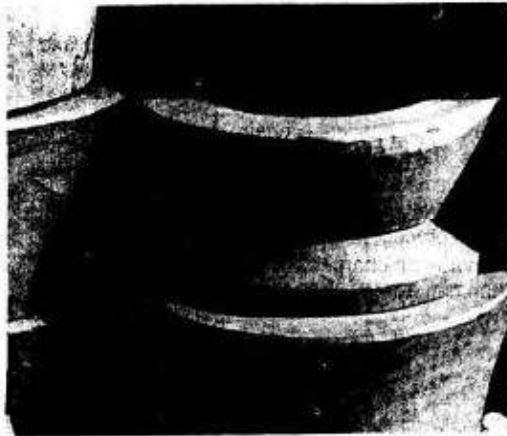


Figure 6: A Stack of Fufu-Mortars on sale at Kejetia Market, Kumasi



Fig. 7: Carved Calabashes and Gourds showing Adinkra cowrie-shell and other designs



Fig. 8: Akan Traditional Stool (of Gye-Nyame design) carved from laminated wood



By Courtesy of Professor E. Ablade Glover

Figure 9: Ghanaian Traditional Stools

BASKETRY

Basketry is one of the oldest crafts of this country. It is an important one, for the rural nature of life in this country creates a great demand for it: baskets are required for all types of domestic and commercial activities in Ghana. Fortunately the availability of abundant weaving materials from the surrounding forests and grasslands has sustained and promoted this craft over the years.

Weaving related to Basketry, dates from about 5,000 B.C. [15]. Ancient civilizations like the Persians, Egyptians and Romans used baskets for various purposes. Today, the traditional weavers of the Northern and Upper regions of Ghana weave baskets of beautiful designs with fantastic colour arrangements, for conveying and storing foodstuffs, displaying wares on the market, keeping personal effects and for travelling and shopping. Designs of different qualities are made for different purposes. The ladies travelling and shopping straw baskets for instance possess such delicacy as cannot be rivalled by the cane baskets used for carting goods which only need to be strong enough for the heavy loads they carry, as well as the rough handling by sellers, buyers and transporters. Also the differences in the types of materials used which change from one region to another, account for the differences in styles and quality of the product. Oil and raffia palm cane, being a comparatively crude material; harder and more brittle than straw, cannot be woven into the intricate patterns which give the craft extra elegance.

Leaf baskets (bedew) are the earliest and easiest to make, though the least durable. They are made of palm leaves and used in times of emergency by farmers and other rural people for conveying their perishable farm produce and other stuffs to the village, and then disposed of. Baskets made of oil or raffia palm cane are the commonest in the villages in the south and used for all farm and house work. They are cheap and easy to obtain, because of the abundant availability of palm cane in this part of the country. Consequently these baskets constitute a major craft in the schools in this region. To make a palm-cane basket, the outer material of seasoned palm branches is peeled and carefully shaped into two different sizes required for the weaving: the 'stakes' - short broad units which are placed in an asterisk form on a base to compose the structure of the basket, and the 'canes' - long thin ones which are twisted in various patterns around the 'stakes' to build up the shape required. It is the 'stakes' that determine the size of the basket: the longer and broader they are, the larger and taller the form that emerges.

Rattan cane which is also a forest product, is prepared in a similar way, but since it is a more pliable material, it can be shaped into finer units, and woven into many delicate patterns. The commonest method of weaving with cane is 'randing' in which the cane goes over and under the 'stakes' alternately. It is similar to 'taby' in textiles. There is also 'pairing' in which two canes, instead of one, are used and twisted around each other as they go over and under the 'stakes'. Other methods such as 'chain

pairing', 'three-rod' and 'four-rod' waling are variations and progressions of 'pairing'. In each method the cane has to be worked damp to improve its flexibility.

Currently rattan cane chairs, tables, baby-cots, room-dividers and lampshades are among the dominant products of this industry. However, since the cane is obtainable only in certain remote parts of the forests, instructors and practitioners who require them, have to pay heavy transportation charges. This accounts for the high cost of rattan cane products on the market.



Figure 10: Rattan Cane Baskets.

