

**UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA**

**DOCUMENTATION OF TRENDS IN CHIEFS REGALIA WITHIN KWAHU  
TRADITIONAL AREA FROM 1950 TO 2022**



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**DOCUMENTATION OF TRENDS IN CHIEFS REGALIA WITHIN KWAHU  
TRADITIONAL AREA FROM 1950 TO 2022**



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submitted to the School of Graduate Studies in partial fulfillment  
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**DECEMBER, 2022**

## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, Henry Ofosu Ameyaw, hereby declare that this Dissertation, '**Documentation of trends in chiefs regalia within Kwahu traditional area from 1950 to 2022**', with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: .....

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### SUPERVISORS' DECLARATION



We hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis/dissertation/project as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

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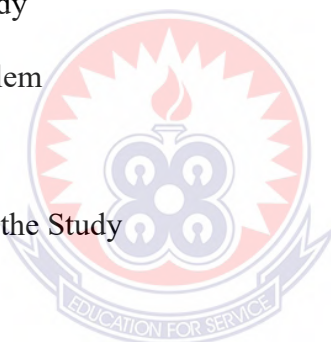
## DEDICATION

I dedicate this to my wife Maud Amofoa Nyarko and daughter's Drusilla Nhyiraba Ameyaw and Ashley Asabea Ameyaw. Mr Paul Ameyaw, Mrs. Christiana Osei Bonsu Muller and Family.



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## ABSTRACT

The Kwahus are part of the Akan ethnic group with unique culture and traditions. This study explored into the dress codes of the Kwahu traditional chiefs from the 1950 to 2022. It aimed at establishing fashion trends of the royal costumes and the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs and to document the ethnic symbolism of the royal dress codes of the Kwahus. Study explored the ethnographic approach using the narrative inquiry tools grounded in qualitative research. Data were obtained through archival documents, semi-structured interview and unobtrusive observation guides. Twenty participants from the Kwahu traditional area were purposively sampled for the study. The sample consisted of four chiefs, six elders from the royal family, four youths and the six elders from the community. The participants were engaged in focused group interviews for the purposes of ensuring validity and reliability of the qualitative data. The research results reveals that the symbolism of the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs from 1950 to 2022 has been the same. Also the dress code for the kwahu chiefs were influenced per the occasion, colour and duties attached. It also reveals that dress codes of kwahu chiefs wron currently reflect the historic events that happened in the past as well as depicting power and wealth. Most occasions demanded a prescribed form of regalia to match the events such as installation, confinement and coronation. However, the quality of the regalia in terms of material like cloth, jewelry and other regalia accessories have been refined and well finished over the years due to advancement in textiles and fashion trends. Some of the dress codes used in the past have been abandoned by current chiefs. Whereas the traditional cultural festivals of the Kwahus have been replaced with a popular culture of Easter celebration which resulted in kwahus especially the youth lacking interests in the traditional knowledge (dress code). It is therefore recommended that the Kwahu traditional council takes vital steps to reintroduce traditional festivals to complement the easter celebrations whereas a royal mesuem should be established to help portray and preserve the culture of the Kwahus.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.0 Overview

This chapter gives information on the nature of the research. It explains the background of the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, hypothesis, significance of the study, and the scope of the study through to organization of the study.

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Art in Africa has always been a reflection of the culture of the people. The term ‘culture’ refers to the language, beliefs, values and norms, customs, roles, knowledge, skills and all other things people learn that make up their ‘way of life’ ‘especially’ dress (UNESCO, 2008). These various art cultures have majorly been considered by art historians or ethnologists in their stylistic forms and aesthetic peculiarities apart from their essence and relevance to society (Banjoko, 2009). Art evolves from society since it is all-encompassing in the people’s way of life. According to Bewaji (2003), clothing and textiles are significant forms of African art, which play vital roles in the cultural milieu of the people. However, these have rarely been given attention by art historians as much as were given to sculpture and painting (Vansina, 1984). Textiles have been grouped as craft, minor or lesser art, and as such not much importance has been given to studying it concerning the society’s socio-cultural values.

Cloth has been least spoken of in African art history as compared to sculptures. This is perhaps due to the historical records that clothing was not generally needed for warmth or protection in most areas of the African continent because of the warm and hospitable

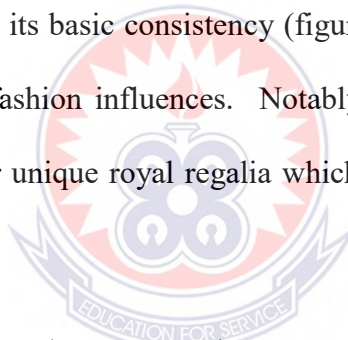
climate and many tribes did not wear much at all. Before the influence of Western cultures in Africa, the men wore just a loin cloth or apron and the women wore wraps around their waist or breasts, often adorning the rest of their bodies with scarification and paintings. Even as the indigenous African societies before the influence of other cultures made little use of cloth, kings and prominent individuals in African tribes had a distinct style of dressing to highlight their social status, power, wealth and prominence.

Interestingly, cloth and dress have been described as a mirror of the culture of the people in any society (Perani and Wolff, 1999). They symbolize the practices of the society, bounded by the same geographical location, sharing the same cultural values. In the cultural context, cloth serves basic needs like clothing and shelter (Payne, 1965). Art forms have been used as vital tools in recording and preservation of history which help people to know their past, juxtapose it to the present to inform the future. This also serves as a means of assessing the strengths and dynamics of progress or development of a culture of the people (Kwakyee-Opong, 2011). Among the diverse tribes, dress codes have played significant roles throughout the history and culture of the African people. There has always been a distinct style of dressing that identifies the cultural ethnicity of the African people at every point in generational history.

The cultural perspective of clothing and fashion keeps changing from time to time, through every generation as cultures continue to evolve. With the rapid globalization and emerging cultural interrelatedness, traditional dress codes of the Ghanaian people have been influenced by factors including religion, values, morals, hygiene, rituals technology as well as aesthetic and symbolism in cultural patterns. To Ghanaians, events such as a

funeral, festivals, rituals, initiations, marriage and naming ceremonies are also key factors that influence dress codes.

In Ghana and other parts of Africa, the trend has changed drastically towards the European ways of dressing. But without downplaying the uniqueness of other ethnic cultures in Ghana regarding dress codes, the Asante have been credited for their resilience to embracing western fashion especially into their royal dress codes (Akwetey, 2007). The Asante kings are noted for their elaborate *kente* cloth coupled with gold ornaments from the head (crown) to the feet (royal sandal). This dress code gives a unique identity not only to the king but to the entire kingdom and the people he represents. However, the dress code of Asante kings has maintained its basic consistency (figure 2) even though generations have passed with much modern fashion influences. Notably, there are documentations of the Asante dress codes and their unique royal regalia which make it easier for aesthetical and cultural appreciation.



The history of the Kwahu costume is presumed to have its beginning from 13 century or earlier (The University of Iowa Museum of Art, n.d.). It can be traced through archaeological discoveries together with artist impressions as reported by some early European travellers to the Guinea Coast (Quacopoome, 2006).

Like the Asante, the Kwahus are also well established with rich cultural unique though sects of the Akan cultural fraternity in Ghana. Kwahu chiefs have their unique dress codes which make them distinct from other Akan chiefs. However, with the Kwahu living far from the Asante land and rather settling close to the *Ga* people, there seem to be merging or transculturation among the *Ga* and Kwahu chiefs. In recent time's costumes for

the *Ga* traditional rulers is having much resemblance with that of the Kwahu traditional rulers. The late Nii Dzamansah III, chief of Otinibi related that in the olden times, the only costumes used by a *Ga* chief priest, chief and the queen mother were a white calico cloth, a white *acacia* (big togas), the *afili* and the *nyanyara* leaf (Kwakye-Opong, 2011). They walked barefoot. This constituted their costume during confinement, when outdoor and at all functions.

Unlike the Asante, there is not much documentation on the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs. The absence of such historical records turns to obscure the true identity of the dress codes used by Kwahu chiefs in the past as against those using the modern-day chiefs. Regarding cloth as an artefact helps to appreciate its historical significance among the culture of the people in every society. The Kwahu chiefs are the custodians of Kwahu traditions, the identity of the people they represent hence any form of misrepresentation through the dress code of the chiefs could be tantamount to loss of identity of the people and culture they represent.

It is therefore imperative to document the dress codes of the chiefs from the past to present to serve as the reference point for posterity. This study seeks to delve into historical records and assess the costume trends among Kwahu chiefs in Ghana from the 1950 to 2022. Going back into history is vital to identify whether or not some cultural values have been lost to contemporary fashion with time.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Researches into Ghanaian costumes revealed that dress codes have been used by traditional leaders and prominent people including heads of states to show the class difference and social statutes among the various ethnic groups and chieftains across the country (Essel, 2019; Acquah et al., 2017). These documentations create fertile grounds and opportunities for a deep appreciation of the arts and preservation of rich culture for posterity.

Dress codes of Ghanaian chiefs give unique cultural identity to the various chiefs in Ghana making them stand distinct during grand inter-cultural durbars. Like any other ethnic group in Ghana, the Kwahu chiefs have their unique dress codes which identify them as distinct cultural leaders. However, the knowledge of these dress codes and how they have evolved over the years is perhaps sacred as it is limited to the royal family due to a lack of written documentation for public consumption. With fast-growing multiculturalism and tourism through arts and culture, oral history regarding the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs known to only a sect of the royal family will not only deem appreciation of the dress codes of the chiefs by the public and people of different cultural backgrounds but also affect patronage of cultural festivals of the Kwahus by tourist as they lack understanding of the significance of the cultural elements which includes the dress codes of the chiefs.

Interestingly, the Asante cultural heritages especially regarding the dress code of the kings have been well documented over the years. This documentation is one of the keen factors contributing to the fame of the Asantehene and the people of the Asante land. Asamoah-Hassan (2011) recounted that custom demands that every Asante king adds to the

collection of the royal regalia which resulted in the establishment of the royal mausoleum and the Manhyia Palace Museum serving as artistic records of the dress codes and regalia of the Asante kings. Apparently, with the lack of proper documentation in form of the edified museum or written records on the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs, the Kwahu traditional area is rather famous for Easter festivity (Kwahu Easter) and not for their rich traditional and cultural or artistic creations unlike the other Akan groups like the Asante.

Even as historical records of Ghanaian culture has described the unique features of dress codes used by the various ethnic cultures in Ghana (Kwakyee-Opong, 2011), there is little existing literature on the trends of dress codes used by Kwahu Chiefs from the 1950s to our present times. Nevertheless, many scholars have argued that dress code for that matter fashion are not restricted to only some specific race, gender, or ethnicity. This has been confirmed by Kwakyee – Opong (2011) studied the clothing and adornment in Ga culture from the seventeenth to the twenty- first century. Her study found that Ghanaians dress code are a symbolic and philosophical representation of society. Similarly, Essel, (2019) opines that dress fashion has played an instrumental role in Ghanaian politics as a strong drive for exerting authority and unification of the society under a common rule. What has been done so far is the documentation of queen mothers' regalia in the Kwahu traditional area (Nkansah, 2008). In her work, Patricia Nkansah explored the descriptive survey method in documenting the characteristics of the regalia of Kwahu queen mothers. Her study found that characteristics of regalia used by Kwahu queen mothers are common with other Akan traditional areas. This study thus leaves a literature gap as dress codes surpass regalia. Again, the study focused on the Queen Mothers leaving out the chiefs who are

ordained cardinal custodians of culture and tradition of the Kwahus thereby creating another gap for exploration.

Agreeably, many experts and cultural anthropologists opine that culture is dynamic, evolving and influenced by time (Damhorst, 2005). The dynamism of culture calls for periodic examination of the dress codes and fashion trends of the Kwahu chiefs, thereby addressing the identified above for holistic cultural documentation at every period. What then are the major changes in the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs? And what factors are the prime influencers of the changes in the dress codes of Kwahu traditional rulers in recent times? These questions call for probing and thereby forming the framework for which this study is underpinned to address the literature gap.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The study sought to examine and catalogue the trends in dress codes of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022. It documents and preserves the rich cultural fashion and royal regalia of the Kwahu people of Ghana, highlighting the characteristics, ethnic and cultural symbolism and significance.

### **1.4 Main/General Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of this study is to assess and document the trends in the costume of Kwahu traditional leaders, focusing on the 1950 to 2022 and it will be guided by the following objectives;

#### **Specific Objectives**

1. To trace and document the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022.



2. To investigate if there are some significant changes in the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022.
3. To investigate the factors that influenced the dynamism in dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022.
4. To investigate the cultural significance/symbolism of the dress code of Kwahu chiefs.
5. To examine the knowledge level of the Kwahus on the cultural significance of the dress codes of their chiefs.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study;

1. What were the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022?
2. What significant changes exist in the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022?
3. What factors are the influencers of the major changes in the dress code of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022?
4. What are the cultural significance/symbolisms of dress codes used by the Kwahu chiefs?
5. Are the Kwahus knowledgeable about the cultural significance of the dress codes used by their chiefs?

### **1.6 Hypothesis:**

- There were some unique dress codes for Kwahu chiefs before the early 2000s.
- There is the possibility of significant changes in the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022.

- The dress codes of Kwahu chiefs possess some cultural symbolisms known to the people within their traditional areas.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

Traditional leaders and other authorities in Kwahu will align themselves with some historical and traditional clothes design which were worn since 1950's and inculcate them in their present time fashion trends for sustenance of culture as revealed in the socio-cultural lives of the people. It will also benefit cultural organizers, anthropologists, ethnographers, lecturers in African Arts, researchers, film or stage directors, costumiers, fashion designers, and readers who may desire to upgrade their knowledge on Kwahu dress culture.

Citizens will be educated on the historical records of costumes among Kwahu chiefs, concerning their indigenous and contemporary clothes, the effect of foreign domination, and the need/ significance of preserving Kwahus chief's costumes for future reference.

African Art and theatre of Art student's second cycle schools, colleges, polytechnics and universities will be able to depict the right dress style for a Kwahu chief in terms of role play in stage display or performance.

Finally, the study will also contribute towards literature and the field of academia. Culturally, issues on the rite of passage, traditional governance, and worship of deities among others have extensively received attention. What seems to be ignored, however, is

research on the costume history of the chiefs of Kwahu which this study is expected to contribute in that direction.

### **1.8 Delimitation**

The study was conducted in the Kwahu traditional area within some historically renowned towns with the genesis of Kwahu's migration in focus. This includes towns like Abene (paramountcy), Obo, Bepong, Kwahu Brukuwa, Kwahu Tafo, Obomeng, Pepease, Atibie and others. It also focuses on dress codes used by leaders of this ethnic group from the 1950s to 2022. The dress codes in this contest includes the cloth, crown, sandals, headgears, necklace, amulets anklets etc.

### **1.9 Limitation**

The researcher encountered some restrictions pertaining to the retrieval of pictures for the study. Some pictures were framed and stucked on glass surfaces which made it difficult and unpleasant for the researcher to have sharp and accurate images for the research.

Lack of pictorial documentations at the royal courts.

### **1.10 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

***Abrempong-ntoma:*** Traditional cloth with intricate images and designs which is worn by paramount chiefs for special occasions.

***Adasaa:*** A white cloth which is used as a big *togas* and it is usually worn under a cloth or smock.

- Adinkra:*** It is an Akan traditional symbol which means ‘fare thee well’.
- Afena:*** A traditional golden sword used in swearing in of a new chief at the palace
- Afili:*** A calico cloth which hangs loosely around the neck of a Ga priest (Wulomo). This is usually accompanied with a big white togas/jumpa and a nyanyara leaves as necklace as dress code.
- Agbada:*** Has an interlacing pattern symbolizing leadership and eternal royal authority. It is worn during major events such as naming ceremonies, engagements, weddings, house warming and funerals
- Agbamevor:*** Also Ewe kete
- Ago*** A smooth velvet or woolen material in various colours
- Akans:*** Ethnic groups located at the southern part of Ghana. They constitute the kwahus, Akwapems, Fantes, Akyems, Asantes etc.
- Akwasidae:*** A forty day ritual celebrated by the people of Akan in most Ghanaian communities. It is held or celebrated in order to clean the community, settle family disputes and plan for developmental projects in the community.
- Alaari:*** A cloth woven from cotton fibres in Nigeria.
- Amambatha:*** Leopard pelt which a chief uses to adore himself with among the Zulu people.
- Amaterasu:*** The sun Goddess

- Amon:*** Is an Egyptian god Alexander celebrated and consulted at Siwah
- Art for art's sake:*** The phrase expresses the belief held by many writers and artists, especially those associated with Aestheticism, that art needs no justification, that it need serve no political, didactic, or other end.
- Asafo:*** These are cult group found in most Akan communities who are in charge of ritual performances in festivals and other ceremonies
- Asantehemaa:*** Queen mother from the Ashanti Region
- Asantehene:*** The paramount ruler or a leader of Asante's kingdom. He rules from Manhyia as the centre of his chiefdoms.
- Aso oke, agbada, buba and Sokoto:*** Are some of the insignia of the Kings and chiefs in Yoruba.
- Ataa-Naa Nyonmo:*** The supreme creator,
- Awomefia:*** The paramount chief of Anlo state
- Awusiaa:*** A child who has lost either one or both parents in an Akan Community.
- Batakari kese:*** Special smock made with charms and other items which is normally worn by chiefs and priest or priestess during war.
- Blotsi:*** Ornaments used by rulers in Volta Region (Ewe) of Ghana.
- Brisi:*** Black traditional hand-printed cloth.
- Bwaantsh:*** Kings costumes which is normally buried with him

- Calico:*** Refers to an unbleached, unfinished fabric made from cotton fibers. It is often described as a half-processed cotton cloth, because it's typically sold as a "loomstate fabric," meaning it's sold as-is after its final stitch is woven.
- Costumology:*** Used as a term in this research to describe the consciousness of selecting and using a particular costume.
- Crook:*** Bent or twisted out of shape or out of place
- Cultural status:*** Refers to a person social placement within a culture or society.
- Dabawu:*** Is a long war garment made of blue-black cotton fibre and a talisman for protection
- Dabawu:*** Is a long war garment made of blue-black cotton fibre and a talisman for protection.
- Destoolment:*** To depose a chief from office either by taking off his slippers or appearing in public barefoot by the chief
- Dipo:*** Traditional rites celebrated by the Krobo or the Ga Adamgbes. It is an initiation rite that ushers the female child into adulthood.
- Dzase:*** The council of royals who constitute kingmakers of the Ga people.
- Ese ne Tekrema:*** The teeth and the tongue.
- Eshi:*** Is made from a twisted fibre used as neckwear by the *Awomefia*

- Eshi:*** Is made from a twisted fibre used as neckwear by the Awomefia. It is symbolic, signifying the role of the Awomefia as the chief priest the deity of the Anlo state.
- Esui:*** Coral beads worn by Ewe royalty because they are considered to be one of the rarest and most expensive kinds of beads.
- Etu:*** Is a dark blue indigo dyed cloth.
- Etuo:*** *Gun*
- Flail:*** Wave or swing wildly
- Ga:*** Refers the ethnic group that reside in the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. They speak the Ga language and are also part of the Ga-Dangbe ethnic descents.
- Hogbetsotso:*** A festival celebrated by the Ewes in Volta Region of Ghana.
- Kabu*** A woven material with strips of horizontal lines
- Kakla:*** Is a spiritual herb woven and put around the neck, elbows, knees and ankles of the new chief for spiritual protection.
- Kanta' Kye:*** A black leather hat with objects designed on it and a commonly worn by chiefs.

- Kente:*** A colourful cloth for special occasions. It is made using either the broad loom or the traditional loom. Cotton, silk or metallic yarns are used in the production of the kente.
- Kete:*** A traditionally woven cloth by the Ewe's from the Volta community of Ghana.
- Koben:*** Red traditional cloth worn for funerals. It is a symbol of blood relation.
- Kotofai:*** White fluffy cloth worn on the head of a Ga priest in an occasion. It has been cut various strips which are attached to form the Ga traditional hat.
- Kra:*** Also known as Soul
- Kuntunkuni:*** A black traditional cloth worn at funeral and installation durbars.
- Kusa-nagi no tsurugi:*** A sword as part of a Japanese ruler's regalia
- Kwahus:*** A native or indigen from the Kwahu land
- Kyemea kente:*** Special kente which is reserved for queen mothers.
- Manbii:*** The military officers of the town.
- Manste:*** A Ga chief who rules under the chief priest (wulomo)
- Mawu:*** Means God the almighty or the Supreme God
- Nduumthe:*** A long transformed belt made of pounded bark and covered in cowries is wrapped around a king's waist while he sits on a sacred



platform. It is meant to remind the king of the time in history before raffia fibre existed.

***Nkodwa dem:*** Traditionally sacred stool room.

***Nkyeretire:*** A special width of cloth worn by the Asantehene in Ghana.

***Nsoromma:*** Stars

***Ntemi:*** Is a king from Tanzania.

***Nyame dua:*** Gods tree

***Nyanyara leaf:*** A natural leave worn around the neck by most priests, chiefs and elders in some Ghanaian communities as a form of protection against spiritual attacks.

***Nyigbla:*** Is a deity in Anlo

***Odo:*** love

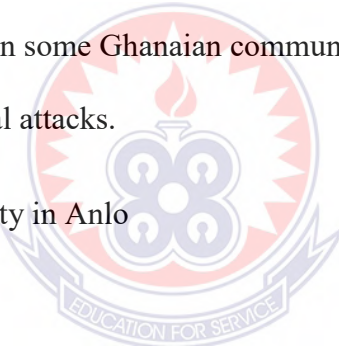
***Okra:*** Soul

***Osrane:*** Moon

***Royal artistry:*** An art form made symbolically for chiefs

***Royal attachments:*** These are complements that a chief aligns himself with in terms of regalia.

***Royal entourage:*** The group following a chief and attending to some important occasion



- Sananyan:*** A brown cloth woven from the beige silk of the Anaphe moth
- Sika dwa:*** A sacred stool which is held in high esteem among the among Asante.
- Silent loquacity:*** Ornaments used by rulers with a great sense of deal or adoration.
- Social connectivism:*** A form of learning which occurs when peers are connected and share opinions, viewpoints, and ideas through a collaborative process. Connectivism allows a community of people to legitimize what they're doing, so knowledge can be spread more quickly through multiple communities.
- Socio-culturalism:*** A term related to social and cultural factors, which means common traditions, habits, patterns and beliefs present in a population group.
- Talisman:*** An object held to act as a charm to avert evil and bring good fortune or something producing apparently magical or miraculous effects.
- Tekrema:*** Tongue
- Transculturalism:*** Is a concept of cultural encounter and its consequences for society, political, and economical structures as well as cultural identities.
- Universality:*** The quality of involving or being shared by all people or things in the world or in a particular group.
- Wulomei:*** Priestly heads called among the Ga communities
- Yasakani no magtama:*** A jewel which is curved and mostly being worn by a Japanese ruler as part of his reglia.

- Yata no kagami:*** A mirror attached to the regalia of a Japanese ruler
- Zizikpo:*** Is one of the vital items which constitutes the regalia of the *Awomefia*. It is a walking stick specially fortified for the chief.

### 1.11 ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- CD ROM – Compact Disk Read-only-memory
- HRM – His royal majesty
- KNUST – Kwame Nkrumah University of Science nad technology
- ORG - Organisation
- UNESCO - United Nations educational, scientific and Cultural,  
Organisation

### 1.12 Organisation of the Rest of the Text

Chapter two reviews literature under the concepts of this study. Some theoretical underpinnings were also be provided, as well as a conceptual framework of the study.

Chapter three presented the research methodology, by focusing on the research philosophies (epistemology, ontology and approach), research strategy, research design, population, sampling procedures, data collection tools, data analysis, quality of the research, and research ethics. Chapter four presented the data collection and analysis on themes based on the five objectives of the study. Findings or research results were also be discussed in detail with supporting literature in this chapter. The final chapter was focus on

the summary of results, make practical and theoretical recommendations, offer suggestions for further research and also present the novel or innovative findings from the study. References and appendices as well as catalogued and transcribed interviewed data attached.



## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.0 Overview

This chapter reviews the corresponding study on literature in the framework of traditional dress codes for African Kings. The review deals with the theoretical and conceptual outlook of some notable literature on the dress codes of traditional leaders for further scholarly discussion, understanding and clarification of the research objectives and question. Focusing on the research topic, the review covers defining documentation, regalia, regalia as fashion, Ghanaian concepts of regalia, regalia as a global phenomenon, royal fashion symbolisms, a historical brief on dress codes of pre-colonial African rulers, cultural interpretations of royal costumes in West Africa, fashion trends among Ghanaian traditional leaders, textiles surface design techniques in post-independent Ghana, traditional Ghanaian concepts of aesthetics in fashion.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

##### The Documentation Theory

The overarching theory that underpins this research is the theory of documentation. The research anchors on Vickery's (1978) concepts of documentation. The theory of documentation has been applied in many fields including science, law, technology, history, and other fields of inquiry. In Vickery's view, documentation is basically actions taken to keep accounts of occurrences. Vickery thus expresses that the term & quot; documentation refers to a practice that is concerned with all of the procedures that are involved in the movement of documents from their sources to their users. Due to the vast quantity and variety of documents, the processes for processing them are frequently reduced to their

most elementary forms. Nonetheless, there are underlying ideas that may be put into action. It is possible that we may refer to these ideas as concepts of documentation. These concepts have been applied in many research fields.

In this regard, the researcher was successful in its utilization of an acceptable and effective pragmatic application of the concept of documentation. In a more pragmatic sense, the primary objective of the research was to gain helpful information concerning the dress standards of the Kwahu chiefs from the actual life experiences of the society from chiefs and senior members. In more recent times, one facet of research on documentation has been considered to be intriguing by artists as well as by other experts. For instance, Gorichanaz (2019) investigated the first-person theory of documentation as part of their research on the artist first-person experience of creating art. The research uncovered a number of common threads that ran across the first-person narrative, including communication and recollections of past events. The first-person documentation theory notion was espoused in order to consolidate the foundations of my research, despite the fact that this research is not a direct study of the process of creating self-portrait art, as was the case in the scenario witnessed by Gorichanaz (2019). Given the conceptualization of the processes involved in the first-person documentation theory, the researcher studied the synergy of espousing qualitative data from the indigenous Kwahus. This was done in light of the fact that the first-person documentation theory. Considering the theoretical foundations of the documentation theory, this was an absolutely necessary step. To put this another way, the identification of first-person sources for the data gathering was the first step in the pragmatic approach to employing this documentation theory. interviews with members of the royal family, as well as leaders and senior citizens of the community. In

addition to the interviews with the chiefs and elders, other concrete first-person data sources for additional qualitative investigation include the royal regalia and the archive data from the royal photo albums.

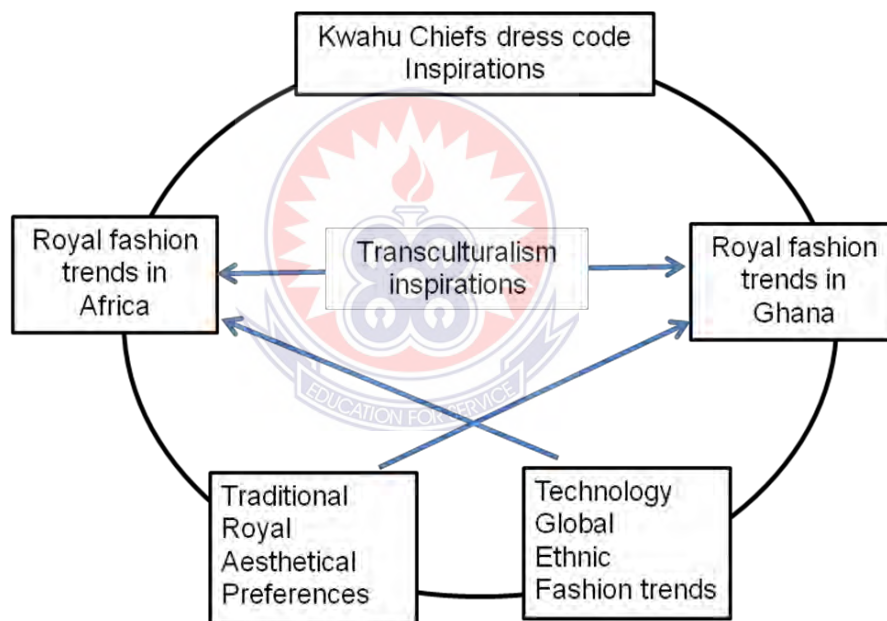
To conclude, the conceptualities of the documentation theory, its processes, and contextual pragmatism were suitably relevant for adoption in the research. It is, for this reason, the documentation theory becomes a strong underpinning for my research. The research basically explored the narratives regarding the trends of the Kwahu chief's dress codes for scholarly documentation. Hence, enacting the narratives through the lenses of the documentation theory provided a scholarly basis for the contextualisation of the findings, having pursued the procedural approaches to conducting documentation research.

## **2.2 Conceptual Framework**

A conceptual framework in research is the plan of ideas or concepts of the researcher. It consists of the structure in which the researcher believes can best provide a detailed explanation of the natural progression of the phenomenon studied (Camp, 2001 as cited in Adom, Hussein, & Adu-Agyem, 2018). Conceptual frameworks are connected to the important concept and theories used in processing the knowledge espoused by the research work which aims at providing logical and sequential relations between the main concepts of the study. Conceptual frameworks serve the purpose of helping the researcher to identify the main variables and concepts in a specific study and it gives information on the research approach (Imenda, 2014 as cited in Essel, 2019).

For this study, the conceptual framework dwells on the concept that traditional dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs within a dynastic period were influenced by the conventional fashion trend of the moment. Fashion trends for a particular historical period

are fueled by various perspectives of the multi-interconnectivity of culture as a result of globalisation and the dynamism of culture itself. *Social connectivism* in diverse forms between two distinct cultures results in interchange and modification of existing traditions, in this case, the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs have seen possible modifications over the years through *transculturalism*. The conceptual framework for the study is therefore grounded in these ideations. Figure 1 presents a summary of the conceptual framework as discussed.



**Figure 1.** Transculturalism inspiration of Kwahu chiefs dress codes.  
Researcher's construct, Adopted from Essel (2017)

### 2.3. Migration, history and demography of the Kwahus

#### 2.3.1 The Kwahus:

The Kwahu or Okwawu are a famed business-oriented Kwa-speaking people who live in south-central Ghana on the western bank of Lake Volta. They are a hardworking mountain-dwelling ethnolinguistic group that belongs to the wider Akan ethnolinguistic



group. With the Afram Plains to the north, Akim Abuakwa to the south, Ashanti Akim to the west, and the Volta River roughly constituting a boundary to the east, the Kwahu dwell precisely on a portion of the Kwahu sandstone plateau (Multi -TeleFone Pictures, 2021).

Asante-Twi, Akwapim-Twi, and Akyem-Twi are slightly distinct from the Kwahu-Twi variants spoken in native Kwahu towns such Abene, Abetifi, Pepease, Atibie, Nkwatia, Obo, Bepong, Tafo, Akwasiho, Obomeng, Twenedurase, Nteso, Nkwakwa and Mpraeso. Linguists claim that Kwahus enjoy utilizing syllabi like (*La*), (*hunu*), and similar ones. They therefore use terms that finish in "*La*" to punctuate their speech and pronunciation. Most of the time, the Kwahu ends it with "*Saala*" (that's it), "*yei ala*" rather than the letter "*saa*" (just this). Therein lies the difference, and the Kwahus, particularly the Obos, are renowned for this style of speech delivery. Asase Aban, Yente Gyae (Protectors of the Land, We Don't Quit) is the Kwahu motto (Multi -TeleFone Pictures, 2021).

They are extremely well-off and prosperous traders who were the first to make use of their position as interior middlemen to establish themselves as formidable local business gurus. By 1914, hundreds of Kwahu traders had expanded throughout the colony, to some regions of the Northern Territories, and even to French West Africa, sandwiched between Ashanti and the coast (Multi -TeleFone Pictures, 2021). The Kwahus quickly seized the new chances for wage labor under colonial control, both on public works projects and in the mines as far away as the Western Province, thanks to their broad commitment to mobility. As a stepping stone to trade in the Gold Coast, they also engaged in salt trading at Ada, hauled copper bangles from Saltpond, ran commercial rubber businesses, sold fabric, and began tailoring as sandal manufacturers.

### 2.3.2 Migration history of the Kwahus

In the current Ashanti Region, the Kwahus can trace their historical ancestry to the Adansi and Asante Mampong. When Osei Tutu I (founder of the Asante nation) hadn't given the Asante Kingdom or societal formation any thought, the first Adansi migration took place. Long before the Asante-Denkyira war of 1699–1700, Nana Osei Twum, the first Chief Agonaman in the Adansi Morobem, his nephew Baadu, his younger brother Kwasi Tititii, a slave named Kofabra ("get it"), Frempong Manso (who later founded the Asante-Akyem stool land in the Asante kingdom), Nana Ameyaw, and Nana Adu Gyamfi (the founding fathers of Asante Afidwase and Gyamase) led from the Denkyira king to find a new dwelling land.

After the group split out, Osei Twum and his trekking Kwahu party traveled up mountains and stopped at Dampong before continuing on and finding the Mpraeso Scarp. Following their initial settlement on Mount Apaku, the trekking Kwahus continued their search for suitable land to settle. As a result, they came across a stream with a rock in it that was shaped like a stone jar. Osei Twum took this as a sign and decided to settle there, naming the place Obo-kuruwa or Bukuruwa (meaning stone jar). They remained there for a long time until Twum passed away and was replaced by Baadu. Bukuruwa expanded to become a sizable town and attracted immigrants from the Aduamoa, Obo, and Nkwatia tribes (Multi -TeleFone Pictures, 2021).

The second group of exiles from Kwahu came from Mamong Agyei, whose uncle was Esono Gyima of Asante Mampong and who was expelled by his uncle Atakora for refusing to aid in a conflict. Before moving to reside at Abene, Mamong Agyei in his voyage first made his home at Hwediem, where he was vanquished in a battle with King of Dwaben

(Juaben). The Abene eventually became the residence of the current line of Kwahu Paramount Chiefs. Other immigrants, such as the Ewes, Hausa, and people from the north who came to dwell in especially in the Afram Plains, continued to come to the Kwahu region.

When the Kwahus battled the Akwamu people at Asabi on the River Volta in the Akwamu-Accra region, more migrants from the Volta enclaves may have arrived to settle in Afram Plain and the Kwahu people may have done the same (1669-1680). After being routed, King Baadu's soldiers crossed the Volta into Togoland and took up residence at Tscheme, south of Kpandu. It is possible that the seeds of the protracted and severe dispute between the Kwahus and Ewe's over lands on the river's right bank were planted here, according to Wallis. When he claims that several centuries before to the German occupation of Togoland in 1884, an Akans known as the Kwahu Dukoman resided north east of the River, historian Debrunner acknowledged the presence of the Kwahus (Multi - TeleFone Pictures, 2021). Most of the Akans within these areas which the Buem, Ewe and Akposo now occupy have Kwahu ancestry.

Because of their close ties to their Asante neighbors, the Kwahus didn't overthrow the Asantes until 1874–1875. With the establishment of the Gold Coast Colony in 1901, when Kwahu and Akim Abuakwa were created as the Birim administrative area, British control was formally established. In 1914, Birim was separated, and Kwahu was given its own district.

### 2.3.3 How chieftancy rule began in Kwahu

There is a historic chieftancy history in many regions of West Africa, and the Akan people have built their own hierarchical system that coexists with the country's democratic structure. Written sources are few, and the origins of Akan chieftancy are unknown. Before 1300, when the Akan arrived in *Bonoman*, the *Bono* had been using the chieftancy system for a long time. The supreme chief held a role similar to that of an absolute monarch (Meyerowitz, Faber & Faber, n.d.). "Nana" is an Akan word that refers to the ruler or one of his many courtiers. Europeans interpreted it as "chief" during colonial times, however this isn't a precise translation. Other accounts refer to the courtiers as "kings," which isn't fully accurate. Even among modern Ghanaians, the term "chief" has become prevalent, albeit it is preferable to use "Nana" without translation wherever possible ("Akan Chieftancy," 2022).

In Ghana, a region and a population belonging to the Twi-speaking Akan tribe are referred to as Kwahu. Because it is the highest livable elevation in the nation, the area is known as *Asaase Aba* or the Natural Fortress. On the western side of Lake Volta, Kwahu is located in Ghana's Eastern Region. Their other Akan neighbours, the Akyem and Akuapem as well as the Adangbe-Krobos, also live in the area.

The Afram Plains region is home to a sizable migrant population from the Northern and Volta Regions as well as some native Guan from the neighbouring Oti and Brong East Regions. They are employed in the thriving waterfront "melting pot" as traders, farm labourers, fishermen, and caregivers. According to historians, the name Kwahu comes from its founding story, "The slave (*akoa*) died (*wu*)," which was based on an ancient prophecy

that a slave would die so the nomadic Akan tribe would know where to dwell (Garlick, 1967).

The many towns in Kwahu all have chiefs who govern or rule the people in their local area. Legendry has it that majority of the Kwahu people migrated from the Asante Kingdom from towns such as *Pampaso*, *Kuntunasi*, *Uaso*, etc. because of wars, misunderstandings and other issues as reflected in the formation of various townships in Kwahu. The Kwahu people first settled in the mountains for protection from their enemies because the mountains allowed them to see their enemies and any group that was about to launch a potential attack on them. They used to hide in the valleys and roll huge stones from the hilltop to trample on their enemies (KNUST, n.d.). The Kwahu paramount king and royal *matrilineage* live in *Abene*, north of Abetifi, on the Volta River. The strategic location of *Abene*, as well as the feared militia that guarded the passage, were headed by *Akwamu* warriors, who ferociously fought colonial soldiers' attempts to capture the *Omanhene*. Given the legends told, the road from Abetifi to the little enclave housing the king is still traversed with some trepidation.

The beginning of the chieftaincy rule in Kwahu is a simple and uncomplicated one. Kwahu was an integral part of the Asante Kingdom, proven by available maps of that period which was before their leaders seized upon the opportunities presented with the *Bond of 1844*. Ashanti would wage punitive and protracted wars against fellow Akans including *Denkyira*, *Akwamu*, *Akyem*, *Fanti*, *Assin* but never fought Kwahu. Abetifi (*Tena matriclean*) is the head of the *Adonten* (vanguard). *Obo* (*Aduana*, *Ada*, *Amoakade*) is the head of the *Nifa* (Right Division) *Aduamoa* (*Dwumena*, *Asona*) is the head of the *Benkum* (Left Division). *Pepease* is the head of the *Kyidom* or rear-guard division (“Kwahu”, 2022).

Kwahu had an Asante envoy, governor, or ambassador at *Atibie*, near to Mpraeso, of the *Ekuona* *matriclan*, as part of the Asante Empire. In 1888, the Kwahu assassinated the Asante emissary in *Atibe*, about the time the Basel missionaries arrived from Switzerland, to demonstrate its independence from Asante. During a layover at Kwahu on his way to Kumasi with his captors, Fritz Ramseyer was given a few days of rest. While in the highlands, he recovered rapidly from an attack of fever. After obtaining his freedom from the *Asantehene*, he applied for permission to create a Christian Mission in *Abetifi*, putting the town on the map and providing vocational and evangelical opportunities in the area (“Kwahu,” 2022). This the researcher believe was the beginning of their independence from the Asante Kingdom and also their independent chieftaincy era. Table 1 presents a list of the traditional set-up of the kingship of the Kwahus.



**Table 1 Traditional Hierarchical Set-up of Kwahu chiefs**

<b>DIVISION</b>	<b>TOWN</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>CLAN</b>
1. Omanhene/ Omanhema	Abene	Omanhene / Omanhema	Tena
2. Nifa	Obo	Nifahene/Nifahemaa	Aduana
	Obomeng	Ohene / Ohemaa	Aduana
	Bepong	Odikro / Obaapanin	Aduana
	Asakraka	Odikro / Obaapanin	Aduana
	Pitiko	Odikro / Obaapanin	Aduana
	Sadan	Odikro / Obaapanin	Aduana
	Ahinase	Odikro / Obaapanin	Aduana
3. Benkum	Aduamoa	Benkumhene/Benkumhema	Dwumuana
	Nkwatia	Ohene / Ohemaa	Asona
	Mpraeso	Odikro / Obaapanin	Asona
	Tafo	Odikro / Obaapanin	Asona
	Amanforom	Odikro / Obaapanin	Asona
4. Adonten	Abetifi	Adontenhene/Adontenhema	Tena
	Bukuruwa	Odikro / Obaapanin	Asona
	Akwasiho	Odikro / Obaapanin	Ayoko
	Atibie	Odikro / Obaapanin	Ayoko
	Aframs	Odikro / Obaapanin	Ayoko
5. Gyase	Atibie	Gyasehene/Gyasehema	Ayoko
6. Kyidom	Pepease	Kyidomhene/Kyidomhema	Bretuo
	Twenedurase	Odikro/Obaapanin	Bretuo
	Nteso	Odikro/Obaapanin	Bretuo

Source: [Nkansa- Kyeremateng (1990:37-38)]

#### **2.3.4 Festivals celebrated by the Kwahus**

The most known festival of the Kwahus is the Kwahu Easter celebrations. Prior to the establishment of the Kwahu Easter, there were some forms of festivals observed by the Kwahus. The Akwesidae is one of such festivals aimed at purifying the land of the Kwahus. It is a festival observed by most Akan communities especially those who own allegiance to the Assante kingdom. But the celebrations of the Kwahu Easter soon took over as the traditional celebration reminded the people of their languishing under the oppression of the Asante ruler.

