

Nyansapo
(The Wisdom Knot)

Toward an African Philosophy of Education



Kwadwo A. Okrah

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KNOT)

Toward an African Philosophy of
Education

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This book is dedicated to
My mother, Adwoa Amanfo (a.k.a. Adelaide Adwoa Konadu),
My late senior brother, Kwaku Appau-Okrah
And my lovely daughters Maame Konadu and Akua Asafo-
Agyei

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Preface

The study of traditional, indigenous educational practices such as rites of passage, folktales, land use, etc. has fallen mainly within the interest of anthropologists. Because scholars have tended to equate education with the formal school building and have consistently focused on the role of literacy and literary tradition, many important and interesting traditions (especially African traditions) have been seen as falling outside the parameters of “legitimate” study in the history and philosophy of education (Reagan, 1996). This is unfortunate, for schools have overlooked the inherent value of informal traditional education (Fafunwa, 1982).

This study examines the issues of indigenous philosophies, which are embedded in different aspects of socialization process among the Akan of Ghana, a major African ethnic group located in the heart of West Africa, described by observers as the “cultural center of Africa.” The research therefore examined the possibility of forging a new future that builds on the positive aspects of their past and present and on carefully chosen ideas, methods and technology from abroad.

To explore the problem, I traveled to Ghana to collect data from June to September 1998. The data collection was done through “participant observation,” face-to-face interviewing and audio taping participants’ responses. I selected the participants through purposeful sampling.

I participated and observed funeral rites, traditional court proceedings and other social and religious activities. I also observed modern classroom teaching and learning, the school atmosphere and everyday activities.

To analyze the data, I applied the domain and thematic analysis (Spradley, 1979). Four main themes that emerged were the vehicles of Akan philosophies, the preparedness of the modern Akan to maintain the indigenous philosophies, factors militating against the maintenance of Akan indigenous philosophies and suggested programs to forge a new curriculum that combines Akan indigenous philosophies with modern education. It was found that the philosophical import of Akan indigenous culture is clear to the modern Akan. The western educated Akan have realized the need to appreciate and understand the traditional education of the African child both in terms of goals and means. This will help make use of local resources in the education of the African child so that he or she would be prepared to function in his or her own world.

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I wish to acknowledge with profound gratitude the assistance I received from the many people who, in diverse ways, made it possible for me to complete this work. With minor changes, this work was submitted to the College of Education at Ohio University, United States of America as my Ph.D. dissertation.

For their prayers and spiritual support, I am especially thankful to my mother Adwoa Amanfo (Adelaide Adwoa Konadu), my daughters Nana Konadu (Maame Konadu) and Cheryl Akua Asafo-Agyei and also my brothers and sisters.

For his encouragement, academic and financial support, I am deeply thankful to Dr. William Stephen Howard, my advisor and the director of my Ph.D. dissertation. I should also put on record the financial help I received from the College of Education, Ohio University, the John Houk Memorial Research Grant, and the Center for Higher Education and International Programs, Ohio University, which enabled me to travel to Ghana to collect the data for this book.

For either singularly or severally of the unfailing source of encouragement and hope of, the cooperation and guidance of, the true friendship and emotional support of or the sharing of thought, I owe a great debt of gratitude to the following:

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I cannot bring this acknowledgement to an end without mentioning Dr. Molefi Kete Asante (Temple University) for his encouragement and recommendation for the publication of this book.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

OVERVIEW

After Rattray had studied the different aspects of the culture of the *Asante* of Ghana and satisfied himself with the values and potency of the culture of the *Asante* people, he regretted that indigenous people like these should be made to discard their past. In his anxiety he postulated as follows:

Guard the national soul of your race and never be tempted to despise your past. Therein lies the sure hope that your sons and daughters will one day make their own original contributions to knowledge and progress. Thoughtful Englishmen can never wish that free peoples such as you, members of a diverse and widely scattered commonwealth, should try to become wholly Europeanized. In your separate individualities and diversities lies your ultimate value to the Empire and the world. (Rattray, 1927)

The above quotation from Rattray is relevant in an attempt towards designing a system of education in Ghana that warns against despising our past. An attempt towards a construction of indigenous philosophy of education should also endeavor to counteract the aspects of colonial system of education that performed the function of producing loyal British subjects. My reference to the colonial education system in Ghana finds expression in the fact that it provides the background for the current educational system. Among other characteristics, the education system in Ghana, like other African countries, fashion on the evidence that mastery of the Anglo-culture, particularly mastery of the English language, has become one of the most important criterion of upward social mobility through education (Miller, 1989). In effect therefore, the cultural scene of Ghana today evinces a gross and undue affectation by Western culture and there arises the necessity more than ever before for a stronger defense of our culture in this stupendous rush of change in our modern times (Bedu-Addo, 1981).

This book examines the issues of indigenous philosophies that are embedded in different aspects of the socialization process in African societies. It particularly investigates in detail the Akan of Ghana and their wise lore as they are passed on by

past generation to maintain and restore social equilibrium. The discussion illustrates how Akan philosophies are expressed orally through the vehicle of proverbs, riddles, idioms, folk tales, myths, songs and games. The socialization processes and other practices that have equally been focused on include naming and names systems, family systems and marriage, puberty rites and child rearing practices. Consequently, the philosophies and cultural values behind these practices and rituals are “reclaimed,” interpreted and used as a “concentric (known to unknown) approach in learning.” Such an approach to education can arouse children’s interest in the classroom. Thus, an attempt is made to situate the various indigenous philosophies discussed in the heart of formal and informal educational discourse both in the modern school situation and in actual life situation.

The discussions in this book will both help us understand the common principles that underlie all educational undertakings and to understand the different means that human beings have devised to accomplish these principles. This awareness and understanding of how Africans educated their children, both in terms of the goals that guided their educational system and the means that they employed to achieve these goals may well help modern educators to develop a more critical and sensitive understanding of the educational goals and methods that need to be used in our modern societies depending upon available resources. It will also establish a discourse between traditional culture and modern classroom “school” education.

Another feature that emerges from the discourse is a correction of the erroneous assumption by many that “education” and “schooling” are synonymous constructs, an assumption that has led them to dramatically distort the reality of the African experience. In the analysis by Reagan (1996) he has posited that, “the study of traditional, indigenous educational practices has been reduced to the study of “socialization” and “acculturation” and has been left to anthropologists and others.” In furtherance to his claim, he maintains that, “because scholars have tended to equate “education” with “schooling” and because they have consistently focused on the role of literacy and literary tradition, many important and interesting—indeed fascinating—traditions (especially African traditions) have been seen as falling outside the parameters of “legitimate” study in the history and philosophy of education “I also share Babs Fafunwa’s (1974) regret that “because indigenous education failed to conform to the ways of the Westernized system, some less well-informed writers have considered it primitive, even savage and barbaric. But such contentions should be seen as the product of ignorance and due to the total misunderstanding of the inherent value of informal education.

In sum, this book investigates the different aspects of Akan lifestyle— political, social and economic activities including aspects of their oral tradition. Philosophies behind these activities have been extracted and adapted in the modern educational system, thus, adding another dimension to the already existing literature on Akan culture and Education in Ghana. Consequently, the conclusions of this book intend to bring some ideas to bear on the Ghanaian curriculum for schools.