Straw baskets are the most varied and colourful of all. The Dagombas, Kanjangas, Frafras, Dagatis, Walas, Lobis, Gonjas, Kasena-Nankanis, Kusasis, Mamprusis and Busangas of the Northern and Upper regions of Ghana are masters of this craft. Both men and women engage in it and weave a variety of forms for all purposes, ranging from treasure boxes to silos for their grain and groundnuts. Fans, meat safes, fish traps, curtains, mats and mattresses are also made. They do this as a hobby after their normal farm work. Different types of straw are used for the different designs in the various forms. The sources of these include all the species of grass belonging to the *Sporobolus Pyramidalis* family, a wild and hardy type which thrives in the dry weather and generally poor soil of the north. *Stupeus*, *Glaucifolius*, *Pungens* and *Regularis* are among the commonest of these. *Panicum Maximum* or Guinea Grass, *Imperata Cylindrica*, also known as Thatch, *Pennisetum Perpureum* (Elephant Grass) and *Schizachyrium* are the other families each of which has a wide variety of species. The *Schizachyrium* family which includes *Brevifolium*, *Ptalyphillum*, *Delicatum*, *Nudulosum*, *Semiberbe* and *Compressum* produce tall and tough straw that can be woven into beautiful mats for roofing, fencing and walling [16].

There is another type of grass which thrives in the swampy areas around Sogakofe, Denu and Keta in the Tongu district beyond the Volta. This is the *Cyperus* species known among the Ewe as Katsi. It is a tall grass with a graceful continuous stalk, which becomes very pliable and manageable when it is dry and slightly moistened. Both *Cyperus Articulatus* and *Cyperus Papyrus* are found in this area, where most of the country's best quality straw mats and mattresses come from.

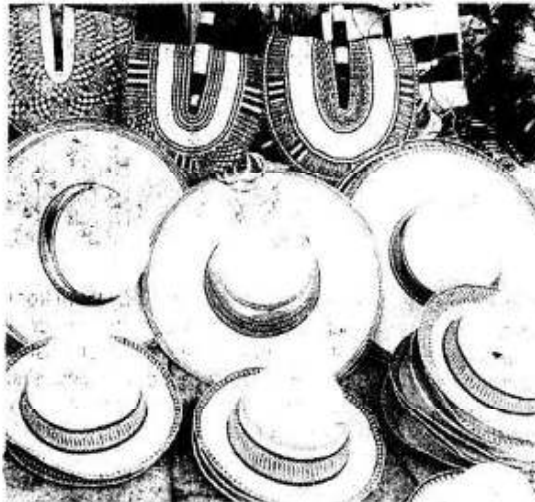


Figure 11: Straw Hats and Fans.

Since straw mats, besides their domestic use, are required in marriage, outdoor and burial ceremonies, and for religious purposes among both Christians and Muslims in this country, the Government of Ghana is encouraged to examine the possibility of setting up a factory for the manufacture of high quality straw mats. Such a factory would feed on the straw from these natural plantations and save the country's scarce foreign exchange for other uses. The Government is further encouraged to seek partnership in the form of technical aid from foreign Governments for the project.

LEATHER-WORK

Leather-craft like straw basketry is an occupation of the people of the Northern and Upper regions of Ghana where animal husbandry which supplies the hides for this craft thrives. Every family keeps a herd of cattle, sheep or goats. Some individuals such as the chiefs and their elders who have the means, keep in addition, horses and donkeys which they use as means of transport and beasts of burden. The wealth of the Dagomba or Mamprusi man is measured in terms of the size of his herd of cattle or sheep which he sells or uses for paying the dowry of his sons in marriage. Hides can therefore be easily obtained and prepared into leather which in turn, is designed into bags, brief cases, cushions, traditional sandals, purses,

wallets, ^{KUMASI}treasure boxes, knife and sword cases, arrow carriers, necklaces, bracelets, waist-bands and talismans. On these works as on the other handicrafts, very skillful decorations are made.

The local people have tanneries where they use herbs to prepare the leather. These tanneries are open spaces with seats covered by sheds to keep off the sun and rain, and earthenware reaction vessels. The tanner and his team of about ten assistants and apprentices stretch the fresh skins from the slaughter house on the ground on nails, remove from them, all the unwanted tissues with knives and leave them to dry. The skins are then soaked for 24 hours in a solution of lime and wood-ash containing sodium hydrosulphide which loosens the hair on the outer skin - keratins - and facilitates its removal [17]. After the hair has been peeled off with knives the skins are washed for a whole day in the juice of water-melons, and hung on a drying line to drain off the liquid. After the hides have been prepared in this way, they are immersed in the tannin for about 24 hours, then removed, dried and pounded in a mortar with some groundnuts to soften them. The leather which emerges after the tanning as cream, is either bleached white or dyed with another vegetable stuff into one of the beautiful shades of red, brown or black which are found on the market. The local tanners obtain their tannins from the following sources:

- a. the pods of *Acacia Nilotica*
- b. the barks of *Burkea Africana* and *Coriocardus Erectus* [17].