In addition to how the indigenous Kwahu use the Easter to meet their families, settle family disputes, participate in festivities, and observe quiet time, the Kwahu Easter has now been accepted as a component of Kwahu culture and a national holiday thanks to the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Creative Arts. The scale of the Easter celebrations included paragliding, trekking, carnivals, and traffic bottlenecks. As a result, Easter is now viewed by the Kwahus as a time of yearly reunion, whilst Easter revelers view the festival as a reason to party (Multi -TeleFone Pictures, 2021).

#### **2.4 Documentary Research (DR)**

Every research method is a particular form of inquiry that emanates from a perceived problem. Whereas the primary aim of every research is to delve deeper into the perceived problem, there are wider ranges of approaches to tackle the inquiry process. One of the approaches is the documentary research method. In an attempt to define documentary research, Ahmed (2010) expresses that documentary research consists of an analysis of documents that contains vital information (data) about a phenomenon under study by a researcher. Documentary research, therefore, refers to the type of study that is



carried out with the use of official papers or personal documents as the primary source of information.

Most often, the documentary research method is used in social science research and is sometimes even considered to be extra cost-effective than social surveys, in-depth interviews, or participant observation studies (Ahmed, 2010). The expenses involved in traveling and conducting interviews or observations become minimal when conducting documentary research. This is because the data source for documentary research is limited to documents such as books, photographs, artifacts (paintings, sculpture, etc.), newspapers, stamps, diaries, maps, handbills, statistical reports published by the government, recordings made on a gramophone, files on the computer, tapes videos, and hand-written notes. Access to these data sources does not often involve high costs as the needed information can be accessed remotely or from archives.

Documentary research is quite similar to content analysis, which is the examination of information that already exists and has been documented in various forms of media, written

materials, and physical objects. It is not necessary to acquire data from people in this setting in order to carry out research. As a result, this is a classic illustration of what is known as secondary research.

### **The use of documentary in this research**

There are different approaches and types of documentary research. Some of the known examples of documentary research include social research studies, archival inquiry, and aesthetic interpretation. In social research studies, an extensive inquiry is made into

reports generated by organisations or individuals. Investigating for example published medical reports involves analysis of historical information on patients which is similar to the examination of documented historical records on the culture of a people or even the board papers published by school authorities (Walsh, 2014). For archival inquiry, the researcher depends on available information preserved by individuals or organisations related to the study. Archival research encompasses a wide variety of actions that are carried out in order to enable the analysis of documents and textual materials that were generated by and about organizations. Archival methods, in their purest form, are those that involve the analysis of historical documents. They are records that were compiled at some point in the not-too-distant past, and they grant us access to the institutions, people, and happenings of an earlier era that we would not have had otherwise (Hughes & Goodwin, 2014; Mohr, & Ventresca, 2002). Aesthetic interpretation on the other hand explores another aspect of documentary research which is not limited to text only. In this type of documentary research, aesthetic interpretation draws data from pictures, paintings, videos, audio files, monuments, and architectural designs for critical content analysis. To explain further, Bhat, (2022) describes the elements such as paintings, pictures, videos, etc. which are sources of vital data as tools, and these tools double up to authenticate the textual data in research.

In this study, the researcher attempted to explore the aesthetic interpretation form of documentary research coupled with an archival inquiry. The aesthetic interpretation approach was mainly used to collect and analyse pictorial data retrieved from the archives of the Kwahu chiefs. In some instances, the narratives regarding the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs were sacredly preserved orally by the elders in the royal family. Therefore,

the researchers explored verbal interactions through interviews to retrieve information on the dress codes of the past chiefs. Again, the historical records of the Kwahu chiefs' dress codes were in some cases readily available and secured in the royal photo album. In this regard, further probing through interviews with the chiefs helped to delve deeper into the aesthetic interpretations of the dress codes and the symbolisms of the dress codes used by the chiefs on various ceremonial occasions. Like every other documentary research, the aesthetic and archival inquiry approaches exposed in this research followed the systematic methods or steps laid out for documentary research. The steps used include; authenticating the documents; the credibility of the documents; the representativeness of the documents; and finally, the meaning derived from the documents (Ahmed, 2010; Hughes & Goodwin, 2014; Bhat, 2022). The details of the procedure used are as follows;

a. *Authenticity*: This was the first step to exploring the archival inquiry and the aesthetic interpretations. The researcher ensured that the document, in the case – of the photographs and real objects including the royal cloth and other dress accessories retrieved has a high level of genuineness. Because the authenticity of the photographs and the dress accessories had to be confirmed by the interviewee, the researcher was particular about establishing the identities and positions of the interviewees in the royal courts before engaging them in aesthetic interpretations.

b. *Credibility*: The next step has to do with the believability of the source of the information. It was necessary to believe the source of the information. However, this as based on the trustworthiness and expertise of the informant selected. Therefore the credibility of the data heavily relied on the first step which has to do with the authenticity of the source and the interviewee. To maintain the credibility of the images retrieved from

the internet archives, for example, the researcher relied on the elders of the royal family to authenticate the credibility of the aesthetic interpretations of the royal dress codes and dress accessories of the Kwahu chiefs obtained from internet sources. This strategy helped to eliminate any data that does not relate to the culture of the Kwahu people from the information retrieved through newspapers, internet sources, and other written documents.

*c. Representativeness:* Finding the representativeness of the pictorial data and the artifacts (cloth and other dress accessories) of the Kwahu chiefs was also paramount. This was not however not challenging to achieve because each of the images and the verbal descriptions and interpretations were provided by credible and authentic elders purposively selected as respondents of the research. These interviewees are custodians of the traditions of the Kwahu people, therefore, provided authentic representativeness of the data retrieved from the royal album and other archival sources.

*d. Meaning:* Given the nature of the aesthetic interpretation and archival inquiry approach, there was the need to ascertain the meaning of the data retrieved from the diverse sources regarding the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs. The images and descriptions provided by the elders were therefore carefully examined to understand both their physical aesthetics and sociocultural and traditional symbolism grounded on the culture and traditions of the Kwahu people. The researcher again relied on the knowledge of the informants selected from the royal family and elders of the community to provide accurate meanings and interpretations of the symbolisms associated with dress codes and traditional philosophies of the design elements found in the chiefs' regalia of the Kwahus.

## 2.5 Defining Regalia

Conventionally, regalia is viewed as a broad concept that constitutes all ornaments worn by chiefs. Ornaments such as crown, insignia, cloth, emblems, anklets, chains, talismans, bracelets and necklaces of royalty used by kings are conceded as regalia. In other words, regalia are mostly perceived as the traditional official garments accompanied by decorations, worn by kings to ceremonies. Addo et al. (2020) describe regalia as an epithet of social status which has been in existence with humanity since ancient times. Once mentioned, every mind is set on the highest office among a group of people in society. It is that distinct costume accompanied by various accessories which catapult traditional rulers to the apex of hierarchy in society.

As a total embodiment, regalia thus becomes a medium of communication sending messages about the indigenous culture and royal legendary. Whereas each artefact associated with regalia carries a unique code of message, the regalia, when perceived in its entirety “serves as a language of symbolism exhibiting the cultural and historical perceptions of the people and as a way of preserving them” (Addo et al., 2020). For example, in Ghana, the royal regalia of the Asatehene speaks volumes about the culture of the Asante people. When adorned in the full royal regalia, the Asante king is perceived in grand accolades as a convener of power and authority over a superlatively wealthy kingdom.

The presentation of the Asante king does become a strong diplomatic message coded in the regalia which in turn, creates a perception not only about the king but the ethnicity and culture he controls. During the grand Akwqsidae festival of the Asante Kingdom, the king is often sported in spectacular regalia. This form of regalia encompasses

an entourage of kinsmen, sub-chiefs, palanquins, drums and a showy display of gold in various forms ranging from the crown, pendant, amulets and ceremonial swords as shown in figure 2.



**Figure 2.** Asante King, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II in full royal regalia during Akwasidae festival.

Image Source: <http://enochdarfahfrimpong.blogspot.com/2007/05/how-asantehene-celebrated-his-57th.html>

As asserted earlier the concept of regalia can be treated as a subject of ethical discussion. To every ethnic culture, what constitutes and defines regalia is relative to the constraints of the cultural standards, values and norms. Notwithstanding that, the definition of regalia can be confined basically to any cosmology with accompanying body accessories won by kings to show their royal status and distinct supremacy. With this concept informing what the definition of regalia entails, it can be admitted that the number of ornaments or external attachments that glorifies the costumology of kings does not necessarily have to be excessively elaborate or enormous. But rather, the constituent of

regalia for a king is determined by the ethnic norms and values of the society in which that king reigns. This is evident in a comparative analysis of the royal regalia of the Zulu King Goodwill Zwelithini (figure 3) as against the regalia of Asante King Otumfuo Osei Tutu II (figure 2). For the records, both kings are highly reputable and revered in their kingdoms but their costumology sets them apart in terms of what they represent. In the case of the Zulu king, his regalia unswervingly reflect what the Zulu represent.

The Zulus are warriors who celebrate manhood through the magnificent art of stick fighting hence the culture of the Zulu people eulogises masculinity (Carton & Morrell, 2012). For a culture that is characterised by an explicit spirit of stick fighting, the representative of that culture, the king has in the adornment of himself should in one piece send a clear message of what he represents through his dress code. Similarly, the Asante king represents a different culture.

Throughout Sub-Sahara Africa, the Asante state has distinguished itself from all kingdoms to some hierarchy that 'wealth' comes to mind when the name Asante's kingdom is mentioned (McCaskie, 1986). The entire jurisdiction of the Asante Kingdom is covered with minerals where gold mining flourishes hence the mining activities and cross-cultural trade with other ethnic cultures generated a characteristic of wealth as the label for the kingdom. With Asante's culture characterised by wealth, it will seem rather ironic to see the Asantehene showing less of that wealth. Just like the Zulu king who portrays the culture and what the Zulu stand for, the Asante king also clothes himself with a massive showy display of gold ornaments to affirm the cultural identity of the Asante people. This is by no means to say that the Zulu kingdom is not wealthy because the Zulu king does not cloth in gold ornaments or does not have an exorbitant entourage as part of his regalia. Instead, the



arguments relating to the definition of regalia in this discussion are relegated to the constraint of the cultural norms of the people.



**Figure 3.** Zulu King, Goodwill Zwelithini in royal regalia which reflects the culture of the Zulus

Image source: <https://i2.wp.com/savannanews.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/9da1b40343defd6b.jpg?resize=1080%2C1352&ssl=1>

In conclusion, regalia are unique costumology that identifies an individual as a king of society. It is the traditional and cultural dress code of kings which distinguishes them as principal custodians of a kingdom. The constituent of regalia, varies significantly among ethnicities but highly reflects the unique characteristics of the people the king represents. For some cultures, regalia in full gear entail many attachments in addition to the personal adornments of the king.



Other cultures on the hand, limit the paraphernalia of their regalia to rather few cultural symbols and clothing. Royal regalia is a coded message about the people the king represents which is hidden dress codes with or without external attachments like kinsmen, drums, umbrellas, palanquins, stools, etc. This perceived coded message provides detailed pictorial information and a description of the culture the king symbolise. The definition of regalia can therefore not only be limited to the direct ornamentation of a king but to an extension, for some cultures includes the entire entourage and ensemble of a king, especially on iconic occasions.

## **2.6 Global Historical Perspectives of Regalia**

### **2.6.1 Ancient Egyptian royal regalia**

Globally, kings, emperors, monarchs, queens and traditional rulers have used various forms of costumes to put on a pedestal the supremacy, status and power they exert on their subjects. For some emperors or kings, ascending to the throne is as prestigious as being perceived as a god, for this reason, the *costumology* of such powerful personalities is highly sacred. In Africa and ancient Egypt for instance, the Pharaohs were revered as a god, powerful enough to be given exclusive devotion in the entire jurisdiction of their reign during their life and after death (Dashish, 2019). As a sacred personality perceived as mediocre man and god, everything of the ancient Egyptian kings such as dress codes, vessels and other artistry were equally ranked sacred and of extreme socio-cultural, religious and political value.

To make the picture clearer, Dashish (2019) explains that the Pharaoh's ascending to a divinity state was due to several royal rituals during which the king becomes sanctified and the most important ritual was crowning the divine Pharaoh to the holy throne. In this

regard, the *costumology* of the sanctified god is by no means annihilating itself from the prominence of the crowned Pharaoh. After being crowned, the royal regalia of the Pharaoh reflects his status as a living god for eternity. The royal regalia of Egyptian Pharaohs was perceived as individual elements that interact with each other to create a visual projection of the royal power, divine strength and apotropaic nature of the Pharaoh (Calvert, 2009).

Having been ordained into eternity through a series of royal rituals and purifications, the royal costume with its accessories has a direct influence on the Pharaoh's current status aiding him to achieve the full potency of divinity. For instance, the Pharaohs were known to have been riding in royal chariots to symbolise their supremacy whereas other accessories such as *crook* and *flail* were insignia of pharaonic authority. Whilst the crook signifies kingship, the flail symbolises the fertility of the land. History has it that the costume of the Egyptian Pharaoh keeps changing from period to period however the significance and the message that the regalia projects remain unchanging.

In all, it can be said that the royal regalia of ancient Egypt symbolises the power, divinity and immortality of the Pharaohs as revered gods which have a linkage with the beliefs of the people. However, little can be said about how the royal regalia of Pharaohs reflect the socio-culture of the people of ancient Egypt in its entirety. The ancient Egyptians were known to be illustrious farmers, great architects, skilled weavers and merchants, would be ideal that the *costumology* projects the people and what they culturally or ethnically stand for rather than the sole projection of the Pharaohs as sacred and divine above all their subjects.

### 2.6.2 Ancient Japanese imperial regalia

In ancient Asia, the Japanese were well known for their industrious, warlike, fearless and religious nature. Their adventure spreads in the areas of farming, arts, fishing and calligraphy which characterises their rich culture and traditions. The Japanese believe and adhere confidently to their traditions and culture of which the emperor is the chief custodian. Just like any other kingdom across the globe, the Japanese have a royal costume for their leaders which is preferably known as the Imperial Regalia. Varley (1971) recounts that the imperial regalia of the Japanese constitutes; a mirror (*yata no kagami*), sword (*kusa-nagi no tsurugi*) and curved jewel (*yasakani no magtama*), clarifying that though the origin of those objects was unknown, it is believed that they may have been used as gestures for tribal headships.

What is remarkable in the submission of Varley is that the name costume was not mentioned. The fact that costume was not mentioned among the things that constituted the royal regalia of the ancient Japanese does not imply that the emperors did not wear any clothes. Rather, inferences can be drawn that the Japanese place premium on royal attachments which they believe possess strong sentiments of their nature and beliefs. The mirror, sword and jewel were therefore kept as royal souvenirs and insignia from generation to generation as the imperial regalia of the Japanese emperor. It is notable that to the Japanese, the *costumology* of the emperor, therefore, does not highlight the royal status of the emperor as much as the mirror, sword and jewel. What then gives a supreme recognition to an individual as an emperor is his possession of the mirror, sword and jewel but not his physical adoration in an elaborate costume.

Comparatively, the ancient Japanese notion of regalia differs from that of the ancient Egyptian concepts of regalia. Whereas the ancient Egyptian value and place a premium on the dress codes and *royal attachments* of the pharaoh as complete regalia, the ancient Japanese singled out the royal objects as a priority as far as regalia is concerned. This diversity in cultural point of view in the case of the ancient Egyptian and Japanese is by no means threatening to the earlier definition and connotations of regalia as discussed at the onset. Instead, the cultural diversity and the varying contextual use of regalia by the ancient Egyptians and Japanese consolidates the view of Addo et al. (2020) who express that the term regalia can be attributed to a language of symbolism that exhibits and preserves the cultural and historical perceptions of the people.

As in the case of the ancient Japanese, it is evident that what communicated and preserved the cultural values of the people by the emperor was not necessarily his *costumology*, but rather a set of royal attachments and insignia which is perceived as the imperial regalia. Varley (1971) clarifies that though traditional mythology asserted that the Sun Goddess, *Amaterasu* bestowed the Japanese imperial regalia to her grandson Ninigi, the regalia has supposedly been transferred from one sovereign to another. Indeed, mythology can be misleading (Allchin, 2003; McNeill, 1986) as there might not be empirical evidence to support mythological claims. Therefore, how the imperial regalia of the ancient Japanese came into existence is not of much essence in this discourse. What is rather remarkably of interest is the transition of the royal objects from one emperor to another. The transfer of these same objects (the mirror, sword and jewel) from one emperor to the other projects a notion of cultural and traditional relevance of the royal or imperial

regalia of the ancient Japanese people. This explains why the imperial regalia was highly protected and preserved throughout the ancient Japanese world.

### 2.6.3 Regalia of ancient Greek rulers

The historical accounts of regalia can also be viewed from the European perspective. In ancient Europe, the Greeks were characterised by varied facets of arts, culture and adventure in diverse forms. Following the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE (Walbank, 2021), the Greeks have since developed a mastery of the culture inherited from the Egyptians and other ethnicities across time. As a famous man who conquered the world in his youthful stage the royal costume and insignia of Alexander the Great becomes an object of great interest in this discourse. The historical analytic accounts of Collins (2012) persuasively allude to instances that justify the *costumology* of Alexander to his personality.

Haven delved extensively into the elements that constituted the costume and royal insignia of Alexander, Collins argues that Alexander viewed himself as a conqueror of many nations, therefore, rejected significantly the totality of royal costumes of Medians, Persians, Asians and that of the Egyptians. Instead, the accounts point out that Alexander adopted a variety including sacred costumes to eulogies his personality dependence on the occasion but had a “habit of dressing as *Amon*” (Collins, 2012, p. 377). *Amon* is an Egyptian god Alexander celebrated and consulted at Siwah (Walbank, 2021). Having been saluted as a son of *Amon* in Egypt, Alexander, therefore, was likely to opt for girdling himself as a demigod to reflect his greatness – a phenomenon which can be likened to the traits of ancient Egyptian Pharaohs who also perceived themselves as gods after their divine coronation (Dashish, 2019). Agreeably, as a phenomenal warrior in his

contemporary, armour suits becomes part of the *costumology* of Alexander however, what was obvious was his un-stereotypical nature in the choice of *costumology* that defines his personality and beliefs.

After the death of Alexander, the subsequent emperors of the ancient Greek world seem to have followed the status quo of their great legend, having the prerogative to choose their royal costumes. Regardless, it is undeniable that the ancient Greek culture hovers on the aristocracy, and nobility and seeks knowledge alongside the belief and practices of religion. With the culture of a well-defined democratic political system filled with philosophers and intellectual classism, the ancient Greek royal regalia after Alexander rather reflects the nobility and luxurious glamour of an imperial majesty heading an intellectual society. The royal *costumology* of the ancient Greek emperors was thus often characterised by an undergarment and a cloak.

Comparatively, what constitutes royal regalia for the ancient Greeks differs from that of the Japanese and the Egyptians. The Japanese imperial regalia focused on the attachments (mirror, sword and jewel) which as believed to have been bestowed on to the first emperor through divine means and bequeathed to subsequent emperors. Whereas the royal regalia of the ancient Greek from the archaic era to the Hellenistic period reveals no correlations or assertions to divine sources. Instead, the emperors by their prerogative girdle themselves in elaborate costume which connects and defines their personalities. Again, the ancient Greek royal regalia did not reveal or lay much emphasis on royal attachments as part of the royal insignia. This is by no means to claim that the ancient Greek rulers did not use other attachments as part of their royal costume. The ancient Greeks were rather known for their luxurious use of body ornaments such as a tiara,

necklaces, earrings, nose rings, wristlets, bracelets, anklets and royal seals made from gold, silver and other precious pearls (Tonkova, 2015).

#### **2.6.4 Regalia of England and British monarchs in retrospect**

Hailing from the struggles under oppressive Roman rule first led by Constantine III, England and British kingdoms has since become one of the most documented kingdoms of our time. The historical and chronological accounts of Johnson (2021) reveal a tall list of Kings and Queens amounting to 61 monarchs of England and Britain spread over approximately 1200 years beginning from the days of the Anglo-Saxon to date. In his work, Johnson provides pictorial representations or portraits of the English kings with their brief biography across time since the days of King Egbert (827 – 839). Looking at the portraits in his work, it is evident that the royal regalia of the British monarchs vary in time concerning the reign of each monarch. However, one thing remains common, which is the use of crowns. With the likes of King William I (The Conqueror, 1066 – 1087), Henry I (1100 – 1135), Edward III (1327 – 1377) and Richard II (1377 – deposed 1399) among others, the use of the royal crown was very eminent. In their time, the crown was prominent and visibly known as they often use it as part of their royal routine.

Regardless of the time in history, every kingdom possesses their own unique identity of royal dress code which identifies and projects the supremacy of the ruler as in the case of the British royal regalia of the monarchs of England. Unlike the ancient Japanese imperial costume which was believed to be bestowed on the first emperor by a goddess, there is no such similar historical account regarding the British royal regalia as from any divine origin. Nevertheless, there exists an empirical record which reveals that the royal regalia of the English monarchs hovers on crowns and scepters as imperial



insignia for the monarchs. For example, a recent study on the compilation of ceremonial regalia of England found that the kings and queens have stored crowns, robes, and other royal insignia at the Tower of London for over 600 years. Whereas, the coronation regalia of England which is commonly referred to as the ‘Crown Jewels’ have been protected at the Tower since the 1600s (The Crown Jewels, n.d.).

The collecting of sacred royal ceremonial objects which constitutes the regalia of the monarchs of England as described by The Crown Jewels includes; powerful symbols as such; the St Edward’s Crown – a solid gold crown with semi-precious stones dating to 1661. Next is The Sovereign’s Orb, which has a cross mounted on a glob made in gold and gemstones, symbolising the Christian world. Another sacred object is The Sovereign’s Sceptre and Rod. The Sceptre is made predominantly of diamonds signifying the monarch’s pastoral care for his people. The collection also includes the Coronation Robe which was last worn by Queen Elizabeth II along with other ornaments and utensils all have significant roles to play during the coronation and life of a new crown monarch in England.

Juxtaposing the royal regalia collection of England to that of the Japanese, it can be said that both the British and Japanese have a similar culture of bequeathing their royal regalia to new monarchs through sacred rituals. This act is also similar to that of the ancient Egyptians who also bestows the divine regalia onto new pharaohs through sacred rituals. What is however unique about the regalia of British monarchs is that the sacred objects constituting the regalia have been well preserved and protected as a royal collection to date, probably due to the lack of major inter-kingdom wars in England since the last invasion by Constantine III. Another possibility leading to superb documentation, protection and preservation of British regalia could be attributed to the monarchy system of ruling where



most of the rulers attained the position through heredity. Also, a critical view of the royal collection of the regalia used by the monarchs of England reveals a connection between the monarchs and religion. The symbol of the cross permeates almost every sacred object relating to the regalia of England, an indication that the British monarchs have strong religious ties with Christianity.

Notwithstanding the disparities or similarities between the regalia of the ancient world as reviewed so far, the discussions head to a singular conclusion. For every kingdom of the ancient world, the regalia of the king, emperor or monarch was very keen and unique. The uniqueness was however often driven by some inevitable factors hailing to the cultural backgrounds, beliefs, practices and some extensive perspective, the personality of the king, emperor or monarch themselves. But for a well-structured monarchy, the sacred coronation regalia remain a constant variable for every new ruler. Regardless, historical accounts of ancient kingdoms reveal that some kings and queens made modifications to some of the regalia bestowed on them, as in the case of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs, Greek emperors, Japanese and British monarchs (Dashish, 2019; Collins, 2012; Varley, 1971; The Crown Jewels, n.d.).

Conclusively, irrespective of the time or era, regalia can be perceived as the *costumology* of a reigning king which speaks volumes about the kinship and subjects on which the king exerts dominion. The regalia thus become powerful symbolism through which the imperialism and sovereignty of a kingdom become highly marketable. This phenomenon is however not only limited to the ancient world and the western cultures but is also seen in Ghanaian indigenous rule among the various ethnic groups.

The next theme, therefore, discusses in detail some indigenous dress codes of Ghanaian kings and how they reflect the culture, beliefs and practices of the local people. The deliberations to this end indicate that ancient cultures have their unique preferences of what constitutes the royal costumes of every dynasty, kingdom or empire. The diversity in the uniqueness of the royal costume of each ethnicity of the ancient world as discussed however conforms to the definitions and ideations or conceptual connotations of what defines regalia. There is a need to extend the discussions to the indigenous Ghanaian societies. As Ghana is composed of integrated ethnic diversity with unique kingship systems, a detailed review of selected royal dress codes in indigenous Ghana would provide insight into the historical development of royal regalia or dress codes in the Ghanaian cultural context. The next sub-theme, therefore, discusses some selected royal dress codes in indigenous Ghana.

### **2.7 Retrospect of Indigenous Ghanaian Royal Dress Codes**

In Ghana, there are several diverse ethnic groups with unique cultural characteristics. The ethnic diversity of the various cultures in Ghana reflects in the traditional practices such as religious activities, occupational activities and chieftaincy practices. Cultural anthropologists uphold the view that the beliefs of a group of people inform their daily lives and practices (Brown, 2020). These beliefs and practices are the integral composites of Ghanaian society. Various practices such as festivals, puberty rite ceremonies, initiations into secret cults, and masquerade or ritual performances of *Asafo* groups help to define the unique and diverse culture of the Ghanaian people. Due to the variegation of the beliefs and practices among the various ethnic cultures in Ghana, each ethnic society possesses its royal dress codes that conform to the beliefs and practices of

the people. The following sub-themes provide a discussion of the royal dress codes of selected Ghanaian ethnic societies which include; the Anlo, Ga-Dangbe, Nzima, Dagomba and Frafra.

### **2.7.1 Royal dress codes of the indigenous Anlo people**

The Anlo people are one of the largest indigenous cultural groups among the Ewe people in Ghana. They are well organised, practice a patrilineal system of inheritance and have well-established clans headed by chiefs. The chiefs have unique dress codes that distinguish them from the members of the clan. Aside from their well-established political system, the Anlo are also known for their religious affinity. An explicit veneration of the supreme God, *Mawu* and other deities form an integral part of their society.

The entire Anlo state, however, pays homage to one common paramount chief – *Awomefia*. In his recent ethnographic inquiry into the royal dress codes of the Anlo chiefs, Kumatia (2018) found that the Anlo chiefs wore unique *Kete* as ceremonial cloth. His accounts express that, the choice of the hand-woven fabric used by the Anlo chiefs was influenced by many factors including “forms of clothing regalia used and the specific occasions on which they were used, the role of the Anlo chiefs, colour influence, clan and inheritance as an influence on the type of clothing regalia used” (p. 86). This means a particular dress code of the chief will depend on the occasion or event they will attend. Similarly, for heads of clans, their choice of dress codes depends on the type of clan they belong, because each clan has its own identity which must be projected.

To the Anlo state, the highest office of the land is the office of the *Awomefia*. Referring to the most respectable officer as *Fia* which means vow, the Anlo chief swears to be faithful and loyal to God, the Anlo state, the stool and render services to the people

(Kumassah, 2009 as cited in Kumatia, 2018). The swearing is viably part of the installation process through which the chief becomes ordained as an embodiment of authority and the premier custodian of the land. The accounts of Johannes (2011 as cited in Kumatia, 2018) point out that the stool and the royal sandals constitute the chief's regalia and are significantly part of the installation process, therefore appearing in public barefoot by the chief is a taboo tantamount to *destoolment*. To other cultures, however, a chief appearing in public barefoot might not be a big deal reckon event though what accounts for such a strong taboo and its related sanctions on the Anlo chief remains unclear. It can however be recognised that the Anlo state reveres every little portion of what constitutes the chief's regalia significantly.

Earlier documentation on the chief's regalia of the Anlo state indicates that there are variations on the regalia used by the *Awomefia* concerning specific occasions. There are varied items that form the constituents of regalia used by the Anlo chiefs for ritual processes that precede their installation. However, special items are used by the chiefs as part of the regalia for festival ceremonies and other special ceremonial gatherings. The accounts of Kumatia state that during installations, the chief is clothed in symbolic regalia – a sandal for protection and a white *calico* which symbolizes victory for a successful installation.

As part of the other items that constitute the regalia of the *Awomefia* after installation includes; the *Kakla*, *Dabawu*, *Eshi*, *Zizikpo* and *Sorshie* all of which possess symbolic essence. The *Kakla* is a spiritual herb woven and put around the neck, elbows, knees and ankles of the new chief for spiritual protection. Also, the *Dabawu* is a long war garment made of blue-black cotton fibre and a talisman for protection. Perceived as the

chief warrior, this garment fortifies the *Awomefia* in preparedness for any battle waged against the Anlo state.

The *Eshi* on the other hand is made from a twisted fibre used as neckwear by the *Awomefia*. It is symbolic, signifying the role of the *Awomefia* as the chief priest the deity of the Anlo state. The *Zizikpo* is one of the vital items which constitutes the regalia of the *Awomefia*. It is a walking stick specially fortified for the chief. Both the *Zizikpo* and the *Eshi* bear the same symbolic connotation as they signify that the *Awomefia* is the chief priest of the *Nyigbla* deity.

Apart from the regalia used in the enstoolment process, the *Awomefia* uses a different form of regalia for festival ceremonies. Discussing the regalia used by the *Awomefia*, Gavor (2015 as cited in Kumatia, 2018) recounts that during *Hogbetsotso* festival, the chief dresses in full regalia. The regalia comprises a pair of shorts and jumper under an *Agbamevor* also known as the Ewe *Kete* cloth, gold and beads accessories for the wrist, neck and arms and a sandal to match. The festival outfit seems to blend with contemporary fashion as a result of enculturation over the period. Interestingly, Gavor reveals that the regalia of the *Awomefia* of the Anlo state is self-possessed by each chief hence not inherited or bequeathed to new chiefs.

Conclusively, it is evident that the regalia of the Anlo chief is inseparable from the religious stands of the people they lead. The symbolism ascribed to the various items that constitute the *Awomefia's* regalia reemphasises the significant role of spirituality in the livelihood of the Anlo people. The regalia of the Anlo chief reflects the culture and the identity of the Anlo state.

The regalia of the *Awomefia* though signifies his authority as the high priest of the Anlo state deity, the regalia does not exhort the *Awomefia* in isolation but rather posits him as leader of a group of people who share common beliefs, practices and ancestry. Again, the *Awomefia's* regalia is of great symbolic essence than just an aesthetically pleasing garment. The Anlo people relate and understand the coded messages each component or accessory of the regalia bear.

### **2.7.2 Royal dress codes of the indigenous Ga-Dangbe ethnic culture**

The Ga-Dangbe is one of the ethnic cultures in Ghana that have preserved if not all, aspects of their culture and identity to date. Occupying the planes of Accra and the Akuapem foothills, the Ga-Dangbe people are believed to have migrated to their present location through Nigeria, Benin and Togo. However, Kwakye-Opong (2014) believes that some scholars hold diverse opinions as far as the origin and migration story of the Ga-Dangbe people is a concern. Like the Ewe people, the Ga-Dangbe are religious and beliefs in and worship the supreme creator, *Ataa-Naa Nyonmo*.

It is perhaps owing to their strong attachments to the divine authority of the supreme God that Ga-Dangbe people were initially ruled under theocratic governance. To make it clearer, Kwakye-Opong explains further that traditional rule permeates through all ethnic groups in Africa as in the case of the Ga-Dangbe people. His deposition affirms the oral traditions and narrations that Ga and the Adangbe did not have chieftaincies initially. Instead, they were ruled by priestly heads called *wulomei*.

Chieftaincy was only introduced into the Ga-Dangbe communities through the influences of European trade links and contacts with other ethnic groups such as the Akan (Kwakye-Opong, 2011, 2014). This, sets the system of governance among the Ga-Dangbe

people different from that of other ethnic groups in Ghana. Whereas other ethnic groups like the Akan have their chiefs as the final authority, the Ga *Mantse* rules under the chief priest (*wulomo*) who possesses the divine authority of the land. Due to the important roles, both officers play in the governance of the Ga-Dangbe people, the regalia of both the Ga *mantse* and the *wulomei* will be the focus of discussion under this sub-theme.

As discussed at the onset, the high priest of the Ga-Dangbe land was the highest authority and the leader of the people until the selection of chiefs began. The regalia of the *wulomo* is distinct and reflects the social status of the office he holds. The accounts of Kwakye-Opong (2011) express that the high priest wore simple clothes as regalia, usually of white *adasaa* (big togas), the *afili* and the *nyanyara* leaf. The use of white by the Ga priest signifies purity.

The white cloths or loins were often accompanied by other accessories like beads, body paintings, *kotofai* headdresses and necklaces made of a leaf. Significantly, the Ga priest walks barefoot unlike the Anlo Awomefia who is forbidden to appear barefoot in public. Depending on the occasion, the *wulomo* may appear bare-chested with body marks especially when leading purification rituals. During the Homowo festival, the *wulomo* wears a long jumper with a pair of trousers made of calico which is also used in all religious activities (Kwakye-Opong, 2014).

The Ga *mantse* who on the other hand is installed to represent the people through an election also bears unique regalia to project his position. The narratives of Kwaky-Opong (2014) indicate that the election of *mantse* among the Ga tribe was done through two elections. The first was the election of a nominee by the council of royals (*dzase*) who constitute kingmakers of the Ga people.



The nominee was then presented to the military officers of the town, collectively known as the *manbii*, for approval. Only the *manbii* had the power to elect or reject a proposed candidate for chief (Kwakye-Opong, 2014). The royal costume of the newly installed chief then takes a new dimension from that of the *wulomo*. Through the influence of other ethnic cultures such as that of the Akan, the *mantse* adorns in a pair of shorts and a jumper worn under a colourful *kente* cloth for special occasions. This dress is matched with other accessories such as beads, leaves and headdresses. Parading as the leader of the Ga people, the Ga *mantse* submits to the authority of the chief priest whose regalia reflects divine superiority than just a mere leader of the people.

It is perhaps for this reason that the regalia of the *wulomo* has not seen much modification despite many modern influences including modern fashion and technology. For this discourse, the regalia of the high priest becomes much of interest preferably to that of the Ga *mantse*. This is because the traditions of the Ga-Dangbe people point to the *wulomo* as the highest officer of the Ga state – a position which one attains through divine selection to become the theocratic leader of the group of people who are religious and conscious of spiritual matters.

It is therefore comfortable to conclude that the regalia of the chief priest of the Ga-Dangbe people reflects the culture and traditions as well as the religious stands of the people. Whereas the various components of the regalia are symbolic emblems that serve as means of protecting and also help in healing or purifying the entire community including the *mantse*. The regalia of the highest office of Ga-Dangbe is unique and distinct from the regalia of the *Awomefia* of the Anlo state.



### 2.7.3 Regalia of Kwahu Queens

In a recent study about the culture of the Kwahus, Nkansah (2008) documents the royal regalia of the Kwahu Queens. Her work highlights the significance and symbolism of the regalia of Kwahu traditional area *Queen Mothers*. The researcher finds the use of the phrase “Queen Mother” by Nkansah to connote female chiefs contrary to the indigenous conceptions and interpretations of the phrase. In Akan culture, the indigenous people have unique names for the royal or rulers. *Nana* is often used for chiefs or kings or persons in high authority like priest whereas *ohemaa* or *Nana Hemaa* for females in high authority or queens.

In the Kwahu tradition, the mother of the chief and a wife of the chief can both be referred to as *Nana* due to their position of closeness to the throne, and as a symbol of respect to the throne however, they are not queens and have no powers of governance or rule over the community. To make the matters clearer, the *Kubeasehene* of Kwahu traditional area expresses that,

“We do not have any name for queen mother in our local language.

What we have is a queen. Our queens are selected from a royal lineage and installed to preside over the community. The role of queens in the Kwahu traditional area is to help in the selection and installation of the chiefs. Also, the queens are responsible for the governance of the community together with the *Kontenehen* in the absence of the chief either by death or destoolment” (Kwahu Kubeasehene, personal communication, June 15 2021).

There seems to be a misinterpretation of the concept of queens, queen mothers and kingmakers in literature. Ideally, the phrase queen mother is fitting for the description of the biological mother of the queen. Whereas the queen is fitting to describe the female ruler, the kingmakers can best be used to describe the individual powerful and high-ranking members of the indigenous society (usually representing each of the clans) who play keen roles in selecting queens or kings to rule over the community.

Kingmakers can be male or female. However, the contentions of the proper use of the phrase queen mother requires further ethnographic study for a concrete position in the Akan culture. Notwithstanding, the work of Nkansah provides detailed information on a collection of items and practices that constitute the royal regalia of the Kwahu queens. These ranges from hairstyle, beads, clothes, stools, footrests, anklets, sandals and crowns.

For example, colour interpretations of the headgears used by the queens were provided as follows; Yellow headgear represents a state's wealth and royalty. It is utilized at grand durbars, anniversaries, and other happy events; Green headgear is worn during get-togethers, naming ceremonies, and other events. The color green represents a state's greenery. It symbolizes newness, beginnings, fertility, or freshness (Nkansah, 2008).

Regarding cloth, the Kwahu Queens used golden yellow cloth to symbolise riches, royalty and happiness. The *Baasa nkye* cloth is used for joyous occasions like festivals and traditional anniversaries. Wrapping the *Baasa nkye* cloth is also a symbol of maturity, dignity and nobility therefore, women who adorn themselves in this cloth are usually those of high esteem in society (Nkansah, 2008).

Other significant aspects of the royal regalia of the Kwahu Queens include the palanquin (*seko*), stool (*asesedwa*), footrests, armlets and umbrellas. For each of these items, Nkansah (2008) provides a vivid description of the colour symbolism and significant interpretations as used by the Queens. For example the black umbrella is said to be used purposefully funerals by the Queens and it signifies sorrow or grief. In which case the dead is considered as “something that belongs to the past” (p. 49). Similarly, the red umbrella is “symbolizes blood” and it is “used to protect the Queen mother” (p. 49).

Different types of crowns were identified among the Kwahu Queens. The variety of the crowns can be seen in terms of materials used. Among the various crowns listed in the work of Nkansah (2008) includes; the silver crown, mainly used for weddings, the gold crown for grand durbars, black and silver crown also for festivals and the leaf crown which is worn during the funeral of a paramount chief and signifies sorrow.



Figure 4: A Kwahu Queen dressed in colourful Kente and gold ornaments regalia.  
Source: Nkansah (2008)

As part of the regalia of the Kwahu Queens, is the unique hairstyle. Different types of hairstyles are used to suit different occasions. Figure 4 shows a Kwahu Queen wearing a hairstyle which appears to be like the shape of a moon, traditionally known as *Densinkran* (Nkansah, 2008). In the picture, the queen adorns herself in a royal *kente* cloth with other body accessories to magnify her majesty and status as a powerful figure in the society. The display of gold ornaments including bracelets, finger rings, necklaces and armlets consolidates the prestige and riches of the Kwahu *hema*.

Notwithstanding the unique adoration glory of the royal regalia of the Kwahu queens, there seem to be some level of semblance in the dress code of the Kwahu queens with that of the regalia of the Asante queens. The next sub-heading reviews some significant aspects of the regalia of the Asante queens with a degree preference on the style and symbolism of regalia accessories they use especially in this modern times.

#### **2.7.4 Regalia of Asante Queens**

Asante is the largest and most prominent group among the Akan people in Ghana, and has its capital situated at Kumasi. It was founded around 1701 (“West Africa before the Colonial Era: A History to 1850,” 2014) with most of its wealth primarily derived from trading gold with North Africa and Europe. The Asante Kingdom managed to expand to become the largest through military conquest to reach where it has today as a spectacular polity in West Africa.