WHY AKAN FOR THE CASE STUDY?

The Akan of Ghana was the targeted population in this study. The choice of the Akan for the study rests on a number of reasons including the following:

1. Akan is the largest ethnic group in Ghana.
2. The Akan culture and traditions are similar in scope and practice to other Ghanaian cultures and in fact, the West African sub-region, especially the Mende of Sierra Leone, the Ibo and Yoruba of Nigeria and others.
3. As a native of Akan, not only does my cultural background give me an added advantage to research into the socialization and educational process of the people, I also studied the culture to the college level and served as the Presidential state linguist of the country in 1992.

THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The philosophical foundation and theoretical approach that guide this book is Dewey's "social construction of knowledge." John Dewey, in article II of his "Pedagogic Creed" (1897) opines:

Education is a process of living and not a preparation for future living.

That, the school must represent present life—life as real and vital to the child as that which carries on in the home, in the neighborhood, or on the playground.

That, education that does not occur through forms of life, forms that are worth living for their own sake, is always a poor substitute for the genuine reality, and tends to cramp and to deaden (p. 115).

According to Dewey, social construction of knowledge should be prime in all educational enterprise and that learning must be tied to a concrete social situation (Spring, 1994). Also, individual subjects must be integrated into the teaching of all other subjects so that all the knowledge learned in these disciplines would be tied to a particular social situation.

Another guiding principle of this work is that research should benefit the people who are providing information. Too often, researchers have exploited the good will and generosity of their informants, giving little or nothing in return. Therefore, ethical research, hierarchical education, and shifts initiative, should benefit and entrust power onto local people (Chambers, 1983).

On the methodological level, the theoretical grounding of "interpretive approach" could be a heuristic contribution to an objective investigation into the culture and philosophies of Akan of Ghana. In applying the interpretive approach, Carr and Kemmis (1990) have observed that the crucial character of social reality is that it possesses an intrinsic meaning structure that is constituted and sustained

through the routine interpretive activities of its individual members. The objective character of society, then, is not some independent reality to which individuals are somehow subjects. Rather, society comes to possess a degree of objectivity because social actors, in the process of interpreting their social world, externalize and objectify it. Society is only “real” and “objective” in so far as its members define it as such and orient themselves towards the reality so defined (Carr and Kemmis, 1990).

In the argument of the interpretive school, the behavior of human beings consists, in the main, of their actions, and a distinctive feature of actions is that they are meaningful to those who perform them and become intelligible to others only by reference to the meaning that the individual actor attaches to them (Carr and Kemmis, 1990). Thus, observing a person’s actions does not simply involve taking note of the actor’s overt physical movements. It also requires an interpretation by the observer of the meaning, which the actor gives to his behavior. Ayer’s (1946) demonstration for this point supports the argument that one type of observable behavior may constitute a whole range of actions. To him, raising and drinking a glass of wine could be interpreted as

1. An act of self-indulgence,
2. An expression of politeness,
3. A manifestation of loyalty,
4. A gesture of despair,
5. An attempt at suicide,
6. A religious communication.

In view of this, actions cannot be observed in the same way as natural objects. They can only be interpreted by reference to the actor’s motives, intentions or purposes in performing the action (Carr and Kemmis, 1990).

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

This study explores the presence of an African philosophy of education in Akan culture. The topic “African philosophy of education” needs not be misleading in investigating Akan culture. This is because the central features of the type to which African cultures belong is that, there is a certain *common* world-view to which can be related, all other central concepts *in most, if not all, African societies* including those of religion and theology, morality and social organization (Abraham, 1995). Also, a volume of Ghanaian philosophy is a volume of African philosophy. Although there are differences of detail and, possibly in some cases, of principles between Ghanaian conceptions and those entertained in other parts of Africa, there are deep affinities of both thought and feelings across the entirety of ethnic Africa (Wiredu & Gyekye, 1992). But in order to illustrate the way in which all other central aspects of the traditional African flow from a certain worldview, I shall choose the Akan of Ghana as my paradigm.

As Danquah (1944), Sarpong (1977), Safro (1995) and others have observed, the Akans belong to the Tano language family to the east and west of the Tano river in the coastal and forest regions of the West African countries of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire. In Ghana, the Akans are found mostly to the east of the Tano River in the Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Central, Western and Eastern regions of the country. They speak dialects such as Akuapim, Asante, Fante, Kwahu and Akyem, collectively called the Akan language, part of which is more popularly known as Twi.

My choice of the Akan for the study therefore is based on a conglomeration of factors. First, in order to make generalizations supposedly to benefit the entire country in curriculum enrichment, it would be appropriate and more convenient to use the ethnic group with the largest population and also to consider how familiar and conversant other non-members of the group are with the group under study. Also, my concern for traditional education and systems of thought implicitly calls for an ethnic group that has maintained most aspects of their indigenous culture. And as Antwi (1992) has asserted, "it is important to note that the indigenous people of Ghana, particularly those in the forest zone (*the Akan*), are Sudanese Africans who, ethnically speaking, have remained *comparatively pure* over several centuries."

In his "Readings In African Philosophies: An Akan Collection," Safro (1995) has stated that, "in terms of population, they (*the Akan*) constitute about fifty percent of the fourteen million or so citizens of Ghana and the biggest ethnic group in the country. According to Abraham (1995), The Akan of Ghana represent two-thirds of the fourteen million people of Ghana. They are to be found in Ashanti and to the south, and in Axim and to just west of Accra. They speak a cluster of languages, which have a family resemblance but are not related as language to dialect. In Agyarkwa's (1976) study of "Akan Epistemology and Western Thought" he has stated that the Akan represent the Akan ethnic group (which forms about forty-five percent of the entire population). To Sarpong, (1971), "the Akan-speaking peoples of West Africa are hardly in need of an introduction to anthropologists. They occupy the Western, Central, Ashanti and Brong-Ahafo regions of Ghana, and parts of Eastern and Volta regions of Ghana and the southeastern corner of the Cote d'Ivoire. In Ghana, the northern limit of this area is the upper course of the Volta River, the southern being the seacoast. This territory can be estimated as fully one-half of the ninety-two thousand square miles of the surface area of the country." In fact, the history of Ghana is the history of the Twi-speaking peoples who now call themselves the Akan (Meyerowitz, 1974).

In terms of culture, as Agyarkwa (1976) has posited, apart from the fact of Akan forming the largest ethnic group in Ghana, the culture is similar to other Ghanaian cultures and in fact, that of the West African sub-region. Again, considerably more has been published about the Akans than the other ethnic groups in Ghana; thus, more material would be available for the study. This is important in as much as adequate material would be available for the acquisition of the relevant data to test the theory or to find the answer to the questions under consideration (Best and Kahn, 1993).