This is an area of economic interest to the government. Therefore in its efforts to promote the industries of this country for the production of the basic needs of the people, it has among other things, instituted research programmes in some of its institutions of higher learning, under which scientific investigations are being conducted into local plants and herbs which are believed to possess some tanning, dyeing, adhesive and medicinal properties. The Forest Products, Research Institute in Kumasi, which is one of these institutions has discovered that Ghana has many other plant species which contain tannins. These include *Anacardium Occidentale*, *Pithecellobium Dulcae*, *Rhisophora* (Red Mangrove) and *Ugenia Uniflora* [17].

Hides for leather production in Northern Ghana are mainly obtained from sheep, goats and cattle. However, the skins of horses which are occasionally obtained, are also used. The development of livestock farming alongside that of tannins is a crucial factor in the general development of the leather industry in this country. The Government being aware of this, is encouraging cattle ranching projects in this country. The U.S.T./Canadian Cattle project at Doadi in Kumasi which is successfully cross-breeding the N'dama cattle with the heavy Holstein Friesian breed for local use and the veterinary stations set up in the regional capitals and at other vantage points in the North for the prevention and control of animal diseases, ensure the cattle ranching project a very bright future.

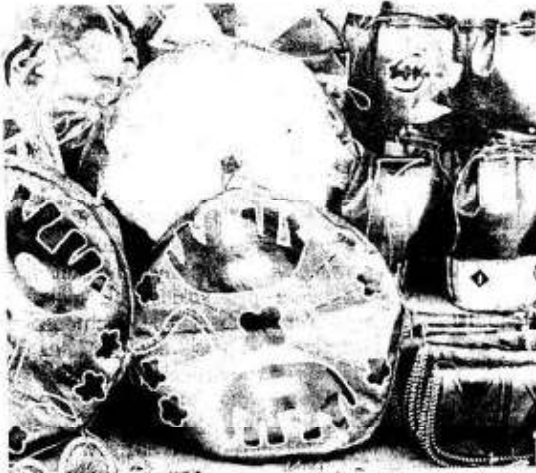


Fig. 12: Leather Cushions, Brief-cases and Ladies Bags

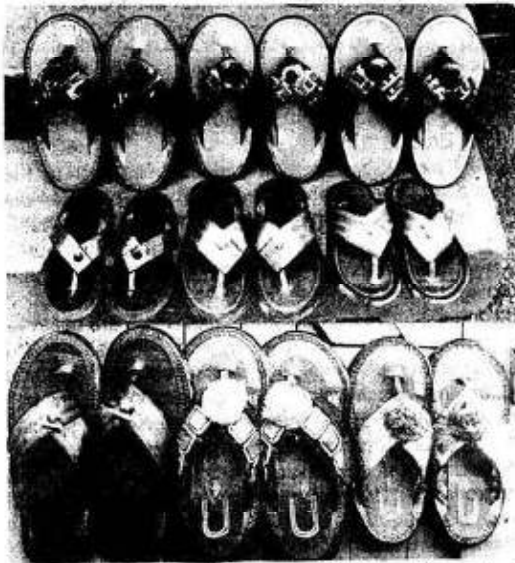


Fig. 13: Ahenemma (Ghanaian Traditional Sandals with leather tops)

POTTERY

Pottery is a special craft in this country, not only because of its importance as a ritual object, but also its association with housekeeping in general and food preparation in particular - a distinguished office in all societies. Its second office as a household utensil made it originally a craft for women who by tradition are the holders of this important office in the Ghanaian society. In the past, almost every housewife made her own pots, but

Figure 14: Other leather product Arrow-carriers and sword sheaths



now it has been found more convenient to buy them from certain villages which have specialised in this craft probably because of their high standard of craftsmanship and the easy access they have to good clay deposits. Ahwiaa, Nnerebehi, Aferi and Mfensi are popular clay centres in Ashanti. Fomena and Saltpond in the Central region, and Mamfe and Doryumu in the Eastern and Greater Accra regions are other centres.

Ritual pottery include the 'Abusuakuruwa' (Clan Pot) which contains the hair of all the departed relations of the clan, and pots for the Kunkuma in which offerings of eggs and animal blood are made to the ancestral spirits. There are also ceremonial pots used by the clan-heads and other pottery including terra-cotta heads used in the funeral and burial rituals of traditional heads. The 'Abusuakuruwa' may be kept in a shrine while the Kunkuma is placed at the entrance of the family compound or on a dais in the 'pato' at the house. At the fetish house, its appropriate place is on the fork of the 'Nyamedua' at the entrance of the shrine-room.