In Ghana the most powerful kingdom is without a doubt the Asante Kingdom and what will such a powerful kingdom be without its Queens. In Asante, the queens (mostly referred to as queen mothers) are connected together with the chiefs in a dual-gender system of leadership. The regalia of the Asante Kingdom is very important to the people. It

denotes the Asante's material culture, breadth and complexity, which is crucial in conveying the beauty of the people, royalties and the entire legacy.

This section presents a searchlight discourse on some features of the Asante queens' regalia descriptively focusing on forms and symbolisms. The splendor of the Asante royal regalia as a whole first came to the attention of Europeans in 1819 with the publication of T.E Bodwich's Mission from Cape Coast to *Asanteman*. All the regalia of the Asante kingdom date back to the time of pre-colonial rule (Walker, 2018).

For the queen, the regalia holds as much importance and meaning as that of the Kings since the kingdom is not ruled solely by the King but also by the queens. The regalia of the Asante queens comes in a wide range of artifacts and art forms which include crowns, textiles, pectoral disks, musical instruments, ornaments, ceremonial furniture and of course jewelry.



### *The royal stool*

Of all the regalia of Asante queens the royal stool (figure 5), the jewelry and the royal clothing they possess are valuable insignia of their royalty and indicators of their royal status, most of which were made of gold. The stool especially holds a lot of significance in the Asante kingdom. The stool on which the queens sit on are made of either gold or silver depending on the tribe and the tradition of said tribe. In the Asante kingdom the queen's stool is called *asesedwa*. The stool used for the queen is also referred to as *Ahema Dwa* and is exclusively used by women. Stools of different shape can bear the same name.

The *Asesedwa* in the *mmaa dwa* design has a smoked color and metal painting indicating the high status of the queen (Arhin, 1983). Figure 5 is an example of Asante

Queens' stool believed to have a blend of tortoise, drums, and other motifs which symbolises the how nature can be peaceful and unpeaceful at times.



Fig 5 A stool of an Asante Queen  
Source:<http://www.digitalindy.org/cdm/ref/collection/tcm/id/349>

### *Royal Head gear*

Head gear (*denkyemkyɛ*) which is decorated with gold, and various necklaces and rings all of which were made of gold are all art of the regalia of the Asante queens. The headgear is expressive of their royal status and serves as the crown for the queens. Some ceremonial head gears are made of antelope hide with a scalloped fringe and long cheek straps situated on either side.

The straps have additional pieces of hide attached to the ends which have long tufts of antelope fur sewn to them (The British Museum, 2012). This was more of a helmet but still held royal significance. The head gear of the Asante queens holds as much significance and beauty as that of other queens.

### *Royal clothing*

Royal clothing which included textiles like the famous Kente and personal adornments which include a wide range of jewelry consisting of gold necklaces, beads, elbow and wrist ornaments, anklets, finger rings and leather sandals and slipper beautified with gold. The Kente cloths come in colourful intricately woven cloths with many different designs and symbols woven on them (Walker, 2018). This has even been seen to be influencing modern fashion styles and trends.

### *Gold ornaments*

In the mention of all the regalia of the Asante queens' gold is mentioned a lot, this is because gold was and still is an integral part of the Asante's art and regalia. Gold has been the physical representation of the soul (*kra*) which was viewed as a very vital force of life and was thus infused into the regalia of the Asante kingdom.

It is for this reason that most of the regalia shown off by queen mothers in the Asante kingdom are made of gold (Walker, 2018). Ornaments like rings, necklaces, amulets and others were all worn by the queen mother and were all in gold to assert royal status as gold was used for this purpose.

### *The royal foot wear.*

The traditional footwear (*Ahenema*) of the Asante royalty has its historical origin tracing back to the queen-ship of Nana Konadu Yiadom I whose tenure was from 1768-1809 (Essel,2017). It was a culturally significant fashion item with densely layered symbolisms and became regalia for the queens and chiefdom and till date remains



unchanged and has now spread on an international level making it multicultural and multinational.

They also ascribed symbolic, philosophical, and proverbial names which are cultural codes and language that need to be decoded. That tells a lot about the culture and history of the Asante kingdom and is rightly displayed through the regalia of the Asante queens.

#### *The royal hairstyle*

*Densinkran*, the royal hairstyle of Asante Queens is a short cut and the edges of the head and hair are dyed with charcoal or black colored dye (see figure 4). It has a very interesting history. The Asante's after being defeated by the *Ga-Adangbe*, *Fanti*, *Denkyira*, *Akwamu* and *Akyems* introduced the *Densinkran* to mourn those lost in battle in the *Katamanso*. The name ennobled “*Gyese Nkran*” in the local palace was then vulgarized as *Densinkran* (“Battle of Dodowa (Katamanso),” 2020).

It from then on served as a hairstyle for royalty and also a funeral hairstyle. It also communicates the status and rank in the community and is not worn by other women except those of royal blood.

#### *Adinkra Symbols*

Although the above-mentioned art forms and jewelry show the regalia of the Asante kingdom, another important part of the regalia includes the royal symbols which are referred to as *adinkra* symbols. *Adinkra* symbols are the symbols that represent aphorism. They are normally used on fabric, logos, and pottery extensively and for architectural features, they are incorporated into the very walls of the building. For royalty, they appear on the gold weights and on the adornments used by the queens.



The symbols are carved on the stools whereas, for the clothes, they are printed on. These symbols hold a lot of meaning to the people of Ghana and are a very important part of the rich culture of the nation as a whole. Symbols like *Gye Nyame* which means Except God and Sankofa which means go back and get it and stands for wisdom attained by learning from past events are popular symbols that most Ghanaians are well aware of. There's also *Adinkrahene* which means the king of adinkra symbols and stands for authority and leadership. The *Denkyem* is also another symbol which relates to the headgear of the queen (*denkyemkyɛ*) and it means crocodile and stands for adaptability and cleverness.



**Figure 6.** The 14<sup>th</sup> Asantehemaa (Asante Queen), Nana Ama Konadu Yiadom III carried in palanquin.  
Source: Ghananewsflash.com (2022)

When the wife of a king attends ceremonial functions alongside their Kings they dress to assert their royal status and also to exhibit their husband's worth and authority. But the role of the Asante queens are different. In the Asanteland, a queen is not the wife of the king. Asante queens are royals who are installed to preside over the state in the absence of the kings. The queens are also instrumental in the selection and choosing of a king for

installation. The Asante King's jubilee in 1995 was celebrated in grandeur with the *Adioukrou Queen* (figure 6) attending the ceremony wearing a gold turtle and crocodile talismans in her hair as regalia, indicating her royal status (NL 193270, 2009). She was also bedecked with gold jewellery and her makeup was done with gold dust. This is all indicative of her royal status and also that of her husband. Items of regalia are frequently embellished with gold as a symbol of royal might, which gold represents. These accessories are not only eye-catching but they also depict the Asante proverbs on leadership and society.

In conclusion, as most kingdoms hold the regalia in high esteem and respect its significance and contribution to the identity of the royalties which in the long run reflects the identity of the subjects of the said Kingdom to the world, so do the queens of Asante. Royal stools, necklaces, footwear, headgear, rings, intricately woven Kente cloths, and even makeup are all a part of the wonderful and artistically pleasing regalia of the Asante Queens.

### **2.7.5 Regalia of Dagomba Queens**

The Dagomba are a *Gur ethnic group* of northern *Ghana*, numbering more than two million people. They inhabit the *Northern Region* of Ghana in the sparse *Savannah* region below the *sahelian* belt, known as the *Sudan*. They speak the *Dagbani language* which belongs to the Mole-Dagbani sub-group of the *Gur languages*. There are around one to two million speakers of *Dagbani*. The Dagomba are historically related to the *Mossi people*. The Mohi/Mossi now have their homeland in central present-day *Burkina Faso*. The homeland of the Dagomba is called *Dagbon* and covers about 20,000 km<sup>2</sup> in area (“Dagomba People,” 2020). Although the Dagomba people are a patriarchal society, there

are a number of female chiefs (Pag Naa). The Gundo Naa is the highest female authority among the Dagomba similar to Yaa Na who is the highest male authority of the Dagomba. The Gundo Naa carries out a number of duties which include the settlement of disputes, the gathering of women for communal service among others (Gyamfi, 2018a).

The “Queen Mothers” of Akan are the most well known female chiefs in Ghana without a doubt. However, they cannot be contrasted with the female chiefs of Dagomba. In many ways, their positions are very different and so is their regalia. The traditional regalia of Dagomba Queens includes a combination of handwoven cloths and parts of animal skins. Dagomba queens are known not to dress elaborately at all and rather keep it simple but still holding a lot of significance status wise and authority wise. The clothes of the Gundo Naa are handwoven like that of the Yaa Na. For jewelry and ornaments, they keep it very simple with beads. The headgear the Dagomba queens wear are long white clothes which they wear on their heads and secure with a headband.

In a picture by photographer Eric Gyamfi, we see Gundo Naa Hajia Samata Abudu in her royal regalia. She is dressed in a their traditional handwoven cloth with her staff in hand. She also has a white cloth draped over her head and flung over her shoulder with her headband securing it in its place. She is also seen in her traditional footwear. In another picture, Yani Kpatu-Naa Naama Andani also photographed by Eric Gyamfi (2018b) shows her in the traditional Dagbon handwoven cloth. She is also seen holding her staff and also has the white cloth wrapped around her head.

Although there is not much written information on the regalia of the Dagomba queens the picture evidence is enough to see the splendor and significance of their regalia.

Just like other regalia of the queens of other ethnic groups the Gundo Naa's regalia shows the rich culture of the people of Dagbon and also asserts her royal status.

## **2.8 Regalia in the Contest of Fashion**

Dress in any form has for many years constituted the fashion of trends of the time in every society. Fashion however entails much more than mere dress or clothing styles. Fashion includes a wider range of items fused into a lifestyle of which dress or clothing is part. For several fashion scholars, dress fashion trends are predominantly influenced by various factors such as cultural practices, belief systems and technology. But fashion is a broad field that comprises inter-disciplinary socio-cultural and economic pastures for which each area requires specialised expertise. As regalia forms part of the cultural and royal lifestyle of chiefs and traditional leaders in society, there is a need to analyse regalia under the lens of fashion. To appreciate royal regalia as a form of fashion, there is the need to discuss what fashion is to establish through strong argumentation how regalia can be perceived as a form of fashion contextually. The next subject discusses the contextual concept of regalia as an aspect of fashion.

### **2.8.1 The concept of fashion**

There are diverse views about what fashion constitutes. But notwithstanding, fashion is connected positively with beauty, style and glamour. In some instances, fashion is a sort of art with which culture is examined with the belief in beauty and goodness. Fashion has been defined as the cultural construction of an identity that encompasses various forms of self-fashioning such as street styles and high fashion by designers and couturiers (Steele, 2021). Fashion can be described as the prevailing style of dress or

behaviour at any given time, with the strong implication that fashion is characterized by change.

Justifiably, the change fashion brings in itself is driven by the dynamism of culture over a while. Culture is subjected to change under the auspices of behavioural interferences due to multi-cultural integrations and cross-cultural interactions through trade, religion, sports and technology. It is important to emphasise that the dynamism of culture does not in any way annihilate indigenous fashion. In recent times fashion scholars like Valarie Steele argue that the *Westernisation* of fashion concepts is a subject of debate as fashion-oriented behaviour existed in some other societies and historical periods, such as Tang Dynasty China (618-907) and Heian Period Japan (795-1185). Therefore, when fashion is most often thought of as a phenomenon of the Western world from the late Middle Ages onward, has debatable limitations (Steele, 2021). The position of Steele can also be analysed from the perspective of indigenous African fashion. Long before the arrival of Europeans, various African societies and cultures have their clothing styles and accessories that connote the sense of fashion and beauty. Granted, the Western world may have taken the lead in documenting and propounding fashion theories but westernizing fashion concepts as a conventional cannon will be unfair to other cultures or ancient societies and highly debatable.

In his doctoral study on the *clothing and fashion in Ghanaian culture: a case study among the Akans*, Dzramedo (2009) argues that the indigenous concepts of fashion in Ghanaian culture pivots on morality and decency. In that, for every occasion, the style of dressing and its accessories used are guided by values of morality and aesthetics. For example, the indigenous fashion trends of the Krobo people require that an adolescent girl

undergoing *dipo* rites dressed in a specific fashion amidst wearing of beads, body paintings, exposing her breasts et cetera. According to the societal norms, such grooming is underpinned by the moral and aesthetic values of fashion prescribed for that particular occasion which is approved by the society.

### **2.8.2 Regalia as a form of fashion**

Regalia has been described conventionally on a broad continuum as all ornaments used by rulers as a form of adoration or *silent loquacity* to project their supremacy and authority in society. One of the cultural depositions that can be discussed in the context of fashion is regalia. Whether used during rituals, for initiations, at festivals, when presiding over judicial cases or at home for daily adoration, the choice of regalia used by the traditional ruler possesses a sense of fashion. Variably, there exists some cohesion between regalia and fashion which this discourse seeks to establish through the review.

Delving into the confines of fashion, regalia can be well situated within that same parenthesis. The royal regalia can be said of the fashionable style chosen by the royal class to match a specific occasion. At any point in time, what the traditional ruler wears is a style popular among the subjects they preside over. The royal wardrobe to some extent then becomes a fashion style for every occasion they are used for. Admittedly, fashion is not limited to only clothes or dressing styles. It also encompasses a wide range of additives such as automobiles, jewellery, hairstyle and in some instances architecture (Steele, 2021).

Similarly, regalia is also not hinged only to the confines of dress or costume used by chiefs or royal class. Regarding the ideations and the constituents of regalia in Ghanaian cultures, Akwetey (2007) and Kwakye-Opong (2014) observed that what makes up regalia expands beyond to confines of cloth dress and footwear. According to them, regalia to the

Akan community, for example, entails a complete suite that brands the chief as a supreme authority.

The full regalia of the Asante king for instance includes a palanquin, umbrella, heavy gold body accessories, stool, footrest, and royal entourage among others. Similarly, the kings of the northern cultures have distinct regalia that defines their royal supremacy. To some extent, the Asante regalia is believed to have influenced the chieftaincy of other Ghanaian ethnic cultures. Most chiefs in recent times have become fond of the *kente* as their royal costume, however, it is also evident that each chieftaincy possesses their unique royal identification coded in the regalia they use (Akwetey, 2007; Dzamedo, 2009; Kwakye-Opong, 2014).

In summary, it is justifiable to regard regalia as an associate of fashion. Whereas fashion includes styles and tastes of beauty as accepted by the cultures of society, regalia on the other hand constitutes what the indigenous society perceives as aesthetically pleasant according to norms and values which the chief custodian represents. The style, glamour and all accessories including body ornamentations chosen by the traditional leader to represent his/her people at specific functions could be posited as fashion. This is because the concept of fashion hovers contextually on style, glamour and aesthetics which can be highly influenced by time, cultural dynamism and trans-cultural influences.

Regardless, some Ghanaian cultural societies like the Anlo, Ga and Asantes have undoubtedly worked tremendously towards preserving their royal regalia and fashion despite the slight changes the influences of modernity exerts on indigenous traditions (Akwetey, 2007; Dzamedo, 2009; Kwakye-Opong, 2014). Irrespective of the time or



period, indigenous African regalia and royal fashion are inspired by many factors which will be the focus of discussion under the next sub-theme.

## **2.9 Factors influencing trends in royal regalia of kingdoms across the globe**

The royal regalia of various kingdoms has been a prominent feature and its trend has been intensified by many factors, influences and impacts across the globe. One of the fascinating aspects of regalia among kingdoms is its richness which poses a sense of variation, although the kingdom realms have surfed in the age of globalization. Some of the kingdoms had a huge significant history before massive globalization and the age of technology, nevertheless, leaders, principal rulers, chiefs, kings, queens and monarchs of various kingdoms have been able to maintain their traditional kingship to a very impressive extent.

Royal regalia is objects of symbolic significance that attributes to royalty and display a king's power, authority and majesty. The important function of royal regalia is associated with festivals, coronations and investiture, and other key ceremonies that portray the sovereignty and status of a king or queen. These regalia feature some combination of precious materials, artistic merits and historical value.

The majority of these royal regalia are highly revered, designed and given unique names from the start of a dynasty and are accumulated through many years of tradition. The regalia, its use and significance vary in each kingdom. They range from textiles to headgear, crowns, sceptres, stools and thrones, rings, jewels, umbrellas, sandals, gloves, bracelets and armbands, swords, flywhisk, and seals, to mention but a few.



Since time immemorial, many factors have influenced the trends in royal regalia of kingdoms across the globe. These factors may include status, power and authority, religion, culture and tradition, and display of wealth or natural resources among others. These influential factors may vary among kingdoms across the globe based on the people's way of living and belief systems.

Balmer, (2006) asserted that to be regal differs from monarchy to monarchy, based on its history ('what we have done), tradition ('what we do, and how) and culture ('what the people expect and accept'). Even though there has been a substantial change in the recent generation, the role of royals and the views of kings and monarchy with regards to their choice of regalia that has been posed for generations has barely been influenced, and that has brought about a tremendous trending nature of various regalia.

### **2.9.1 Culture and Tradition, an Influencing Factor on the Trend of Royal Regalia**

The common identity of every kingdom reflects through its culture and tradition. Culture and tradition are key in every kingdom as it transcends history and possesses a sense of signal towards what the future might hold. Sarpong (1974 cited in Kwakye-Opong & Adinku 2013) admits that culture is dynamic, never static, and has not only been manifested and shared by the members of a society but also been passed on from one generation to another in an uninterrupted succession. It is so binding on the people that it has become difficult for society to change its culture or an essential part of it overnight. Notwithstanding global transformations, the regalia of most royals embraces modernity whilst paying respectful homage to centuries of tradition.

Ceremonial festive, coronations, enthronement, investiture and other traditional occasions are auspicious, sacred and primal in maintaining the sovereignty and

development of a kingdom's culture. These royal occasions are well steeped in tradition. Every kingdom's identity is embedded in its culture as such Kings stand in sovereignty to hold up the traditional heritage of their kingdom and because of this, kings and rulers display their regalia to portray cultural themes and practices.

Thailand's kingdom is known for its great tradition and throughout its history, as reiterated by His Excellency General Prayut Chan-o-cha (Ret.) Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, the kings of Thailand have been the head of state and have played an important role in sustainable development, maintaining the sovereignty of the Thai nation, and the development of Thai culture. Culture is everything to the king of Thailand such that his regalia is closely informed by it. According to Thailand's Ministry of Culture (2018), the offering of the Royal Regalia to the King as performed in the Royal Coronation Ceremony is a traditional practice from Brahmanism. The Royal Regalia is considered the most important symbol of the Kingship, and it must be offered to the King in the Royal Coronation Ceremony.

The ministry elaborates that according to the book of protocol concerning the Royal Coronation Ceremony of the King, the ceremonial articles to be used consist of: the great crown, the royal clothes made of red wool, the sword, the tiered umbrella and the golden slippers. Each item holds a symbolic meaning.

The Great Crown (figure 7) refers to the high heavenly abode of Indra; the Red-wool cloth represents the Khanthamat Mountain of the Sumerumat Range; the Sword represents the wisdom to cut through misunderstanding; the Six-tiered Umbrella refers to the sixth level of heaven; and the Golden Slippers are a reference of royal support to all

subjects living in the royal kingdom, just as the earth is a support to the Sumerumat Mountain.



Figure 7. The Great Crown of Victory or “Phra Maha Phichai Mongkut”  
Source: Wall Street English Thailand Collection



Figure 8. The Royal Slippers or “Chalong Phrabat Choeng Ngon”  
Source: Wall Street English Thailand Collection



Figure 9. The Sword of Victory or “Phra Saeng Khan Chai Sri”  
Source: Wall Street English Thailand Collection



Figure 10. The Royal Fan and Fly Whisk or “Walawichani”  
Source: Wall Street English Thailand Collection



Figure 11. The Royal Scepter or “Than Phra Kon”  
Source: Wall Street English Thailand Collection



Figure 12. Coronation of a new king of Thailand (King’s Royal Regalia)  
Source: Md-house19, Pinterest (2021)

The Royal Regalia that the Chief Brahmin offers to the King in the Royal Coronation Ceremony (figure 12) is; the Great Tiered Umbrella, the Crown of Victory (see figure 7), the Royal Sword of Victory (figure 9), the Royal Scepter (figure 11) and the Golden Slippers (figure 8) or “Chalong Phra Bat Choeng Ngon” in Thai (Ministry of Culture, 2018).



Kingdoms within the African boundaries are boastful of their rich cultural traditions with histories dating back to ancient times. The trending nature of royal regalia among Africans are mostly seen in their inherited traditional practices such as festivals, ritual ceremonies, enthronement, naming ceremonies and others. Elaborate regalia is the hallmark of traditional rulers in Africa.



Figure 13. King Zwelithini, left, during a Zulu ceremony in 2019  
Source: Kim Ludbrook/ EPA, the New York Times (2021)

The culture of South Africans is one of the most diverse which is prominent among the Zulu (the warriors, known for their shield-bearing skills), Xhosa known for their complex dressing that projects their social status, Khoikhoi and San the bushmen, known for their hunting and tracking skills, Ndebele known for their women skills in house decoration) and Sotho. Their rulers (see figure 13) themselves wear regalia accordingly to their traditions. The Kings of Zulu adorn themselves with leopard skin bearing a shield as a warrior. His royal regalia is influenced by the Zulu culture.

### **2.9.2 Religious Factor**

Religion and beliefs among some kingdoms influence the trend of royal regalia. Acquah (2011) asserts that for many Africans and Ghanaians, in particular, it is religion more than anything else that shapes their worldview and participation in social life. The African traditional religious belief is that human beings do not live in this world alone; there is a sense of human beings' close relationship with nature. There are also spiritual beings that are more powerful than humankind and this opens up the African to the divine and to seeking affinity with these spiritual powers. Religion according to Mbiti (1990 as cited in Kwakye-Opong & Adinku 2013) permeates into all areas of life so fully that it is not easy or possible to separate it. Religious belief is thus diffused in all spheres of life filling them with meaning and significance.

Oral traditions in some parts of Nigeria establish that rulers were seen as a link between the world of the living and the spiritual world hereafter. As such, in the southern kingdoms most especially, regalia was vital for the performance of religious rituals. And further, in the North, the Muslims emir ad sultans; ruler had religious functions as spiritual commanders, and the regalia, in that case, did not have any connotations of metaphysical nature but as a symbol of the power of the ruler.

### **2.9.3 The status factor**

According to Kwaakye-Oppong (2011), the use of clothes helps to communicate people's social and economic status. The status of royals is so important that whatever they adorn themselves with must be of standard or matchup to their titles, economic and political status. Barton (1989), Opoku (1978), Kyeremateng (1965), Field (1961) as cited by Kwaakye-Oppong (2011) have stated that African chiefs, queen mothers and some

ritual experts dress to portray their position in the society. These high officials are usually distinguished with rich clothes and unique styles not used by ordinary citizens.

Referring to the Ashanti kingdom in Ghana, Kyeremateng (1965 as cited in Kwaakye-Oppong, 2011) explains that, the uniqueness of the Ashanti king's *kente* lies not only in the artistry of its manufacture but also in the manner in which it is worn and the royal dignity it confers on the wearer. He stated further that in the past Ashanti's social tradition gave the Ashantehene the sole right to wear a specified width of the *nkyeretire* clothes. The quality, design and colours of the king's *kente* cloth must also prove his economic strength among his subjects. For instance, to prove his economic viability, the *Asantehene* is mostly dressed in gold or yellow colours. His social prominence is also identified by the use of restricted designs made by special weavers. Barton (1969 as cited in Kwaakye-Oppong, 2011) hold a similar view and has reported that the social status of the Roman emperors or generals around 500 BC-AD 400, was observed by wearing the *paludamentum*; a big white or purple cloak.

Inside the monarchs of Nigeria, dwells the regalia of kings in its splendour displaying the personalities of rulers. The kings in various Nigerian tribes adorn themselves with traditionally made textiles, beaded crowns, and many other regalia's that portray their status as kings (See figures 14 & 15). The regalia used by the kings gives an outstanding elevation of them as the highest-ranking member of the society.



Figure 14: HRM Agbogidi Obi James Ikechukwu Anyasi II, Obi of Idumuje Unor  
George Osodi, Fuji Crystal Archive, 2012

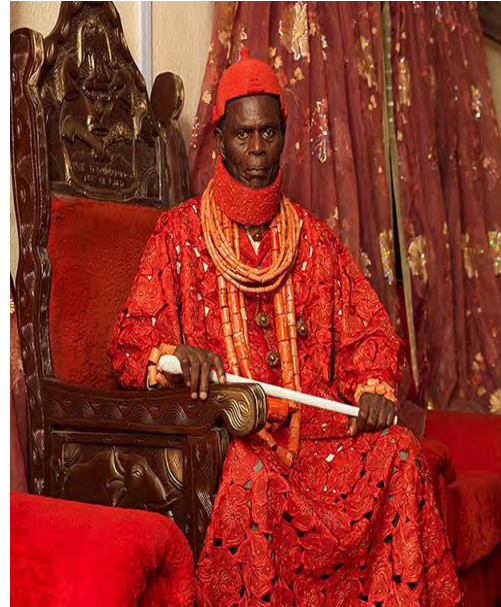


Figure 15: HRM Pere Donokoromo II, the Pere of Isaba Kingdom  
George Osodi, Fuji Crystal Archive, 2012

In Cameroon, kings adorn themselves with richly textured and colourful headwear (figures 16 & 17) which denotes their high social rank. The caps are decorated with elongated bulls as an indication of their belonging to an eminent official. According to Nooter Roberts from the University of California, together with other objects in the royal treasury—beaded calabashes, thrones, tobacco pipes, drinking horns, fly whisk, ivory trumpets and jewellery—caps formed a visual and metaphorical extension of the ruler.

The Cameroonian chiefs also adorn themselves in elaborate dress made of a combination of hand-woven fabrics and other colourful stitches (see figure 17) resembling the *fugu* worn by the Northern chiefs in Ghana. The dress is decorated with refined animal skins and other accessories which portrays the king's elegance and diplomacy.





Figure 16. A Cameroonian Chiefs cap  
Source: Detroit Institute of Arts, Founders Society purchase, Eleanor Clay Ford Fund for African art



Figure 17. Kings of Cameroon  
Source: Camtourventures - wordpress.com (2021)

#### 2.9.4 Power and authority factor

The image of power and authority functions as an influence in the trend in Royal regalia among rulers in various kingdoms. Power is primarily an image that is maintained in the public mind. Therefore, the representation of power, that is, its communicative component, is a key condition for its existence (Chiglintsev et al, 2019). One of the key concepts of power is the authority of the individual, recognized by community members and understood by them. Numerous regalia such as swords, crowns, and outfits among

others are powerful symbolic tools that attest to the power and authority that a king or any royal has.

Swords often symbolises divine authority and kingship. Ideally and functionally, swords are meant to be weapons but according to Holbrook (1993), many histories and traditions have included weapons as a symbol of authority and royalty: the spear, bow, axe and mace with swords not being an exception. An example of such a symbolic sword is the sword of Laban. In the biblical context of the Book of Mormon, the sword of Laban fits this pattern and can be compared to the sword of Goliath. The sword of Laban can also be traced as part of the royal regalia that provided authority throughout Nephite history (Holbrook, 1993). The Laban's sword was part of the royal treasures. Book of Mormon kings possessed anciently as a tangible sign of their authority. In the olden days, the sword serving as a symbol of power in war became part of the royal regalia owned by kings that justified their kingship and rule. It was passed on to the heir as a transfer of authority, and the giving of the sword to the new king was a widespread feature of coronation ceremonies.

Over the centuries, crowns, as royal regalia has been displayed as a symbol of authority and power and the majority of it, being seen in the coronation and enthronement ceremonies of newly elected kings. Among the Asian kingdoms and monarchies, most rulers and kings are heavily laden with regalia that display their authority. As a symbol of authority, the kings of Bhutan are adorned with special diadems known as 'Raven Crown'. This crown is highly revered at the enthronement ceremony for new kings.

In Brunei, the Sultan is given a gold crown and a dagger as a symbol of his royal authority. The crowning of kings and queens as well as the investing of regalia to display

their authority is done in many parts of the globe among the Europeans thus the kingdom of Hungary, Netherlands, Russia, Belgium and many others.

### **2.9.5 Display of wealth and natural resources as a factor**

The wealth of a kingdom can be displayed in the regalia of kings, queens, monarchs and other traditional leaders. Referring to the Ashanti kingdom in Ghana, West Africa, and the Asantehene's regalia portrays wealth. The kingdom of Ashanti is well known for the quantity and exuberance of its royal regalia in gold. Royals are clothed in gold to symbolize wealth and riches. Katia 2018 asserts that gold derives its significance from the commercial value and social prestige associated with the precious mineral. She added that gold dust and gold nuggets were used as a medium of exchange and for making valuable royal ornaments. It symbolizes royalty, wealth, elegance, high status, supreme quality, glory and spiritual purity Edusei (2006, as cited in Kumatia 2018).

Splendour, magnificence and wealth is displayed in the golden regalia and costumes of chiefs during the festive celebration. To the Asante , gold represents wealth, affluence and prominence, therefore it is mostly reserved for traditional leaders. For instance, to prove the economic viability of the *Asantehene*, he is mostly dressed in gold-coloured *Kente* clothes (Kumatia, 2018). The richness of the kente cloth, finely detailed cast gold rings, bracelets and amulets, sandals encrusted with delicate pieces of gold jewellery and the golden stool among many others form part of the Asantehene's regalia that displays the wealth and natural resource of the Ashanti kingdom.

Unlike the Ashante who display their wealth in gold, the royals of the Ewe in the Volta region of Ghana, portray their wealth using beads. The royal regalia of Ewe consists of traditional cloth and more importantly valuable beads. According to Shonsey (1995),

the royal bead collection possesses a considerable amount of wealth and admiration. These beads are obtained through inheritance and due to the rarity and beauty of the royal beads, Ewe chiefs and queen mothers are usually more than willing to appear in their coveted belongings (Kumatia, 2018; Shonsey, 1995). This is a way for them to display their wealth and items of inheritance. One of the distinct types of royal beads known in Ewe is *Blotsi* and *Esui*. The coral beads known as *Esui* are worn by Ewe royalty because they are considered to be one of the rarest and most expensive kinds of beads.

Diving into the Malian Empire, the reign of Mansa Musa, emperor of Mali is well known in history. The empire was one of the greatest medieval empires in West Africa and having witnessed a bright era in the 14 century with Mansa Musa's pilgrimage to Mecca allowed the empire to be well known among the Muslim empires across the globe. He was noted as part of his regalia to travel with an entourage of tens and thousands of people and dozens of camels each carrying 136kg of gold. He is still acknowledged as one of the richest kings in human existence who displayed his wealth even among the needful. The Catalan Atlas (see figure 18), created in 1375 C.E. by Spanish cartographers, shows the very well dominated, West African Mansa Musa sitting on a throne, holding a nugget of gold in one hand and a golden staff in the other. The King became cemented in the global imagination as a figure of stupendous wealth. After the publication of the Atlas. His regalia was seen in his wealth as he revitalized cities in his kingdom as sought the patronage of the Malian culture.



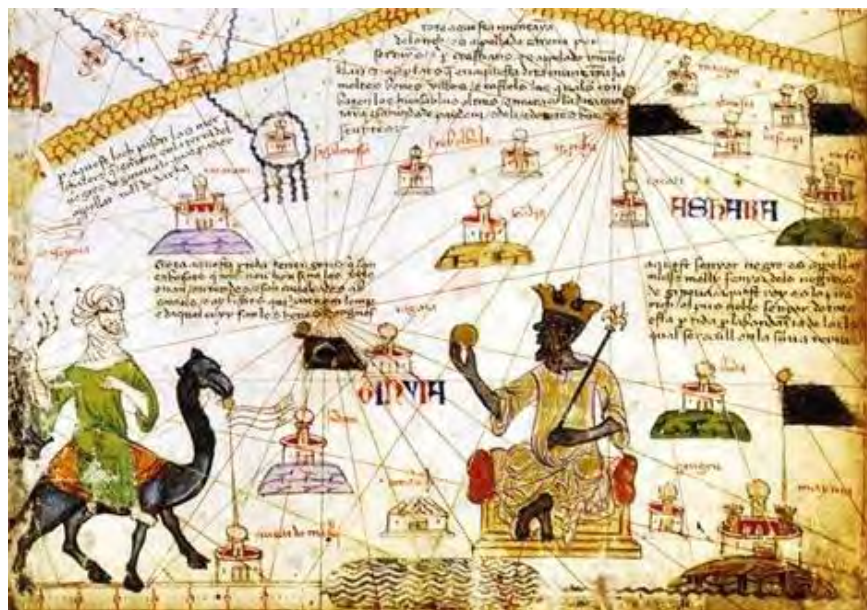


Figure 18. A detail from the Catalan Atlas, attributed to the Majorican Jewish cartographer Abraham Cresques, 1375  
Source: The New York Review, 2012. Bringing Mecca to the British Museum

## 2.10 Ethnocentric importance of royal regalia in the African context

### 2.10.1 Overview of African culture and ethnicity

Throughout the world, many researchers have probed further to inquire about African history, culture and ethnicity. Notwithstanding the gaps there are to be filled and investigated, the empirical studies examined so far are impressive. Royal regalia among African leaders has equally received much attention and undoubtedly any anticipated quality research on this context of ethnicity and culture can only be better appreciated by comparing and contrasting collected data with existing literature. On this basis, this study seeks to review the ethnocentric importance that royal regalia has in line with the culture grounded in various African Ethnic groups.

Over the centuries, people have lived in many parts of Africa within diverse ethnic groups, having similar ways of living yet the art forms, traditions and ethnicity of each dominate uniquely, making room for differentiation and diversity. Africans practice many

religions that are specific to their ethnic group. Ethnicity may be accurately described based on people's cultural heritage and customs. Ethnicity refers to the identification of a group based on a perceived cultural distinctiveness that makes the group into a 'people' their distinctiveness is believed to be expressed in language, music, values, art, styles, literature, family life, religion, ritual, food, naming, public life and material culture (Robotham, 2020).

On the issues of ethnic diversity and unique cultural multiplicity in Africa, a recent study conducted by the Ethnic Groups in Africa (2020) reveals that over 3000 different ethnic groups are speaking more than 2,100 different languages in all of Africa. A few large tribes among many others are the Hausa, Berber, Igbo, Oromo and Yoruba. Within each group resides a royal kingdom of kings, queens, chiefs and many forms of traditional leaders whose reign has been passed down from ancestral generations in decades based on their cultural beliefs. African art and its being are embedded in the people's culture. Traditional leaders are the heart of custom and culture, in the sense that, they play an important role in the efforts to preserve them. They are described as 'guardians' of traditional norms, values and practices that are respected in particular communities from generation to generation Chinsinga (2006 as cited in Kumatia, 2018).

The expression of culture has been described by UNESCO (2008 as cited in Akinbileje, 2014), as the language, beliefs, values and norms, customs, roles, knowledge, skills and other things that people learn that make up their 'way of life' 'especially' dress. This view is no different from the earlier definitions of culture discussed earlier. What is keen to connect this discussion is the mention of 'dresses as an element of identity. Even though heads of various ethnic groups are distinguished by names or titles among others,

one key identity that distinguishes royals in African ethnicity is their regalia. Though the royal regalia chosen among Africans encompasses strong aesthetic peculiarities, it comprises mainly of cultural vitality.

### **2.10.2 Regalia in African Cultural Context**

Regalia elaborates on the dress and dress accessories of people. It is mostly linked to royalty and other peculiar subjects. The choice of regalia among royal's influences, determines and incorporates their level of prestige. Royals in African societies adorn themselves in many regalia ranging from textile clothing to beads and jewels, crowns, stools, sandals, rings, umbrellas, staffs, palanquins, scepters and many other forms of art that has symbolic values interwoven in the cultural milieu of its people

Clothing has played an integral role which is well embodied in human existence evoking emotions and cultures. Cloth and dress have been described as a mirror of the culture of the people in any society Perani and Wolff (1999 as cited in Akinbileje, 2014). Its adaptation among various tribes, kingdoms, nations or individuals reflects a historical and present makeup, bringing to bear their differences, expressions and representations in status, religion, group affiliation, occupation, gender, geographical locations, psychological mindset and perceptions among others and more importantly ethnicity as far as this study is concerned. Kumatia (2018) asserts that culture cannot be devoid of clothing for the reason that, the importance of clothing transcends cultures, times and geography. Culture is important for every society and like history; it provides the basis to assess the past and provide a compass for the future.

### 2.10.3 Royal regalia and its significance among the Ashantis in Ghana

Ghana contains a great diversity of ethnic groups. The Akan are the most numerous with the largest percentage in population followed by the Ewe, Ga, Adangme, Gonja, Dagombas and many others. The Ashantis are part of the Akan ethnic group with its king reigning with the title of *Asantehene*. The regalia of Asantehene (figure 19) have various symbolic interpretations which depict his supremacy and authority. One key regalia in this context is the traditional hand-woven cloth *kente*. Kente is a unique piece of artistry widely known in West Africa and adorned by Ghanaians mostly among the Ashantis and it has remained a symbol of national pride since time immemorial. Amidst the controversy about the origin of Kente among the Ashantis and Ewes, it is the most common bodily wear of Ghanaian Kings, Chiefs or Queens as well as presidents (re-contextualized rulers) during installations and swearing-in ceremonies, festivals and other important celebratory state events Dor (1992 as cited in Kumatia, 2018).

Kente is significant as a symbol of prestige and glamour. Throughout history, societies have used clothing as a form of regalia to nonverbally communicate. The designs in the Kente have stories with proverbial connotations giving each cloth its distinction. Items of regalia of Ashanti royals are frequently incorporated with gold as a display of power and splendour visualising the kingdom's proverbs about leadership and society. Ghanaians and more specific Ashantis express their world, practices and ideas in culture through symbols. These symbols according to Dzobo (2001 as cited in Kumatia, 2018) serve as sources of insights into the African orientations to life. Symbols are very important and since no symbol exists without some material form in this case, cloth symbols are real and tangible, and by producing them we produce ourselves (Padilioni, 2017).



The Ashanti *Kente Abrempong-ntoma* used during festive occasions easily identifies Ashanti paramount chiefs, while the *Kyemea Kente* was reserved for queen mothers. This type of *Kente* cloth which was originally reserved for royalty and limited to special social and sacred functions was to signal to subjects the mood or social prominence of royals (Kumatia 2018). The queens (figure 20) who are equally part of the royal family adorn themselves with gold jewels, kente and other royal regalia showing forth their beauty, royalty and status in the Ashanti kingdom.



Figure 19. Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the Asantehene  
Source: Daniel Kenu, Graphic online



Figure 20. Adioukrou Queen. Source: Carol Beckwith and Angela Fisher, African Heritage City, 2013.

Ceremonial stools play an active role among Akan royal regalia as chiefs and high ranking officials are given the Asantehene's permission to have their stools decorated with strips of intricately patterned silver or gold. The stool, *Sika Dwa* 'the Golden Stool' (figure 21), as part of the regalia of the Asante, is very important and sacred, held in high esteem. Made of solid gold, the Golden Stool never touches the ground; it is carried in processions and set on a mat of an elephant hide, the stool has its own throne. As an icon of the Ashanti kingdom, it functions as a national flag, embodying the political and cultural

souls of the nation (Bortolot, 2003). The stool represents the authority of the Asantehene, enshrines the soul of the nation and symbolizes the kingdom's unity (Walker, 2018; Bortolot, 2003). The stool legitimizes the rightfully chosen royal occupant as the Asantehene, it is a priceless treasure and by its name, displays the wealth of the kingdom.



Figure 21. The Golden Stool (Sika Dwa)  
Source: blogspot.com (2021)

The wearing of the gold jewels is usually seen on special occasions when the kings appear publicly. The king's fingers are adorned with finely detailed cast gold rings (see figures 19, 22, 24 & 27) with three encased amulets resting at the back of his hand. His arms, wrist and fingers are greatly laden with gold jewels such that, he is obliged to rest his hands on a special attendant. Some of the jewels come in a delicately rendered snail shell, replicas of keys, and gold nuggets among others. His sandals are encrusted with delicate pieces of gold jewellery and per their culture, calamity may befall the kingdom, stripping off the king's authority should his bare feet touch the ground. Each jewel regalia carries its meaning calling to mind well-known proverbs of the Ashanti kingdom.