Also, my being a native of the Akan ethnic group with the disadvantage of being “subjective” notwithstanding, gives me an added advantage over the complete “outsider.” I would have the ability to overcome the problems that might be encountered by outsiders. For example, I, as a native, would have access to some “sacred” places and also would not encounter any problem of linguistic barriers and distortions in meanings, which become prevalent when interpreters are used in the case of “outsider” researchers. As Deng (1986) has cautioned, an “insider” researcher stands the disadvantage and danger of distortion should they become too defensive of their society and overstate facts. Another disadvantage observed by Uchendu (1965) is that being a “cultural bearer”, the researcher may be selective and ignore what appears to him or her as a commonplace, which may be relevant to understanding the culture. To counteract this, however, an insider also stands the advantage of not being too cautious about any form of involvement and hence can eschew the danger of understatement. Spindler (1965), writing the foreword to Uchendu’s (1965) “The Igbo of Southern Nigeria” commends the latter by stating that “descriptions of the thinking and feeling of a people are not frequent in anthropological literature, for it is difficult for the observer from outside to penetrate beyond manifest behavior to the inner patterns of a way of life.”

METAPHOR OF NYANSAPO (THE WISDOM KNOT)

Akans use symbols and proverbs abundantly in their daily expressions. Ability to use proverbs, figures of speech and metaphors wins for the speaker recognition of intelligence and wisdom. *Nyansapo* means “wisdom knot” and suggests that, when the wise ties a knot it takes an intelligent mind to untie it. The saying implies that there are underlying meanings behind all symbols and figures of speech and activities of the Akan people. It takes a person with insight and profound intelligence to understand the true meanings of their actions. In other words, a foreigner observing traditional Akan person (in fact, indigenous people) will take everything by the face value and conclude as such. The one may assume for example, that they were making noise when they were actually singing; that they were pagans when they were actually religious; that they were lazy when they were actually in recreation. For this reason, early foreigners considered that Africans did not have education and that it was they who brought education to Africa. The fact is that these foreigners interpreted the Akans (Africans) through their own (foreigners’) cultural lenses to which they arrogantly believed that everyone should conform.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study illuminates the common principles that underlie all educational undertakings and attempts to understand the different means that human beings have devised to accomplish these principles. This awareness and understanding of how traditional Africans educated their children, both in terms of the goals that guided their educational system and the means that they employed to achieve these

goals will help modern educators to develop a more critical and sensitive understanding of the educational goals and methods that need to be used in our modern societies depending upon available resources (Telda, 1996). It will also establish a discourse between traditional culture and modern classroom “school” education (Reagan, 1996). Thus, another dimension would be added to the already existing literature on indigenous culture and modern education in Ghana and Africa in general through the emerging ideas that would impress upon and enrich the Ghanaian curriculum for schools. The project will also help arrest the purely Western-oriented education that alienates students from their own culture and move them toward a different life style; a life style that has led to social disintegration of ethnic communities, the dysfunctioning of traditional family life and a total refusal by the youth to return to the land and consequently, a rise in delinquency and crime (Busia, 1964, Boahen, 1985). Non-Governmental Organizations in the education sector will also find the study useful since the findings will assist them to provide purposeful and functional education to the non-Western people they intend to help. Educators developing multicultural curriculum for culturally diverse societies like the United States will also find the project useful.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In his book “Colonialism in Africa: Its Impact and Significance,” Boahen (1985) quotes Sir Gordon Guggisberg as admitting that:

One of the greatest mistakes of education in the past has been this, that it has taught Africans to become a European instead of remaining African. This is entirely wrong and the Government recognizes it. In future our education will aim at making an African remain an African and taking interest in his own country (pp.800–801).

In Ghana, like most African countries, after independence, political expediency necessitated an expansion of the educational system inherited from the metropolitan power. It is regrettable that most aspects of the traditional educational system, which could have been incorporated into the Western system of education, were neglected. This Western oriented education alienated and continues to alienate students from their own culture and move them toward a different life style. This life style has led to social disintegration of ethnic communities, the dysfunction of traditional family life and a total refusal by the youth to return to the land and consequently, a rise in delinquency and crime. The background of this phenomenon is that, rural children are being prepared in school for a world that does not yet exist around them. Thus, the education that students receive does not make them fit into their own society. Schools and universities in Africa today are disseminators of alien culture rather than workshops propagating indigenous culture (Abimbola, 1990). Awoonor (1994) was therefore right when he asserted that, Ghanaians now hang in

a limbo of cultural confusion, social incoherence and moral purposelessness. In a similar concern Thairu, (1975) has stated that:

The self-conscious educated African boasts of African values but denounces them most openly by his mode of life. He knows *what* he would like to be, but does not know *how* because his intellectual master, the pink man, has not yet told him how.

To reiterate Bedu-Addo's (1981) observation, the cultural scene of Ghana today evinces a gross and undue affectation by Western culture and there arises the necessity more than ever before for a stronger defense of our culture in this stupendous rush of change in our modern times. According to Bedu-Addo (1981):

Today we are in the mainstream of the world's life, and therefore, we cannot, of course, go backward to a past form of our being, but we cannot go forward to a larger re-possession of ourselves, taking into account the modern world around us with the Ghanaian mind to preserve and develop the great ideals of the Ghanaian civilization. The necessary formula of acculturation, which is give-and-take process among cultures during interaction, should apply in the Ghanaian spirit... It is the slavish copying of foreign patterns, which inevitably destroys a people's distinctive culture (p. 5).

Rawlings (1986) with a similar concern stated that:

It is not enough that our children should learn to read and write. They must be educated about their environment and about how to use the resources around them productively for the community's benefit. That is the essence of the new educational order we seek to build. (p.10)

In other words, education should not aim at denationalizing the recipients but to graft skillfully onto their national characteristics the best attributes of modern civilization (Guggisberg, 1919 in Boahen, 1985).

If the above assertions are to be viewed seriously and accepted, then it is high time educators reviewed what can be retained in their cultural heritage and how the schools can help in that process.

The problem facing contemporary Ghana, like other African countries, is that education has failed to be followed by satisfied employment (Yeboah, 1990). This situation which according to Fafunwa (1974), was absent in the African indigenous educational system, suggests that something is wrong in the educational system in the light of the present economy. According to Nyerere (1967), the education we are giving in Africa is responsible for creating the people we condemn. In his view, the education at present instills in the youth the idea that their education confers a price tag on them and which makes them concentrate on this price tag. Agyarkwa (1976), in his study on Akan epistemology and Western thought, has argued that

epistemology is culture-oriented, and that wherever there are significant cultural differences, one should expect corresponding epistemological discrepancies. Given the anthropological premise that the Akan culture differs significantly from Western civilization, the theoretical argument is advanced that Akan epistemology differs from Western epistemology, and that a degree of epistemological disorientation occurs when Akan youth study certain Western school subjects. It is recognized that any system of education should aim at serving the needs of the individual, the society in which he lives and the country as a whole. My own library research has shown that, several studies have examined the issues of indigenous education in the context of traditional African life style. For example, the goals and content of African indigenous education have been discussed by Fafunwa and Asikisu, 1974; Moumouni, 1968; Abbam, 1994; Busia, 1964 and others. Also African philosophy has been discussed in detail by African and non-African philosophers including Wiredu, 1992, 1995; Gyekye, 1987; Blocker, 1987; Hountondji, 1983; Mbiti, 1990 and others. However, the literature is virtually silent on the construction of an African indigenous philosophy of education, which will bridge the confused hiatus between tradition and modernization. This middle space, *if not carefully filled*, will remain the locus of aberrant expression of acculturation (Sumner, 1974).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This book explores some of the vehicles of indigenous Akan philosophies. And consequently attempts to forge an educational curriculum in Ghana that will build on the positive aspects of the past and present and on *carefully chosen* ideas, methods and technology from abroad (Telda, 1996).