Every pot is designed precisely according to its uses. The kings eating and drinking vessels are of a superior design, while the 'mmarima-sanka' (the men's food-bowls) with flanged hips and broad brims of buff and black colours [18] are more graceful than the 'apotoyowa' (The women's dishes). There are medium-size pots 'ahina', for collecting and storing water, palm-oil or palm-wine, as well as tiny ones of about two-litre capacity, 'akotokywa' for serving palm-wine. The water-coolers ('nsuhina') and pito-brewing pots which are exceptionally large, are normally held in position with special earth constructions in the kitchen or courtyard. Tobacco-pipes and beads are the other products of this craft.

The traditional potters dig their clay from pits or river-beds, soak it for a day or two to soften it, and pound it into a plastic substance. During the pounding, all the foreign bodies such as pebbles, pieces of glass and roots are detected and removed. The clay is then kneaded into

balls, wedged and finally prepared into long coils for the modelling. When the pots are leather-dry, they are smoothed, decorated with designs and then allowed to dry slowly under natural weather conditions until they are white-dry and ready for firing. After the firing which is done with firewood in a pit, the pots come out in various shades of red-ochre but are smoked into glossy black. Long stacks of these pots are transported by road and rail from their villages of origin to the big markets in the towns and cities for sale to the public. Tafo, Pankrono, Apeadu, Asaman, Aferi, Sepaase and Taabuom in Ashanti, Dodowa, Agomeda, Kodiabe and Doryumu in the Greater Accra Region, and Bondakire near Sampa in the Brong Ahafo Region are great centres of traditional pottery.

pottery which brought with it the potter's wheel and the electric kiln which is adjustable to any temperature requirements. Modern equipment and tools in pottery enable the potter to wash, sieve, knead and wedge the clay in preparation for the throwing, and afterwards 'turn' and decorate the form to a high standard of finish before it is fired. Among Ghanaian artists who have made notable contributions towards the development of studio pottery in this country are Mr. Zigah and Dr. Daniel Koblah who, after their training, established their individual pottery studios for the production of household wares and decorative ceramics. Art teachers of this University and other institutions of the country including the late Mr. W. C. Owusu have also made a considerable impact on the teaching of this art. Figures 16 and 17.



Fig. 15: Apotoyowa (Women's food dishes) and Cooking/Storage pots



Fig. 16: Decorated Fufu and Soup Dishes

The material and technique used by the potters of Bondakire are different from those described above. Instead of pure clay, they use a mixture of ordinary earth and a small proportion of the clay from anthills, and after firing they dip the hot pot into a vegetable solution to harden and colour it [19].

Most of these pots and dishes are adorned with fabulous designs of lines, textures and symbols in sgraffito. Other designs of animal forms such as birds, crocodiles and fishes are also observed.

The slow and laborious methods of modelling pots with coils of clay, and firing them in pits without any means of regulating the temperature, are gradually but steadily giving way to the new and more scientific approaches which result in the production of stronger, healthier and more beautiful pots. (Studio pottery with vitrified bodies fired at high temperatures do not have pores for harbouring germs). This transformation of the traditional pottery methods into the modern techniques began with the introduction into Ghanaian schools and colleges, of studio



Fig. 17: A Decorated Pot

GOLDSMITHING

Goldsmithing is a branch of the art of jewelry. It is an honourable art because of its association with the institution of chieftaincy, the nobility and rich. The emblems and gold ornaments forming the regalia of the Ghanaian chief such as the state sword, headgear, breast plate, bracelets, armlets, anklets, and rings are the works of the goldsmith. Hence the saying: "Chiefs of Ghana are the custodians of the legacy of the Ghanaian artist" [19].

It is believed goldsmithing was introduced into Ghana by people who had learnt it from the Cameroons and other neighbouring African countries and settled in Keta, Nungua in Accra, and other coastal town. The art is also known to have been practised in Ashanti by Boron captives after the destruction of the Boron Kingdom by the Ashantis in 1740 [20]. Though the chiefs and members of the royal families were the first patrons of this art, the desire for body adornment with gold ornaments became common among the people and more goldsmiths came in to offer their services to those who could afford them.

Gold, the most valuable of the metals that form the earth's crust, is the main raw material for goldsmithing. The attractiveness, brightness and colourfulness of this metal make it popular for jewelry, while its density, malleability and durability make it a useful material for industrial application especially in the electrical, electronic and related industries.