Figure 22. Mpetea (Finger or toe ring)  
Source: <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/object/36831>



Figure 23 Asansafo (Pendant)  
Source: <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/object/36886>



Figure 24 Benfra (Bracelets), 19<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> century royal artists  
Source: <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/object/36831> (2021)

Other insignias of courtly power are the ‘afena’, curved swords with distinctive gold-covered hilts and pommels, the linguist staff covered in gold portraying political symbols and motifs from Akan proverbial lore. Bortolot, (2003) asserts that gold is an



integral component of Asante art and belief, considered as an earthly counterpart to the sun, it is the physical manifestation of life's vital force, or "soul" (*kra*), and is incorporated into the ruler's regalia to represent his purity and vigour. He added that, at a political level, gold indicates the kingdom's dominance over rivals. It is for this reason, gold has been an



Figure 25. Arm ornament of Asantehene  
Source: <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/object/36735>



Figure 26. Abotire (Prestige headband)  
Source: <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/object/36704>



Figure 27. Details of how Asantehene adorns his hands with jewels  
Source: Carol Beckwith & Angela Fisher, 1993 from the collection of African ceremonies, <https://pin.it/7x9y5c0> (2021)

integral core of the Asante regalia. Gold is therefore used for all ornaments including linguist staff (figure 29), the golden headgear (figure 26) and sandals (figure 28). Details of how the Asantehene adorns his hands with various jewels are presented in figure 27.



Figure 28. Gold-ornamented sandle of Asantehene adorns his legs with jewels  
Source: Monica Ethlin, Africa Afrika, <https://africaafrika.tumblr.com/post/96773462499/west-africa-ashanti-gold>

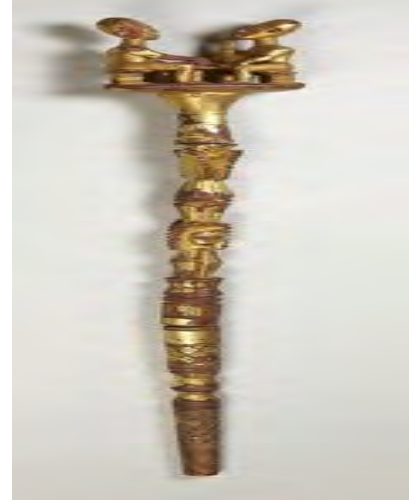


Figure 29 Okyeame poma (Linguist staff)  
Source: <https://artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/object/33608>

#### 2.10.4 Royal regalia and its significance among the Yorubas in Nigeria

Nigeria is known to have strong ethnic groups in its abode, including the Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba and many others. A traditional cloth ‘Aso oke’ (figure 30), is used by the Yoruba of Southwestern Nigeria and the neighboring republic of Benin. It is portrayed in three main designs; *etu*, which is a dark blue indigo dyed cloth, *sananyan*, a brown cloth woven from the beige silk of the Anaphe moth and *alaari*, which is woven from cotton fibres were also the preserves of the kings and nobles. (Akinbileje, 2014). *Aso oke* sewn in *agbada*, *buba* and *sokoto* is one of the insignia of the Kings and chiefs in Yoruba.

The typical beadwork motif made in the king’s *agbada* has an interlacing pattern symbolizing leadership and eternal royal authority. It is worn during major events such as naming ceremonies, engagements, weddings, house warming and funerals.





Figure 30: Aso Oke hand-woven cloth of the Yoruba, Nigeria  
Source: Santa Fe, Antique and Vintage, <https://pin.it/4PbSlz9>  
(2021)



Figure 31: Yoruba Oba in full regalia,  
Source: YORUBALAND.ORG

Among the most spectacular beaded object from Africa are the crowns (figures 32 & 33) of Yoruba kings *adenla* (figure 31). The Yoruba rulers dress in their sacred regalia with conical bead crown with forms of features build-up, embellished with vibrant colours

sometimes with a veil that partly conceals his face and signifies his role as a living representative of the ancestors or as a divine leader. The veil shields onlookers from the strength of the Oba's gaze (Royal Regalia in Nigeria, 2001). The bird surmounting on the top of the crown signifies the power of women who supported and sustained the Oba's right to rule they also wear beaded slippers while they carry a beaded fly whisk. The crowns are mostly lined with 'aso oke' textile (figure 30).

Their kingship is associated closely with beadwork as a royal prerogative. It was known that the wealthiest Yoruba kings, retained families of bead specialists to embroil their royal garments and crowns. However, beads are regarded as sacred to the Yoruba. (Akinbileje, 2014). Beaded crowns signify high social status and stand as an important object among the royal Yoruba regalia as such its usage has a boundary, reserved for only kings and priests who descends from the royal families.



Figure 32. Yoruba Oba's beaded crowns with veils  
Source: <https://www.hamillgallery.com/YORUBA/YorubaCrowns/YorubaCrown.html>

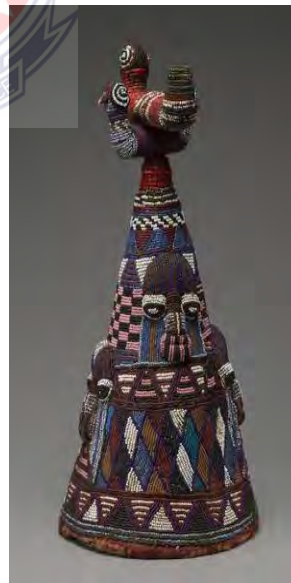


Figure 33. Yoruba Oba's Adenla crown  
Source: <https://www.artmuseum.princeton.edu/collections/objects/36958>

### 2.10.5 Royal regalia and its significance among the Zulu in South Africa

Zulu is a traditional region in the northeastern section of the Kwazulu-Natal province of South Africa. The Zulu group is the largest ethnic group in South Africa and is known for their traditional leopard '*ingwe*' skin regalia and their fighting skills as warriors. The leopard in the African animal kingdom is revered as the king of predators so only those of an elevated social status can wear its skin. This regalia is reserved for royalty and chiefs (see figure 34).

The leopard symbolises, nobility, courage and honour are revered as a totem animal among the Zulu people. Zulu royals adorn themselves during ceremonies with leopard pelt known as '*amambatha*' and plumes made of ostrich feathers. Rickmann (2010) asserts that traditionally, a king could only wear the skin of a leopard he had killed himself.



Figure 34. Zulu King Goodwill Zwelethini in ceremonial regalia  
Source: Scott.net (2018), <https://pin.it/5JZRuGY>



### 2.10.6 Significance of royal regalia among the Kuba of the Democratic Republic of Congo

Bakuba normally called Kuba is located in the central part of Africa. The Bushong are known to be part of the larger Bakuba ethnic group with an interwoven history. Their royal art was used as mnemonic devices to remember Kuba's history and transfer power from one king to the next. They are renowned for their artistry in all aspects of art most importantly textiles. These textiles were commissioned by royalty and worn or displayed for ceremonial occasions. The textiles are made of woven and dyed raffia palm fronds and feature hypnotic geometric designs mostly in shades of black and tan (McDonnell, 2018). Some of the designs are stitched to a two-foot square panel and hang on display behind a royal throne. Other royal regalia includes exquisitely carved drums, drinking horns, stools, knives, staff, and fly-whisk among others.

According to Cornet (2004), each Kuba king owns two costumes called '*bwaantsh*', one of which will be buried with him (see figure 35). Only the king is permitted to wear them. The king's costumes are an assemblage of all the most magnificent parts of prestige regalia numbering about 50 items. He carries a sword and a scepter which marks supreme authority. The king's headgear is curiously in the form of a small house.

Among the Kuba, every ceremony has its set of costumes that are meant to be used by the king. In times when the king is ready to receive visitors, a long transformed belt made of pounded bark and covered in cowries is wrapped around his waist while he sits on a sacred platform. It is called '*nduun*' and is meant to remind the king of the time in history before raffia fibre existed.



**Figure 35:** Kuba King in full regalia  
Source: Angelo Turconi (2021)

During a dance ceremony the king is often dressed in royal masquerade regalia (see figure 36). Two belts were used by the king as part of the regalia accessories, one made of leopard hide and the other, a secret belt, known as the property of the notables, having two knots on the front. All these regalia are interwoven in the culture of the Kuba tribe. In jewel, the king's neck is adorned with a necklace made of leopard fangs. In other dance performances, two royal masks with separate names and meanings are used though on rare occasions. One of its meanings is tied to the legend of the creation of the Bushong people.



Figure 36. A full regalia of the royal Bwoon masquerade  
Source: Angelo Turconi

#### 2.10.7 Royal regalia and its significance among the Sukuma of Tanzania

The Sukuma are a Bantu-speaking people and the largest ethnic group in Tanzania. The role of Sukuma chiefs has gone through many transformations since the sixteenth century when the area began to be organized by hierarchical chiefdoms and not villages as it used to be. Their kings are known as '*ntemi*' (see figure 37, an Ntemi in full regalia holding a fly whisk detailed in figure 38). Traditionally the chief is chosen among the sons of the daughters of the previous king. The relationship between the royal court, the blacksmith and the traditional doctors is pyramidal and linked to spirituality and economics.

Britannica, 2011 asserts that the traditional religion of the Sukuma mainly involved communicating with and propitiating ancestral spirits. Pambe (1978, as cited in Bessaire) explains that concepts like spirit, spirit possession, the spirit of ancestors and medicines are considered to be the source of mystical magical power and are essential to the "rituals and

the symbols which help in making the “chief, traditional doctor and blacksmith”. Through the symbols, these authorities controlled the spiritual and economic vitality of the Sukuma community. Traditionally the king is known to receive his authority from two sources: the life force coming from his maternal ancestors and the consensus of his people.



Figure 37: Ntemi Charles Madeleke Masanja in his royal regalia, 1995  
Source: Bessire, Sakuma Museum

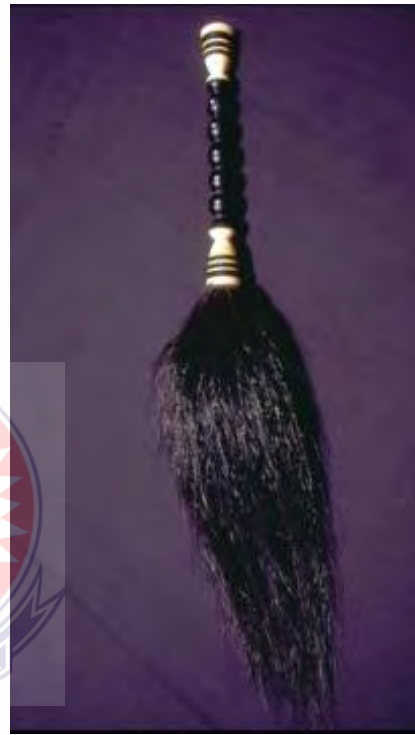


Figure 38: Sing'wanda (flywhisk)  
Source: Collection of the Sukuma Museum



Figure 39: Isumbi Iya itemelo (royal throne)  
Source: Collection of the Sakuma Museum



Figure 40: Ng'oma ndogo (royal drum)  
Source: Collection of the Sakuma Museum



In the narratives of the Bessaire on Sukuma chiefs and royal history, the royal regalia is highly valued among the royal family and each carries its symbolism. As such the royal tradition of the Sukuma is preserved in the royal pavilion of the Sukuma Museum. Among, the regalia is the royal stool (figure 39), the royal emblem ‘*Ndeji*’ which signifies royalty, and the King adorn himself with lion and leopard skin which symbolizes fierceness. His feet are adorned with sandals made of lion skin as a symbol of royalty while he carries a fly whisk made of ebony and ivory with the tail of a wild beast, symbolizing leadership. The whisk is used during his official visits or tour.

To show his power in war and military, the Ntemi carries a bow hooked arrow, a shield and a spear. In their ceremonial processions, royal drums (figure 40) are displayed and used to announce the appearance of the chief. The Queen of Sukuma equally adorns herself with ivory bracelets that signify wealth, lion skin sandals and carries a royal emblem (fly whisk) as a display of royalty.

As time passed, many of these regalia were transcended and passed down to the chiefs from their predecessors. The items reflect the importance of the relationship with one’s ancestors and form a common link between the people of Sukuma and the royal family.

### **2.11 Inspirations of Royal Dress Codes in Indigenous Africa**

Throughout indigenous Africa, royal dress codes have been one of the cardinal focuses of cultural fashion. The wardrobe of the first family is of great importance as the highest office of society. Members of the society look up to their leaders or rulers for various reasons such as protection, direction and religious or divine healing and prosperity. This study classifies the important sources of inspiration for royal regalia of indigenous

African cultures into the following categories namely; cultural beliefs of the society, cultural statutes and practices of the society, and cultural values of the people.

### **2.11.1 Cultural beliefs as a source of inspiration for indigenous African regalia**

In the case of ancient Egypt for instance, the people entrust their daily sustenance of divine direction for living and afterlife to their pharaoh. Dashish (2019) and Calvert (2009) purport that several royal rituals were performed during which the king becomes sanctified. Hence the royal regalia of Egyptian Pharaohs was also perceived as individual elements that interact with each other thereby creating a visual projection of the royal power, divine strength and apotropaic nature of the Pharaoh.

To the ancient Egyptian afterlife was real (Bryan, 2014; Calvert, 2009) and it was that strong belief on which their livelihood revolved. The belief in an afterlife was thus the source of inspiration from which the regalia of the pharaoh was crafted. In that, the fortification of the pharaoh through rituals before his coronation was to elevate him to the state of immortality as god (Dashih, 2019; Calvert, 2009). Logically, a ruler perceived as a god ascribed to the status of immortality should possess regalia that reflects that status. The pharaoh's costume and accessories were made with the finest linen and gold whereas the crook and flail together with other ornamentation and vessels collectively used by the pharaoh allude to the belief in an afterlife.

In Africa, the ancient Egyptians were not the only society whose rulers had regalia inspired by religious or divine sources. Take for instance the Ga society of Ghana, which was initially by tradition and was led by their high priests. The Ga people are by nature religious people who believe greatly in the divine leadership of the creator (Kwakye-

Opong, 2014, 2011) for that reason looked up to the priest of the land for guidance, protection and instructions.

As a society headed by a priest, the focus of the regalia could rather be ironical if found to be extravagant in style and fashion rather than depicting priesthood and spiritualism. Indeed, the costume of the Ga traditional ruler reflects the cultural priorities and societal norms of the people. It has been observed that most traditional priests often dress in simple clothes without footwear (Kwakye-Opong, 2014, Dzramedo, 2009) but this is not mean that their fashion style connects to their material wealth. Instead, the regalia of the priesthood was inspired by divine direction (Kwakye-Opong, 2014) to which every element or accessory has a specific function to perform. For example the use of white clay by African traditional priests on their body and face symbioses spiritual purity and divine synchronization of thoughts with ancestors and gods (Kwakye-Opong, 2014; Boni, 2008). Again, there are other accessories like talismans, leaves, cowries and pendants made of animal bones or leather serving as means of divine protection, and spiritual and physical healing.

### **2.11.2 Cultural statutes and practices as a source of inspiration for indigenous African regalia**

The Zulu culture can also be considered as another example. In South Africa, the indigenous world once feared the Zulu society for their fighting spirit. The Zulus are fearless warriors who celebrate manhood through the magnificent art of stick fighting hence the culture of the Zulu people was characterised by an explicit spirit of stick fighting and they eulogise masculinity (Carton & Morrell, 2012). Ideally, a culture that places a premium on warriors would have much of their activities centred on such themes. So the

royal cosmology of the Zulu society was not just aesthetically pleasing to the people but a message of bravery. It is a symbolic language that puts confidence in the hearts and minds of the people the Zulu king leads. This symbolic dress code of the Zulu king is not static or remains the same for every occasion.

There are other outfits fashioned to match specific occasions and ceremonies, however, the identity of the Zulu society is revealed when the leader adorns himself in the traditional regalia which reflects what the people stand for and not that which exhorts the ruler. It is clear to this extent that the inspirations from which the regalia of the Zulu king is fashion are of a different tangent to that of the ancient Egyptians. Whereas the regalia of the ancient Egyptian pharaohs was inspired by the religious beliefs and the divine spectrum, the regalia of the indigenous Zulu society was inspired by the social characteristics cultural status or statutes and practices of the people. The latter were known for their war-like nature and that for sure inspired the traditional or cultural regalia of their kings.

### **2.11.3 Cultural values as a source of inspiration for indigenous African regalia**

Concomitantly, the fashion style and rendition of royal regalia may easily reflect the culture of the people they represent, however, the philosophical underpinnings and symbolism it carries may not be known by persons who do not belong to the circles of that culture. For example in his studies on the *Divine rites of kings and rituals of royal regalia: Its symbolism and ensemble among the traditional Igbo people of South-Eastern Nigeria*.

Madukasi (2021) observed that the Western perspective of indigenous regalia symbolizes the explicit nucleus of African paganism and that evil must be annihilated. On the contrary, Madukasi highlights the view of Niangoran-Bouah (1991 as cited in



Madukasi, 2021) that the symbolism behind the royal regalia among the Igbo people for instance was judged from the exterior and condemned without any effort to study and understand what it represented in the African traditional worldview.

Emphatically, Madukasi expressed that the royal regalia of the Igbo kings is an aspect of African indigenous cloth and that wearing of it was restricted to only the Igbo Kings. The regalia of the Igbo people constitute part of the essential implements through which the people understand who they are and maintain their Igbo identity. Contextually, the inspiration which underpins the fashion styles of the Igbo royal regalia is the conceptual cultural philosophies of the people.

The royal regalia is therefore hinged on the *cultural status* of the people hence understanding the constituents or the various elements fashioned into the regalia can best be appreciated through the values and cultural statutes of the Igbo people. Ironically, what the Western man failed to do was to perceive the cultural significance of the royal regalia of the indigenous people through a philosophical window of African values and conceptual ideas. Sadly though, they rather relegated or subjected the art forms and their ideations to a demeaning brand of fetishism, animism, paganism, occultism and so forth (Madukasi, 2021).

In conclusion, the royal regalia and fashion which constitutes costume and all other accessories used by the indigenous African rulers be it priests or chiefs are symbolic emblems. These emblems represent the people or the social status of the ruler and are mostly inspired by some factors discussed above.

The sources of inspiration for the regalia of the indigenous African people are strong and superlatively illustrious as the wearer or user of the regalia. It is therefore evocative that, comparatively appreciating the regalia based on physical appearance and materialistic point of view among various ethnic cultures would be deceptive. This is because sources of inspiration for fashioning royal regalia differ among the various cultures in Africa.

## 2.12 Indigenous Ghanaian Regalia Design Concepts

Irrespective of the material used or sources of inspiration that motivated the creation of regalia used by the indigenous societies, the royal regalia of the various cultures in Ghana possess some design concepts. Under this theme, design concepts of selected regalia of some indigenous Ghanaian ethnic cultures will be discussed.

Akwetey (2007) describes the royal costume designs of indigenous Ghanaian rulers as concepts based on traditional motifs and colour. For the Ewe and Asante chiefs who use *kete* or *kente* costumes for special functions, the cloth is often woven with simple complex patterns of *adinkra* motifs and or harmonious colours of geometric shapes and or animal motifs, especially in the case of the Ewe chiefs. Design concepts of indigenous regalia are grounded on the traditional or cultural philosophies of the people. In a recent study on the ideation of textile regalia, Ayesu, Howard, Asinyo, and Anokye (2020) explain the design concepts in the regalia of the Akuapem state paramountcy are based on main Akuapem state symbols. These symbols encompass diverse forms ranging from human figures, linguist and linguist staffs, footrests, crowns, headgears, *okra* (soul) and body ornaments.

For example, this symbolic conceptual opus can be seen when an indigenous Ghanaian chief is titivated in full regalia. In figure 41 for example, the *Okuapimhene* and

*Omanhene* of Akropong, Oseadeayo Addo Dankwa III is seen in full regalia. At the feet of the king sits a young child, his "*okra*", meaning his soul. Standing to the right of the king is a linguist. The triadic figures and their adornment constitutes a symbolic regalia. The image also includes a linguist and a child seated at the feet of the chief. Both the linguist and chief though wrapped in cloth – a usual Ghanaian traditional style of dressing common to the Ewe, Akan and Ga-Dangbe cultures, the aesthetic qualities of both cloth set an outright status distinction between the two. The sparkling patterns of gold motifs in the chief's cloth spurs his royal majesty rather than just a beautiful cloth.

Whereas the cloth of the linguist on the contrary bares simplified linear patterns that visually present its wearer suggestively at a status of a humble servant of his chief. But the same cannot be said of the dress of the child. At an initial glance, the dress of the child which is fashioned with a piece of cloth visually portrays his status suggestively as an insignificant personality sitting within the composition.



Figure 41: Okuapimhene and Omanhene of Akropong, Oseadeayo Addo Dankwa III. Curtsey of Kwekudee. Source: <https://kwekudee-tripdownmemorylane.blogspot.com/2013/09/the-akuapem-people-are-amalgamation-of.html> (2021)

However, on a second look focusing on the child's headgear and swords in the child's hands gives an impression of a child upholding power. Also, the total appearance of the child as well reflects confidence rather than an innocent child. Indeed, the child's invigorating appearance correlates with the gravitas of the chief.

The triadic composition of these three personalities constitutes something beyond grooming and aesthetic appeal. In his submission on the symbolism of the royal regalia of the Akuapim people, Kwekudee (2013) describes the child as the *Okra* (soul) of the chief. Kwekudee explains that the soul of the king, the *okra* plays the role of human shield, responsible for diverting all evil spirits from the king and must die with the king. Agreeably, it is comprehensive that the three personalities constitute the royal regalia in figure 41. The linguist being the mouthpiece of the king and the child who is the soul of the king cannot be practically separated from the king due to their critical roles.

In Ghana, the indigenous regalia design concepts that are visually expressed have concealed proverbial or symbolic connotations. Royal cloth designs are usually a set of woven or printed traditional *Adinkra* motifs, carefully selected to represent the paramount and the people. The royal cloth is however not the only element in the category of royal dress. The royal dress includes jewellery such as necklaces, pendants, rings, anklets, armlets, bracelets, etc. and other ornaments like crowns, headgear, footwear and insignia such as a sword. Collectively, these items constitute royal dress of which each component carries a symbolic or proverbial meaning underneath their designs. An example is the gold repoussé and cast triangular pendants called *Awisiado* (see figure 41). Daniel (2021) clarifies that, in the Akan language, *Awisiado* correctly written as *Awusiaadɔ* is a word coined from *Awusiaa* (a person who has lost one parent) and *Odɔ* (love). Hence a necklace

with this twin circular plate pendant in the dress code of the king symbolises love for persons who have lost one of their parents and kindness towards them. It was for this reason, as shown in figure 42, Lady Julia, the wife of the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II presented one of these necklaces as part of the gifts to Otumfuo during the final funeral rites of his late mother, *Asantehemaa*, Nana Afia Kobi Serwaa Ampem II in 2017 (Daniel, 2021).



Figure 42, Edited: wife of the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II presented one of these necklace as part of the gifts to Otumfuo during the final funeral rites of his late mother, *Asantehemaa*, Nana Afia Kobi Serwaa Ampem II in 2017. Curtsey of Graphic.com.gh.

Source:<https://gh.opera.news/gh/en/culture/6bae8cd1fed3b0926ba6e725d63787d4>

It is important to note that Ghanaian concepts of regalia are an integration of varied concepts and philosophies. These integrations as observed by the researcher can be described as conceptual heritage bonded by three major philosophical concepts namely; *the royal dress code, the royal artistry and the royal entourage*. Each of the three categories constitutes imperative components that collectively define the traditional and philosophical underpinnings of regalia contextually within the cultural affinity of the Ghanaian people.

To make this categorisation clearer, some of the various components of the three major categories of what constitutes royal regalia have been listed in table 2.

The researcher observes that each category as presented in the table performs unique functions within the conceptual parenthesis of royal Ghanaian regalia. Category “A” is the *royal entourage*. It constitutes humans, personalities or individuals who are symbolic performers of the royal regalia. Without these personalities, the clothes, jewels and other royal artistry cannot be animated and these include the king and every other person who falls within the closed circles of the king upon any public appearance. Category “B” is *the royal artistry*. It involves all royal artistry visually present within the circles of the king upon his appearance in a public space. Category “C” on the other hand is *the royal dress code*. It focuses on the individual items that constitute the personal royal dress codes of the king when he appears in public. Every individual component of the categories is traditional design concept that are symbolic and reflect the cultural philosophies of the people.

**Table 2.** Categories of what constitutes the royal regalia of Ghanaian traditional rulers

<b>Category</b>	<b>Some examples of components that constitute regalia within the category</b>
<b>(A) The Royal Entourage</b>	Individual persons like the king, linguist, sub-chiefs, umbrella holder, carriers of the palanquin, the stool carrier, the deity carrier, footrest carrier, gift parcel carriers, etc.
<b>(B) The Royal Artistry</b>	Art forms and props, like pots, royal stools, umbrellas, linguist staff, footrest, palanquin, drums, horns, skins, horses, swards, etc.
<b>(C) The Royal Dress Code</b>	All accessories used to adorn the body like cloth, headgear, headband, crown, sandals, rings, armlets, anklets, necklaces, talisman, pendants, breastplates, etc.

Source: Fieldwork data (2021)



To this end, it can be established that the traditional regalia of the Ghanaian people are symbolic and proverbial. Even as visual taste and aesthetic qualities are portrayed in the dress, jewellery and other forms of ornamentations or accessories that constitute the regalia of the indigenous Ghanaian royal class, each cog is a representation of traditional philosophy. The designs are skillfully composed to reflect the traditional contextual cultural ideations of the people thereby affirming the position of Mouralis and Geesy (1990) that, African art is not *art for art's sake*. Instead, they are functional and symbolic with contextual concepts of beauty or aesthetics.

### **2.13 Chapter Summary**

From the onset, regalia has been the main subject under review in this chapter. The theoretical discussions so far posit regalia by the definition in different contexts in the likes of fashion, dress, dress accessories and total artistry used by people of high authority in society. Regalia is by the far more than a common denominator of the royal class of every given society. It serves as a unique code for a visual representation of the people over which the ruler presides.

As a unique symbol, regalia has a double repercussions. Whereas in most cases, the royal regalia was found to be an insignia that represents the sociocultural makeup of the society, the narrations differ for other communities. In some jurisdictions, the regalia of the king is just a reflection of the personal traits and characteristics of the ruler than portray and identity of the people. Notwithstanding, whatever perspectives regalia can be viewed from, one underlining denominator that can be deduced from the discussions of the literature is that regalia is an identity that presents the religious cannons, values, character, traits, norms etc. of a society or the individual ruler rather than the people they represent.



Also, another inference made from the review indicates that regalia can be an object (in the sense of dress) or a collective of objects (in the sense of dress and other accessories). In some royal classes of some societies, regalia is the unique identity of dress worn by the ruler. In this sense, the dress can be with or without body ornaments like crowns, rings, chains, sceptres, swords and guns. Whereas other societies viewed regalia as a full entourage that traverses beyond mere dress codes. In this regard, regalia includes, the costume or dress of the ruler as described in the previous scenario in addition to palanquins, drums, king's men, umbrellas, stool carriers and the royal security. The object of regalia in this sense then becomes a blend of humans and a variety of other artistry that collectively provides an identity for the royal class.

In conclusion, the socio-cultural context of regalia is paramount in a theoretical review. It is not enough to subject the royal regalia of any society to aesthetic qualities. In Kant's view of aesthetics, the objectivity of the object is limited to the aesthetic underpinnings as accepted by the culture of the people. However, this literature review identifies some gaps in Kant's theory that the ideological underpinnings of the royal regalia especially in Africa have more influences from a socio-cultural philosophical stand rather than aesthetic roots.

Again, the *costumology* of royal regalia from the African paradigm especially, in the Ghanaian context can be debated to mean a broader scope than just the dress or cloth. The researcher, therefore, proposes that first-person documentation theory by Vickery which focuses on sociocultural philosophies of the traditional societies should be collectively used as a parameter by similar researchers on the regalia of African origin.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Overview

This chapter discusses the main steps used in undertaking the study. It talks about the how of the study and captures information concerning methods and tools employed to gather and analyse data applicable to the research project such as research design, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, data collection instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis plan.

#### 3.1 Study Area

The study is about the Kwahu traditional area. The Kwahu traditional area consists of 16 traditional towns. The study area, Kwahu is homogeneous since inhabitants have the same culture, customs and beliefs. The roles played by the chiefs and their regalia for various chiefly positions are also very similar.

The 16 traditional towns were zoned into six major existing traditional demographics namely; Omanhene, *Ninfa*, *Benkum*, *Gyasi*, *Kyedom* and *Adontin*. This grouping provided fairgrounds for the selection of the sample group for the study as a town each was visited within the five major traditional groupings for the study.

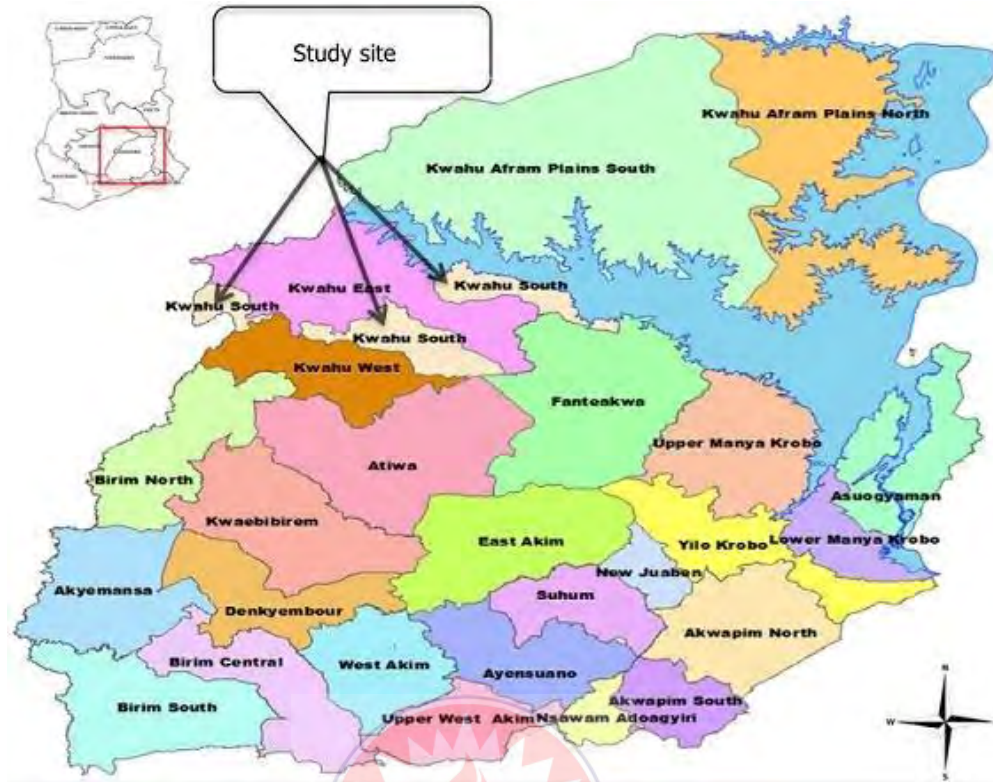


Figure 1: Map indicating Kwahu traditional Area

Source: [https://www.google.com/search?q=map+of+kwahu+in+eastern+region+of+ghana&sxsrf=ALiCzsYsU\\_ZJilgkhAATdWiyTTliBmOBYw:1669724506727&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiyheLAsNP7AhUngf0HHc9KAI4Q\\_AUoAXoECAIQAw&biw=1366&bih=657&dpr=1#imgc=yjctcat71q3bkM](https://www.google.com/search?q=map+of+kwahu+in+eastern+region+of+ghana&sxsrf=ALiCzsYsU_ZJilgkhAATdWiyTTliBmOBYw:1669724506727&source=lnms&tbn=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwiyheLAsNP7AhUngf0HHc9KAI4Q_AUoAXoECAIQAw&biw=1366&bih=657&dpr=1#imgc=yjctcat71q3bkM)

The Kwahus share boundaries with the Akyems who separated with the Birim river in the Eastern region of Ghana. It has almost about 140.9 km distance from Accra which takes an individual 3-4 four drive time using a vehicle. On the other side, it lies midway from Accra to Kumasi Stretch which serves as a root to other smaller villages along the hill.

Weather conditions in Kwahu are cool due predominant rain pattern and this makes most tourist consider the place as pleasant for touring. The study area also focused on two major districts which includes the kwahu South and Kwahu East.

### 3.2 Research Paradigm

The research paradigm is one of the key aspects of educational research. It is a model, template or pattern that the research follows. The concept of the research paradigm origin has been linked to American philosopher Thomas Kuhn (1962) who first used the word to mean a philosophical way of thinking (Mseer, 2014; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In educational research, the term paradigm is used to describe a researcher's 'worldview' (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). This worldview is the perspective, thought, school of thought, or set of shared beliefs, which informs the meaning or interpretation of the research data.

A researcher's philosophical thinking was based on the ontological perspective or epistemological paradigm. Whereas the ontological paradigm questions the existence of reality, the foci of epistemology are to investigate the nature of human knowledge and comprehension and what the researcher can possibly acquire to broaden and deepen understanding in the field of research (Mseer, 2014; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017).

The philosophical underpinnings of this research were therefore driven by epistemological thinking, the researcher's quest for a deeper understanding of experience and knowledge of the indigenous culture of the Kwahu people regarding the dress codes of their chiefs. This study relied on data gathered from the people, documented books, leaders or elders in the community who are custodians and in the know of the Kwahu traditions. Therefore the epistemology of the research is grounded on authoritative knowledge (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017). In documenting the *costumology* of the Kwahu chiefs, authoritative knowledge as a paradigm to guide the foci of the research was very paramount. The data emerging from document reviews and narrations from elders of the royal family were valuable for the validity and the qualitative analysis.

### **3.3 Research Approach**

This research expounded the social constructivism approach of qualitative research. Social constructivism (or *socio-culturalism*) expresses the view that the creation of knowledge cannot be separated from the social environment in which it is formed. Hence knowledge is created through the interactions of individuals within society which is central to constructionism (Vinney, 2019). The researcher, from an epistemological perspective of thinking, induces an understanding of the traditions and culture of the Kwahu people through interactions with the selected members of the royal family and archival documents.

This qualitative inquiry approach was informed by the research paradigm, tools for data collection and analysis methods (Saunders et al., 2012; Creswell, 2014; Mseer, 2014; Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017; Mohajan, 2018). This approach enabled the researcher to explore varied tools for collecting data on the subject for logical knowledge construction through qualitative analytic methods. Detailed information on the research design, data collection tools and analysis methods have been discussed under sub-themes *3.4 Research Design*, *3.8 Data Collection Instruments* and *3.11 Method of Data Analysis* respectively.

### **3.4 Research Design**

Art historical study of this nature which entails the vivid description of narratives on historical artefacts and events with rigorous analysis and interpretation of data gathered requires a qualitative research paradigm. The study explores narrative designs of inquiry which involves interviewing and observing small groups to describe and understand the phenomena from the participants' viewpoint (Saunders et al., 2012; Mohajan, 2018). Narrative and phenomenological studies have a specific contextual focus, such as the life experiences of individuals (Creswell, 2014). The research design was therefore appropriate

as it allowed the researcher to narrate the responses, processes and philosophies gathered from the fieldwork.

The narrative method includes the analysis of the characteristics of the narrative text, and inter-human relations in social, cultural and historical contexts (Saunders et al., 2012; Felton & Stickley, 2018) and it focuses on people's narratives either about themselves or a set of events, concentrating on the sequential unfolding of a told story by participants with emphasis on characters. The narrative analysis focuses on stories such as life history, oral history or personal reflections from one or more individuals (Mohajan, 2018). Hancock et al. (2009, as cited in Mohajan, 2018) admit that the narrative procedure though involving small numbers of participants is time-consuming.

Data collection in narrative research is usually by observations, diaries, letters, interviews, artefacts, and photographs (Lenberg et al., 2017) and allows for unique context-based evaluation time-oriented structures revealing how changes occur from the personal perspective of participants. In this study, the adoption of narrative research provided grounds for in-depth data collection from the respondents. The use of this tool was also influenced by the research objectives which sought to tell the history of the dress codes of the Kwahu Chiefs, highlighting the distinct characteristics and their cultural significance. Listening to the narratives of lived experiences of the chiefs and elders yielded a better understanding of the phenomenon as it involved meaningful conversation and dialogue with participants.

Phenomenology is an approach that explores people's everyday life experiences. It is used when the study is about the life experiences of a concept or phenomenon experienced by one or more individuals. A phenomenological researcher investigates



subjective phenomena as described by participants (Creswell, 2018). In phenomenological inquiry, the researcher interviews and listens to the narratives of experiences as described by the participants. It is a rigorous, critical, systematic and exciting although challenging and exhaustive process (Mohajan, 2018). For this study, phenomenology was very instrumental as the nature of the study requires rigorous inquiry into the lived experiences of the chiefs and elders regarding the dress code trends of the Kwahu traditional leaders from the 1950 to 2020.

### **3.5 Library research**

The researcher embarked on a comprehensive research approach from museums and libraries, however, the bulk of the study focused on narratives and library research. Balme library, African studies and the School of performing Arts (Theatre of Arts and Music Department) were visited by the researcher. The Department of General Arts studies library and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and technology were also not left out. Other local libraries within the researchers locality such as Kwahu Obo main library, Abetifi Library and the kwahu traditional council offices were also visited for secondary data.

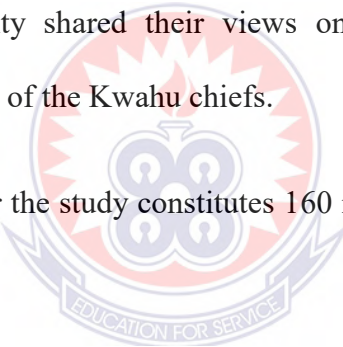
### **3.6 Population**

A population is an all-inclusive group that is operationally defined by the researcher (Berg and Latin, 2004). Other scholars posit that population is “any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that is of interest to the researcher” (Creswell, 2014). Simply, the population is the larger group from which individuals are selected to participate in a study. For this research, the targeted population covered all

Chiefs, elders of the royal family and traditional leaders of the Kwahu traditional area who are knowledgeable on historical developments of the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs.

Out of a total of six traditional areas, four were selected as the representative population. These groups of respondents possess appropriate responses to the research questions that the study sought to answer. For instance, elders of the royal family with advanced years of age were real eyewitnesses to the dress code trends of the chiefs, thus providing helpful and detailed responses based on their experience. The chiefs who are the practitioners of the phenomena under study also provided information on what informs their choice of dress codes and shared personal experiences whereas the traditional leaders and elders in the community shared their views on the cultural significance of the uniqueness of the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs.

The accessible population for the study constitutes 160 research participants in three broad strata:



Stratum A: Traditional Leaders (Chiefs)	20
Stratum B: Elders of the community (70 years and above)	40
Stratum C: Elders of the Royal Family	40
Stratum D: People from the community	60

### 3.7 Sample and Sampling Technique

Sampling involves the selection of a suitable representative part of a population to determine the parameters or characteristics of the whole population. Where a population is too large to cover, the researcher obtains a part (sample) rather than a total population. It is easier to observe a part rather than a whole. For this study, the stratified and purposive (expert) sampling methods were employed. This is because it provided an avenue to choose subjects concerning the objectives of the research. It also provided an accurate platform to establish good rapport between the respondents which intends to affect the quality of data collected positively (Etikan, 2017).

Participants in stratum *A* were screened to arrive at four (4) Kwahu Chiefs with the aid of convenience and accessibility as criteria for selection in mind. The researcher used 15% which amounts to six (6) participants each for stratum *B* (which constitutes elders of the community) and *C* (which constitutes elders of the royal family). Whereas only four percent of the stratum *D* which amounting to only four (4) participants were selected. This resulted in a total sample size of 20 research participants for the study.

The proportionate stratified random sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used to put the varied sizes into three strata. Putting the respondents into three strata was informed by their diverse lived experiences regarding the phenomena under study. It could be noticed from three strata that stratum *A* were the Chiefs who are currently using the dress codes, *B* consists of elders of the community who have lived from the 1950s till date, while stratum *C* were elders of the royal family who have historical records on the dress codes of the Kwahu Chiefs as well as knowledge of its symbolism and significance.

For stratum *D*, it constitutes the natives of the community between the ages of 20 and 40 years. Using purposive sampling, the researcher consciously selected respondents (informants) who could provide needed vital information for the study which could not be obtained from other participant choices.