To this end the important questions set to answer include the following:

1. What are the main vehicles of Akan indigenous philosophies of education?
2. To what extent have Akans, both “literate” and “illiterate” maintained or otherwise their indigenous cultural values?
3. What factors, if any, militate against the sustenance of Akan indigenous cultural values?
4. What are some suggested programs that can attract indigenous cultural values to the school system?

It should be noted that the study is restricted to the Akan culture of Ghana.

Interviewees and participants in the study were all Akans and only their views were reported.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is not readily easy to make a national policy based on the culture of one ethnic group out of about fifty different ethnic groups. However, the model can serve as a starting point for future research in other ethnic groups so that a complete work

toward African philosophy of education would be realized. Since the similarities are more than the differences among African ethnic groups, the problem of generalization is not insurmountable.

As the sole interviewer and the instrument of this study, my biases were likely to influence the analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Also, reliability and validity were not tested on the instrument of the study. Again there was the possibility that the research participants may have expressed views that were purposed to satisfy me. Many of the participants knew me as the state linguist, one of the top cultural specialists in the country, and therefore might have wanted to impress me especially, in answering the question of their preparedness to uphold indigenous Akan philosophies. Using qualitative research also limited the range of interviewees and that; conclusions were based on the views of a small sample of the population

ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK

[Chapter one](#) of this book has dealt with the introduction of the study. The focus of discussion included in the introduction has been the overview of the study, the theoretical and methodological framework, the background of the study, Statement of the problem for the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study and the chapter summary.

[Chapter two](#) reviews and discusses the literature on African philosophy of education. Eleven themes relevant to the study are discussed. These include defining African philosophy, African education, philosophy of education, history of education in Ghana, African socialization process, child rearing and socialization in Akan, indigenous Akan education, African religion, Akan folktales, Akan proverbs and Akan art and symbols. The first four themes dealing with philosophy, African education, philosophy of education and history of education in Ghana are considered indispensable in a study that is dealing with philosophy, education, Africa in general and specifically Ghana. The seven other themes are some of the main aspects of cultural studies that have been found to harbor most indigenous philosophies. It would therefore be rehashing the statement to say that the selected themes serve as a vehicle or a very rich reservoir where one can draw views from earlier researchers to support claims of this study.

[Chapter three](#) will deal with the methodology of the study. [Chapter four](#) will be dedicated to the analysis of the data collected while the findings from the analysis will be interpreted and discussed in [chapter five](#). [Chapter six](#) will deal with a summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations for practice and further research.

The appendix section explains foreign terms used in the study and copies of documents used in the preparation and the conduction of the study.

Finally, the abstract of the study will provide the overall summary of the research.

SUMMARY

The introductory chapter has highlighted the overview of the study. The main purposes and the concerns that prompted the study—investigation into Akan indigenous philosophies and their contribution to education of children in Ghana—have been discussed. The theoretical and methodological frameworks that guide the study have been situated in the Deweyian philosophy of education and the interpretive methodological approach respectively. The choice of Akan for the study has been justified and the research problem is explained in terms of the background, the statement of the problem for the study and the purpose. Significance of the study is clarified in this qualitative study, which is guided by four main research questions. Finally, like all qualitative research, I noticed the delimitation and limitation of the study, with regard to the limited scope of the population and sample. I concluded the chapter with an organization of the entire study.

CHAPTER TWO

African Philosophy of Education

INTRODUCTION

At a glance, it is clear from the holdings of any library in the United States that ample research exists on Africa and Education and as well, many works of literature have been produced on the subject's philosophy. A critical examination would, however, reveal that the research and works deal with specific subjects. For example, with regard to education in Africa, committees, commissions and students have researched and appraised various educational reforms in Africa. In their findings, they apportion the blame of the failure of African educational reforms to different factors like instructional leadership, financial constraints, uncooperative attitude of parents, etc. But there is not yet sufficient interest in African philosophy in educational curriculum and reform. For example, no other continent is as rich in oral literature as Africa. But unfortunately, Africa has been colonized by an alien form of literature (Abimbola, 1990). This has claimed superiority and is being propagated at the expense and to the detriment of indigenous oral literature. Identification of the demise of African oral literature is imperative because if Africa is to know its own mind and channel its own course, it can only be done through the promotion of its indigenous oral literature and works in African languages (Abimbola, 1990). As discussed in chapter one, the pivotal point of the theoretical framework of this book is *social construction of knowledge and functional education*.

The sections that follow are the review categories that will unearth some of the themes that recur or are embedded in the Akan culture, and how they are seated in the culture through the daily activities of the Akan people of Ghana.

DEFINING AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

Whether or not "African philosophy" is a reality is debatable. According to Blocker (1987), a problem surrounds the question of "African Philosophy" (is there such a thing and if so what is it?) which does not enter into the discussion of, say, African history or African geography).

The present prolonged and ongoing debate in and on the status, nature and indeed the very possibility of African philosophy dates back to the early 1970s,

when challenges to the ethnographic and documentary hegemony of Temples, John Mbiti, and others began to be registered (Serequeberhan, 1994). Scholars, including philosophers tend to squirm a little at the mention of African philosophy, though they do not do so at the mention of African art, music, history, anthropology, or religion. Whereas the latter cluster of disciplines has been—and is still being—cultivated or pursued by scholars, both African and non-African, in the various Centers or Institutes of African Studies around the world, African philosophy as such is relegated to limbo, and its existence doubted. Philosophy is thus assumed to be a special relish of the people of the West and the East (Gyekye, 1987). The notion of African philosophy therefore has been ambiguous since it was first used in the 1910s. The pervasiveness of primitivist ideologies marks the conditions of its possibility and implies references to preligism in thinking, paganism in belief, and primitiveness with regard to the *Weltanschauung* (Mudimbe, 1991). In Hountondji's (1983) opinion, what is referred to as African traditional philosophy is just a myth since it is a collective philosophy, which is "common to all Africans." Hountondji and his associates believe that philosophy is the reflections of the individual thinker and that philosophizing is a wholly individualistic affair. In a similar opinion, Bedunrin (in Telda, 1996), has stated that philosophy relies on the analysis, debate, appeal to reason, argument and counter argument, and this is not the predominant style of west African myths, proverbs, and sayings of wise elders.