Gold was plentiful in Ghana, and used as a medium for the exchange of goods and services. The early European traders who operated along this coast obtained gold in exchange for their merchandise, and affectionately called the country "The Gold Coast", a name it retained until its independence from British colonial rule on 6th March, 1957. Now gold is an important foreign exchange earner of this country, and used in accordance with international trends, as backing for paper currency in the economic system of this modern Government.

Gold could be collected in its dust form from alluvial deposits in the villages after a long showering, and from the beds and banks of rivers and streams, as well as the seashore where it had been washed to by flooded rivers. It is even believed that the oceans themselves contain billions of tons of gold, but there are only 6 parts of gold to 1 billion parts of sea water [21]. Occasionally larger grains and nuggets of this precious metal were also found in the sand or trapped in rock crevices in the surrounding land. The 'Placer' method of mining gold from alluvial deposits was not an industrial secret known to Ghana only. It was being used in those early times by the ancient civilizations of Persia, India, and China, and in California and Alaska [21].

Gold could also be obtained in this country in the form of ore from pits by digging and chipping with hoes and chisels. Sometimes shafts were sunk to enable the miners to reach the vein or gold-laden rock on rope ladders, and work horizontally towards it. The ore was then hauled to the surface in calabashes, ground and washed to obtain the gold. The Shaft-and-pit method of exploring gold deposits is similar to the 'Lode' method. However, in

modern mining technology, the finely ground ore is chemically treated to free the gold which initially emerges in liquid form and then is precipitated. This process is necessary for the removal of such impurities as silver, copper, platinum, palladium and other base metals which the gold in its natural form might contain [21].

Pure or 24 karats gold which is of 100% fineness, is however too soft to work with, and should be alloyed to improve its hardness and colour. Silver, copper and zinc are alloys which produce various shades of yellowish gold, while nickel, copper and zinc produce whitish gold. Gold is also alloyed to reduce its value and price for the benefit of the low income earner. Most of the gold used for jewelry is therefore of 14 karat quality. Gold of 9 karat quality is also acceptable in jewelry.

Besides the stool regalia, the goldsmith produces among other things, chains, necklaces, ear-rings and other trinkets. Larger objects such as badges, medals, trophies, watches, plaques and cutlery may be barely gold-plated. The smith has a workshop equipped with a hearth and basic tools including the bellow, anvil, hammers, sticks, pliers, tongues, files, bench and hand vices, and piercing saw for heating, holding and shaping his forms. These artists also possess the skill of refining old trinkets into pure gold, and could reproduce little objects in gold by casting. The molten gold is prepared in earthenware crucibles and poured into moulds of cuttle-fish bone to form the replica required.

The early goldsmiths used as the standard measure for weighing gold, the sovereign - a gold coin of one pound value and 22 karats fineness which was in circulation in this country. They also made gold weights of 'Adinkra' and other traditional designs as units for measuring gold. Since the art of body adornment with gold and gold-plated ornaments is steadily spreading into other cultures of the world, goldsmithing which is the source of these ornaments has a bright future. It should therefore not be ignored as a trade of the past era, but be encouraged and taught as an art with a new image, probably as a branch of the science of metallurgy.

CONCLUSIONS

It is evident from the above discussion, that in Ghana, Art has since the beginning of creation, been the medium for the expression of man's way of life; a means for providing the people of this country with the basic necessities of life - food, clothing, shelter, weapons for self-defence and objects of art for observing their customs and traditions. Art is absolutely necessary to the Ghanaian for he needs to know and practice it in order to survive. It is therefore more relevant to the industrialization programme of this country than the art of Europe was to the Industrial Revolution of the early 19th century. In Europe, the artist was responsible only for the design of the product which did not matter very much to industry until the desperate demand by society for better designed industrial products made the need for his services felt, and caused the outbreak of the Industrial Revolution. In

Ghana, the artist has to design as well as make the product. He holds an office of dual responsibility which he discharges with selfless devotion. Hence his position of great respect in the Ghanaian society.

However art in the modern sense should not be limited to the crafts. It should be an integration of the indigenous and scientific approaches to production - the old and the new which can serve the industries better. While the indigenous quality endows the product with the necessary traditional flavour and uniqueness for its easy identification on the world market as African Art, the scientific method will provide the technology for ensuring an efficient and more useful product.

But are the schools and colleges equipped well enough in terms of staff, equipment and materials to be able to teach this indispensable subject, the life-blood of the Ghanaian society? What was the attitude of the educational authorities and teachers towards this subject? These issues are addressed in another paper under the title: "Art Education in Ghanaian Schools".

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