Expert sampling was used to select respondents in stratum *A* and *C* to ensure validity, accuracy and reliability of data. Though the researcher is grounded in the customs of the Kwahus as an indigene, the use of the experts even within the royal family was convenient and aided in accessing the royal achieves for rigorous data collection. The sample from Stratum *D* was also purposefully selected using the quota sampling approach where three criteria for the selection was pegged on the ages between 20 and 40 years. This sample group helped in collecting data to satisfy the research objective five which has to do with seeking the views of the youth on how conversant they are with the regalia symbolisms of the Kwahu chiefs. The sample of respondents was thus convenient for the study and was determined by the judgment of the researcher.

In **Table 3**, the summarised sample size for the study has been presented for a glance. The table constitutes the various groups of participants used for the study and their numerical values.

**Table 3: Sample size of the study at a glance**

<b>SN</b>	<b>Sample Group</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
1	Chiefs	4
2	Elders from the royal family	6
3	Elders from the community	6
4	Youth in the community	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>20</b>

Source: Fieldwork

### 3.8 Data Collection Instruments

The researcher obtained data from varied sources. Both text-based and non-textual data were collected interviews, observation and focus group discussions . Data from eyewitness accounts and documents, in other words, from first-hand records of events and situations in both textual and non-textual forms such as festivals, traditional council meetings, photographs, thesis reports, appellations, films, journal articles, posters, official records, books and all other documents that provided first-hand accounts of an event or a situation.

As a green area, instruments for the data collection in the field were semi-structured interviews unobtrusive observations, festival documentaries, field notes and photo albums and were supplemented with secondary data. Mobile electronic devices (cell phones, and digital cameras) were used by the researcher to collect vital data from respondents alongside hand-written notes.

### 3.8.1 Semi-structured interviews (SSI)

It is an oral questionnaire. Interviews permit the researcher to elicit direct information from respondents and classify it on the spot (Best, 1981). In this study, Semi-Structured Interviews were used. This type of interview employs a blend of both close and open-ended questions, accompanied by follow-up how or why questions. This tool allowed the researcher to have an interactive conversation with the participants thereby minimizing fatigue for both the interviewer and respondent (Adams, 2015). The research espoused the expert group approach for the interviews with the elders and the chiefs. This approach was convenient and contributed to collecting reliable data for qualitative analysis. The chiefs and elders are the custodians of the traditions of the Kwahus therefore, getting them in a focused group of three and four helped to validate the responses of the groups through triangulations.

The interview process started with a draft interview guide (Appendix A) was prepared in English but interpreted in the Akan language and pre-tested in the communities within the Kwahu traditional area to find out whether the respondents understood the questions or otherwise. From the answers given, the pre-test interview revealed unanticipated problems with question-wording, such as grammatical constructions which were unacceptable to the royal family according to the customs of the people. This revelation led to the restructuring of customized open-ended questions in harmony with the customs of the Kwahus before the main interviews were scheduled after seeking an official permit through writing (Appendix B) and customarily.

Next was the actual interview which was preceded by self-introduction, an explanation of the purpose of the interview and how the opinions of respondents would be



treated. The researcher further established the kind of relationship that was needed for the respondents to accept and willingly answer questions posed to them.

Structured and semi-structured questions were used to guide the subjects in providing answers in their own words. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005) in a structured interview;

*“The researcher asks a standard set of questions and nothing more. However, in a semi-structured interview, the researcher may follow the standard questions with one or more individually tailored questions to get clarification or probe a person’s reasoning” ..*

It was necessary to have an interview schedule to maintain consistency in data and to ensure that respondents do not stray from the research topic therefore the researcher used telephone calls for pre-interview communications and confirmation of interview schedules. This made the interview schedules flexible but diplomatic and also paved way for establishing healthy rapport with the participants. Again, the researcher capitalised on the good affinity to deploy further diplomatic open-ended follow-up questions to elicit in-depth views from respondents.

Recording of responses from respondents was on the spot through note-taking and with the aid of a digital recorder to obtain ensure the security of detailed and comprehensive data which otherwise would be difficult to capture through writing only. When the researcher was in doubt about some facts after leaving the field, the mobile phone was again used to find out from the respondents.

At the field, all interviews were conducted in the Akan language. This was convenient because it enabled the respondents to freely express their thoughts. On the part of the chiefs, the use of the local language was very imperative as it constitutes the customs of the people. Therefore, after recording the interviews, the researcher engaged the services of a translator who transcribed the audio recordings into handwritten English documents. The transcribed version of the interview played a keen role in the analysis process.

### **3.8.2 Unobtrusive observation**

Observation is the tool used by the researcher to collect data through direct investigation. This allowed the researcher to directly interact with chiefs and elders as well as the royal fashion collection within the palace. The observation involved a critical look or scrutiny of the characteristics of the fashion collection of the chiefs from the 1950 to 2020. Using unobtrusive yields documentation of primary information rather than self-reported behaviour, and is also considered appropriate for studies that trace historical information or events over some time (Lee, 2017). Observation The royal photo album and artefacts were observed along with a video documentary of past events and the current dress codes of the Kwahu Chiefs were also critically looked at.

The observation was aided by a semi-structured observation guide (Appendix C) based on the aesthetics, conceptual and functional context relating to the customs and traditions of the Kwahu people. Similarities and differences between dress codes of the various chiefs within the year understudy were also keenly observed to ascertain the contrasting or harmonious patterns in the fashion trends of the Kwahu Chiefs. The observation was supported by the use of a digital camera to capture relevant information.

The advantage of this research tool was that it was relatively inexpensive and flexible and it yielded valuable data which was understood by the researcher and analysed with ease.

### **3.8.3 Archival documents**

An archival document is a term used to refer to a wide variety of materials from historical accounts. It comprises textual and non-textual materials such as photographs and apparatus, in the personal possession of an individual, form part of an institutional collection or are stored in an archive. This also includes visual sources, such as photographs, video, and film (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Bowen, 2009; Morgan, 2022).

For this research, the researcher adopted archival documents, both textual and non-textual were used as an imperative data source. Firstly, information was synthesised from existing literature regarding the historical accounts of the culture of the Kwahu people. This secondary source of data was assembled from selected thesis dissertations and newspaper articles. Secondly, the royal regalia of passed chiefs (both the realia and photographs) form another category of data source for the study.

The initial research plan was focused on collecting data from the preserved regalia (cloth, beads, sandals, stool, etc.) from the royal family of selected chiefs in the Kwahu traditional area. However, some of the items were not easily assessed due to the customary creed that upholds and preserves the royal legacy to some extent. The researcher, therefore, settled on the royal photo album as an additional data source for the research.

#### **3.8.4 Reflective journal**

To enact triangulation of the various data sources, the use of reflective journals was found viable as another imperative data source. Writing about the daily field experiences concomitant to interviews and document reviews in the research journal was helpful. The reflective journal has been used in recent times by many qualitative researchers for rethinking validity in light of epistemological perspectives and teacher education (Ortlipp, 2008; Bashan & Holsblat, 2017). A reflection of the research process in the personal journal of the researcher provides inductive thinking into the theories and serves as a “multidimensional” instrument that can exist in a variety of forms (Boud, 2001 as cited in Bashan & Holsblat, 2017).

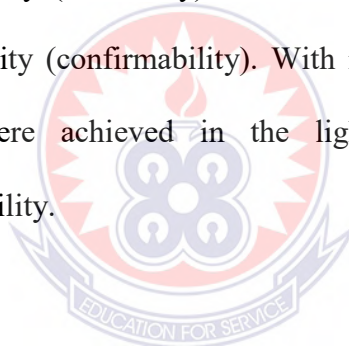
#### **3.9 Data Collection Procedure**

The nature of the sample especially involving the royal family required some process of following highly esteemed traditional protocols. Therefore, the researcher through the aid of qualified personalities and influential elders obtained royal permits both through official writing and following the traditions and customs of the Kwahu people before conducting the interviews. Interview appointments with the chiefs and elders of the royal family were scheduled in focus groups whereas that of the elders of the community was through single interviews.

In some instances, traditional rites were performed including libations and oath swearing by the researcher as custom demands before entry was granted into some sacred places which hold vital information for the study. The swearing of the oath cemented the confidence of the respondents that their information will be treated with a high level of confidentiality.

### 3.10 Trustworthiness in the research process

Qualitative research is focused on scepticism (Cobbold, 2015) as matters which underlie the state of doubt which are derived from a perceived lack of representation of the (usually small) sample used in qualitative studies and an alleged lack of rigor in the collection, analysis and interpretation of the data. This lack of rigor in the problem of bias introduced by the subjectivity of the research (Hamel, 1993). Arguably, there are also concerns as to achieve the issue of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity which are the tenet of qualitative in post-positivist research (qualitative studies). To ensure trustworthiness of findings for the study, Lincoln and Guba (2000) formulated naturalist's equivalents of internal validity (credibility), external validity (transferability), reliability (dependability) and objectivity (confirmability). With regards to the study, the issues of reliability and validity were achieved in the light of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.



#### **Credibility**

Credibility construct is the qualitative parallel of internal validity in qualitative research (Cobbold, 2015). To Cobbold, it basically typifies the extent of correspondence between participants' actual view points and how these have been portrayed by the researcher. In the study, credibility was achieved through triangulation (Reeves, Kuper, & Hodges, 2008 as cited in Kafui, A. 2018) as it helped to reduce bias and it cross examined the integrity of participants' responses. The first was methodological triangulation as different different data procedures (interviews, observation and secondary sources) were used to compare and contrast findings to help provide more comprehensive insight into the phenomenon under the study (Roper & Shapira, 2000). The second approach was through respondents'

interviews triangulation, as each respondent with different portions on the subject under study were interviewed twice for verification of findings.

### **Transferability**

Transferability addresses the issue of whether the findings of a study hold up beyond the specific research subjects and the settings involved. Although it does to a degree, the very tenet of its operation are that human behavior is not random but unpredicted (Cobbold, 2015). Thus, qualitative researchers concern themselves not with the questions of whether their findings are generalizable, but rather with the question as to which other settings with which the research findings could be applicable to. To facilitate this, a description and expert purposeful sampling of the study context was provided and the people from whom data was collected and the basis for selecting them.

### **Dependability**

Dependability involves the issue of whether the study findings would be consistent and repeatable if the study were conducted with the same participants in the same context (Neuman, 2003). Dependability is gained through consistency of data, which is evaluated through transparent research steps and research findings. To enable dependability in the study, it was important that a dependability audit was conducted ‘to attest to the quality and appropriateness of the inquiry process’ (Mertens, 2005,). The researcher carefully documented decisions made in the course of the study to facilitate dependability audit (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of the research process.

### **Confirmability**

Confirmability is concerned with establishing that data and interpretation of the findings are not figments of the researchers' opinions or belief (Tobins & Begley, 2004) but rather, the data can be tracked to its original sources. The logic that is used to interpret the data are made explicit and the process of synthesizing data to reach conclusions can be confirmed (Mertens, 2005). Again, this was facilitated through methodological triangulation and respondent interviews as most of the statement were stated verbatim to reflect the views of the key informants.

### **Ethical Concideration**

As ethnographic studies involves gathering data in a natural settings, questions of research ethics must be addressed. These includes informing participants about the rsik involved in the research, protecting their identities if possible and more generally, paying paying extra attention to the decisions that are made during the research process (li, 2008). Ethical issues considered were informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality and beneficence.

Informed consent is based on the need for participants to enter into research voluntarily, while understanding the nature of the research and any disadvantage or obligations that may be involved (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). It is important to ensure that potential participant have full and open information about what their participation will involve and what will be expected of them (Clark, 1997). Informed consent form was given to participant to inform them about the purpose of the study, method of data collection and their right to withdraw at any time of the study.



Anonymity and confidentiality were also considered as Oliver (2003) describes anonymity in research as given respondents the opportunity to have their identity hidden in a research report. However, Bell (2005) defined it as a promise that even the researcher will not be able to tell which responses came from which respondent. In addition, confidentiality is assuring someone that what has been discussed will not be disclosed (Wiles, Crow Heath & Charles, 2006). In assuring anonymity, key information were given pseudonyms and were reminded not to mention their names or say anything that will reveal their identity. On the part of assuring confidentiality, data collected was handled and managed by the researcher and findings were reported on the data gathered.

Also, the principle of beneficence refers to the need for the researcher to maximize the benefits and minimize any possible harmful effects (Cozby, 2007). Potential harm to participants from participating in research can include psychological, emotional or physical harm and loss of confidentiality (Dunn, 1999). To ensure beneficence in the study, the researcher worked with participants based on their request of what information to be given out. Information in which participants thought to be sensitive were not given out.

### **3.11 Method of Data Analysis**

Using the historical research tool of content and narrative analysis, the study adopted a hermeneutic approach of interpreting raw visual, textual and oral data as well as practical experiences into findings. The researcher was acquainted with the heuristics used by many historians. Regarding heuristics, historians often reflect on the source and context of the data and corroborate to ensure the validity and reliability of the data collected. Historical research of this nature deals with the identification, analysis and interpretation of past events, eyewitness accounts, other oral history and interviews (Freund, 2009). After

collecting data, it was subjected to hermeneutics which positioned the researcher to acquire an understanding of the data for sound interpretation by finding robust contextual historical connotations.

Adopting the narrative configuration, data analysis was done accurately with consistency by taking into consideration contradictions and changes in tone of the interviewee as well as a variety of dress code patterns found in the photographs to produce sound interpretation without disrupting the content of the narrations about lived experiences of interviewees. Photographic and video proof of the dress codes used by the Kwahu chiefs in the past and present were treated with critical descriptive analysis and interpretations based on the Afrocentric Ghanaian aesthetics and cultural contextual contest and significance of the Kwahus.

Qualitative research often begins with reflections along with data collection (Creswell, 2014) but not at the end of data collection. This presents the researcher with the opportunity to use a progressive strategy of adjusting the data collection process, redirecting the conceptual focus of investigating relevant patterns to achieve the specific objectives of the study. With the data collected, thematic analysis, flexible and content-sensitive (Vaismoradi et al., 2013; Javadi & Zarea, 2016) instrument was used to develop categories of themes. Vivid explanations were then derived from the phrases, incidents and patterns which helped analyse the significance and uniqueness of the dress codes of Kwahu Chiefs through descriptive discussions.

For this research, the types of qualitative data generated from the field masterminded a multi-dimensional approaches to the data analysis. The researchers

employed visual content analysis strategies to analyse the pictorial data collected regarding the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs. Again, the dress codes of the chiefs were not perceived as aesthetic objects therefore the researchers familiarity and knowledge with *Akan* semiotics provided some advantage in analysing the traditional symbols in the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs. Even as there are general interpretations to the Akan traditional symbols, the researcher was careful to rely on the analysis of the narratives from the respondents with the focus of probing for rich qualitative data. This paved way for analysing the interviews with the content analysis.



## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Overview

This chapter entails presentations and discussions of the outcome of the study. It deals with the analysis, synthesis and interpretations of data collected to suit each of the five research objectives. With objective one, the study converted the primary or raw visual and textual data into finding using the narrative and content analysis tool and paying much attention to the chronology of dress code trends of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022. Data collected regarding objective two which has to do with assessing significant changes in dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022, was also analysed using both the narrative analysis and descriptive analysis tools.

Again, in documenting the lived experiences of the chiefs, the narrative analysis tool was useful. Both the descriptive and narrative analysis tools were also used in handling data gathered for objectives three and five. Whereas objective four which has to do with the cultural significance and symbolism of the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs was approached with Afrocentric aesthetic, visual and content analysis tools.

The paragraphs that follow present the results and discussions organised under each of the research objectives and emerging themes. Where necessary, references to pictorial pieces of evidence (labelled figures) have been made for clarity.

#### **4.1 Objective One:**

##### **Dress codes of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022.**

To the Kwahus, there are dress codes for varied purposes, a phenomenon that is synonymous with many cultures in Africa. The purposefulness of the dress code found among the traditional classism of the Kwahus affirms the earlier disposition of some historians on African art and culture that the arts of the African people are not for art's sake (Mouralis & Geesy, 1990) but for functional. With each of the dress codes of the people ascribed to some specific occasions, the cardinal custodian of the Kwahu tradition also dresses to reflect the validity of the occasion.

The regalia of the chiefs from the 1950 to 2022 as compiled from the field have been classified based on the occasions or purposes for which they were worn. The categorization of the dress codes includes regalia for installation ceremonies, festival and diplomatic dress codes, regalia for religious ceremonies, dress codes for marriage ceremonies, funeral regalia and dress codes for wars.

The classification was imperious to help appreciate the dress codes of the chiefs through the lens of the cultural practices of the Kwahus, taking cognisance of their aesthetic concepts and functionalism. The findings have been presented and discussed as follows.

##### **4.1.1 Regalia for installation ceremonies**

Ascending to the hierarchy of a cardinal custodian of the traditions of the Kwahus is a very significant millage for an individual of the royal family as well as to the entire populace of the locality. In other to become the chief of the Kwahus, the ideal royal descendant is fortified through traditional initiations and ceremonies which encompass

ritual processes and in-depth education on the cultural practices of the people. Whereas the duration and processes involved in installing the chief both in the past and present were mostly concealed from the public, the climax to the completion of the process often rests on the coronation or installation ceremony. Several items are used as constituents of the regalia for the chief during the coronation or installation ceremony. A study into the archival records reveals some significant items which constitute the regalia used by the Kwahu chiefs in the 1950 to 2022.



Figure 43: Nana Gyansiamah II (late), Kwahu Ahantanahene in a brown Ago cloth after enstoolment (1960's)

Source : The Archives of Paul Ameyaw

### ***Kuntunkuni cloth***

*Kuntunkuni* or *Birisi* (figure 47) is a fabric dyed with vegetable or natural dye in black with various Adinkra designs such *osrana ne nsoromma*, *kodee mmowerewa* and *dwannimmen*. The black colour derives its significance from the notion that new things get darker as they mature, and physical ageing comes with spiritual maturity. The Akans

blacken most of their ritual objects to increase their spiritual potency. Black symbolizes an intensified spiritual energy, communion with the ancestral spirits, antiquity, spiritual maturity and spiritual potency. The black cloth is worn when one is bereaved or during funeral ceremonies by chiefs and individuals in the community. When a chief passes on and the funeral rites are not observed, they will not put on the black cloth.



Figure 44: A newly installed chief in black Smock (1990's)

Source : Kwahu Traditional Council archives



Figure 45 : Nana Obuagyan II, swearing in to a sub chief at his palace in Obo (2010)





Source: From the archives Nana Obohene

Figure 46: A newly installed chife swearing an oath of alligence in black cloth (2020), Abene



Figure 47: Daasebr3 Akuamoah Agyapong congratulating a newly installed chief (2020), Abene

Source :Kwahu Traditional Council archives



Figure 48: A newly installed chief in *Brisi* jubilating after ceremony (2010), Mpraeso

Source : From the Archives of Nana Anom

In the case of the Kwahu chiefs, wearing black cloth during the installation (see figures 46 & 47) ceremony signifies spiritual fortification. It is a codified symbolism that reminds the newly installed chief of the potential heavy derailment that bad omens bring. The chief, when adorned in the *birisi* (*black cloth*), therefore feels empowered with intensified spiritual energy in readiness for any eventuality that may pose any grievous challenge to their authorities. Figure 48 shows a newly installed chief in his *birisi* followed by women from the royal family. As part of the installation ceremony, the women from the royal family cheerfully shower praises onto the newly installed chief admits chanting appellations, singing and waving a white piece of cloth to decorate the occasion. Also during the swearing ceremony for the chief he also puts on the black cloth with or without adinkra designs as shown in figure 46 above. Both the newly installed chief and the ruling or paramount chiefs puts on the same black as it has persisted through out the 19950' to date as reinstated by Nana Obuagyan II, Obohene.



Figure 49: *Black Adinkra cloth (2020)*

Source : Abusuapenin Awuah, Kwahu Tafo

### *Okunini Ntama*

This cloth has been applied or embrioded with various items being objectss, animals and other square-like materials (figure 50 and 51). It signifies greatness as well as togetherness and it worn on special occassions. The cloth is used mainly by chiefs during funerals and enstoolment.



Figure 50: *Okunini Ntama*

Source: Fieldwork data (2021)





Figure 51: *Okunini Ntama* (2020)

Source :Fieldwork



Figure 52: *Kuntunkuni* or *Birisi*  
Source: Fieldwork (2021)

The new chief, clothed in black, assumes the status of authority, glory and chief custodian of the community in his outfit. As stated earlier, the *kuntunkuni* or *birisi* (see figure 52) is also used in the connection of grief to mourn the dead. Its usage by a chief during the installation ceremony signifies that death is inevitable. And that, the one succeeding the late chief could have done everything in his power to have conquered death but it is a natural phenomenon that cannot be overpowered by humans. Also, it symbolizes that the successor is in a sad mood during the transitional (installation) period to become the next king. Nana Otuprekwagyan II, Kubeasehene of Abitifi explained that;

“ What I know is that in the past, (the 1950s to 1970s) whenever a chief kicks the bucket, the mourners put on *kobene* ( all red cloth ) as shown figure 45 or all black cloth (*brisi or kutunkuni*)... when funeral rites have not yet been observed, they may not put on the black cloth... Elder Gyasi (personal communication, June 19, 2021) explained that the black cloth provides consciously prepares the mindset of the incoming chiefs toward death as the only terminator of their reign. As they mourn the death of the previous chief during this occasion, the new chiefs do reflect on the task ahead of them, pondering on what to achieve during their reign with death in perspective.



Figure 53. A chief in *kobene* during installation in the 1970s  
Source: Archives of Nana Otuprekwagyan

### ***The Koben cloth***

The *koben* is a red cloth used by the Kwahu chiefs during their installation. From the 1950s to the 1990s, the *koben* cloth was mainly plain and free of motifs or patterns. In

some jurisdictions, the red 'Koben' cloth (figure 53) can be used by a chief during the performance of installation rites. The *koben* eludes the same symbolism as the black cloth. It is used to portray the mourning state of the new chief. As the successor, the new chief forms a strong blood tie with the dead chief therefore, wearing the *koben* indicates that the successor is in an aggressive mood and ready to serve since a close blood relation with whom he is succeeding has departed.

In simple terms, both the *birisi* and the *koben* (see figure 54) are worn as a combination at different sections of the installation process. The black cloth is worn when the new chief is doing the swearing of oath and also going for the selection of a stool name in the '*nkodwa dɛm*' (the ancestral stool room). The red on the other hand can be worn only during the swearing of oath or a convocation. The chiefs always wear them shoulder down where the cloth lies freely on the hand or around the bust which shows humility, and respect to other chiefs around and this also enables him to move freely with the heavy large cloth.



Figure 54: *Combination of Kobene and brisi by Nana Kwabena Boampong*

Source :Kwahu Traditional Council archives (2020)

### ***Kabu, Ago and Dumas cloth***

These were locally made cloth which were worn by chief's from the 1950's to 1960's where there were no Textiles factories in Ghana (Nana Yeboah Agyapong II, Abomahene, Kwahu Tafo). Chiefs wore either brown (which is considered the colour of the earth which form the grounds for plants survival) and red (which represents blood and a symbol of aggressiveness) Kabu, (see figure 59, 60)(smooth velvet-like or woolen material) or Ago (see figure 43, (woven fabric with horizontal lines) cloth for most of their programs including installation processes, diplomatic and Akwesidae /Awukudae occasions. Dumas became the mostly preferred cloth by the chiefs in the 1970's since the taste for the previous cloths faded and the demand of the Dumas cloth became know to chiefs all over Kwahu because of its colourful designs. It extended to 1980's where later on the kente cloth took over the fashion trends of the Kwahu chiefs in 1990's to the 2000's.

Kente in various shades and designs (Damedame, see figure 55, 56, 57, 61, 62, 65, 66) as well Wax print cloth(see figure 67) were now widely used by chiefs in the kwahu Jurisdictions and beyond for various occasions including installation (Abomaahene, Kwahu tafo)

### ***The white cloth***

The white cloth (figure 55 below) when worn by a chief during an enstoolment signifies his victory to have been selected over his competitors and hence smooth initiation rites.





Figure 55. Nana Anom Buansi in white cloth during his installation in 1999, Mpraeso  
Source: Nana Anom's archives

#### **4.1.2 Festivals and Diplomatic dress code**

Festivals are very important aspects of the traditional Kwahu society. These festivals are considered joyous occasions (see figure 68) within society. During festivals, the chiefs have special regalia to mark the occasion. The data gathered from the field indicates that the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs used for such joyful celebrations from the 1950s have undergone some transformation. This sub-theme discusses key cloth designs that have been used by Kwahu chiefs for their dress codes from the 1990 to the 2000s.



Figure 56: *Nana Abetifihene in his kente cloth 1950*

Source : Nana Otuprekwagyan II' s archives



Figure 57: *Nananom at the Abetifi palace in both Dumas and Kente cloth(1950's)*

Source : Nana Otuprekwagyan II' archives



Figure 58: *Nananom in various diplomatic cloth (1950's)*



Source : Nana Otuprekwagyan II's archives

Figure 59: *Nananom in a velvet and a lace-like cloth, Kabu (2010)*

Source :Kwahu Traditional Council archives





Figure 60: *The appointment of Nana Kwabena Boampong (2010)*  
Source :Kwahu Traditional Council archives



Figure 61: *Nana Afari in a wax print cloth (2011), Obo*  
Source :Nana Afari's archives



Figure 62: *Nana Afari in a Damedame kente cloth, Pepease (1992)*  
Source :Nana Afari's Archives



Figure 63: *Nana Akuamaoh Boateng (late), Kwahumanhene with formal president Kufour, (2004)*  
Source :Kwahu Traditional Council





Figure 64 : Nana Afari in a colourful Okunini Kente cloth, Mpraeso(2011)  
Source :Nana Afari’ archives

### *Nwowomu*

This is a combination of Adinkra cloth and strips of kente fabric in various colours which have been sewn together. The kente design (figures 64, 65) in the form of Ahwepan design means single weaves of colours which are mixed with adinkra symbols such as Dwannimmen (ram’s horns), *kodee mmowerewa* –the talons of the eagle and the corrupted version of the *nyame dua*. This fabric can be worn by a chief on a joyous and diplomatic (see figure 65) occasion.



Figure 65: Nana Afari in a kente cloth at District Assembly ceremony,(2010)  
Source :Nana Afari’s archives





Figure 66: Nananom in their colourful kente and GTP cloth, Obo (2005)  
Source : Kwahu Traditional Council archives



Figure 67: Nananom in their wax print and lacelike cloth, Abene (2010)  
Source : Kwahu Traditional Council archives



Figure 68: *Nananom in their various kinds of cloth at a festival in Obo, (2002)*

Source :Nana Afari's archives

There is another version of the Nwowomu which is also a ceremonial cloth (figure see 68). It is artistically woven into a counter-change pattern with a long strip of Kente cloth. The symbol inscribed in the fabric is an 'Afena' adinkra symbol which symbolises Gallantry. This cloth is worn by chiefs during festivals and thanksgiving services. Others may also wear these cloth for the funeral of an elderly person in the community.

#### **4.1.3 Dress Codes for marriage ceremonies**

Marriage ceremonies are one of the most important aspects of the cultural livelihood of the Kwahus. During marriages, special costumes are worn by the families of the couple. One of the elders in an interview expresses that, the chiefs are not 'lords' over the people of Kwahu. Rather, they are an integral part of the community and therefore should share in the activities of the people. He retorted that in situations against the odds which could prevent the chief from attending such joyous events, there was always a representative from the royal court. Indeed, not all events would the chief be able to attend but royal marriages are significant and considered paramount on the schedules of the chief.

Finding from the field indicates that there is some collection of cloth in the royal closet that was used by the chiefs of Kwahu traditional area for marriage ceremonies. This collection has been sampled and discussed in the paragraphs that follow.

***Kabu***



Figure 69: *A kwahu chief in a Kabu cloth for a marriage ceremony in the 1950's*  
Source : Courtesy Kwabeaschene, Kwahu Abetifi





Figure 70: Lace Material ,2002  
Source : Abusuapanin Ntiri Berko,  
Nkawkaw



Figure 71: Printed GTP cloth (Dumas) 1980  
Source : Abusuapanin Ntiri Berko,  
Nkawkaw



Figure 72: Blue wax print, 1980  
Source : Abusuapanin Ntiri Berko,  
Nkawkaw



Figure 73: Blue and Gold Asonawo kente 1950  
Source : Abusuapanin Ntiri Berko,  
Nkawkaw



Figure: 74: Abusuapanin Awuah in his  
colourful Asonawo kente cloth, Kwahu Tafo  
Source : Field work 2020

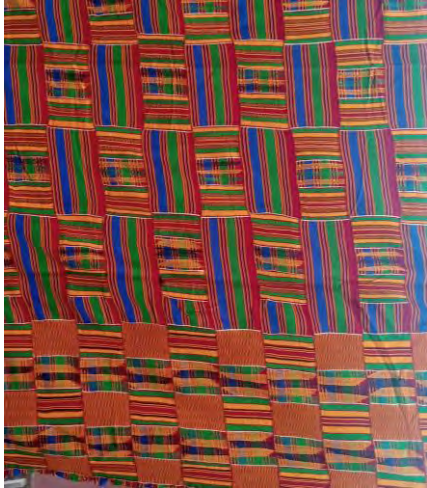


Figure 75. Kente cloth (Nkyemfre)late 80's  
source: Ahyeamehne, Kwahu Abene

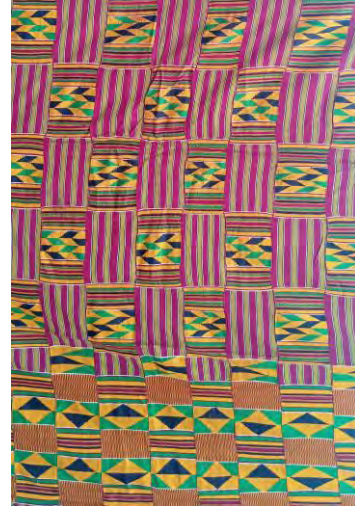


Figure 76 : Kente Cloth (Adwini asa)1980's  
Source: Ahyeamehene, Abene



Figure 77. Black and white  
metallic fibre cloth ,1994  
source: Abusuapanin Ntiri Berko, Nkawkaw



Figure 78. Combination of adinkra  
and kente weave, 1980's  
Source: Ntiri Berko





Figure 79: *colourful Okunini Ntama, 1980*

Source : Fieldwork, 2020

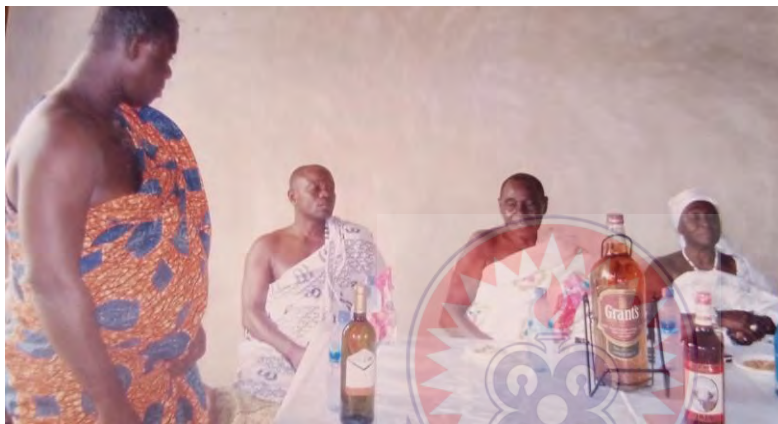


Figure 80: *Nana Afari in his clourful cloth, Obo (2012)*

Source :Nana Afari's archives



Figure 81: *Nana Afari in a white kente cloth, Obo (2011)*

Source :Nana Afari's archives



### *Adinkra 'Ese ne Tekrema' cloth*

Found in the private collection of one of the Kwahu chiefs, is a white cloth patterned with black adinkra motifs. The decorative patterns are dominated by the '*ese ne tekrema*' adinkra motifs (see figure 82). The colour white signifies victory, happiness, purity, virginity, and the faultlessness of God. All joyous occasions like birth, outdoorings, marriage, puberty, victory at war or from any form of struggle, the funeral for the old in the society and victims of accidental death. The chiefs of Kwahu adorn themselves with such colourful materials during the above-mentioned ceremonies.



Figure 82. Kwahu chief's Adinkra fabric embedded with **Ese ne Tekrema** designs for marriage ceremonies, 1990  
Source: Nana Anom's closet.

The *ese ne tekrema* adinkra symbol in the cloth has its philosophical place in the socio-cultural setting of the Kwahu people. *Ese* (tooth) and *tekrema* (tongue) are symbolic of lasting friendships. Wearing such a symbolic cloth by the chief to a joyous occasion serves as a royal appeal to the people to maintain the unity and solidarity among them even during such occasions (see figure 82). The tooth and tongue are of different characteristics but their harmony in the mouth is the symbol of peace and coexistence, said one chief. In

this regard, the chief demonstrates his concerns for the newly married couple to find mutual grounds for peaceful coexistence. By extension, the cloth speaks volumes to not only the new couple but also the entire community present at the occasion.

The symbolic cloth is by far a philosophical silent loquacity embedded in the symbolic speech of the chief. The emphasis on this cloth regarding its physical characteristics is not bestowed on its aesthetic qualities but rather on the philosophical message the cloth carries. The aesthetic qualities of this cloth are perceived or judged as beautiful based on the philosophical message it conveys and not its elegance in colour.

### ***Rites and rituals performance***

#### ***Batakari fitaa/Tumtum***

During the performance of rites, smock wearing is permitted and at instances where a chief receives a dead or sad news or when his anger is provoked. . Also during firing of musketry rites for example where the musketeers make skirmishes and engage in other ritualistic activities smock wearing makes one look smart. White smocks (see figure 83) are also worn during joyous occasions like puberty, childbirth, outdoor, marriage ceremonies and victory at war by chiefs in Kwahu.



Figure 83: Batakari fitaa used by chiefs on joyous occasions.

Source: [https://www.tradeafricaonline.com/new/11927-large\\_default/nock-kids-white-smock.jpg](https://www.tradeafricaonline.com/new/11927-large_default/nock-kids-white-smock.jpg)

#### 4.1.4 *Funeral Regalia*

The modernised version of the *kobene* (figure 89) or a combination of kene/Brisi fabricis (see figure 47, 54, 89) worn by chiefs during funerals. At times other versions of specially printed cloth in red and black print with Adinkra and other symbols as well as lace and kente materials (see figure 84, 86, 87, 88, 90, 91) are made for the chiefs and the people with the community red is associated with blood, sacrificial rites and the shedding of blood. A red-eyed mood means a sense of seriousness, and readiness for a serious spiritual or political encounter. Red is therefore used as a symbol of heightened spiritual and political mood, sacrifice and struggle. It expresses aggression and action as well as power. The adinkra symbol embedded in it is ‘*Kra pa*’ (*Nmusuyide*) which signifies Good fortune and Sanctity. During burial rites observation, chiefs may put on the red cloth. Black and white cloth in the kwahu community are mostly worn for the funeral of an elderly person. (see figure 85)



Figure 84: *Black Adinkra cloth, 1980*  
Source : Abusuapanin Awuah, Kwahu Tafo



Figure 85: *wax print coloth, 1992*  
Source: Abusuapanin Ntiri Berko





Figure 86: *lace-like fabric* , 1990

Source: Abusuapanin Ntiri Berko



Figure 87. *Combination of adinkra and kente weave* , 1980

source: Abusuapanin Ntiri Berko



Figure 88. *Special funeral cloth for the late Obomenhene, Nana Obeng Akrofi.*(1994)

Source : Fieldwork 2020



Figure 89: *Nana Afari in a Kobene cloth (2019)*  
Source: Nana Afari's archives



Figure 90: *Nananom in a black and brown Adinkra cloth at a funeral in Obo, (2010)*  
Source: Nana Afari's archives



Figure 91: *Nana Afari in a Funeral cloth, Obo (2017)*  
Source :Nana Afari's archives

Kwahu chiefs use black/brown or red cloth during funeral ceremonies in most communities. Red *kente* is made of stripes or wavy curvy lines which is also known as the *Asonaw* is mostly used by chiefs in Kwahu. The chief may also wear '*Kuntunkuni*' for the most funerals but will put on the red cloth if the person is related or a sub-chief.

#### 4.1.5 Dress codes for Wars

In the past, war was one of the events integrated with the livelihood of the people. One of the elders narrates that, during the 1950s, the chief heads the group of warriors who fight in defence of the people. As the warlord, there is a special costume for the chief to distinguish him as the commandant. The '*batakari kese*' costume (figures 92a, b & c) was used by the Kwahu chiefs in the early 1950s as wardress. The costume is a collage-like applique of pieces of leather, shells, knives, calabash and furchers. These items are not mere decorations, a chief retorted, they are objects of deeper connotations. Each applique is



symbolic of a charm that fortifies the chief against calamity and evil that could lead to any defeat at war.

The costume also symbolically provides the chief with the synergy of bravery from his physical strength and backing from the ancestors. In this regard, he is fully fortified and protected to lead the warriors to a victorious battle.



Figure 92a. Batakari kese (modern version)  
Source: Auntie Theresah Owusus collections, Manhyia



Figure 92b: Kubeasehene in Batakari kese holding etuo(gun), Abetifi (early 90's)  
Source: Nana Kubeasehene's Archives



Figure 92c: Nana Afari in his war Smock, Obo Palace

Source : Fieldwork 2020

### **The dress code of a departed chief laid in state**

The funeral of the Akans is a reflection of their belief in life after death. Akans believes that when a person dies, he/she makes a journey into another world and continues life after death. So by all means the chief who is believed to have gone to his ancestors is gorgeously dressed in kente cloth such as adwiniasa or asamntakra with golden wristband (Nana Anom Boansi, 2020) .Sometimes if he is, to be laid in state for a long time intermittently his cloths are changed. All the cloths used to dress the chief's body must be good quality cloths accompanied by long necklaces (ntweaban), - wristband (nkapo) and sandals.

The Akans refer to the chief who has passed on as having gone to the village. As he is believed to be going to his village, he is given anything of which he would need in the life after death - cups, plates, and bucket. All these are carried along with him into the underworld. In the medieval times even the servants who serve him were also sent along

with him! After the funeral, the chief is laid to rest in a place separated by building a fence (baammu), there are different types of baammu. A special place is prepared to keep the chiefs mortal remains to allow the body to get rid of the bodily fluid. After that the mortal remains is carried to 'Baamm Ketuwa' where it is Laid on 'nsaa' ( good quality bed spread made in the north) when, chiefs are alive , they sleep on good quality bed spread (nsaa), So the chiefs mortal remains is taken from 'Asone3' baammu and Laid in the Baammu ketewa. Then the body is dressed in gold, The gold continues to be used to decorrate the body hence the proverb 'when a royal's corpse decomposes, it is smoked with gold' (Odehye3 nam por) a, yade sika na 3ho), So when the joints begin to disintegrate, gold is used to weld the joints, when the body parts becomes too weak to beheld together and eventually breaks apart, the place where the body had been laid would be filled with gold; so that place becomes a treasury where they could go for gold in time of need . It would be a very Long time that the body would be finally laid in the grave: So there are people in the palace called Baammufo) who are excutioners who guard the Baammu,from the time the chief is laid in state up to the time the corpse is taken to As)nee3, Baammu and then taken to Adae3 will be many years -more than four years. Also he narrated that our forefathers had the technology of embalming the corpse of the chiefs but our generation has lost that technology.

#### **4.1.6 Kwahu Zongohene chief dress code**

The Zongos don't have the Akan enstoolment rites where the initiate is taken to the stool room blind folded and he is made to touch one of the stools which will eventually become his stool name as expansiated by Abdul Razak Suleman (kwahu Tafo Zongohene, 2020).

The zongos believe that as it is your turn in a monarchical order, you maintain your private name like Abdul Razark. The main dress code at durbars is the smock (see figure 93 and figure 94) and there hasn't been any changes over the years, in dress code of the zongo chief, we don't put on cloth; "we put on our traditional long-sleeved gown known as batahari, when a zongo chief dies attend the funeral rites ceremony, we collaborate with the local chiefs in matters concerning development, So we are given the accolade p3p3ni, which means a truthful person.

### **The establishment of Kwahu Tafo Zongohene**

The respondent said, "we are made to understand that Kwahu Tafo Zongo is the oldest in Kwahu among Atibie, Nkawkaw and Kwasiho Zongos. As the towns grew larger we were displaced from time to time. So this made some zongo residents leave for Nkawkaw and other places. Again the Aliens Compliance Order in 1970 caused many zongo residents to migrate to the north.