It might seem from the foregoing that such a discipline as African philosophy cannot exist but as Blocker (1987) argues, since "philosophy" is an English word expressing a western, European concept, the problem arises in applying it to the thought systems outside the spheres of western Europeans. All such ascription is comparative. We have thought systems in West Africa and we have European concept of philosophy. It is therefore out of place to ask the question "to what extent is the one like the other?" In other words we do not have to compare a thought system in Africa to that of the West as a work of superiority (Blocker 1987). So for example if there is no English concept of "nton and ntoro" (tracing one's genealogy and consanguinity relation through the mother and the father simultaneously) among the Akan of Ghana, why do we have to assume a Western criteria for non-Western cultures? Philosophy, after all, is a conceptual response to the problems posed in any given epoch for a given society (Wiredu & Gyekye, 1992). In Lucas's (1969) opinion "in its general terms, philosophy is the human being's attempt to think most speculatively, reflectively and systematically about the universe and the human relationship to the universe" In further examination, Lucas (1969), referring to classical philosophical discourse, believes that:

Philosophy for the Greeks promised to explain the universe, to answer questions such as what reality is, what the universe is made of and why it is here, why man is in it and what he is to God. It would even answer the question what God is, what the world is to God and in fact what the world is. It would say what the very nature of human is. It asked what knowledge is and how we would know it (p. 200).

Thus, a great deal of philosophical material is embedded in the proverbs, myths and folktales, folk songs, rituals, beliefs, customs and traditions of the people, in their art symbols and in their sociopolitical institutions and practices (Gyekye, 1987). For example, art is a means of expressing a basic philosophy of life (Parrinder, 1969), and as the Akans could not write, they expressed their philosophico-religious ideas through art (Abraham, 1962). The Akan drum language, for example, is full of riddles that conceal reflective thought and philosophy and that the funeral dirges philosophize on life and death (Busia, 1962).

Jahn (1961), discussing whom Westerners consider a “real” African refers to European history where Africans have sometimes been called “heathens,” “savages” or “primitives” sometimes extolled as “pure, natural human beings.” These vocabularies arose out of mere prejudices, which were in turn confirmed by the vocabulary so that every assertion was justified. In a long discourse Jahn (1961) had the following to say:

For those who expect to see in their fellow men fools, blockheads or devils, will find evidence to confirm their prejudices. If we are convinced the other fellow cannot sing, we have only to call his song “a hellish row” in order to justify our claim. Simply by applying a certain vocabulary can easily turn Gods into idols, faces into grimaces, votive images into fetishes, discussions into palavers and distort real objects and matters of fact through bigotry and prejudice (p. 20).

It must be noted that, it is prejudice that has created types in the minds of the public to think that, only the most highly cultivated person, humane, cosmopolitan, enlightened, progressive counts as a “real European.” And a “real African” on the other hand, lives in the bush, carves “primitive” sculptures, can neither read nor write, goes naked, lives carefree and happy from day to day and tells fairy stories about the crocodile and the elephant. The more “primitive,” the more “really African” (Jahn, 1961).

In discussing what African philosophy is, Blocker (1987) has stated that, to designate a piece of work as “African” does not imply necessarily doing a work in Africa or any work of literature produced by an African. To Blocker (1987), African does not mean only a geographical area (the continent of Africa) but also, a cultural designation, that is a black African with its distinctive non-European culture.

Another problem that faces the definition and acceptance of African philosophy is its collective nature assigned to it by several scholars either because it is supposed to be the production of all or most of the members of the community or it is supposed to be accepted by the whole community; whereas when we talk of Greek philosophy we usually mean the philosophical ideas of the individual thinker, and the same goes to German philosophy, British philosophy, Islamic philosophy and all the other kinds (Gyekye 1987). In Hountondji’s opinion, African traditional philosophy is a myth because it is a collective philosophy, which is common to all Africans, that to which all Africans are supposed to adhere (Hountondji, 1983)

However, what has come to be described as “collective” thought is nothing but the ideas of individual wise people, individual ideas that, due to the lack of doxographic tradition in Africa, became part of the pool of communal thought, resulting in the obliteration of the differences among these ideas and in the impression that traditional thought was a monolithic system that does not allow for the divergent ideas (Gyekye 1987). People who believe that philosophizing is a wholly individualistic affair fail to recognize that the thinker perforce operates on diffuse and inchoate ideas of the cultural milieu. We obviously cannot divorce the philosophy of an individual thinker, from the ideas current among the people, for the philosophy of the individual thinker is rooted in the beliefs and assumptions of the culture (Gyekye, 1987). Without the basis in the culture, traditions and mentalities of the societies that nurtured them or if those ideas were palpably antithetical to the cultural ethos, the ideas of such philosophies could hardly be referred to as Greek, British, German, Islamic philosophy, Akan philosophy etc. (Gyekye 1987). African philosophy, therefore, investigates both the general and the particular characteristics of the African social donnes (Iroegbu, 1994).

It is therefore no abstraction to assert that the relationship between philosophy and culture is the pivot on which my thesis regarding the nature of African philosophy turns; (Gyekye 1987). Also significant in the construction of African philosophy and its imports is the resolution passed by the commission on philosophy at the second congress of the Negro writers and artists held in Rome in 1959 as follows:

Considering the dominant part played by philosophic reflection in the elaboration of culture, considering that until now the west has claimed a monopoly of philosophic reflection, so that philosophic enterprise no longer seems conceivable outside the framework of the categories forged by the west considering that the philosophic effort of traditional Africa has always been reflected in vital altitudes and has never had purely conceptual arms, the commission declares:

1. That for the African philosopher, philosophy can never consist of reducing the African reality to Western systems.
2. That the African philosopher must base his or her inquiries upon the fundamental certainty that the Western philosophic approach is not the only possible one and therefore:
 - a. Urges that the African philosopher should learn from the *traditions, tales, myths and proverbs of his people*, so as to draw from them the laws of a true African wisdom complementary to the other human wisdom *and to bring out the specific categories of African thought*.
 - b. Calls upon the African philosopher, faced by the totalitarian or egocentric philosophers of the West, to divest himself of a possible inferiority complex,

which might prevent him from starting from his African being to judge the foreign contribution (Presence Africaine, Paris, 1954 in Timothy, 1996).

African educators and policy makers therefore need to understand traditional people in their own right, on their own terms. They must cease to go along with the notion that the West alone can define whose and what thought qualifies as philosophical, whose belief is worthy of the term religion, and whose way of life can be deemed as developed, advanced or civilized (Telda, 1995).

Africans indeed have a responsibility to acquaint the world with the beauty and depth of African thought, creativity and inventions. They owe it to the ancestors, to future generations and to themselves to keep the record straight. Africans cannot simply and somnambulantly repeat the question, "What can Africa learn from other nations?" They need to ask, "What can others also learn from Africa?" Asking such questions will force Africans to articulate and present African thought and ways of life to their youth and to the world (Telda, 1995).

Summary

In this section, I have discussed the debate about whether or not there can be a study dubbed "African philosophy." Philosophy as an area of study has, over the years been discussed within the tenets of western vocabulary within whose cultural vehicle the term originated. The term "philosophy" has always been associated with debate, answering questions, clarifying language in different situations, etc. "African philosophy" therefore seems a misnomer at a glance. However, it is argued that the term can be used with some modification in the "conservative" meaning to equally apply to African thought systems, especially, if it is accepted that the term connotes a central theme of thought systems or worldview. In other words, if we are to educate sensibly, we must above all things do it with a sense of direction and proportion, and to have this is to have a philosophy. Philosophy is love of wisdom; the philosopher is the lover of wisdom and it is wisdom that we need (Reid, 1962).