It is believed that in the past all the palaces used to have zongo people to witness in a case because they will speak the truth, Again they are able to foretell future calamities that may befall the chiefs so that it will be redeemed . As the researcher have already said, all the Zongos in Nkawkaw, Atibie and Kwasiho will attest to the fact that they all trace their ancestry to Kwahu Tafo.

The zongos are truthful and our elders collaborated with the local chiefs and even fought alongside with them to captured lands, So it's "became incumbent on the local chiefs to accept so that we could develop Kwahu.

As custom demands that, when a chief passes on he is given the same funeral honours as any other person. However, as a chief, even though he would demand that we bring him the same day the local chiefs would have to be informed, and after burial we would have to inform the local chief about the observance of the 'Adoa' rites, and as we attend their funerals they may have to all end over where the zongo chiefs would also be invited. Our forefathers made us understand that Nkwantanang was a cattle ranch where the people traded in cattle, It didn't have a zongo chief; he was a Moshi so was looked upon as a Moshihene. So nobody , formally enstooled him as zongo chief, He claimed he had been selected as Zongo chief by the Kwahumanhene who passed on sometimes ago, But if you go to Abene there is no record attesting to the Moshihene's claim. On the contrary, the enstoolment of the present zongo chief was witnessed by Kumasi and Accra Zongo chiefs who were invited by Dasebre Akuamoah Agyapong, This is the first time Kwahu zongo chief has been formally enstooled for us. Abene had had zongo chiefs, before but all could not stand . That Is Why Dasebre saw that there was conflict among the zongo chieftancy affairs did not have a leader who could unite all zongos as it pertains in other areas Dasebre saw that to ensure unity among zongos in Kwahu there should be Kwahu Zongo chief. But we agree that Kwahu paramountcy is Abene, so to have Kwahu zongo chief, we must have Abene zongo chief who will preside over all in the seventeen Kwahu states. No zongo chief in any of the seventeen states other than Abene can claim to be Kwahu zongo paramountcy. For example, the respondent said he cannot be a Tafo Zongo chief and claim to be Kwahu zongo chief, Tafo is Twafohene under Abene so traditonally the repondent believe what Daasebr3 wanted to structure for us the right one that will ensure unity among zongos in Kwahu. So as we see Asanteman, at a point in time kwahuman will also be viewed in

that light, so we must all support anything that will ensure prosperity for all to benefit from, Nkwantanang is at the bottom of Pepease, But you can also get there through Abene. You pass-through Kotoso Nkwantynang is not part of the seventeen kwahu states.

Currently the zongo at Abene is the one whom through Daasebre<sup>3</sup> has asked all zongos to channel our grievances to him (Daasebre<sup>3</sup>). He is the one who has sworn an oath to Daasebre, in the presence of Daasebre's chiefs and elders. He is the zongomanhene of Kwahu in the person of Ulmar Bawa. He is the first zongo chief. There is no one before him, we thank him for his conviction for the zongo communities. For his conviction as in Ashanti they give zongo communities recognition so we "shall be recognized here. This is what the respondent said that he perceives of Daasebre's intention to uplift the image of zongos so that together we can develop Kwahu. A week ago a Fulani chief was enstooled. But if you hear the negative things people say about the Fulanis, then it becomes necessary to install Kwahu Zongo chiefs who will then install sub-chiefs under him. The installation of the Fulani chief will ensure that arrangement will be put in place for the development of the towns. Plans are being drawn to capture all Fulani inhabited places in Kwahu. If they are able to plan well they can have a central cattle market where all people everywhere can come and buy, so we saw the need to enstool Fulani chief for Kwahu so he can organise Fulanis in the areas. Measures have been put in place which requires the support of all to help come to fruition, all of us are one people, and some think non-Kwahus are different people. But no, the chief is knowledgeable, Daasebre's has made a right choice for us. So when they all rally behind him, they will see Kwahu's development. The respondent said they thank Daasebre for helping to resolve these grievances through the Kwahu Zongo



chief. The respondent also said that they pray that things will work well for our well-being, (Abdul Razak,2020, Kwahu Tafo Zonghene).



Figure 93: Malam Sulley(late) and his entourage at a funeral in Kwahu, (2012)  
Source: Abdul Razak, Kwahu Tafo Zonghene



Figure 94: Malam Sulley(late) and his family at a funeral in Kwahu (2012)  
Source: Abdul Razak, Kwahu Tafo Zonghene

#### 4.1.7 Kwahu chief regalia accessories

##### *Etuo – the royal gun*

They were made up of wooden handle with a metallic long hollow rod composition that has a metal trigger. Its chambers are filled with either real-life bullets or rubber bullets. These locally manufactured guns and bullets (figure 95) were used by the chiefs in

performing some rites during the death of a prominent person and installation ceremonies. The gun mostly fired or shot in the air to warn off and at the same time alert intruders. Some chiefs lead the battle with the royal guns during some territorial wars and tribal wars.

In a personal communication with of the correspondents, an elder of the Abetifi chief palace, it was revealed that the *Etuo* (as in figure 95) “*is often embellished with some momentous accessories such as a piece of red cloth, cowries, leather strip, leaf and beads*”. These accessories were some sort of *talisman* believed to fortify the royal gun and maximize the efficacy of the chief in firing without missing. The narratives regarding the descriptions of the royal gun of the Kwahu chiefs traverse beyond mere weapons. The royal gun is as well a powerful insignia and a symbolic element of the royal regalia. When possessed by the chief, it adds up to the spiritual and territorial defence mechanism of the royal statutes. The chief is then perceived as a fierce warrior when the royal gun is used as part of the regalia either for a state function or for leading a territorial battle.



Figure 95: Etuo, Early 1950s royal gun and bullets that was part of the regalia used by Kwahu chiefs during installation.

Source: [africaneyereport.com](http://africaneyereport.com)

Commenting on the relevance of the royal gun, one respondent, and a chief aged 89 “*recounts that the functionality of the gun was very prominent in the early 1950 to late 1990s. However, its prominence has since been on the decline since the early 2000s*”.

Viably, the main purpose of the gun being part of the royal regalia was to show off the warrior nature of the chiefs who possess them. But the end of the territorial battles with the emergence of colonial rule brought all ethnic territories under the British ordinance marking the beginning of the showy display of guns among the Kwahu chiefs. Notwithstanding, some chiefs in recent times still possess and fire gunshots in the air during their installation and special ceremonies to outdoor the war-like status of the throne they have inherited.

### ***The Royal Sword - Akofena***

The royal sword – *akofena* depicts the authority of an installed chief. When used by sub-chiefs, the sword affirms their loyalty to a newly installed chief. This symbol of loyalty is reciprocated by the paramount chief to his sub-chiefs through the use of the same *akofena*. One respondent retorted that the sword in this sense becomes an insignia of exchange of loyalty among the chiefs. The royal *akofena* are made with either solely or combination of silver, bronze, copper or gold metals. In some jurisdictions, the sword may be given to the royal messenger to summon a subordinate or subject. The *Akrafo* are mostly seen with the *Afena* on most ceremonial occasions. Surprisingly, the sword of authority has no cutting edge. In expression, one elder clarifies that;

“the *akofena* is not for fighting nor for cutting” (Openyin Gyasi, 89 years, Kwahu Abetifi, personal communication, June 19, 2021).

The swords are mostly embellished with traditional symbols like the adinkra symbol or animal motifs, objects and shapes depending on the totem or the spiritual linkage of the bearer. Figure 54b shows details of two examples of the *akofena* used by Kwahu chiefs during their installation ceremonies. Chief's swords are mostly covered with *batoidea* meaning dried skin of ray fish which is a permanent covering. This covering symbolises camouflage, control and self-defence of the ruler. Figures 96 (a & b) represent *Kubeasehene* – Kwaku chief, swearing an oath of allegiance in Kwahu Abetifi during an installation ceremony. The same *akrafena* can be seen in figure 96a used by Nana Anom for his installation ceremony. The same was also used by the Obohene of Kwahu and Abetifi Kubeasehene who wore the *kobene* or *birisi* cloth respectively during his installation ceremony (figure 45, 97)



Figure 96a. Nana Anom swearing an oath during his installation with the Akofena in his right hand, (2012).

Source: Archives of Nana Anim Boansi





**Figure 96b:** Akofena(2021)  
Source: Archives of maame Theresah (Manhyia)



**Figure 97:** Kubeasehene of Kwahu Abetifi in kobene or birisi cloth. The chief holds the *akofena* for oath swearing during the installation ceremony(2010).  
Source: Nana Otuprekwagyan II

### ***Nkawa***

These are metallic gold or silver worn by chiefs on their fingers for charms and beautification purposes (see figure 22). Some are also specially made in bronze or copper by blacksmiths and some magical words are performed on them for protection against evil forces.

### ***Eyie Nsasu/Nkapo)***

These artefacts can either be tripled or quadrupled and worn at the wrist or shoulder levels of a chief (figure 98). It serves as protection for chiefs since it's believed to have been embedded with magical powers



Figure 98: Nsasu/Nkapo used by chiefs  
Source: Asona Konadu Enterprice, Manhyia

### ***Kronbonkye or Nsebe kye***

This is a form of headgear that comes in various styles depending on the status of the chief. The headgears worn by the paramount chief are known as the '*Kanta*' *Kye* (figure 99a & b). Some also come in the form of a hollow circle shape which is made out of velvet



or leather-like material in black or brown with some symbols embossed on them. Others contain special charms and incantations which protect the individual from evil forces.



Figure 99a: Kronbonkye or nsebe kye in full  
Source: Asona Konadu Enterprice, Manhyia



Figure 99b: Kronbonkye or nsebe kye in half view  
Source: Asona Konadu Enterprice, Manhyia

### ***Bodua***

The Bodua (as presented in figure 100 ) which is the fly whisk is mostly used by Kwahu chiefs as part of their regalia to swat flies to prevent any inconveniences in public. Most traditional whisks are obtained from the tails of big and wild animals. They come in various styles and forms and some are used as hand fans for air during hot temperatures.



Figure 100: Bodua, the chief's whisk made of animal tail.

Source: Asona Konadu Enterprice,Manhyia

### *Ns3b3 Abaa/mena*

The artefact serves as a complement to the chief's regalia. It is made up of a combination of black or brown leather, cowries, velvet, paper, long metal or wood and others (see figure 101). It is a magical whisk which is held by the chief in the right hand in other to protect him from foreign powers and also prevent people from having a handshake with the chief in public. It is believed by the people of Kwahu that if an individual possesses strong spiritual powers he might exchange some good fortunes with that of the chief, so the Abaa is used to prevent such occurrences.



Figure 101: Nsebe Abaa/mena

Source: Asona Konadu Enterprice,Manhyia

### *Ahenemma*

There are two types of *Ahenema* foot ware displayed as an occasional wears: black for funeral and the white kente *Ahenamma* for joyous moments. They also come in various shape in relation to the sole of the *Ahenemma*. The curved shape *Ahenema* known as the Asansan and the straight shaped *Ahenemma* also called the Atine are the only designs pertaining to the soles. Those worn by the paramount chiefs are known as the '*Abrempon Naase*' the slippers commands respect, majesty and authority in the Kwahu traditional certain when adored with the Ghanaian rich Kente. It can be worn during funerals, puberty rites, child birth, festive seasons and marriage ceremonies. Some examples of the Ahenema foot wares worn by chiefs includes: *Abusua te se kwai* and *Kwasiada nsuroma*.

#### 4.2. Objective two:

**To investigate if there are some Significant Changes in the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022.**

This objective aimed at investigating if any, the significant changes in the regalia of the Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to the 2022. The findings regarding this objective show that there are some significant changes in a few of the dress accessories and the dress codes of the chiefs in the Kwahu traditional area.

It was a bit difficult in making a comparative observation between the current dress codes and those used in the past. This is because there seems to be little documentation of the dress codes and the regalia used by the chiefs in the past. Whereas the royal closets of the current chiefs have some degree of restrictions. Notwithstanding, the interviews and interactions with the chiefs helped to obtain some qualitative data for analysis and

discussions. The findings on this objective have been presented in themes namely, war, funeral, installation, festival and casual regalia.

#### ***4.2.1 Changes in war regalia of the Kwahu chiefs***

During the earlier historical days of the Kwahus before the 1950s, the quest for power and territorial control was very common among the various kingdoms across Africa. It is for this reason the war cloth or garment was part of the wardrobe of the Kwahu chiefs. According to one of the respondents in a focused interview, the war regalia was common and used by almost all the chiefs or kings of the indigenous society. He explained that the war regalia used by the Akan chiefs was similar in appearance.

For the Kwahus, the *Batakari kese* has been the official costume used by the chiefs of Kwahu during the war. In an exclusive explanation, one of the chiefs clarifies that there have been some major significant changes in the wardress of the Kwahu chiefs. He expressed that “before the 1950s, the wardress of the Kwahu chiefs made of raffia and cowries” (Opanyin Gyasi, personal communication, December 10, 2021).

It is interesting to note that the descriptions given by the respondent regarding the nature of the wardress used by the Kwahu chiefs seem to be rather simple and as though without the potency to protect the chief at all. However, Opanyin Gyasi explained that “the dress codes of chiefs during wars are mere symbolisms because the chiefs are spiritually fortified through initiations and rituals before they lead the battle” (personal communication, December 10, 2021). In this case, the war costume made of raffia and cowries was protective enough to usher the chief into combat. This type of costume changed before the early 1950s.

The chiefs of Kwahu switched from the use of blacken jute sac to the *Batakari kese* as the official war costume. The reason for the switch from the raffia costume to the *batakari kese* is unknown. However, Opanyi Gyasi opined that the adoption of the *batakari kese* could have been influenced by the war costumes of other Akan chiefs which is believed to have been greatly influenced by the dress codes of Yaa Asantewaa, the Asante queen who was instrumental in the “War of the Golden Stool” during the 1900s. The views of Opanyin Gyasi led to an archival search and visual analysis of the wardress of Yaa Asantewaa and the war regalia of the Kwahu chiefs.



Figure 102 Yaa Asantewaa, 1900s (left) and a Kwahu chief, 1990s (right) both in war regalia.  
Source: Getty images

Figure 102 presents images of the *batakari kese* war regalia of the Kwahus and the image of Yaa Asantewa in her wardress. The kwahus also enstools female royals as chiefs in some jurisdictions when there are no males to succeed the a deceased chief among the royal family. A typical axample is the Weremphene of Kwahu Tafo traditional area who succeeded his uncle after his death. The two images above exhibit some similar

characteristics. The upper garment of Yaa Asantewaa has small square patches that resemble an applique of objects fixed onto the thick garment which resembles the *fugu* garment worn by the Northern people of Ghana. Similarly, the *batakari kese* has applique patches of objects fixed onto the *fugu* garment worn as an overcoat by the Kwahu chiefs during wars. This visual analysis to some extent proves the assertions of the respondent as mentioned earlier much convincing to the researcher.

In summary, the war of regalia of the Kwahu chiefs from the 1950s has not changed significantly. The dress codes for wars have not been of much relevance or actively used as part of the royal wardrobe of the Kwahu chiefs. This is because there are no more wars what is left in the royal courts is there for historical purposes and preservation of historical events of the chiefs of the Kwahus.

#### ***4.2.2 Changes in funeral regalia of the Kwahu chiefs***

Funerals are very important aspects of the livelihood of the Kwahus. When someone dies, the community mourns the dead with the bereaved family. Among the Kwahus, individuals do not only belong to their family but as well are relevant members of the community.

As part of the traditional customs of the Kwahus, funeral rites are held for individuals who pass on. One of the elders recounts that, in the past, when someone dies, the chief is officially informed through the elders. The family heads must get the chief informed about any death that occurs. As the cardinal custodian of the land, the chief deserves to know about any death that occurs. The delegates that go to the palace to inform the chief about the sad news often dress in peculiar clothes. A black or red piece of cloth - a



muffler is usually wrapped around the necks of the delegates who sometimes also put on black or red clothes (Opanyi Obrempong, personal communications, December 20, 2021).

During the focused group interview, the elders recounted that in the past, holding a green leave to the palace, in any dress raises a suspension of loss of life or another dreadful happening. However, the major dress codes used to inform the chief about any sad news which involves loss of life in the Kwahu land are black and red costumes.

Similarly, the chief upon hearing any sorrowful news in the land joins the mourning by wearing the black clothes. Commenting on whether or not there have been any significant changes to the funeral costumes of the Kwahu chiefs, the *Kubeasehene* expressed that "nothing has changed... the chiefs of our land (referring to the Kwahu states) have since used the *birisi* and the *kuntunkuni* or *kobene* clothes for any funerals" (personal communications, December 20, 2021). In analysing the responses from the interviews, the researcher observes that the use of the black and red cloth for the funeral is by virtue rooted in the customs of the Akan tradition (Nkansah, 2008) and by extension, cultural practices of other ethnic groups in Ghana including the Guan and Ewe (Kumatia, 2018); Nkansah, 2008).

There are other Regalia used by the Chiefs for funerals. For example, when a chief of Kwahu dies, the newly installed chief does not use any jewellery or body ornaments as part of his regalia for the funeral rites of the departed chief. Usually, the chief wraps the black or red cloth around his waist and does not wear any footwear. That dress code signifies respect for the dead chief who has joined the ancestors. Again, the dress code also carried some cultural symbolism which has been discussed in detail in the subsequent sub-heading in this chapter.

#### 4.2.3 *Changes in installation regalia of the Kwahu chiefs*

Installation of the Kwahu chief embraces some systematic processes that involve traditional customs. The Kubeasehene explain that each of the stages within the installation process requires a unique costume.

In the past, the cosmology of the chief of Kwahu for installation ceremonies has been simple, involving a piece of red or black cloth and without footwear. Similar situations prevail today. According to the customs of the Kwahus, the final funeral rites of the dead chief are observed during the initiation ceremony of a new chief.

For example, during the installation of the chief of Anom in 1976 (figure 54a) and the Kubeasehene in 2009 (figure 55), it could be observed that both chiefs used simple costumes. In the case of the chief of Anom, he wore white cloth stained with black printed traditional Akan motifs. However, the council of elders present were all dressed in black cloths. The chief holds an *Akrafena* (the royal sword) frozen in a posture of swearing an oath of royalty to ascend the throne of the Kwahus. Whereas in the case of the Kubeasehene, the costume used was the *kobene*. The council of elders present were all clothed in *kobene* and *birisi* or *kuntunkuni* (red and black). The remarkable change between the two events is the use of white and black cloth by one chief, and red cloth by another.

To make the matters clearer, one of the elders during the focused group interview explained that, the white, black and red cloth have all been used interchangeably or together for sensitive occasions like the death ceremony of a chief. He added that the installation ceremony of the new Kwahu chief is coupled with some rites performed to appease the demised chief before the new chief can sit on the throne.

It is significant to note that the incoming chief whether dressed in white, red or black cloth, wears the cloth in a similar unique style which has not changed till the present. Nana Gyasi expressed that “it is part of the Kwahu tradition for a new chief to lower his cloth below the chest level before swearing the oath” (personal communication, December 12, 2021). That act is considered a symbol of respect to the departed chiefs and ancestors of the land.

At some point, to climax the installation ceremony, the elders sprinkle a white powder on the new chief to symbolise his victory over evil and success during his reign as the chief of the Kwahus. Drums and horns are played to express the state of joy among the people who now welcome their new chief.

Consequently, it can be said that the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs for installation ceremonies have not changed. During the ceremony, the chief wears a simple white, red or black cloth without any footwear. This posture has been explained by the Kubeasehene as a sign of humility. For such a simple costume, the chief is to be reminded that as a human, there is a need to be humble and lowly. That state of humility is expected to be transcended into the rule of the chief where he ascribes dignity, respect and fairness to the Kwahu people (summarised interview with elders, December 20 2021).

#### ***4.2.4 Changes in the Kwahu chiefs’ regalia for festival***

Festivals are very important integral part of every society. They serve as a source of social cohesion. In past, the festival celebrated by the Kwahus is known as *Brenya* which was celebrated at *Obo Kwahu*. According to the elders interviewed, the *Brenya* was celebrated as a result of the struggles the people of *Obo* went through to gain their independence from their oppressors in Asanteland before relocating to the present place,

*Obo*. The *Brenya* festival was celebrated annually in July previously before the emergence of the *Kwahu Easter* festival in *Obomeng*. However, for some reason perhaps due to the popularity of the *Kwahu Easter* the *Brenya* festival has been relegated and rather *Kwahu Easter* is now preferred by the *Kwahufor* (people of Kwahu) hence the *Brenya* festival has died off and is no longer celebrated. Reflecting the reasons that led to the curtailment of the *Brenya* festival, Nana Afari II, Obohene asserts that,

“the festival suffered some shortfalls resulting from lack of sponsorship and media advertisement. Moreso, the natives also did not want to remind themselves of the ordeal they went through in the hands of their oppressors any longer which was portrayed in each of the celebrations held” (Nana Afari II, personal communications, April 15, 2022).

During the focus group interview, the elders explained that the Kwahus also celebrate the *Akwesidae*. The *Akwesidae* festival is characterised by 40-day rituals observed by the chiefs, elders and citizens in a particular Kwahu community. It is observed for pacification, cleansing, and taking decisions for the benefit of the Kwahu community. The *Akwesidae* also serves as a period to settle the dispute and other cross-cutting issues battling the community.

In all the festivals, the chiefs have their dress codes or regalia for each occasion. For example, during the *Akwesidae* celebrations, the chief’s dress code is mostly casual. There are no special costumes except during the rituals and purification activities. In the early 1950s, the use of green leaves and red cloth was prominent. However, the green leaf is not commonly featured as part of the dress code for major ritual activities during the

Akwesidae celebrations. The *kobene* cloth or the *brisi* cloth is mostly used and where customs demand, the chiefs do not wear any footwear and as a sign of humbling themselves before the ancestors, lower their cloth below the chest before performing libations (summarised communications with the elders, April 15, 2022).

In a critical analysis of the costumes used by the Kwahu chiefs from the narratives and pictorial documents so far, the researcher finds no significant changes in the costumes used for festivals from the 1950 to the 2022. What has been observed is that there have been some significant changes in the festivals celebrated. The most prominent festival celebrated by the Kwahus in recent times is the Easter Festival.

During this festival celebration, the chiefs dress up for the opening event which more or less serves as a durbar. As a joyful occasion, the dress code for the ceremony does not include any black or red-coloured costumes. White and any other bright colours are used. The chief's appearance, therefore, portrays illumination of joy, status and authority. Umbrellas, palanquins, and the chief's entourage are keen components of the royal regalia. In addition, the use of body ornaments such as gold rings, necklaces, royal kente cloth, the crown, anklets and bracelets all contribute to the glorification of the royal status of the chief. In the interview with the elders, they recounted that the dress codes of the chief for the Kwahu festival since its celebration started have not "The Kwahu Easter festival is a celebration to mark the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and have nothing to do with traditional customs of the Kwahus" (Nana Afari II, personal communications, April 15, 2022).

In short, the Kwahu chief's regalia for festivals is informed by the type of festival. The traditional festival attracts simplified costumes usually involving white, red and black-

coloured cloths used during rituals or initiations for pacification and cleansing of the land. The said costumes for such events or ceremonies have not changed over the years. What has changed is the introduction of the Kwahu Easter festival which is much popular and celebrated as a contemporary festival among the Kwahus and usually attracts tourists and visitors from all over the world due to the geographic positioning of the locality amidst mountains and fascinating scaps for paragliding and other exploring of nature on the hills of the various Kwahu townships.

#### ***4.2.5 Change in the Kwahu chiefs' casual dress codes***

Notwithstanding their status in society, the chiefs have their private life. This private life involves attending to the family's needs, and receiving and engaging personal friends. During such periods, the chief does not need any special costumes to elevate or portray his royal ship. The thing required is a decent dress code that will portray the respect and honour of the chief. Among the Kwahus, any decent grooming by the chief is acceptable. There are no specific clothing stipulated by the customs of the people.

According to the elders, the chief of Kwahu is not bonded by any traditional canon on the choice of casual costumes to wear neither is he provided with any royal wardrobe by the traditional council. The royal wardrobe is a personal collection of the chief and any decent clothing used by the chief is much appreciated by the elders. Commenting on his casual dress codes, Nana Afari II, retorted that “I am a simple person and love to be very comfortable at home but my decency within the confines of the throne all the time even when I choose to be casual, it should reflect the honour of the throne” (Personal communications, April 15, 2022).



Consequently, since there are no traditional canons guiding the casual dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs, it was difficult to identify and ascertain if there are some significant changes which have occurred over the years. The study found that, there are no concrete documentations on the casual dress codes of the chiefs whereas the elders expressed that nothing has changed in the way chiefs used to dress casually in the past and now.

#### **4.3 Objective three:**

**To investigate some factors that influenced the dynamism in dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022.**

This objective aimed at investigating if any, the prime factors that influence the dynamism of the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to the 2022. The findings regarding this objective show that there are a few cardinal factors responsible for the noticeable changes in a few of the dress codes and accessories of the chiefs in the Kwahu traditional area.

During the focused group interview with the elders, it was found that the little changes that have occurred in the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs have been due to fashion taste of the time. Among the key factors identified by the study which are responsible for the somewhat significant changes in some of the dress codes of the Kwahus include, fashion trends of the time, technological advancement and personal tastes.

##### **4.3.1 Fashion trends**

Back in the day, the object of fashion trend may have not been a popular subject among the Kwahus, however, the choice of dress codes used at the time can be described as the fashion trend of the time. In the works of (Steel, 2021; Essel, 2019; Dzramado, 2009)

cited earlier in chapter two, fashion trends of a particular culture at a certain period of time is influenced by many factors including the technological advancement, influences of foreign cultures, cultural moral standards and availability of dress accessories.

In the case of the Kwahu chief's regalia, the study found that one keen element that exerts strong impact on the fashion trends of the Kwahu chiefs over the years has been the influence of Akan culture. Having strong ties and once under the oppression of the Asantes, dress codes of the Asante king largely influences the costumology if the Kwahu chiefs. An example of this is the War dress, *bakarikese* (see figures 52a & b) used by the Kwahu chiefs in the early 1950s which has gross resemblance of the war dress used by yaa Asantewa of Asante fame in the early 1900s during the Asante British wars. Another example of how the Asante royal fashion has influenced the Royal regalia of the Kwahu chiefs can be observed in the use of kente and other gold ornaments by the Kwahu chiefs. On special occasions over the years, the chiefs Kwahu have used the kente cloth and other body ornaments in a similar manner as used by the Asante king. The celebration of Akwasidae 40 days festival is of akan origin and common to all akan cultures with a little bit of variations. The dress codes used for the celebrations are therefore similar across the akan states.

Notwithstanding the great influences, the elders in a focused group interview retorted that there has been few significant changes on the dress codes of the Kwahu chief through fashion trends. But these few changes are remarkable. According to them, the chiefs have on certain occasions wore shirts and suits to some events not because they reject their customary lifestyle but as a form of dress code preferred by the as a matter of convenient choice for an academic environment either than a cultural gratification. Nana.

.... added that in the past (referring to the early 1950s), the wearing of shirt and suits were not the fashion trend among the elites in our communities. The fashion trend has become part of us due to our constant engagements with the western education and cultural interchange. However, we have been able to preserve our cultural fashion in a modernised way.

#### **4.3.2 Technological advancement**

All over the world, one major factor influencing fashion trends has been found to be technological advancements. At every period of time, technology have been in existence and in its unique form. As discussed on the onset, the Kwahus have had a level of dymism in their dress codes and fashion line. Prior to the the 1950s the use of hand-made garments with natural fibres like rafia, jute and also from leaves or grass was the norm. other garment were made from kalico to cover the lower (genitals) of the body.

The ability to fashion garments from the available natural resources of the time is a form of technology. To make it explicit, Sundqvist, (2020) posits that technology is the ability to make practical application of knowledge demonstrated through skills and techniques. It is therefore viable to express that the various forms of garments used by the Kwahu chief across the time were all to some extent an exhibition of technology at the time.

According to the elders during the focused group interviews, it was found that the major garment that have been used by the Kwhau chiefs since the 1950s has been the Kente cloth and the cotton fabrics designed with printed traditional motifs or symbols. One of the elders purported that “over the years, we have seen the quality of the cloth or fabrics used by our chiefs increase. The prints are sharper and the finishing appears pleasing than it was

before” (summarised personal communications). This view by the elder could be eluded to the fact that the raw materials for making cloths or fabrics have improved over the years through industrial revolutions and various forms of technological advance in the field of textiles and fashion (Essel, 2019).

### **4.3.3 Personal taste for fashion**

Regardless of the factors already discussed above which includes fashion trends, technological advancement, another key item which influences the the dynamism and choice of regalia used by the Kwahu chiefs is the personal taste of the royal family or the chief in question.

Taste for the fashion has been an ancient quest among royals, kings, emperors and monarchs from the ancient world. In chapter two, a few literature were reviewed on how personal taste for fashion of some great rulers of the ancient world superimposed the prescribed traditional or canonical regalia of certain kingdoms. For example the case of Alexander the great found in the literature review revealed that he, Alexander chose his royal costumes according to his own taste to project himself, perhaps as a god or as the Egyptian god he admires much rather than the traditional fashion style of past Greek emperors (Collins, 2014 Walbank, 2021).

His comments on the choice of costumes used by the Kwahu chiefs over the years, Nana Afari II explained that “whenever a new chief is installed, they usually have their own taste for things such as costume, food, wife etc. aside what the ancestors have traditionally ordained for the royalty” (personal communications, April 15, 2022). Naturally, every individual have their own preferences but the Kubeasehen retorted that, “there are things that are customary which the chief cannot go against by using his own

choice or taste. For example, the chief is required not to wear any footwear during installation ceremonies and there is nothing any chief can do about it” (summarized personal communications).

It is however important to note that, there are some flexibility in the choice of costume prescribed by the ancestors. This means that when it is stated that a red cloth should for example be used by the chiefs to observe the installation rituals and ceremonies, the type of design, or the type of cloth material for example cotton or linen are sometimes not specified. This gives the chiefs some appreciable level of selecting their own choice of costumes to use for specific occasions.

However, Nana Afari II admits that there are always alternating knowledge and practical wisdom at the disposal of every king you seek. A newly installed chief in choosing their own royal closets should seek the concern from the queen, elders of the Kwahu traditional area and the priests to make well-informed choices that will be remain in the confines of the costumes and traditions of the Kwahu people (Summarised personal communications, April 15, 2022). As way of adding to the existing royal collection of closets, every newly installed chief is granted to prerogative to make choices of his collection of personal closets of royal costumes. Whereas the taste depends on the chief, there are always members of the royal court who serves as imperative advisers to the chief in this regard.

It is interesting to note the dynamics of the machinations controlling the freedom of taste the chiefs of Kwahu traditional area possess in choosing their royal closets to represent the the people. The underlining factor of what informs the choice of the royal costumology of a Kwahu chief is highly driven by the costumes and traditions of the

Kwahu people. It is for this reason even as a chief may desire to have the best modern fashion styles as part of his closet, that fashion taste is upheld within the confines of the costumes of the people. This in itself reconsolidates the chief as the cardinal custodian of the costumes and traditions of the people. The change in taste of the costumes selected by new chiefs in this regard only rests in the quality and refinement of the design patterns, fabric quality and modern high quality finishes but not change in prescribed customary requirements of royal costumology.

#### **4.4 Objective four:**

**To investigate the cultural significance/symbolism of the dress code of Kwahu chiefs.**

This objective aimed at investigating if any, the cultural significance or symbolisms of the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs. The findings regarding this objective show that there are some cultural symbolisms and significance of the dress codes used by the chiefs in the Kwahu traditional area.

The customs and values of the people are highly replicated in their way of life and practices. Most of the cultural practices by the varieties of cultural ethnicities in Africa have their own significance to the people. Like any other ethnic society in Africa, the dress codes of the chiefs of Kwahu traditional area possess some cultural significance to the people.

In this session, the findings regarding the cultural significance and symbolisms of the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs have been classified under the following themes;

- Cloths or fabrics
- Jewelries



- Footwear
- Regalia accessories

#### 4.4.1 Cloths or fabrics

Cloth or fabrics used by the chiefs of Kwahu are of different forms and varied designs. The royal cloth of a Kwahu chief is characterised by either a hand-woven fabric or a printed fabric. For the traditionally printed fabrics, they are basically three major dominant colours (red, black and white) of cloth used for specific events or occasions.

The printed fabrics used by the Kwahu chiefs from the 1950s have been printed manually by special craftsmen in the royal courts. The prints are made in black pigments whereas the cloth is often in a plain or single colour either black, red or white. During the interview with the elders of from the royal family, it was found that the a particular cloth colour has its unique symbolism and functionality. Therefore, the chiefs used the various colours of the hand-printed cloths for specific purposes and to make visual statements during important events or ceremonies (summarised communications, April 10 2022). The symbolic interpretations of the colours of the traditionally hand-printed cloths or fabrics used by the Kwahu chiefs are as follows:

a. *Black* printed cloth:

In the case of the hand-woven fabrics, the kente cloth is used by the Kwahu chiefs for major ceremonial occasions. According to the narratives of the chief and elders interviewed during the fieldwork, it was revealed that the kente cloth has its unique symbolism when used by the chiefs. The royal Kwahu Chief's kente as narrated by the one elder points that, the royal cloth is woven from the Asante land where most of the kente

cloth used by the Akan chiefs in Ghana originates. He added that the chief's cloth are specially woven by ingenious royal weavers in a town called Bonwire in Ashanti Region. The royal weavers have their mastery in weaving colourful elegant kente cloth of all kinds of kings, chiefs and queens in Ghana.

The royal kente cloth used by the Kwahu chief is similar to what other Akan chiefs use. They are mostly decorated with applique motifs. Woven in distinct complexity, style and bright colours, the royal kente stands out in the midst of other kente fabrics. The applique motifs used to enhance the appearance of the cloth are predominantly traditional Akan symbols which have their unique symbolic interpretations among the Akan people. According to the conventional knowledge of the Akan people, kente cloth in general, when used by the chief of an Akan or the Kwahu chief symbolizes power and authority. The Kubeasehene asserts that, power and authority is one of the attributes of a crown chief which has to be reflected through his costume. As a highly valued fabric created by the finest weavers, the adoration of a chief in the kente cloth elevates his authority and social status. The power and authority of the throne is therefore reflected through the elegance of the wearer of the kente cloth.

It was also found that the Kwahu chief also adorns himself in modern costume made from a combination of kente weaves and embroidery. Figure 103 presents a photograph of Daasebre Akuamoah Agyapong wearing an embroidered kente with corrupted (abstracted) adinkra designs.



Figure 103: Daasebre Akuamoah Agyapong dressed in a traditional regalia. The cloth is combined woven kente and embroidery of selected adinkra symbols.

Source: <http://images.app.goo.gl/KrDQDTBXRuQTPhzg8>

Aside the general iconic symbolism of the royal kente cloth which is interpreted as power and authority, it is interesting to note that the royal kente cloth of the Kwahu people bears some traditional Akan symbols which have their symbolic interpretations. These symbols are not woven together with the colourful weave patterns. Instead the symbols are created as an applique through embroidery of cut-out templates from different fabrics stitched onto the woven fabric. Some of the popularly used specific colours of cloth, traditional symbols and their symbolic interpretations in the royal cloth of the Kwahu chief include;

- a. *Gye Nyame* (figure 104): The symbol signifies the divine presence and power of God. It is a traditional symbol that connotes the recognition of the supremacy of God over all beings therefore must be feared and revered by all. The symbolic use of the *Gye Nyame* Adinkra symbol in the royal kente cloth of a Kwahu chief is to reflect his submission to the supremacy of the

almighty creator. A respondent explained that, by this, the chief is reminded that his position as the high authority in society does not surpass the ultimate role the creator occupies.



Figure 104: Gye Nyame symbol  
Source: Fieldwork, (2020)



Figure 105: Akofena symbol  
Source: Fieldwork (2020)

- b. *Akofena* (Figure 105): *Akofena* is another common traditional symbol featured in the royal kente cloth of the Kwahu people. As part of the installation process, the *akofena* is one of the component of the royal regalia which the chief possess. The *Akofena* is a ceremonial sword which when held in hand, portrays the power and authority of the chief. Gyasehene, Kwahu Pepease (2020) also said that the sword is mostly featured in the royal kente cloth to symbolise the authority of the Kwahu chief over the subjects under his jurisdiction.
- c. *Ese ne Tekrema* (Figure 106): This a symbol that represents the teeth and tongue. It believe that the chief is a symbol of unification and therefore wearing a cloth this this symbol is a form sending strong visual proverbial saying to his subjects that though they may be different and may have intruders living among them, unity is what they should pursue always.

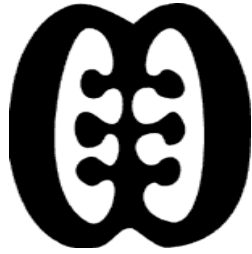


Figure 106. Ese ne Tekrema symbol  
Source: Fieldwork (2020)

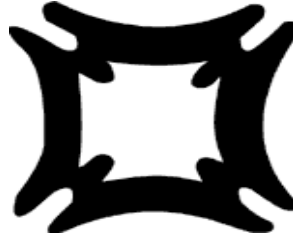


Figure 107. Fihankra symbol  
Source: Fieldwork,(2020)

- d. *Fihankra* (Figure 107): This literally means a spherical house or complete house. It is used to symbolise the complete state of the Kwahu traditional area. Wearing a cloth with the *fihankra* symbol reflects the chief's ownership of the entire Kwahu state which is perceived as the symbolically as a house.
- e. *Pempamsie* (Figure 108): Is a symbol that literally means sow in readiness. As the leader of the people, the Kwahu chief is a symbol of hope to the people. Wearing the *pempamsie* cloth symbolises an assurance to the people that the throne is proactively ready to protect its people. According to the elders, the symbol is also a visual statement to the people to always be prepared for an eventuality in life.



Figure 108 Pempamsie symbol  
Source: Fieldwork (2020)

- f. *Nyamedua* (Figure 109): This is symbol origination from a tree known as God's tree. It is used to represent the supreme being. *Nyamedua* symbolises

the the alter of God or place of worship of God. When used in the cloth of the chief, it is a symbolism to project the chief as sacred and an embodiment of moral values. It exerts a visual statement of portraying the presence and protection God. The Kwahu chief as a the cardinal custodian of the traditions of the Kwahu people constantly through his cloth reminds the people to acknowledge the presence and protection of God.



Figure 109. Nyamedua symbol  
Source: fieldwork (2020)



Figure 110. Adinkrahene symbol  
Source: Fieldwork (2020)

- g. *Adinkrahene*: The Adinkrahene is according to the Akan traditional symbology, is the chief of all the Adinkra symbols. It is represented in perfect circles and forms that basis for all prints. When used in the cloth of the Kwahu chief, it serves as the reminder both to the chief and the subjects of the presence and supremacy of God as the only perfect being whose ways must be learned by all. In another sense the adinkrahene is also used to express that the chief is the perfect individual who fits to be the chief of the Kwahu people. For example in figure 110 the adinkrahene has been rendered in white colour to connote the flawless perfection of the Daasebre Akuamoah Agyapong as a fitting Chief of the Kwahus.





Figure 111: Daasebre Akuamoah Agyapong wrapped in a combined woven kente, embroidery and applique cloth with selected adinkra symbols  
Source: <http://images.app.goo.gl/gc8bHeRLtKZ3uhA7>

The selected adinkra symbols used in the cloth of the Kwahu chief (figure 69) are always reflective of embodiment of proverbial saying which speaks either about the throne or to the people. Respondents also expatiated that apart from the proverbial sayings which the Chief's cloth carries, the cloth itself is perceived as an aesthetic object which glorifies the status of the chief when worn .

#### 4.4.2 Jewelleries

Body ornaments purposely for adoration and decoration of the body are described as jewelleries. In the Akan tradition, the use of jewelleries by the chiefs is very common. Respondent also said that due to the abundance of natural mineral in the land of the Akan people, the jewelleries used by the chiefs of Akan decents are predorminantly made with gold. In the focused group interview with the chiefs, it was affirmed that the ultimate

purpose for which body ornaments made of gold are used by the chiefs is to portray the wealth of the stool and by extension project the riches of the people.

Gold ornaments are precious and worn mostly around some specific parts of the body that would be easily noticeable by audience. It is a form of “show off” – expressed by one elder. One of the traits of the Akans is their showy nature. Therefore, the chiefs use their gold ornaments to project their prestige not only as individual chiefs but to make strong and proud statements about the land they rule over (summarised comments by elders). A typical example of how Kwahu chiefs show of their wealth and prestige is presented in Figure 69 where Daasebre Akuamoah Agyapong is gilded in dazzling multiple gold jewellerys on his hands and round his neck. In the same figure, the cloth worn by the Daasebre is yellow dominated to highlight the essence of the gold and the prestigious position he occupies. This finding aligns to the earlier observation by the Kwakye-Opong (2011) that the dress codes of traditional chiefs are not merely for fashion but to emphasis their social and economic stature.

It is notable that apart from primary purpose of portraying the wealth, the body ornaments also have some subtle symbolic underpinings known to the people. One of the symbolic purposes of the jewelries used by the Kwahu chiefs is for projection against evil.

The jewellerys come in different forms and designs ranging from rings, bracelets, necklaces, armllets, anklets, pendants and crowns all have their symbolic connotations. For example, the *Nsasu* jewelry (figure 98) is said to be a protective ornament worn around the wrist or shoulder of the Kwahu chief. Its functions is to repel any evil or bad spiritual attacks unleashed onto the chief. The *Nsasu* is made of leather in a form of a bracelet with three or four small round pendants attached. Figure 99 is also another example of body

ornament used by the Kwahu chiefs called the *Nsebe kye*. The *nsebe kye* is believed to be a charm used as a headgear or crown by the Kwahu chiefs. Also, made with leather and a white feather attachment, the ornament is believed to possess some vital spiritual charms that helps to fortify the chief and protect his mental faculty from been corrupted by any evil influences that will bring the kingdom into ruine.

#### 4.4.3 Ahenemma Footwear

Footware is one one of the components of the regalia used by the Kwahu chiefs. It directly related to the items used as part of the costume of the chief. from the past, footwear has not been a component for all forms of the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs. Consistently, there have been some occasions where the chief is required by the customs and traditions of the Kwahu people to go barefoot. Some of these occasions include aspects of the installation ceremonies which requires some rituals and initiations to be done.

Apart from such special ceremonies, the Kwahu chief oftenly uses footwers to complement their traditional and casual dressing. The footwear has its own symbolic connotations when used by the chiefs. For example commenting on the Kwahu chief's footwear, the Kubeasehene explained that the *Ahenemma* is a protection to the feets of the chief. However, is has purposively designed to be flat, extra broad sole to give the chief a solid grounding. The extra-broad sole is also symbolic to the earth as a receptacle for living creatures. The Ahenemma is always black because it symbolises of the ancestry of the Akan people .

Interestingly, it was difficult for the research to get visuals of the Kwahu chief's footwear called the *Ahenemma*. This is because the customs of the Kwahu royal family forbids duplication of the royal footwear. Therefore, the chiefs were reluctant to permit the

researcher pictures of the their *ahenemma*. One elder explained that the taking images of the chief's footwear is also considered as a sign of destoolment or perhaps giving opportunities to people to imitate the designs when allowed to do so (Nana Kissi Ampadu, personal communications, April 15, 2022).

Though the chiefs were reluctant to share pictures of their footwears, the researcher chanced on sample manufactured *Ahenemma* (Figure 112) specially made for an unnamed chief. This footwear has some symbolisms which possess unique interpretations when used by chiefs. It is designed with motifs and objects such cowries, leather materials, adinkra motifs and shapes. According to a respondent in an interview, the spherical shapes on the ahenema signifies the perfection, unity and wholeness of God. The cowries traditional footwears symbolizes wealth and fertility. The leather material on the *Ahenema* is also a sign of power and protection. *Adinkra* symbols like *Adinkrahene*, *GyeNyame* (immortality of god), *Bi-nnka- bi* (peace), *Akoma Ntoaso* (agreement) and others.



Figure 112. Sample Ahanemma for Akan chiefs  
Source: Asona Konadu Enterprice, Manhyia

#### 4.4.4 *Regalia accessories*

For this research, the researcher classified all other objects used in addition to the costume of the Kwahu chiefs as regalia accessories. It was observed that the regalia of the Kwahu chiefs appears more simple and does not constitute many accessories.

##### **Akofena**

One of the accessories is the *Akofena* (the ceremonial sword) which is mainly incorporated into the regalia during the installation ceremonies especially at the point of oath taking. The *Akofena* (see figures 96 & 97) has its own symbolism and it is designed in different forms. Ideally, the *Akofena* is made with golden handle which has two round balls, one at the end of the handle and the other between the handle and the blade whereas some of them are made entirely covered with gold dust. Though fashioned in form of sword, the *Akofena* is not a sharp weapon for fighting but rather bears some traditional symbols which represent the customary concepts of the people.

From the study, “the *Akofena* represents the strength of the people”. When given to the chief on the day of installation, it connotes that the authority to preside and rule over the people has been given to him. The chief then becomes the war-lord in this regard – said one elder. To explain further, Nana Afari asserts that.

“today, we do not go to war. But the *Akofena*, as given to any chief empowers that chief upon ascending to the throne. The fortification and preparation of the chief’s mind as a warrior has its own psychological underpinnings. It embraces the chief with heroic mindset, encouraging him to become a courageous leader who will take bold and wise decisions as the ruler for his people in times of

distress to the benefit of his people. The entire community therefore awaits the direction and the voice of the chief as their commander just as a warlord”.

The symbols on the the Akrfena used by the Kwahu chiefs are mostly cut-out geometrick shapes such as stars, circles, crescent and diamonds. Even as the elders did not provide vivid symbolic interpretations of the individual shapes portrayed on the swords, it was generally described traditional symbols which collectively represent the royal authority of the Kwahu people.

### **Bodua**

The *Bodua* (see figure 100) is made from the tail of ram and locally treated leather. The Bodua functions as a ‘flywhisk’ for the chief when held in hands. The Bodua of the Kwahus was found to resemble the ‘*Sing*’ flywhisk of the Ntemi (traditional chief) of the Sukuma people of Tanzania (see figure 38). Comparatively both the *Bodua* and the *Sing* are made from animal tails have different traditional purification processes before given to the chiefs.

Commenting on the Bodua during the focused group interview, one of the elders form the royal descent asserts that “the Bodua is not used anyhow by the chief”. He explained further that though it functions as a whisk, the bodua is specially made to help the chief drive off evil charms that may be targeted at him by enemy chiefs or persons who wish the downfall of the chief.

By concealling the details regrding how the bodua is fortified to perfume its protective functions, the elders consented that the chief may not embarck on any threatening mission in the interests of the royalty or the people of Kwahu without his



Bodua (summarised interview communications, April 20, 2022). It was also pointed out that while the chief finds himself in the company of the masses, the Bodua is used. Holding it in the right hand doubles and proection and prevention of regular handshakes in public. It is believed that some individual with charms could attempt evil on the chief through handshakes therefore, holding the Bodua, sends visual messages of his unwillingness to accept any form of handshake from the public.

### **Nsɛbɛ Abaa**

Another regalia accessory is the Nsɛbɛ Abaa (see figure 101) which is made from woollen materials, leather, cowries and jute fibre. Just like the *Bodua*, the the *Nsɛbɛ Abaa* is a symbol of protection. It is said that it contains a charm the also repells evil againt the chief. The chief therefore holds the Nsɛbɛ Abaa during special ceremonies to double as a fortification and a personal protection. Eventhough much was not disclosed about its compositions by the elders during the interview, the Nsɛbɛ Abaa upon sight appears as a charm.

To conclude, it can be expressed from the study that the Kwahus have traditional connotations for the dressodes of their chiefs. A chief may wear a printed black, white or red cloth as a dress code to the symbolises a state morning the dead of an ill trusted member in the community or another chief. Again, black, white and red fabrics used by the chief are symbolic to the cutoms and traditioins of the Kwahus as they constitute the traditional regalia for some chiefs during the *akwesidae* celebrations, innitiations for installation of the chief and the funeral ceremonies of the immediate past chief.

The kente cloth with elaborate gold jewellereies when used as the dress code for the Kwahu chief symbolises a state of joy and celebration. It is therefore customary for the

Kwahu chiefs to adore themselves in a dazzling kente cloth with different vibrant colours and different forms either solely hand-woven kente or a combination of the hand-woven with embroidery and applique depending on the fashion taste of the chief.

Again, whereas the bright-coloured kente cloth reflects a state of joy when used as the regalia by the Kwahu chief, the gold ornaments project his glorious wealth and ownership of the land of the Kwahu people. The chief is therefore glorified and eulogised with chantings of appellations amidst drumming and singing when dressed in this regalia. This has been the tradition from the 1950s however, according to the chiefs and the elders, individual chiefs have added to the royal closets especially the current chief who has more refined ornaments and fine cloths due to modern advancement in textiles and fashion. This finding consolidates the observation of Essel (2019) that technological advancement enhances textiles and fashion over a period of time.

#### **4.5 Objective five:**

**To examine the knowledge level of the Kwahus on the cultural significance of the dress codes of their chiefs.**

This objective aimed at assessing the knowledge level of some citizens in the Kwahu traditional area regarding the significance of the dress codes of their chief. The beliefs and practices of the African people are said to be common among the people (Acquah, 2011). In view of this the research seeks to assess the views of the Kwahus to establish their level of familiarity of the symbolism of the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs.

During the field work, four (4) respondents were interviewed in a focused group. The researcher provided sample images of the Kwahu chiefs dressed in some various regalia for evaluation of their views. The interview espoused semi-structured interview

questions which allowed for qualitative responses for evaluation. For this objective some themes were generated from the findings which includes the following based on thematic areas of the :

- a. The knowledge level of the Kwahus regarding the dress symbolisms of Kwahu chiefs
- b. Factors influencing the knowledge level of the Kwahus regarding the dress symbolisms of the Kwahu chiefs
- c. Ways to educate the Kwahus on the dress symbolisms of Kwahu chiefs

#### ***4.5.1 The knowledge level of the Kwahus regarding the dress symbolisms of their chiefs***

After establishing a suitable research relations through effective introductions, the researcher using guided open-ended questions first sort responses from the participants to identify the type of dress code used by the Kwahu chiefs. During the focused group interview, all the four respondents were able to identify from the digital photos the type of dress code as kente cloth with gold jewelry or printed cloth without and jewelry. One of the respondents, Yaa (pseudo name) retorted that, “kente is a common cloth we all know and even children can tell what a kente is”. Gyasi (aged 26) expressed that “I know the red and black printed cloths are used when there is a funeral. They are the colours used in most Akan communities for any funeral ceremony”. These expressions by the research participants creates the impression that the respondents are familiar with the dress codes of their chiefs to some extent. Still on describing how the dress codes relates to specific functions or ceremonies, the respondents during the focused group interview recounted that

without any funeral and initiation which will include some form of rituals, the dress code of the Kwahu chief has always been brightly coloured cloth with jewelries.

A critical analysis of their responses show that the respondents interviewed have a fair knowledge on the various dress codes used by the Kwahu chiefs. They also demonstrate a fair knowledge of the functionality of the various dress codes, with the ability to distinct funeral or ritual costumes from ceremonial or costumes for joyous occasions. As a point of interest, the researcher probed through further interrogation to find out how the respondents acquired the knowledge about their responses. According to the participants, they were not taught by anyone but rather, they have observed the pattern of the events from their childhood that these are the various dress codes use most often.

Interesting, even as the respondents interviewed seem to have knowledge of the various dress codes used by the chiefs, their knowledge of the deeper symbolism seems to be low. When interviewed on their knowledge of the meanings on the traditional symbols only one out of the four participants was able to identify and interpret the meaning of the traditional symbols in the cloth used by the chiefs in the photographs shown to them. The respondent was able to give the general interpretation of the symbols as known in the Akan tradition. According to him (pseudo named Kwame), “I learnt the meanings of the symbols in senior high school while studying general knowledge in art subject”. From this response, it can be said that school has played a keen role in educating the respondent on the symbolism of the Akan *adinkra* symbols to some extent. However, it is left to him to have deeper understanding of the symbolic meanings of which they have been specifically selected to design the cloth of the chiefs. For such knowledge, the researcher believes that

is lies in the onus of the community and the families to transfer such knowledge to the younger generation (Kumatia, 2018; Kwaye-Opong, 2013).

In summary, it was manifested from the findings that the respondents have little knowledge about the symbolisms of the dresscodes of their chiefs. For example, a image of a chief holding a sword with his cloth lowered below the chest level was displayed to the repondents to seek their knowledge of what that dress code symbolises. All the four respondents were not able to give the symbolic interpretation of that dress code. According to one of the respondent, “only the elders understand what that means and even when you ask them, they don’t tell you what that means”. To this extent, it is clear that the youth interviewed will need further education of the dress symbolisms. However, analysis of their responses also points to the fact that there is a possibility of generational gap between the elderly men and the youth where transfer of knowledge from the older generation to the younger generation seem to be missing in this regard. Such generational gaps could be addressed through formal education and conscious oral legendery as observed by the Kwakye-Opong (2013) and Kumatia (2018). In the next the sub-heading, the factors that influences the knowledge level of the youth regarding the symbolisms of the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs has been discussed further.

#### ***4.5.2 Factors influencing the knowledge level of the Kwahus regarding the dress symbolisms of the Kwahu chiefs***

In the previous discourse, the findings relating to the knowledge level of the Kwahus regarding their understaning of the symbolisms of the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs was initiated. It was found that the Kwahus interviewed has knowledge about the dresscodes of their chiefs and the specific occasions which the dress codes are used for.

However, it was found the analysis of their responses that they lack indepth knowledge of the meanings of the dress codes used by the chiefs as well as the symbolic meanings of why certain traditional adinkra symbols are fused into the cloth designs of the chiefs. The researcher therefore used further probes to indentify the factors which accounts for the inability of the youth to have adequate knowledge about the dress symbolisms of the Kwahu chiefs.

The factors identified from the respondent were found to have some cultural underpinings through a content analysis. Culturally, the Akan tradition has a way of holding knowledge as sacred among the elders of the royal family and the elders of the community. Therefore, it becomes a bit difficult for other people especially the younger generation to understand the symbolisms if they are not consciously educated on them. From the research, the following key factors were identified as the factors contributing the inaability of the youth to have much knowledge about the symbolic meanings of the dress codes used by the Kwahu chiefs.

- The Kwahus do not have many traditional festivities aside the Kwahu Easter celebration which is characterised by western, secular and popular cultures.
- Inability for some kwahus to experience frequent traditional events in the Kwahu traditional area
- Communication gaps between the old and the young generations in the Kwahu traditional area
- Secrecy of knowledge regarding the costums and traditions of the people among the elder, the royal family



- Inability to integrate the culture and traditions of the Kwahus in local basic school system as an area of study.
- Reduction in school arts and culture festivals
- Higher interests in-search of money than interests in cultural issues.

In summary, the factors contributing the low knowledge levels of the youth regarding the dress symbolisms of the Kwahu chiefs can be described as lack of adequate cultural education. The youth are the future custodians of the traditions of the people therefore, when should be involved in customary activities to help educate them more about the symbolisms of the dress codes of their chiefs for posterity.

In the next heading, the research attempt to find more clues as to the possible ways to educate the kwahus to help them understand the traditional symbols.

#### **4.5.3 Ways to educate the Kwahus on the dress symbolisms of Kwahu chiefs**

The researcher believes that the sources of problems have hidden solutions within. In this regard, the researcher through a focused group interview with the youth attempted to seek the possible solutions of how to get the people educated to understand the dress symbolisms of the Kwahu chiefs. The respondents came out with various suggestions. Initially, three of the the four respondents making up the majority opined that it is not the duty of the youth to find solutions to such issues. To them, the responsibility of educating the Kwahus about the culture and traditions of the people lies solely on the elders and the traditionalist in the society. They believe the youth has nothing to do in this regard than to choose whether or not to even avail themselves to be taught their culture.

Notwithstanding, the other one respondent (pseudo named Abena) held the view that traditions are important and the Kwahus need to have adequate knowledge about them.

Having the knowledge about the traditions will enable the Kwahus to get more involved with socio- cultural activities in their communities. The perspective of Abena on this issue paved way for further discussion to identify the possible solutions. Through the interview and discussions some solutions were identified and suggested as follows:

- Teachers should teach the culture of the Kwahu people consciously at the school to educate children before they grow.
- The community should consider having a culture day where some cultural activities will be held exclusively to help increase the interest of the people to participate in cultural activities.
- There should be a frequent community engagement with the people as a traditional forum where the youth will be educated on the customs.
- A traditional library should also be provided as means of educating the Kwahus
- Provision of traditional gallery or mini-museum for members of the society to help serve as source education for the people in Kwahu on the traditions and customs.

The points raised by the youth during the focused group interview were analysed contextually using the content analysis approach. From the analysis, it was found that the suggestions provided collectively enumerated by the people were all laudable for positive action. However, the points enumerated were found to be targeted at shifting all the responsibilities to the elderly in the community and leaving out the younger generations. Even as the researcher tried to seek the views of the participants on what they as Kwahus can also do, the respondents proved to be unwilling to accept any responsibility in that

regard. It can therefore be established that the people were simply not ready to initiate any progressive course towards learning the dress symbolisms of their chiefs. However, they were willing to participate in any form of activity that will provide such opportunities for them to acquire knowledge about the dress symbolisms of their chiefs.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.0 Overview

This chapter recapitulates the foremost findings of the study. Conclusions were drawn based on the findings made from which suitable corresponding recommendations were provided. For clarity and easy verifications, the findings, details of conclusions and the recommendations have been enumerated. Furthermore, the chapter also provides probable areas for further research through the results of the study.

#### 5.1 Summary of Findings

This study was steered on five specific objectives. Objective one delved into the examination of the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022 focusing on dress codes used on specific occasions. The second objective on the other hand endeavours at investigating if there exist any significant changes in the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022 whereas the third objective investigates the prime factors that influenced the dynamism in dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to 2022. The fourth objective also investigates the cultural significance and symbolism of the dress code of Kwahu chiefs. Finally, the study ends with examining the knowledge level of the Kwahus on the cultural significance of the dress codes of their chiefs. The next paragraphs present a summary of the key findings capitulated under each of the specific objectives.

Regarding objectives one, the study found that:

The dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs have a long-standing history of uniqueness. It was noted that there were different types of dress codes that the chiefs use from the narrations gathered during the field study. However, it was challenging to provide

chronologically pictorial evidence to complement the narrations. In the 1950s, the Kwahu chiefs' dress code centred on a simple full-length cloth for various occasions. The cloth was mostly designed by unknown artisans who work for the royal court. Concealing the identities of the artisans who design the chief's cloth was a form of security measure for the royal family. Notwithstanding, the traditional cloth used by the chiefs was embellished with simple symbolic patterns. These were mostly used for traditional festivities, marriage ceremonies and casual adornments by the chiefs. Key among the various cloth used by the Kwahu chiefs which have been retained but modified since the 1950s include the *Kuntunkuni, Kobene, Okunini ntama, Kabu, Ago, Kente and the Birisi*.

During the 1950s to 1980s, the use of wardress for installations of Kwahu chiefs was common. A specially made costume *Batakari kese* was used. The costume is symbolically more than a usual dress for the ceremony. The narratives revealed that the costume possesses some charms to fortify the chief as the warlord of the Kwahu people in times of battle. Even as there might be no pending wars during the installation ceremony, the wearing of the *Batakari kese* induces some psychological effects on the chief making him conscious of his present state as the defender of the Kwahu people in times of fierce battles.

In the early, 1990s, the use of the wardress for installations became unpopular and was replaced by modern traditional cloth designs with patterns of Akan traditional symbols in them. The *Batakarikese* was also not used in isolation. It was accompanied by the *Etuo* – an eighteenth-century locally manufactured gun. Whereas the gun symbolically alludes to the preparedness of the chief for any battle, it is a weapon for physical protection and defence against attack by an enemy. When used together with the wardress, it signifies the

power and the combatting might of the chief. The Kwahu chief in such an outfit is considered the most powerful and fierce among the people he lords over.

In the 1950s the costume for the Kwahu chiefs includes wooden sandals. These wooden sandals were used until the early 1970s. The well-crafted sandals were one of a kind used by the chiefs. Its heavy nature slows down the movement pace of the chief. It is believed that the chief as a majestic figure of the society should as well walk majestically to match his status hence, wearing the heavy wooden sandals was in effect used to achieve that. However, in recent times hailing from the early 1970s, the traditional chiefs have used a modernized sandal common to the Akan society. The *Ahinemma* sandals are used as the official footwear for the chiefs of the Kwahu traditional area. The footwear has a heavy sole with gold ornaments fitted on the leather straps. Its weight replicates that of the wooden sandals used previously.

One thing that was imminent regarding the dress code of the Kwahu chiefs had to do with the exclusive use of dress accessories. Since the 1950s, various forms of accessories for royal fashion have been used by the Kwahu people to serve varied purposes. Remarkable among them include the *nkawa*, *bodua*, *nkapo*, *akrafena* and *nsebe kyɛ*. Each of the accessories plays a vital role in the *costumology* of the chief. Depending on the occasion as in the case of an installation ceremony, the chief carries the *akofena* which is considered the sword of souls. The chief is the custodian of the people hence holding the *akrafena* is a psycho-symbolism that the souls of the people lie in his hands.

It appears that much pictorial documentations have not been done by the royal courts. It was difficult to obtain the few pictorial documents preserved at the royal courts of the Kwahu people. Unlike the Asante, there is little documentation on the royal regalia of



the Kwahu people. The majority of the pictorial documents found date more recently to the late 1990s.

Regarding objective two, the study found that:

There are no drastic significant changes in the dress codes of the Kwahu people from the 1950s to the 2000s. However, the research found that there exists some minor transformations in the dress codes used by the previous chiefs. The changes observed were more on the quality of the designing, making and finishing of the regalia and its accessories used by the Kwahu chief but not on the form, function and symbolism of the dress codes.

Again, due to the lack of adequate historical documentation on the royal regalia of the Kwahu people, the researcher found it challenging to establish a chronological or sequential pictorial argument on the significant transformations of the dress codes. However, dialogue with elders and the chiefs through focus group interviews led to the establishment that some costumes or dress codes such as the *Batakarikese* (wardress) has not been worn by any Kwahu chief since the 1970s.

Rather, the trends of the Kwahu chiefs dress code from the 1980s till date have been symbolically reflective of wealth, prestige and diplomacy. A abandonment of some of the traditional festivals also led to the abandonment of some royal costumes like the *Batakarikese* since there were no more wars or royal conflicts, it becomes needless for the chiefs to groom themselves in a wardress unless one is pushed to per the event.. They rather prefer to be seen as diplomatic individual who possess wealth and power over the jurisdiction they reign than warriors. It is for this reason the study found that the trends of the regalia and dress codes of the Kwahu people especially during festive occasions

characterised by expensive cloths (usually kente) with elaborate gold ornaments along with an entourage of kingsmen to show off the royal status.

Regarding objective three, the study found that:

One of the major elements which accounts for the dynamisms in the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs from the 1950s to the 2000s has to do with culture evolution. It was found that the sudden change in taste of culture from traditional festivals to Christian festival celebration is one key factor which affected the change in the dress codes of the chiefs. The dress codes for the Christian festivities have no mandates of traditional symbolism to be used by the chief as prescribed customarily. Any dress codes used by the chief becomes acceptable and has no underlining customary or traditional defilements.

It was found that, the dress codes from the 1950s though have not changed dramatically in terms of the traditional symbols incorporated especially in the cloth designs, the quality of the materials used have been influenced by modern technology. The finishing of the hand-printed funeral cloth and hand-woven kente fabrics used by the chiefs in the 1950s have been improved in recent times. The major factor responsible for the changes in the quality of the making and finishing of the royal cloth used by the Kwahu chiefs can be ascribed to the advancement in textiles technology and techniques for finishing textiles products. In the past the motifs of traditional symbols were hand-printed using basic local tools and materials. However, there are high quality technological tools, materials and equipment for making sharp and high quality finished prints. This has also affected the taste or choice of cloth a chief will like to wear.

Again, the regalia accessories and other ornaments worn on the body such as crown, rings, necklaces, chains, armulets, footwears, etc. made in gold and silver used by the chiefs in recent times (1990s – 2000s) were found to be more refined than the 1950s. This significant change could also be attributed to that advancement of the design, making and finishing of the ornament due to modern artistic processes and techniques.

Also, the research found that the two major factors observed about are both influenced by another factor which the researcher deem as key which the third factor. This third factor is the royal fashion taste of the chief. The Kwahu people have no stifled enshrined traditional cannons for the royal wardrobe. However, there exists some traditional framework which confines chief to the dress codes permissible to be used for specific occasions. Therefore, the reigning chief has the laxity of choosing various royal cloth designs for himself based on his taste for current fashion which is also influenced subtly by the modern textiles technological advancement.

Notwithstanding, the choice of fashion of the chief is always within the royal framework of dress symbolisms prescribed for Kwahu chiefs in accordance with the customs of the people. In this regard, the traditions of the type of dress code fashion style (how the chief is groomed) is always in conformity with the customs of the Kwahus. Therefore, a chief could not choose to wear a black cloth with accompanied jewelry and other regalia accessories to a joyous event such as marriage or the Kwahu Easter festival celebration. Such an act could be considered awkward and contrary to the customs of the Kwahus.

Another factor which accounted for the changes in the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs has to do with the prevalence of peace among the neighbouring states as order of the

day. Prior to the 1950s, there were various wars among the various ethnic groups. Hence, the Kwahu chief's regalia constituted a war dress – the *Batakarikese*. Now with the absence of wars and conflicts, the functionality of the wardress have since been on the decline. Hence, the various chiefs over the years have not shown much interest in possessing their own versions of the *Batakarikese*. Therefore, relevance of the dress code becomes a key factor which accounts for some of the subtle changes in dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs observed through the research.

Regarding objective four, the study found that:

The dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs are not purposely for aesthetics. Regalia used by the chiefs of the Kwahu traditional area are mainly symbolic and possess some cultural interpretations. These symbolises and interpretations have since the 1950s not evolved. The people of the royal descents and the leaders of the society have well informed knowledge about the symbolisms of the dress codes of the chiefs.

Key among the symbolisms established from the study dwells not only on the motifs of traditional symbols incorporated in the cloth, umbrella, linguist staff, sandals and the stools but as well the entire interpretations of the regalia and accessories used. To the Kwahus, there are symbolic interpretations to the various colours of cloth used by the chief in a particular dress code. This symbolisms and their interpretations are long-standing dating way back prior to the 1950s, and are a universal or common knowledge to all the members of the society. Every member understands that the chief bereaved when seen in a *Kobene* (Red) or *Brisi* (Black) cloth. Similarly, the people relates to the meaning of the dress code when the chief puts on a kente and a white cloth.

The kente cloth though symbolises the prestigious status of the chief, its embedded traditional symbols are coded proverbial sayings whereas the kente cloth dress code in entirety reflects a joyous state of the 'throne'. Also, another key finding relating to symbolisms of the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs is the use of the Akan traditional symbols as motifs in the cloth designs.

The research establishes that the Kwahus are part of the Akan culture and were once under the oppression of the Asante kingdom. Therefore, the traditions and customs of common to the Akan people in Ghana have greatly influenced the culture and tradition of the Kwahus. Notwithstanding, it was found through the research that, the Kwahus have unique and distinct major festival which they celebrate. Kwahu Easter festival of the Kwahus have transformed the culture and traditional paradigm of the people since its introduction.

The Kwahu Easter has in a subtle way or unconsciously drifted the people of Kwahu into not giving much attention to the Akan traditional festivals as observed by of Akan people. Rather, the Kwahu Easter has become one of a kind of celebration which a hybrid of indigenous culture, Christian culture, modern and popular culture, thereby distincting itself from all other Akan festivals and celebrations.

For objective five, the study found that:

The Kwahus interviewed had to some extent, basic knowledge about the dress codes of their chiefs. These respondents were able to identify and name the use of the red, white and kente clothes when used as a dress code for the chiefs. However, their

knowledge or aware of the symbolisms associated with the dress codes of their chiefs seem to be a little limited.

Even as the respondents interviewed group were able to identify and name the traditional symbols used in designing the regalia of the Kwahu chiefs, it was revealed that they did not know much about their meanings and cultural significance. Again, the study found that the inability of the interviewed group to have much better understanding of the symbolic significance or meanings of the dress of their chiefs was mainly lack of adequate cultural education. The causative factors leading to the lack of adequate knowledge about the dress symbolisms on the part of the youth were identified as;

- Break in communication between the older and younger generation
- General lack of interests in tradition and cultural activities on the part of the Kwahus in that, the people are more interested in finding means to earn a living than to pursue cultural knowledge about their traditions.
- The introduction and celebration of Kwahu Easter festival as the major festival of the people as against the traditional festivals like Akwasidae.
- The inability to incorporate the traditions of the Kwahu people into the school curriculum to educate the school children about the customs and traditions of the Kwahus.

In analysing the above factors, the researcher found one of the factors to be paramount among the rest. Considering the trends of culture in Kwahu traditional area indicates that the people have gone through some form of enculturation over the past decades. Entire locality have deeply bought into the Christian festival (Easter) whereas the entire,



landscapes of the various townships within the Kwahu traditional area is convenient for hiking, paragliding and other activities that magnetises the tourist from other parts of Ghana and abroad. It is not surprising that indigenes, not wanting to remember their past state of oppressions quickly embrace the new culture of celebrating the Easter festival in a unique style as replacement of their true traditional festival.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

Like many other ethnic society in the world, the Kwahu chiefs have their unique costumes and dress codes. These dress codes are informed by the culture and traditions of the Kwahus. However, the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs from the earlier 1950s to the 2000s have not been properly documented.

The dresscodes of the Kwahu chiefs have not evolusionalised significantly over the years especially from the 1950s to the 2000s. The only changes which seem to have occurred has to do with the use of highly refined and quality finished fabrics and body ornaments in recent times as compared to the 1950s to 1970s.

Even as the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs have not changed much, some of the dress codes have been totally abandoned and not used by chiefs in recent times. For example, the Batakarikese (wardress) seem to have outlived its relevance and no more a taste for the Kwahu chiefs in selecting their dresscodes.

Each of the dress codes used by the Kwahu chiefs are symbolic and carries a cultural interpretation that qualifies the function for which it is used. From the 1950 to the 2022 the symbolism and interpretations of the dress codes or regalia used by the Kwahu chiefs have not changed. What the dress codes signify in the past remain the same in recent times.

The symbolisms and traditional interpretations of the dress codes of the Kwahu people does not manifest only when the traditional Akan adinkra symbols are used in the regalia designs. But the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs in totality with or without direct representation of the adinkra symbols are still symbolic.

Colour is a very relevant factor in the symbolisms of the dress codes and regalia used by the Kwahu chiefs. The dominant colours play a key role in the symbolic interpretations ascribed to the regalia used by the Kwahu chiefs since the 1950s.

In the past, the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs centres on the cultural symbolisms than aesthetic qualities. However, the aesthetic values of the dress codes and regalia used by the Kwahu chiefs in recent times exerts much relevance in addition to the traditional symbolisms.

The dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs from the 2000s portrays much of diplomacy, classism, display of wealth and power of the individual chiefs than those in the 1950s – 1970s.

The kente cloth and a combination of gold ornaments including headbands, necklaces, bracelets, armbands, finger rings, pendants, golden-handle ceremonial swords, fly whisks, gold-decorated sandals, etc. are recently used by the Kwahu chiefs to show their wealth and position in society.

Royal regalia for initiations such as installation of new chiefs, funeral rites or ceremonies of demised chiefs and purification rituals are characterised by simplicity from the 1950s till date. There are no significant changes. The chief usually wraps simple black, red or white cloth lowered around the waist area and walks barefoot with any body ornaments.

This has been the costume of the people of Kwahu even prior to the 1950s till date and have not been altered in any form.

Choice of regalia or dress code to be used by a chief is recently influenced by the fashion trends and taste of the chief. There are not strict traditional canons which binds the chiefs to a particular royal wardrobe. However, the choice of dress codes by a Kwahu chief is regulated to stay within the confines of the cultural interpretation and functionality of colour, cloth, and other body ornaments.

The Kwahus are part of the Akan culture therefore have similar function and interpretations to colours of cloth used as dress codes by chiefs for specific events.

Apart from the colour symbolisms of the regalia of the Kwahu chiefs which is a common knowledge in the traditional area, the people lack indepth knowledge about the symbolic interpretations of the dress codes used by the chiefs.

There is a generational traditional knowledge gap between the kwahus and the elders within the Kwahu traditional area. Whereas the channel to bequeath traditional knowledge on the symbolisms of the dress codes used by the chiefs seem to be broken due interest of the youth in modern popular culture than traditional culture.

Again, some components of the royal regalia or the costume of the Kwahu chiefs are held in confidentiality among the elders and the royal family. It is highly forbidden for taking photographs of royal regalia of the Kwahu chiefs. It is believed that exposing the royal costumes to photography is a way of compromising the royal wardrobe to duplication by the society thereby reducing the social status of the chief.

The Kwahu Esther festival celebrations have contributed to the lack of interest in traditional culture among the Kwahus. The Easter festival has totally replaced the traditional festival therefore much traditional culture is not displayed for the younger generation to observe.

It is therefore, feared that the traditional culture of the Kwahus will be totally buried with the modern western-influenced multi-culture of speedily gaining roots within the traditional area of the people.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

There is an urgent need to consciously establish a royal catalogue for the preservation of the royal wardrobe of the Kwahu chiefs. The royal album will serve as great source of historical reference point on the royal dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs.

A royal documentary on the dress codes and symbolisms of the Kwahu chiefs should be considered by the Kwahu paramouncy.

The existing dress codes and regalia accessories used by past Kwahu chiefs from the early 1950s to the late 1970s should be well preserved in a royal museum which should be established by the Kwahu state. This royal museum, when established will complement the tourism aspect of the Kwahu Easter festival and as well double as a means of education the people about the history and culture of the Kwahu people.

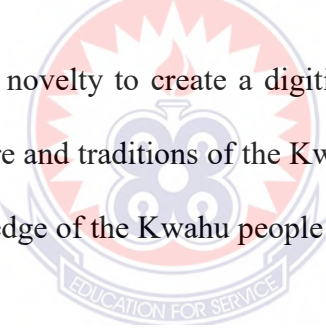
Even as the Kwahu Easter has gain popularity of the traditional ceremonies of the Kwahu people, there is the need to revive the abandoned traditional festivals. It is suggested that the Kwahu traditional council could re-establish a the traditional festival to be

celebrated in the last quarter of the year as way of pulling tourist to the area the second time annually.

#### **5.4 Suggestions for Further Studies**

The study traced the dress codes of the Kwahu chiefs from the 1950 to the 2022 and found that there is no chronological archival documentations on the traditional regalia of the Kwahu chiefs. Whereas the colour symbolisms of the dress codes used by the chiefs of Kwahu traditional area has since not changed, it was established that the recent chiefs have taste for high quality and well finished textiles and jewelry due to technological advancement in fashion. However, there is a need for further studies into developing a royal archival digital library for the Kwahu traditional area.

It would be scholarly novelty to create a digitised scholarly documentary on both the past and current the culture and traditions of the Kwahu people in general as it will help in securing traditional knowledge of the Kwahu people for posterity.



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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### SECTION A

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHIEFS

1. Please kindly tell me about yourself
2. In which year were you installed as a chief of this traditional area?
3. Can you please narrate your experiences of the royal activities as youth prior to been crown?
4. What traditions govern the dress fashion of Kwahu chiefs?
5. Can you give fair descriptions of the dress code trends of Kwahu chiefs during your youthful ages?
6. Are there significant changes in the dress trends of Kwahu chiefs in recent times?
7. Do you have unique cultural or customary reasons for dressing the way you do?
8. What makes dress codes of Kwahu Chiefs distinct from other traditional leaders in Ghana?
9. Are there symbolic interpretations of your dress code as Chief of Kwahu?
10. Would you say modernity and influence of foreign culture has affected the dress culture of Kwahu Chiefs?

## SECTION B

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR ELDERS (ROYAL FAMILY/ COMMUNITY)

1. Please kindly tell me about yourself
2. How long have you been an elder of this community?
3. Please tell me about your responsibilities as an elder of royal family/community
4. Can you please narrate your youthful life experiences with the customs and traditions of the Kwahu people prior to becoming an elder?
5. What traditions govern the dress fashion of Kwahu chiefs?
6. Are the chiefs taught how to dress, and who are responsible for doing so?
7. Is there any royal collection of dress codes for the chiefs?
8. Are there special artisans responsible for designing the dresses of Chiefs?
9. Can any other person of the community use the dress code of Kwahu chiefs?
10. Are there significant differences between the dress codes of the chiefs when at the place and when attending durbars or nationals events?
11. Are there special people responsible for the Chief's wardrobe and in charge of dressing him?
12. Are chief's dressed differently when laid in state for burial?
13. Can you give vivid descriptions of the dress code trends of Kwahu chiefs during your youthful ages?

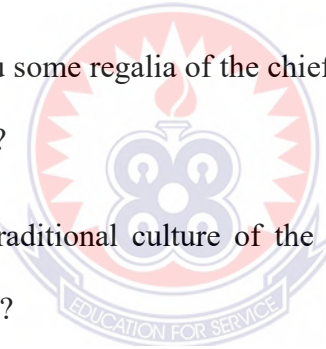
14. Are there significant changes in the dress trends of Kwahu chiefs in recent times?
15. Do you have unique cultural or customary reasons for way Kwahu chiefs dress?
16. What makes dress codes of Kwahu Chiefs distinct from other traditional leaders in Ghana?
17. What happens to the fashion collection of chiefs when they die?
18. Are there symbolic interpretations of your dress code as Chief of Kwahu?
19. Would you say modernity and influence of foreign culture has affected the dress culture of Kwahu Chiefs?



## SECTION C

### INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE YOUTH GROUP IN THE KWAHU COMMUNITY

1. Please kindly tell me about yourself
2. How long have you been living in this community?
3. Please tell me about what you know about the culture of the Kwahu people
4. What do you know about the symbolisms of the dress codes used by the Kwahu chiefs?
5. What does the adinkra symbols designs in the chiefs' cloth signify?
6. I will like to show you some regalia of the chiefs of Kwahu so you can tell me what you know about them?
7. Would you say the traditional culture of the Kwahu people is still relevant and important to the youth?
8. What would you recommend to be done to sustain the interests of the youth in the traditional culture of the Kwahu people?





**Appendix B**

**PERMISSION LETTER**

My ref no: HOA/20/R1

6th April, 2021

Dear Sir,

I am a PhD (Arts and Culture) candidate in the University of Education, Winneba and currently conducting a research on the topic “Documentation of trends in Chiefs regalia within Kwahu traditional area from 1950 to present”.

I am humbly request to be given the permission to visit your palace to interview the chief and elders of your traditional area concerning the historical accounts on the dress codes of Kwahu chiefs from 1950s to our present day.

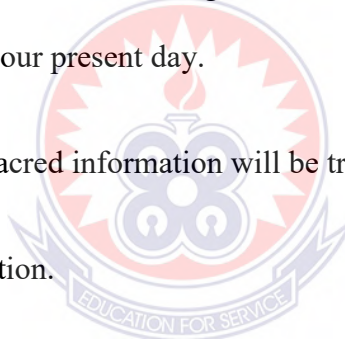
Please be assured that your sacred information will be treated with much confidentiality.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Sincerely Yours.

(Henry Ofosu Ameyaw)

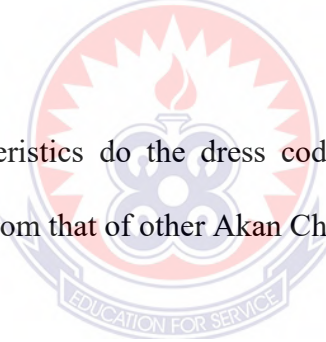
Researcher



## Appendix C

### OBSERVATION GUIDE

1. What constitutes the dress code of Kwahu chiefs
2. What are the distinctions between dress codes used by the Kwahu Chiefs for specific occasions?
3. What are the features of the dress codes of Kwahu Chiefs
4. What changes have occurred in the dress codes of Kwahu Chiefs from the past to present?
5. What elements in the dress codes of Kwahu Chiefs that reflect Afrocentric Ghanaian culture?
6. What unique characteristics do the dress codes of Kwahu Chiefs possess which makes them distinct from that of other Akan Chiefs?



## Appendix D

### Consent Form for Respondents

**Project Supervisors:** Dr. J. B. K. Aidoo

Co-supervisor: Dr. E.K Amissah

**Researcher:** Henry Ofosu Ameyaw

Department of Music Education

School of Creative Arts

University of Education, Winneba, Ghana.

#### **Purpose of this research**

The study sought to examine and catalogue the trends in dress codes of Kwahu chiefs from the 1950s to recent times. It documents and preserves the rich cultural fashion and royal regalia of the Kwahu people of Ghana, highlighting the characteristics, ethnic and cultural symbolism and significance.