AFRICAN EDUCATION

Most of the existing literature on African education offers uncritical view of the colonial imposed system and hence it is high time African education was given a discerning examination. According to Makulu (1971), "African education needs not the luxury of unproductive, philosophically oriented education but education that will produce men and women who will help in the exploitation of the technical coming of age of Africa in the task of nation building." It should be noted also from Lewis' (1962) assertion that, "the wholesale transfer of the educational conventions of Europe and America to the peoples of Africa has certainly not been an act of wisdom, however justly it may be defended as a proof of a genuine interest of the native people."

Many African policy makers and educators have made kindred statements to prompt Africans about the need to reform education to meet their needs. In all parts of Africa, education is in the front line, so to speak, of national planning, for the future of every independent country depends more than anything else on the rapid and effective development of its system of education. Education has accordingly become a major concern of every independent African country (Burns, 1965).

However, statements about education reform and improvement to meet the needs of the African people have remained a lip service. In some cases where commissions have been charged with recommendations for reforms in education, the findings have remained “white elephants.” In Ghana, George (1976) has recounted that, over the years, the growing number of young people who left elementary schools with only academic or general education, as the one-year development Plan of July, 1970-June, 1971 stated, “drew increasing attention to the problem of relevance in education and how the schools should themselves provide prevocational or vocational education.” According to George (1976), successive governments in Ghana have taken steps to broaden the curriculum at both the elementary and secondary levels so as to include various practical subjects. In addition, the Busia government laid down an important new policy on the language of instruction in Ghana’s elementary schools. Breaking sharply with the Nkrumah policy, which stressed teaching English at the earliest possible stage, this policy (of Busia’s)—not fully implemented in practice—requires teaching in a Ghanaian language during at least the first 3 years of primary course.

In a parallel concern, (Yeboah, 1990), in her address on the Ghana’s recent educational reform, “The New Content and Structure of Education in Ghana” expressed that:

As far back as 1973, the need for education reform had been felt in Ghana. This need was based on the recognition that any system of education should aim at serving the needs of the individual, the society in which he lives and the country as a whole. The system should, in a country like Ghana, aim at instilling in the individual, an appreciation of the need for change directed towards the development of the human resources of the country (Yeboah, 1990).

In a popular opinion of Nyerere (1967) in his *Education for Self-Reliance* expounds that, “it is the education we are now giving in Africa and the social values on which it is based, which is creating the people we condemn.” “It is our education,” continues Nyerere (1967), which is instilling into the young boys and girls the idea that their education confers a price tag on them and which makes them concentrate on this price tag.” According to Whitehead (1932) therefore, “...education should be useful, whatever your aim is in life. It was useful to St. Augustine and it was useful to Napoleon. It is useful because understanding is useful...”

What we need therefore in African educational system is the part of African tradition, which would generate social unity and promote what was good and respected (*and for that matter valuable and useful*) in the African culture. Such a tradition would assert the rights and interest of the people, help to reject foreign ideologies and provide foundations for continuity. It also would promote what was unique in the African personality (Urch, 1992) and thereby help to erase the impression created that it is only if Africans adapt imported institutions into the continent will Africans eventually be able to lift the psychological dependence which prevents escape from material dependence (Whitaker, 1988). In other words, we must seek an African view to the problems of Africa. However, this does not mean that Western techniques and methods are not applicable to Africa. It does mean that in a country like Ghana, we must look at every problem from the African point of view. Therefore we must educate our people to achieve this goal (McWilliam, 1975).

In his proposition at the at the Fifth International Congress of African Studies in Ibadan, Kwapong, (1992) stated that, “the modernization of Africa need not be synonymous with its westernization.”

Although African leaders and policy makers as well as their educators are aware and informed about the above assertions and postulations, yet, the picture is different in almost all African countries after the long period of colonialism, which swept over almost the entire sub-Saharan Africa. Contrary to expectation, what is clearly observed now is that the curriculum of the elementary schools follows too closely the curriculum of the schools in Europe and as a result, the schools *seem* trying to make Europeans out of the natives instead of educating them to become useful citizens of their country (Scanlon, 1964). In the 1961 Addis Ababa conference of African states on the development of education in Africa, they developed an inventory of the needs and priorities for African education, and established short—and long-term targets for the period 1960–80 (UNESCO, 1962a). Also meeting in Paris in 1962 were African educators who attempted to adapt the general secondary school curricula to the African situation (UNESCO 1962b); and at the Tananarive conference of 1963 they discussed the development of higher education on the continent (UNESCO, 1963). Beyond the conference stage, UNESCO’s International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP) has embarked on a series of African case studies that attempted to highlight several major problems facing educational planners.

The problems involved the relationship of education to economic development, the financing of education, teacher demand, adult education and the quality of education. It is appalling that, there has not been found the need to address the issue of the content of the curriculum in African schools in tune with African philosophies. The European and the American school systems that have been equated with “education” in Africa have themselves realized—increasingly emphasized in the recommendations of American and European educators—that education needs to be adapted to the needs of the individual and the community (Scanlon, 1964). It is worth noting then that the wholesale transfer of the educational

conventions of Europe and America to the peoples of Africa has certainly not been an act of wisdom however justly it may be defended as a proof of genuine interest in the native people. The too frequent charges of the failure of Native education are traceable in part to the lack of educational adaptations to Native life (Scanlon, 1964). In a similar vein, Jacob (1997) has concluded in a study that among the many reasons that account for the failure of most educational innovations used in “everyday” classroom, playing down of “context” in favor of “cognition” is very cogent. According to Jacob (1997), context and cognition have not been considered together in developing, researching, disseminating or using educational innovations. Mainstream educators [using positive lenses] have often focused primarily on cognitive issues and thus ignored context. This is in contravention of educational anthropologists view [using interpretive lenses] and thus focusing on the context of education. To the latter, performance should be measured in a particular context, rather than measuring underlying abilities in as much as culture influences the kind of cognitive activity examined by psychologists. Similarly, Barbara Rogoff (1990 in Huag, 1998) has stated that “children are apprentices of thinking.” In other words, they try to learn from observing and participating with peers. Teachers [and educators generally] should therefore develop skills to handle culturally defined problems with available tools and building from these givens to construct new solutions within the context of socio-cultural activity. In Huag’s (1998) assertion, when children learn, their cognitive development is inseparable from their surroundings. For any system of education to be meaningful therefore, the socio-cultural environment of the recipient of such education should always stand paramount. However, in an attempt to formulate and implement an African philosophy of education at this time there are critical problems that need to be addressed.

First, African education today is at crossroads and there is little doubt that in the next few years a modern African system will appear. In the mean time, the present systems remain rooted in the programs developed over the decades by the European powers Scanlon (1964). Secondly, with reference to the language problem in the Africanization of curricula, Urch (1992) has asserted “nowhere is the dilemma of traditionalism versus modernism more evident than in the language policy found in educational systems throughout Africa. The policy and the ensuing practice remain an explosive issue in many countries today. While demands exist for a “National Language,” it is apparent that the ethnic tongues used in the 19th century are not sufficient to prepare the youth for the 21st century. Policies vary throughout the continent between the need to promote social and political cohesiveness through an African vernacular and the need for a European language to assist in the modernization process.” This is important in as much as language remains a very significant tool in conveying people’s cultures and philosophies.

However, Thairu (1975), decries the arbitrary disregard for African languages in schools and regrets that, “the entire educational system in Africa was aimed, among other things, at elevating the European languages and de-basing African languages.” It is interesting to refer to Thairu (1975), recounting his own experience in the late

1950s when an Englishman taught him in school that there was still a *tribe* in the *Congo* (Zaire) that could hardly communicate in the dark because the word for “come” was “U” and the word for “go” was “U,” the two words only being distinguished by hand-movements. The relevance of the above allegation is that, the colonial attitude towards all African languages was so bad that by the time an African had acquired some education, he had learned that English or French or some other European language was “THE” language and that African languages were “primitive,” or even “dirty” or simply “vernacular” or “dialects.” Thairu’s (1975) observation in most African countries which is also applicable in Ghana is that:

As in other fields various techniques were used...for de-basing our languages. In some schools, speaking an African language was a punishable crime. Indeed at school many Africans were at times forced to wear large placards bearing the words “I AM A FOOL” whenever they were found speaking Kiswahili, *Akan*, or any other African language. In some other schools the way one spoke English was made so important that pupils were being ridiculed or even punished if their pronunciation smacked of some African language. To make sure that our languages were really killed, English was elevated above all subjects. A candidate who, having passed his “O” Levels and with 7 distinctions in the 8 subjects but manages a mere “pass” in English was not accepted for University despite the fact that he had written all the examinations in English!

It is pathetic that outside the school and university, the pressure to destroy African languages went on. Till today, “one is judged by one’s English,” a common reminder that the Native should learn his Master’s language. Ability to speak “good” English determines one’s ability for employment.

In support of Africanization of education in Africa, Kwapong (1992) has stated that:

Until and unless we Africans are able to confront realistically in Africa the major issue of language, the essential gateway to any cultural self-expression and authenticity, we will continue to suffer from a severe debilitating human handicap—the handicap of cultural alienation, which bedevils any human development. Africa’s modernization must be firmly rooted in Africa’s cultural authenticity, and true self-expression. This is primarily an educational challenge, and the issue of language is an essential dimension of this challenge. (p. 40)

Kwapong (1992) further demonstrates anxiety about how education has shaped the Ghanaian and in fact, the African culture. He illuminates the general apparent idea of relegating African culture to the background in the Western-oriented curricula in schools. He asserts that:

In most African countries, not least my own Ghana, there is, for example, a rich cultural legacy of proverbs embracing all aspects of human experience and wisdom bequeathed to us by our ancestors. The more we know these proverbs, the more we are struck by their profundity and depth of wisdom. How many African intellectuals and leaders of all persuasions today are familiar with a fraction of these proverbs? Indeed, how many of our school children and our younger generation of “educated” or modernized young men and women can speak and write their mother tongues at all in which these gems of ancestral wisdom are enshrined with a comparable degree of facility as they do English or French? (p. 40)

The diverse opinions by different schools of thought on African education have raised the question of “should the youth be schooled to produce a self-reliant economy based on the raw materials available or should they be educated to compete in a technologically advancing world; or is it possible to balance both while moving forward economically?” (Urch, 1992). It is also worth noting that, apportioning blame to the Europeans for introducing Western education to Africa without investigating other possible causes of their diverse problems is far from solution to the problems. Thompson (1981) in his work “Education and Development in Africa” has asserted as follows:

While there is considerable room for reform in the education systems of Africa, there is also considerable danger in assuming too readily that their faults derive essentially from their origins as colonial institutions, whereas in reality schools have become very much an integral and living part of the African societies they serve, and their distinctive problems derive from this fact. If the problem were simply one of alien characteristics unsuited to local needs, or irreconcilable with local cultural patterns, then it might be readily solved. The alien characteristics would tend to wither like seeds planted in unsuitable soil. But in fact these characteristics we complain of have not withered and the seeds have rooted and show every appearance of flourishing. If we fail to analyze the local roots of our problems and instead endorse over simplistic interpretations of their origin, we are unlikely to arrive at solutions, which will meet our need (p. 56)

It is high time Africans learnt that “*when nature gives you cocoa, you make chocolate out of it.*” This ties with Woodson’s (1990) analysis of *The Mis-education of the Negro*. In an example, he states that:

The Negro boy sent to college by a mechanic seldom dreams of learning mechanical engineering to build upon the foundation his father has laid, that in years to come he may figure as a contractor or a consulting engineer. The Negro girl who goes to college hardly wants to return to her mother if she is a washerwoman, but this girl should come back with sufficient knowledge in

physics and chemistry and business administration The so-called education of Negro college graduates leads them to throw away opportunities, which they have and to go in quest of those which they do not find (p. 39).

Africans must therefore come up with a new type of education (1) that grounds their children in their African cultural heritage; (2) that enables them to experience the fullness of life; and (3) that prepares them to understand and carry out their responsibility to the community life (Telda, 1995). It is also imperative that learners be prepared in fields that correspond to the realities and needs of African people. For it is a great injustice, a negation of life, to waste the hearts, minds and energies of Africa's unemployed and able-bodied youth. "A mind is a terrible thing to waste!" African policy makers and educators cannot wash their hands of their responsibility to make things right (Telda, 1995).

Summary

In this section I have discussed the general characteristics of African educational system at the moment; in particular, its lack of functionalism—not serving the needs of the recipients and the community—in the context of the African society. Reviewed also is the concerns expressed by African educators in trying to arrest the inherent problems and thus make African education functional. The problems include, in the main, the deep-rooted nature of the colonial legacy type of education, the language problem in Africa. The need to come up with a new type of education that is African in nature and content and outlook is therefore urgently needed.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

A philosophical foundation is an indispensable factor in the formulation or development of any educational system or curriculum. However, in this discourse, I do not intend to go into the details of philosophical jargons but rather to present the ideas about some philosophers and their concepts of education. These can then be looked at as a model or stand point from which one can construct any educational philosophy in line with the world view of any particular group of people. Thus, education can be seen from different philosophical angles depending upon the purpose or the sort of human beings we aim at turning out (Makarenko, 1955).

The most paramount consideration in defining or building a philosophical foundation of education in any social setting is the ontological (reality), epistemological (knowledge) and axiological (values) implications. Butler (1968) has observed that, a philosophy of education deals with five subjects in the following order: the aims of education, the function of the school among social institutions, theory of value, theory of reality and theory of knowledge. Lucas (1969) agrees to the above opinion by stating that; any full-blown philosophy traditionally deals with

the question of nature of knowledge and knowing, the nature of reality or existence. In furtherance to the assertion, Lucas (1969) explains that:

For a solid foundation of any educational philosophy then, the relationship of epistemological, ontological and axiological issues with education is obvious. Thus, speculating and philosophizing about what can be known, what is worth knowing and how we can know and so on, relates directly to what proper aims of education and the purpose of teaching and learning really are.