#### **What you will be expected to do**

If you agree to participate in this research, you will be asked to be part of a guided interview with the researcher which will be recorded electronically. The interview will take approximately 35 minutes of your time.

#### **Your rights to confidentiality**

The data obtained will be treated with absolute confidentiality. A pseudo name will be assigned to you in order to conceal your actual identity. No information will be released to expose your identity. Only the responsible project researchers will have access to them.

#### **Your right to ask questions at any time**

You may ask questions about the research at any time by contacting the researcher via phone call or WhatsApp on +233243859615. Your right to withdraw at any time Your participation in this research is voluntary. You can skip questions you prefer not to answer. You may withdraw from it or discontinue participation at any time. You may also request for the destruction of your data without any consequences.

#### **Benefits**

Your participation in this research will benefit the public of Ghana as it touches on issues of preservation of traditional culture. The research has an implication for schools in curriculum development that could impact the knowledge of Ghanaian culture in students.

#### **Possible risks**

To our knowledge, there are no risks or discomforts involved in this research beyond those found in everyday life. You can refrain from answering any question if you find it to be

uncomfortable.

**Dissemination**

The results will be disseminated through Ph.D. thesis which could be available online. They may also be disseminated at conferences and in journals.

**Giving consent to participate**

By signing the consent form:

- You certify that you have read, and understand the above, that you have been given satisfactory answers to questions concerning the research, that you are aware that you are free to withdraw your consent and to discontinue participation in the research any time, without any prejudice.
- If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study or any concerns or complaints, please contact the office of the Dean, School of Creative Arts by phone on +233 332-320-654 (calls will be accepted if you identify yourself as a research participant).

**Participant:**

I have read and understand the above information, and that the interview will be audio-recorded, and voluntarily agree to participate in this research.

.....  
**Name (printed)**

.....  
**Signature**

.....  
**Date**

*Please keep a copy of this consent form for your records.*

## Appendix E

### TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW MANUSCRIPTS

#### **Abommaa hene, Kwahu Tafo (Opanyin Aboa Agyapong)**

In responding to the question as to the genesis of chieftaincy in Kwahu, Opanyin Aboa Agyapong who is 74 years old from Brukuwa but traces his ancestry to Abetifi had this to say: As it was in the olden days there were wars so any chief who wanted his peace would migrate to wherever he would find peace, The Buku was were the first to settle on this land followed by the Etena and Biretufo. The Etena and Biretuo families are twin-families whose totem is one. They are much Like Amoakade, Adaa and Aduana families from Obo-kwahu .When they settled here the place was infested with palm trees from which they earned the name Kodiab<sup>3</sup> palm fruit-eaters). The Bukrukuwa had to go for war so they gave their stool to his brother -in-law in Abene for safe-keeping. They were, away for many years when they returned, their brother - in law and his successor had died. Although the stool was still in the custody the people of Abene denied knowledge of the stool. This resulted in a dispute between Abene and Bukruwa. And in the ensuing war that broke out, Abene defeated Bukruwa, and the stool remained in Abene. This explained why Okwahu paramountcy was relocated to Abene, so the first people who settled on the land were the Agona family which was followed by the Etena and Bretuo family, The Etena family came through Agogo. Meanwhile the Etena stool and Mampong stool are one. The Mampong elders bear the same name as the Kwahu elders eg Akuamoah Boateng. During the flight to Kwahu through Agogo, the people fell short of ammunitions so they climbed on to the top of the mountain, Meanwhile as the Ashantis needed these separatists (as it is in every town we need the giant and courageous to fight in wars ) they sent people to pursue and bring the

separatists back to Ashanti. The separatists, who had already climbed the mountain, had men who were charged with patrolling the area to preempt the enemies' advancement. Those patrol would gather stones and hid behind the stones. So when the patrol saw that pursuers coming they would run and climb the mountain and let go of the stones to crush their pursuers

Kubeasehene Abetifi (Nana Otuprekwagyan II)

In his response to the questions posed Kubeasehene Abetifi said: All of us trace our ancestry to Abene. Abene is the paramountcy. We migrated to Abene because an incidence happened. This place is called Kubease; we are not firm Abetifi; we are from Abene. I am the 12th chief. I am 72 years old I was named after the late Omanhene of Kwahu, Akuamoah Acheampong. I have reigned for 16 years. I succeeded Nana Asiamah, I was a teacher, I taught at Abetifi college of Education and Abetifi Presbyterian senior High.

Responding to the question as to his experience as a chief he narrated ; I stayed in the palace for three years, and I am still there; they are not done with me as I am not done with them. I saw most of the chiefs. The late Omanhene of Kwahu was my brother; he was Kwame Acheampong and I am kofi Acheampong.

To the question whether dress codes of chiefs have changed over the years, the respondent said: "we put on the same cloths as our forefathers did during the seventies. During our youthful days as some could not afford the expensive cloths they used to the pieces of cloths around their necks. Chiefs were the people who could afford the expensive cloths. The chief's spokesperson have different styles of putting on their cloths because of the duties assigned to them in the palace. While in response to the question whether there was



an established rule, he said No it was customary not law. Now civilization has led to the manufacture of many different types of cloths for chiefs and people to choose from. At durbars it is inappropriate for the chief to put on a shirt and a pair of trousers, Obomenghene's hat is gorgeously designed; chiefs do wear hats That is why one has to doff his hat when one gets close a chief because an ordinary person should not have their hats on while the chief has his off on. It is a show of respect. Responding to the question whether there have been significant changes in dressing styles of chiefs in recent times the respondent answered thus; Oh yes because of economic reasons. However, significantly the old ways of dressing are still honored. what I know is that in the past whenever a chief kicked the bucket, the mourners put on all-red cloth ( Kobene ) or all - black (birisi, or Kuntunkuni). Different occasion call for different dressing styles. When a chief passes on and the funeral rites have not yet been observed, they may not put on the black cloth. But during the burial rites observation, they may put on red cloth. Chiefs may wear smock from Monday to Friday of the funeral week.

During performance of rites smock wearing is permitted. During the firing of musketry rites where the musketeers make skirmishes and engage in other ritualistic activity. Smock wearing makes one look smart. We put on colourful ones when we are holding durbars when mournful events have occurred we usually put on white cloths, But during thanksgiving occasions where we are enjoying ourselves, we put on golden kente cloth... Yes in the past we wore backs of trees before the wearing of kente emerged, so as time went on dress code was selected to suit the event being observed. The symbols embossed in the cloths must be culturally fitting, If any member of the society wears a cloth embossed with symbols which are culturally distasteful, an elderly person can call that person to

order. we know the right symbols but as we haven't the technology to emboss the symbols in the cloths, we instruct them to emboss the appropriate symbols on the cloths

- To the question whether there are rules governing the wearing of a cloth the respondent answered in the affirmative and said: "If you wear your cloth on the left an elderly will call you and reprimand you Again if you allow your cloth to hang down to cover your feet it implies insult to the elderly or the chiefs.

In answering the question whether the ways in which Kwahus wear their cloth is different from other traditional chiefs in Ghana, the respondent said: "oh, yes we Kwahus have the same cloth style as the Ashantis because we were once part of them. The Ewes and the Gas, however, have different cloth styles from us. Some differences are that the Gas can put on white cloth during funeral occasions, We the Akans will not do that during those occasions for when we are mourning. The Ewes wear their cloths and tie the ends on their shoulders. Again the Gas and "Ewes and even Fantes wear their cloth and on jumpers ... we had practiced the wearing of cloth for a Long time before is the white men who came to introduce us to the wearing of shirt and trousers, and now cloths are worn occasionally.

To the question whether the cloth the chiefs wore were exceptionally different from their subjects, the responder said: "yes the cloths the chiefs wore were exceptional In the past before a chief came out to take his seat at a durbar, the area was surveyed to ensure that nobody was wearing the same type of cloth which the chief would come out in cloth wearing is humoured in Kwahu.

To the question, whether modernity has influenced dress code in Kwahu, the respondent said; not totally we go in for the modern and fashionable and look for the best quality ones. As the cloth is worn regularly one must get the good quality ones so that they can last long

Answering the question how Kwahu came to being, the respondent said, we are from Adanse and came to Asante and descended to Efiduase. They came to meet some people who were hunters, in the ancient times one needed to defeat the settlers and take over their land, so we came from Mampong and defeated several migrant towns before settling and breaking in to towns. Afterwards other migrants joined us; they had been at Nyamewase near Nsawam. They separated because of war and their other halves went to Akwamu' in the ancient times the sole aim of the settlers was to fight and capture lands if a group of settlers saw that a certain group had defeated the other faction in a war the neutral group would join the victorious group so that they could amass forces for future wars.

A group like on Obomeng when they found out that we had defeated our enemies, they joined forces with us. In response to the question whether dress code has changed from the 1960's onwards, the respondent had this to say: " No, I have already told you that the dress code has not changed over the years : but rather people now buy the good quality ones so that they can last long. This state of affairs has resulted in the influx of the foreign ones, so we have developed taste for the foreign

Ones in search for the good quality ones, but the cloth patterns, way of dressing or how we wear the cloth have not changed from the ancient times. When we gather at the palace, one can see only two dress code: cloth and smock. In the medieval times our forefathers used to wear cloth made by beating the back of a tree (danta). The chiefs wore cloths but the subjects used to wear "danta or smock so that they could be smart for the work they used to do.

Chiefs combine tradition with modernity in their private lives, chieftaincy matters must be upheld in the chiefs private life because the chief must be upright, they cannot extricate

themselves from chieftaincy matters in their private lives, Wherever they go, they must be To the question whose responsibility it is to ensure that the chief is decently dressed, the respondent answered thus: It is the Dabehene. A chief is exceptional so he must be descant in dressing He must be exemplary.

To the question if he can tell the things the chief put on when he is appearing in public, the respondent responded thus Yes , some of the things are; kente with gold on Joyous occasion. During funerals the chief puts on a black cloth (kuntunkuni) or a red cloth ( kobene ) and puts on wrist: Sometimes the chief wears a headgear or a hat decorated with things to signify how serious he is.

To the question how the chief will dress on Akwasidae, the respondent replied thus, The chief will put on a white cloth . Akwasidae is the day the chief and his elders sit down and perform libation rites. We have two different Aday, namely Akwasidae and Awukudae, Libation rites are performed on Awukudai. Also on Akwesidae libation rites are performed and the chief and his elders try cases and listen to social issues, we also sit on Saturday's preceding Akwasidae to try cases. During Akwasidae some come to the palace and pay homage to the chief and pledge their gifts.

To the question how the chief's funeral is observed, the respondent replied thus: 'Firstly we observe the 40 day rites and sit to take decision about how the funeral will be observed. The funeral rites observation usually spans two weeks. Every day in the two weeks designated for performance of an activity, When Asante hema, passed on, two weeks were earmarked for the observation of her funeral rites. The chief will lie in state for one week, every day the cloth is changed till the chief is buried.

## **Kwahu Tafo Zomgohene**

Abdul Razak Zuleman

The Zongos don't have the Akan enstoolment rites where the initiate is taken to the stool room blind folded and he is made to touch one of the stools which will eventually become his stool name. The zongos believe that as it is your turn in a monarchical order, you maintains your private name like Abdul Razork.

To the question as to the number of years he has been on the stool the respondent answered; I have reigned for two years now.

To the question if he could tell how Zonngo chieftaincy in Kwahu began, the respondent said, "we are made to understand that Kwahu Tafo Zongo is the oldest in Kwahu among Atibie, Nkawkaw and Kwasiho Zongos. As the towns grew larger we were displaced from time to time. So this made some zongo residents leave for Nkawkaw and other places. Again the Aliens Compliance Order in 1970 caused many zongo residents to migrate to the north.

To the question whether he can tell, the dress code of zongo chiefs at durbars and other festive occasions the respondent said, our main dress code at durbars is the smock...

To the question if he has seen changes in the dress code of zongo chiefs from 1960's upwards the respondent replied No I cannot see any changes over the years, in dress code of the zongo chief, we don't put on cloth; "we put on our traditional long-sleeved gown

known as *batakari*, when a zongo chief dies attend the funeral rites ceremony, we collaborate with the local chiefs in matters concerning development, So we are given the accolade *p3p3ni*, which means a truthful person.

It is believed that in the past all the palaces used to have zongo people to witness in a case because they will speak the truth, Again they are able to foretell future calamities that may befall the chiefs so that it will be redeemed . As have already said, all the Zongos in Nkawkaw, Atibie and Kwasiho will attest to the fact that they all trace their ancestry to Kwahu Tafo.

To the question, how the zong chiefs become relevant in Kwahu chieftancy affairs that the local chiefs would write to zongo chief to chair durbars, the respondent answered this: The zongos are truthful and our elders collaborated with the local chiefs and even fought alongside with them to captured lands, So it's "became incumbent on the local chiefs to accept so that we could develop Kwahu.

To the question how a zongo chief who has passed on is dressed and prepared for burial, the respondent answered thus: As our custom demands, when a chief passes on he is given the same funeral honours as any other person. However, as a chief, even though he would demand that we bring him the same day the local chiefs would have to be informed, and after burial we would have to inform the local chief about the observance of the 'Adoa' rites, and as we attend their funerals they may have to all end overs where the zongo chiefs would also be invited. Our forefathers made us understand that Nkwantanang was a cattle ranch where the people traded in cattle, It didn't have a zongo chief; he was a Moshi so was



looked upon as a Moshihene. So nobody , formally enstooled him as zongo chief, He claimed he had been selected as Zongo chief by the Kwahumanhene who passed on sometimes ago, But if you go to Abene there is no record attesting to the Moshihene's claim. On the contrary, the enstoolment of the present zongo chief was witnessed by Kumasi and Accra Zongo chiefs who were invited by Dasebre Akuamoah Agyapong, This is the first time Kwahu zongo chief has been formally enstooled for us. Abene had had zongo chiefs, before but all could not stand . That Is Why Dasebre saw that there was conflict among the zongo chieftancy affairs did not have a leader who could unite all zongos as it pertains in other areas Dasebre saw that to ensure unity among zongos in Kwahu there should be Kwahu Zongo chief. But we agree that Kwahu paramountcy is Abene, so to have Kwahu zongo chief, we must have Abene zongo chief who will preside over all in the seventeen Kwahu states. No zongo chief in any of the seventeen states other than Abene can claim to be Kwahu zongo paramountcy.for example I cannot be a Tafo Zongo chief and claim to be Kwahu zongo chief, Tafo is Twafohene under Abene so traditonally I believe what Daasebr3 wanted to structure for us the right one that will ensure unity among zongos in Kwahu. So as we see Asanteman, at a point in time kwahuman will also be viewed in that light, so we must all support anything that will ensure prosperity for all to benefit from,Nkwantanang is at the bottom of Pepease, But you can also get there through Abene. You pass-through Kotoso Nkwantynang is not part of the seventeen kwahu states.

Currently the zongo at Abene is the one whom through Daasebr3 has asked all zongos Int channel our grievances to him (Daasebr3). He is the one who has sworn an oath to Daasebre, in the presence of Daasebre's chiefs and elders. He is the zongomanhene of

Kwahu in the person of Ulmar Bawa. He is the first zongo chief. There is no one before him, we thank him for his conviction for the zongo communities. For his conviction as in Ashanti they give zongo communities recognition so we "shall be recognized here. This is what I perceive of Daasebre's intention to uplift the image of zongos so that together we can develop Kwahu. A week ago a Fulani chief was enstooled. But if you hear the negative things people say about the Fulanis, then it becomes necessary to install Kwahu Zongo chiefs who will then install sub -chiefs under him. The installation of the Fulani chief will ensure that arrangement will be put in place for the development of the towns. Plans are being drawn to capture all fulani inhabits places in Kwahu. If we are able to plan well we can have a central cattle market where all people everywhere can come and buy, so we saw the need to enstool Fulani chief for kwahu so he can organise Fulanis in the areas. They have put measures in place which requires the support of all to help come to fruition, all of us are one people, and some think non-Kwahus are different people. But no, the chief is knowledgeable, Daasebre's has made a right choice for us. So when we all rally behind him, we will see Kwahu's development. We thank Daasebre for helping to resolve these grievances through the kwahu Zongo chief. We pray that things will work well for our well-being.

### **Nama Anum Boansi**

In response to a request to give the historical narratives of chieftaincy the respondent Nana Anom Boansi, who said he had ruled for about twenty years had this to say, According to the elders chieftaincy began with hunters, In the medieval times when a hunter discovered a forest land and stayed in the forest for hunting expedition, other hunters joined later.

But to avoid fighting or mistaking one another for a game, they put up boundaries so that each would operate within their territories. Rivers were used as boundaries, The hunters did not stay alone; they stayed with their wives and children and laborers, whenever people came looking for forest land to carry on their hunting expedition, they were directed to see the first hunter to have settled there to show the guest hunter where the boundary ends: So they first settler hunters earned the accolade boundary owner (Known in Akan as (hye3ni) and this word, hye3ni, metamorphosed into (hyene or) hene. Truly most of towns in Akan were founded by hunters: S3manhyia, Fodoa (which means a hunters base); all attest to this assertion.

To the question how the chiefs dress code to durbars and other festive occasions have been from 1960 s upwards the respondent had this to say. The chiefs dressing depends on the time the work or the festival to attend. Usually the chiefs wear kente, so chiefs alone wore cloth such as " Asam ntakra? yoko mma, Adinkrahene The wearing of types of kente lead to wearing of Adwinasa for chiefs and prominent persons in society. Again, some paramount chief wore 'gagawuga'. Gagauga wa such a big cloth that if someone goes to a room to put on a cloth and he delays we say mockingly about him that if even you were putting on gagauga, you would not have taken this time, The gagauga when worn

must be straight, For example if a picture of a leopard has been embossed into the cloth, it must be seen in the cloth as standing, it must not be seen as lying on its back. Alternatively, if the bird "asam" has been designed in the cloth, it must be seen as communicating to an observer. Those cloths were specially woven for paramount chiefs. For example, Okyehene is usually seen wearing a cloth with a leopard design in it. If a chief wants a particular design, he can have it designed unto the cloth for him, that is the cloth called gagauga, Gagauga' is a thick cloth; its types are what are worn "by the gentlemen these days. The cloths have designs that carry messages. Any cloth that a chief wears should match with native sandals, hats and necklaces, so if one goes to the palace one can see different kinds of necklaces, cloths, amulets, and wrist bands, if the dressing is for festive occasion, it is usually a nice kente or adwinasa. If a chief puts on adwinasa and puts on necklaces such as 'Safoa nkonsonkonson'.

This is a chain made with gold with or golden key hanging at the bottom end. Necklaces are worn by both men and women. But the difference with what chiefs wear is that chief's necklaces which are called 'ntweaban' are heavy thick and long, which can hang down to kneel level. The wristbands are sometimes called "Ohuruie3- tare akyekyede3 akyi kwa which literally means "The tsetse fly sticks at the back of the tortoise in vain Generally, the dress code of the chiefs in Kwahu depends on the occasion or durbar the chief is attending. During funerals the chiefs wear black cloth (Kuntunkuni) or red cloth (koben) or (asonawo) The asonawo, is red kente with a designed like snakes. sometimes the chiefs put on smock (batakari Kese3). The Smock is worn by the chief if he has heard bad news, The great smock (batakari kunini) is also worn with cowry sandals to match; the chief can also wear black hat, So as I have already told you the dress code of the chief depends on the occasion

and the job to do. Kwahus are Akans so our dressing have no difference. The only occasion where the dress code may differ is when a chief is to honour a hunter, in the medieval times chiefs used to honour hunters. All in my Life I have witnessed such an occasion once a hunter helped the chief in many ways. The hunter used to help the chief to get 'Mena', Mena is the tail of the elephant. This used to be (and it still is) the warrant used to summon culprits to the palace. Chiefs reward hunters who kill elephants whose tails are used as 'mena'. They dig a trench and the accomplished hunters eat and drink in honour of the departed colleague elephant hunter, usually chiefs attend ceremonies; the attendee chief would put on "Krusi". The 'krusi' looks like a sack which has been cut open at the two bottom corners and given a neck. Then the chief would put on 'nkuronua' .The 'nkuronua' is a pair of sandals made from owawa' or 'ogyima' wood. This is what the chief will put on to attend the funeral of the elephant hunter. The chief would wear the sack and nkuronua and a hat. The hat is not a nice one; it is the made of black cloth to match the Krusi. The chief thus dresses like a hunter who must disguise himself. If a hunter wears anything bright he will be easily spotted by the game that he is luring to shoot. Again the chief should wear beads (bodom) on his wrist. To the question whether the chiefs in 1950 put on hats as part of their dress code the respondent had this to say, Yes they did. When the chiefs used to attend durbar in the colonial periods at Mpraeso, all the chiefs would dress in kente cloth The Kwahumanhene would be carried in a palanquin and would wear a headgear called "Osrane ne Nsoroma" .The chief would also wear gold band and rings .He would wear kente and silk and put on golden necklace (ntweaban). All his elders will wear Kente but the chief should make sure that the kente he wears must exceptionally different, at the chief must carry spare cloth so that if they found out that they were wearing the same

cloth as their subjects they would go and change their cloth. So chiefs wore kente cloth. To the question how chiefs get their cloths , whether they import or make themselves, the respondent had this to say, Among the Akans Kente is the most expensive cloth, but as Kente is not worn daily the chiefs use imported cloth, especially cloths which have brand names like 'asorbayer3 d)t)', 'dade3 mpadua, kromo-nte Awesa, or dumas or durable cloths used to be cloth's the chiefs wore daily, cloths like akok) -mm)- wo-se etc. are not worn by chiefs: sometimes they used to wear nwentoma and the kente embossed with used patterns which cotton has been used to weave in Ghana but it is thick cloth. The chief used to buy the cloth from the Northern part of Ghana or they used to buy Kente from Kumasi My grandparents use to spin their own cotton and weave so the chiefs had people who used to weave cloths for them.

To the question whether the chiefs are taught how to wear clothes or whose duty it is to teach chiefs how to put on cloths, the responded said, In the past when a chief was enstooled, it would take about forty days to complete all the processes, so the Ankobeahene would see to take the chief through the wearing of cloth, making public speeches etc. During that period the chief would be referred to as being kept in a palm frond hut. During that time the Ankobeahene would teach the chief a lot of things. The Ankobeahene usually used to do that with the Gyaasewaa, Gyaasewaa is usually the son of the chief. There are about three or four ways of putting on a cloth. Sometimes the chief's cloth must touch their feet, at other times it must touch the knees, and so on. Mind" if the chief puts on his cloth to touch. His knees, it means the chief is in the hurry. So there are three types; the one which touches the knee, the one which goes beyond the



calf and the one which reaches .All these the Ankobeahene teaches the chief. To rather question whether the chiefs reaches his feet and touch the ground, the respondent had this to say, Yes, it does, when the chief is showing off his position and his royalness, he does that and dirty the cloth.

To the question who washes the chiefs cloth, the respondent replied thus ' in the palace there are about forty different groups who do a lot of work, for example the horn blowers, those who wash thechiefs calabash, there are some who carry chiefs towels and sponges chiefs. When a chief is taking his bath the servants would hold the chiefs towel and sponges till the chief finishes and collect the towel to dry himself, so the cloth getting dirty is not a big issue. Even some chiefs would not wear their cloths for more than three times. So if they wash once or twice, they keep the cloth in the wardrobe. That is why chiefs have many cloths. So the cloths don't get pale before they dispose of them. The chief may look for a servant who has served him well and fashionable the cloth to him.

To the question how a chief laid in state will be dressed, the respondent replied thus, the funeral of the Akans is a reflection of their belief in life after death. Akans believes that when a person dies, he/she makes a journey into another world and continues life after death, So by all means the chief who is believed to have gone to his ancestors is gorgeously dressed in kente cloth such as adwiniasa or asamntakra with golden wristband .Sometimes if he is, to laid in state for a long time intermittently his cloths are changed. All the cloths used to dress the chief's body must be good quality cloths accompanied by long necklaces (ntweaban), - wristband (nkapo) and sandals.

To the question whether the chiefs necklaces and wristband are, removed before the corpse is buried or whether they bury the chief with these items, the respondent said. The Akans refer to the chief who has passed on as having gone to the village. As he is believed to be going to his village, he is given anything of which he would need in the life after death - cups, plates, and bucket. All these are carried along with him into the underworld. In the medieval times even the servants who serve him were also sent along with him! After the funeral, the chief is laid to rest in a place separated by building a fence (baammu) there are different types of baammu. A special place is prepared to keep the chiefs mortal remains there to allow the body to get rid of the bodily fluid. After that the mortal remains is carried to 'Baamm Ketuwa' where it is Laid on 'nsaa' ( good quality bed spread made in the north) when, chiefs are alive , they sleep on good quality bed spread (nsaa), So the chiefs mortal remains is taken from 'Asone3' baammu and Laid in the Baammu ketewa. Then the body is dressed in gold, The gold continues to be used to decorrate the body hence the proverb, when a royal's corpse decomposes, it is smoked with gold (Odehye3 nam por) a, yade sika na 3ho), So when the joints begin to disintegrate, gold is used to weld the joints, when the body parts become too weak to beheld together and eventually breaks apart, the place where the body had been laid would be filled with gold; and the place becomes filled with gold so that place becomes a treasury where they could go for gold in time of need . It would be a very Long time that the body would be finally laid in the grave: So there are people in the palace called Baammufo) who are excutioners who guard the Baammu,from the time the chief is laid in state up to the time the corpse is taken to As)nee3, Baammu and then taken to Adae3 will be many years -more than four years. Our forefathers had the technology of embalming the corpse of the chiefs but our generation has lost that

technology.

To the question whether he could tell his experience as a royal the respondent replied: God has been good unto me! I saw my mother's grandmother whom i stayed with and schooled up to class Six before she died at the age of 130. My father was a royal at Akyem Oda, He later became Oda Krofoso chief before he died so when I came to Mpraeso four of my grandparents were founding chief of Mpraeso so I trace my ancestry to two loyal families so when I go to my father's i see what goes on there and I came to my mother I knew where went on there, As the two families were royals when the was going to be a durbar, I got elderly people whom I followed to be educated , For example I have already talked about the Empire Day during the colonial era and in 1952 when Queen Elizabeth was installed as Queen of England , we observed the Empire Day at Mpraeso where all the Kwahu held a durbar at Mpraeso. We could see the executioner who recited the praise poetry before the chiefs. One could also see different types of traditional and recreational activities. Again chieftaincy, to during Akwasidae all the chiefs used to gather and we witnessed a lot of chieftaincy activities such as the chief sitting in state for their subjects to come and pay homage to him, I was privileged to have the opportunity to watch many activities, Even though those times the palace was scary as we had relatives who were chiefs and sub-chiefs in the palace, we could visit the palace regularly, so, as I have had encounter with chieftaincy activities. I have special respect for chiefs and chieftaincy activities. In response to the question how the how chiefs dress during Akwasidae in the1950's the respondent said during festive occasions like Akwasidea the chiefs wore Black and white. During the Adaekese<sup>3</sup> the chiefs celebrated the day wearing black "cloth. In response to the question what tradition govern the wearing of cloth in Kwahu, the

respondent. said The weaving of cloth is guided or dictated by the durbar or the occasion, For example at a funeral the chief bound to put on a black cloth (kuntunkuni) or ol red cloth( koben ) or ( asonawo ).we wear, the cloth to suit the type of festival being celebrated. In answering the question if he could give the fair description of the trends of the dress code of Kwahu chiefs starting from the 1950's the respondent had this to say The Kwahus when we are celebrating festivals, during the last day when the chiefs attend the festival durbar, they put on the best of their cloths in Kente and headgear necklaces and the wristband that will match the cloth the chief is wearing However, during Akwasidee where the chief has to greet his subjects and the travelers also to come and greet the chief. During Akwasiae the chief and his people usually embark on town- cleaning exercise; they would clear the foot path and the path that lead to the public latrine. Some would go to the farm only to collect foodstuffs for the occasion and that come back. So one realizes everywhere is neat. By 7:00 am all the elders would come round and they greet the chief and wish him well. If there is any outstanding issue to be settle the following day, they would sit and outline the procedure for the trial. At 9:00 am the chief would sit in sit state for the people to come and pay homage to the chief and present, their individual gifts for the chief through his spokesperson the gifts can be, money or drinks or cloth... That day the chief would be cogently dressed. The other elders would not be so gorgeously dressed as to compete with the chief. The chief will always stand out. In response to the question how the chiefs dress in Awukudae, the respondent said, we in Mpraeso do not usually observe the Awukudae. Normally the chief and his elders meet on Akwasidae when there are disputes to settle, during that period any descent which does not signify that one is in mourning mood can be worn. If a new chief is going to be sworn-in, they put on black

cloth. The wearing of black on this occasion reminisces the death of the past chief. The people of Akuapem and Akyem who do not usually celebrate the Akwasidae observe the Awukudae. The choice of Awukudae for observance over Akwasidae came as agreement between the Presbyterian Church and the elders of Akuapem and Akyem who swapped the observance between Sunday and Wednesday so that the people could go to church on Sundays. In response to the question what the chief wears on a court day the respondent replied thus, the chief wears black or red (birisi, or Kobene). When we are trying cases, the chief usually wears dark cloth because case tryings are usually accompanied with pain.

To the question whether chiefs cloth-wearing has seen changes in recent times, the respondent had this to say, yes, it has, the difference between the recent cloth wearing and what what pertained the past lies in the fact that the recent ones are machine-made where are the ancient ones were hand-made. Kente can be worn by whoever has money to buy. But people make sure what they wear should not outclass what the chief will wear, In the past if an ordinal person's cloth was seen as outclassing that of the chief, the executioners would go and seize the cloth, and the person would go home naked, Even the culprit would be taken away to the palace Today on the other hand, anybody who can afford can buy any cloth he wishes. This state of affairs has led to situation where the chiefs would have to always look for both the hand-woven and the machine -woven. It is therefore becoming financially demanding because the chiefs have to be abreast of the changing cloth fashion, Another change that has occurred is the gold nuggets and necklaces that used to be pure gold are today fake gold or impure, Sometimes one can see a chief having gorgeously dressed in what may appear to be pure gold which into reality may be impure (daadaakra)

In the past the chief's apparel would be pure gold but nowadays it is usually fake. Some of the prominent chiefs still put on impure gold. In answering the question what "kabu is, the respondent said Kabu used to be an expensive and imported cloth but today Kabu has lost its past glory. Chiefs used to attend funerals in Kabu alongside kuntunkuni, Children or ordinary persons could not buy it but today because of cloths like Me-ba- wo.-Aburokyire Kabu has lost its glory, so kabu has lost its popularity, and this is part of the changes that have taken place recently. Some of the changes that have occurred are that the amulets and the waistband and the wristband that the chiefs wore in the past could invoke spiritual powers, such as ability to disappear from sight, ability to repel bullets because of what he wears around his waist, wrist or neck. But today these things do not conjure spiritual "powers any longer, they have become impotent. Even the smock chiefs wore were labelled with amulets which had spiritual powers, so today most of the things which the chief wore to protect themselves no longer have spiritual powers.

To the question whether there are any unique customary reasons for dressing the way they do. The respondent answered thus, In the past when a was enstooled he was ordered to wear a big smock (batakarikese<sup>3</sup>) which was the smock the chief's predecessor had worn in battle. In those smock the spiritual powers of the past chiefs were harbored. There was a general believe that when the chief wore those smocks they would be imbued with spiritual powers to withstand gunshot or food poisoning attempts by their enemies, so It is believed that the wearing of those things invokes ancestral spiritual powers The Akans, are like rope; they intertwine: Adonten Abene were founded by Etena and Biretuo twin-families. They trace their ancestry to Asante Mampong, the Asona family are from Mpraeso and



Kwahu Tafo. We trace our ancestry to Akyem and Adanse. So the Akan cultures are alike: All the Kwahu and the other Akans have similar cultures.

To the question whether a father could bequeath cloths and other things used to dress to his sons, the respondent answered thus: it is unusual for a chief to bequeath these items to his nephew. If I dash those things to my nephew, it means my nephew is not hardworking; he could not work to acquire his own. A chief is supposed to be a royal, If it happens like that the people will ridicule the chief and cast insinuation and say that after all your uncle dashed his belongings to you. As I am sitting on a chair as da chief, if I get up my nephew cannot sit on it; but my son can do. Replying to the question what the meaning of that is, the respondent said, yes, if I am alive my nephew cannot sit on my chair, he sits on my chair he will get swollen headed and will be in a hurry to eliminate me so that he can inherit me. Rather my son should sit on it and protect it for me. "There are stories of chiefs whose sons held the forth for them while they were away. As for nephews they cannot come near the throne when the time to inherit the stool has not come. In response to the question what makes the wearing of cloth by Kwahu chiefs different from the other chiefs such as the Gas and the Ewes, the respondent answered thus! When Kwahus wear cloth, they wear necklaces to cover our neck and chest but the Ga's, the Ewes and the Krobos wear jumpers and wear the cloths over the jumpers. Kwahus on the contrary do not wear jumper. Again whereas Kwahu chiefs wear long necklaces Krobos chiefs wear beads. Sometimes the Kwahu chiefs wear beads like bodom, bota, sowotuum and mpuruka; these are beads kwahu chiefs use alongside the necklaces these beads used to be expensive beads as the

gold necklaces used to be. So while the Krobo chiefs wear beads, Kwahu chiefs wear gold nuggets. The Gas wear ' togas'.

To the question whether Kwahu chiefs wear togas they respondent had this to say, “What Kwahu wear is called 'ntwontwo'. In the medieval times (I saw little of it) they used to put on loin cloth. Even chiefs used to wear it; they use to pass it under their genitals. I remember a man called Opanyin Donkor who deliberately used to put on loin cloth during festivals. If you put on a cloth and you don't join the sides, you show your waist there was also 'danta' made of silk and they also sew ntwontwo. The Gas wear hats. The Kwahus wear hats, but we refer to ours as head gear (abotire or ahenky3 ). The abotire is made of a piece of cloth, but the top is open. What a chief wears to cover his top is ahenky3 (a crown). Answering the question whether the Gas wear kente nowadays, the respondent said, yes, now there is cultural diffusion so even the chief's wear smock at durbars Gas too can wear smock, although not at grand durbars. When a minister finds or the president is paying a visit to his new town, the chief can put on a smock. In reply to the question if there are symbolic interpretation of the chief's dress code, the respondent had this to say, as for the cloth it does not carry any interpretation but the rings are designed to carry messages. A tsetse fly perching at the back of a tortoise signifies that the enemy or the envious person attempt at the stool is in vain. If the ring is designed as a mud fish then it means that whatever the chief does he thinks about it .We also have a ring designed in the form of a crab and a bird the smallest bird to signify supplication or concession of guilt. A ring can be designed in a form of a barrel used to store pork: This design means five for fire. We also have a ring which has a knot on it (Epokore); which means we are of one

mind.

In reply to a request to give the names of the rings in English, the respondent said he could not give already made names in English. In answer to the question what the chiefs red symbolises a part from the rings, the respondent said, it symbolises mourning or ligation or a case whose verdict is going to be given or pain, or funeral. Black portrays seriousness, bad times, or battle -ready. White portrays happiness .In reply to a question whether the chiefs hats convey meaning the respondent said, "Yes, some do. For example a hat can show stars and the moon. As we know of stars they are always present in the sky whereas the moon is on and off (asrane bewu agya nsoromma) if a chief wears that hat, it means his enemies or those who don't agree to his enstoolment as a chief would die not before him. It can also mean that the stars depend on the light of the moon

In reply to the question whether the necklaces carry meaning, the respondent said some do, some necklaces have padlocks or keys at the ends. This means he who holds the keys is the owner of the house, so the chief is the owner of the town or the village. Answering the question whether the chief's native sandals carry messages, the respondent said, sometimes the sandals have symbolic designs. For example a scorpion on the sandals means that, if I step on a scorpion, it cannot harm me because I wear it ( the scorpion ) already the colours of the sandals and the cloth should match: Sometimes the chief will wear a smock which is embossed with talisman , then the sandals will be embossed with talisman. If the chief puts on 'Krusi' (as I have already explained ) then he will wear wooden sandals ( nkuronua). In response to the question whether modernity and foreign culture have impacted on the cloth wearing of the Kwahu chiefs the respondent said yes, because of modernity certain cloths which in the past were considered the preserve of chiefs can now be worn by ordinary

persons these days but as it is his right to wear anything he cannot be sacked from the durbar ground as used to be in the medieval times. Again, because of modernity the rings and the long necklaces which are worn by the chiefs are now mostly impure; one can these days hear of town people rumoring that one chief or the other has sold their pure gold nuggets and replaced them with fake ones: This breeds misunderstanding among the people that anybody but can wear anything. In the medieval times ordinary people could not wear certain types of sandals but today one can see a young boy or a young girl wearing native sandals with an eagle designed on it. In response to the question whether modernity and foreign culture have impacted on the cloth wearing of the Kwahu chiefs the respondent said yes, because of modernity certain cloths which in the past were considered the preserve of chiefs can now be worn by ordinary persons these days but as it is his right to wear anything he cannot be sacked from the durbar ground as used to be in the medieval times. Again, because of modernity the rings and the long necklaces which are worn by the chiefs are now mostly impure; one can these days hear of town people rumoring that one chief or the other has sold their pure gold nuggets and replaced them with fake ones: This breeds misunderstanding among the people that anybody but can wear anything. In the medieval times ordinary people could not wear certain types of sandals but today one can see a young boy or a young girl wearing native sandals with an eagle designed on it. We have opportunity for higher education must look for appropriate ways to safeguard our culture: we can do it. The countries which share border with us envy our peaceful culture. But if we don't take care we may lose it. Now what has kept our culture going is the extended family system; but even this one is gradually fading away, what is left about the extended family system that the people are interested in is the chieftaincy, Any rich person would want to

inherit the stool in his or her family. That aside, we are relegating our culture to the background - our language, our food, our dressing are all changing, we've got to salvage what 'Is remained of the culture, or else we shall be Allen-citizens, our own Language we cannot speak well. In fact we are seeing so many things, we are praying to God to grant you who can uninvestigated issues long life to do so. I wish eight out of ten persons could identify the Akan culture we may the researcher thanked the respondent for his in-depth knowledge of the Kwahu chieftaincy.

Obohene (Nana Obuagyan Afari II)

In responding to the question how chieftaincy begin in Kwahu or when Kwahus saw the need to choose a chief the respondent said It was a priest called Ramsyer who led the Kwahus to Kyebi where the British had pitched their camp, then we went to Kyebi' and sought pleaded under the British protectorate, the Ashantis ceased their aggression towards us. In 1885 when the Kwahus formed part of the Ashantis whenever we went for war, the kwahus would lead contingent with thence the accolade: Asante ne ne Kwawuo' .In response to the question who the first chief was the respondent had said,The Kwahus came to their present abode in groups. Bepong came first; they built twelve states in Kwahu They were led by) dc3ee Y3anko' he said he would not fight. Bepongs, were followed by Abene and the Pepease and Abetifi. In response to the question what the chiefs dress code was the respondent said, 'when we are attending funerals we put on black (kuntunkuni) or red (kobene) for the lying -In-state and burial ceremonies.In responding to the question, what the chiefs dress code was during enstoolment in 1960s, the respondent said Black (kuntunkuni) and this dress code spanned through the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s .In response to the question if the chief could put on native sandals to a durbar the respondent

said, "yes, all the durbars. He can also delegate his elders to attend in response to the question what the dress code of the respondent will be if he was celebrating the Brenya Afahye or Easter, the respondent answered this, Benya Afahilye means I've suffered before possessing the Land, They accused Obohene of preparing to join Akyem Kotoko so the Ashantis summoned the Kwahu elders. When they went, the Ashantis Killed all of them' only one drummer was able to escape The Asenes later joined the Kwahus from Amakom in Kumasi, Afari Buaggyan came and met Obo kontihene here. They had fled from the Ashantis: when the people went to fetch water for an elder who had paid visit, a tiger caught one of them, So we commemorate that event in the celebration of the Brenya festival, We tie a sheep to a tree at okyeso to lure and finally killed the tiger which had caught the elder, we named the river whose bank the ancient had occurred 'Asubone' An evil river.

In response to the question what they wear at festivals, the respondent explained thus, It depends upon the occasion, He put on kente for marriage ceremonies and white for Akwasidae and Awukudae, For enstoolment we put on black.

To the question how they get the cloth, the respondent said, "We buy from Kumasi. It is very expensive.

To the question who dresses a chief, the respondent said, one chief does that, He is the Dabehene, He sleeps in the same room with the chief. Answering the question how the chief's death is announced, the respondent said, if he is a paramount chief all the chiefs would.