In the view of Barrow and Woods (1975) they describe education as consisting in molding individuals into obedient members of the state. This description might be considered an appendage to the Socratic view regarding the role of education, that, “an important role of education is creating a willingness on the part of the population to fight for the preservation of the state. Thus, “education is the means of internalizing and accepting state laws” (Spring, 1994). In a Socratic metaphor, he compares this educational process to the dyeing of cloth. “After describing the best method of ensuring that the colors do not wash out, under our persuasion, they receive the laws of the state like a dye, as thoroughly as possible” (Spring, 1994).

In order to frame an Akan Philosophy of Education, we must ask a fundamental question: What is the purpose of education in a given culture, society or nation?

As Peters (1965) affirms, education is normative. It is what we value; it is not neutral, and that it has the “criterion built into [it] that something worth while should be achieved.” In elucidation of these remarks, he continues:

It implies that something worthwhile is being or has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner. It would be a logical contradiction to say that a man had been educated but that he had in no way changed for the better, or that in educating his son a man was attempting nothing that was worthwhile. This is purely conceptual point. Such a connection between “education” and what is valuable does not imply any particular commitment to content. It is a further question what the particular standards are in virtue of which activities are thought to be of value and what grounds there might be for claiming that these are correct ones. All that is implied is a commitment to what is thought valuable (Peters, 1965).

But Stirner (1994) warns us that any education can be an imposition that leads to “wheels in the head.” By “wheels in the head,” Stirner refers to any thought that an individual cannot give up. For him an idea or belief that is a wheel in the head owns the individual as opposed to thoughts that individuals own and can use for their own benefit. To him, it is mere imposition rather than education to prepare children for a form of education that is already decided by older members, “philosopher-kings” or policy makers of the society. For example, ideals planted in the minds of individuals by any outside force that (1) make people go to church and pay taxes because that is what they are taught to do and (2) drive people to sacrifice

themselves for the good of the state, that make them Christ-like, that make them give up what they are, for some unrealizable goals become “wheels in the head.” Any such ideal controls the individual and not otherwise; it owns the individual and leads to subjugation, domination and oppression and therefore should be gotten rid of (Stirner, in Spring, 1994). In order to avoid this type of education Stirner suggests that students or children should be able to identify and be willing to discard the “wheel.” Stirner argues for education that respects and facilitates ownership of self, which means elimination of wheels in the head. He believes that the only way to counteract domination by wheels in the head is for people to gain knowledge and beliefs through actions of individual will, as opposed to acquiring knowledge and beliefs through schooling. Thus, the possession of knowledge and beliefs should be a function of what is useful to the individual (Stirner in Spring, 1994).

Examples of philosophies of education that are based on what Stirner might regard as imposition are Makarenko’s state-bound philosophy of education and the Islamic religious-doctrine-bound philosophy of education. Philosophically speaking, even Stirner’s view that one should be completely free is a system of value proposed by someone and therefore an imposition. Makarenko (1955), a Soviet philosopher, believing that the most important educational goal was making people part of the collective by teaching them to *subordinate self-interest for the good of the group* has argued as follows:

The profound meaning of educational work...consists of the selection and training of human needs A morally justified need is, in fact, the need of collectivist, that is, a person linked with his collective by his sense of the common aim, of the common struggle, by the living and certain awareness of his duty toward society.

In discussing Islamic philosophy of education, Abdullah (1982) is of the view that educational thought is grounded in the Qur’an and states as follows:

Since the Qur’an provides the Muslim with an outlook towards life, its principles must guide Islamic education. One cannot talk about Islamic education without taking the Qur’an as one’s starting point...the Qur’an lays down the foundation of education aims and methods. Moreover, the Muslim educator will find in the Qur’an the guiding principles, which help in selecting the content of the curriculum (p. 24).

In Islamic philosophy of education, it is believed that knowledge is acquired through human reason and from “light from God” and therefore in any good educational setting, a balance will be achieved between these two. Furthermore, it is believed that all children have the capacity to learn because “knowledge exists potentially in the human soul like a seed in the soil; by learning the potential becomes actual” (Reagan, 1996). Quoting Al-Ghazali, Tibawi also writes:

The child “is a trust [placed by of God] in the hands of his parents, and his innocent heart is a precious element capable of taking impressions.” If the parents, and later on the teachers, brought him up in righteousness he would live happily in the world and the next and they would be rewarded by God for their good deed. If they neglected the child’s upbringing and education he would lead a life of unhappiness in both worlds and they would bear the burden of the sin of neglect (p. 40).

In his contribution to Islamic philosophy of education Ibn Khaldun, an Islamic historian, like the American philosopher of education, John Dewey focuses on the social nature of education. To him therefore, education is a social phenomenon and teaching is one of the social crafts; man is a social animal and his prosecution of learning is conditioned by the nature of the material, intellectual and spiritual forces of the civilization in which he lives (Reagan, 1996). Islamic philosophy of education therefore does not merely ensure the Platonic goal of “a sound mind in a sound body,” but rather in a thoroughly integrated personality grounded in the Qur’an and in the Qur’anic morality, because “a person who accepts the message of Islam should accept all the ideals embodied in the Qur’an.” (Reagan, 1996). Traditional Islamic educational thought and practice are therefore inseparable from the fabric of Islamic religious thought and practice (Reagan, 1996).

In Lederhouse (1997) research on “Evangelical Public Educators he found out that teachers’ Christian beliefs influence their educational philosophy. In his field research, one participant, a primary grade teacher, remarked “every student is valuable because they were created by God in His image and are therefore filled with hope and purpose. No one is beyond hope, because they are valuable in God’s sight. Therefore everyone deserves my focus. God has brought these kids into my life for His purpose.” It becomes clear then that the philosophy of this teacher’s education is based on scriptural foundation and therefore is the focus of education.

Two philosophers discuss how we can acknowledge the socializing role of education, but prevent it from being a total imposition or an unconscious socialization process that hinders, rather than frees individuals. In the Deweyan philosophy of education, he takes into consideration the importance of the society as well as the child’s own capabilities. That is to say that, we are born into a social atmosphere and develop a socially shaped consciousness. But when education sees both the psychological (individual nature) and the sociological (social) nature of the child and draws upon both in education, then education is not simply imposition, but becomes a joint creation of the individual and society. As Spring (1994) has opined, Dewey believes that education, the school, subject matter, the nature of method, and the relation of the school regulates social progress. According to Dewey:

All education proceeds by the participation of the individual in the social consciousness of the race. This process begins unconsciously almost at birth, and is continually shaping the individual’s powers, saturating his

consciousness, forming his habits, training his ideas, and arousing his feelings and emotions. Through this unconscious education the individual gradually comes to share in the intellectual and moral resources which humanity has succeeded in getting together.... The most formal and technical education in the world cannot safely depart from this general process. The only true education comes through the stimulation of the child's powers by the demands of the social situations in which he finds himself (Boydston, 1972).

In a like manner, Freire (1972) is worried that state education simply reproduced the stratified society. Instead, he proposed problem-posing education that began with the contradictions in the lived experience of those traditionally oppressed. Education should therefore free children to think independently and that from the beginning of a child's training in the home he or she should be allowed the laxity to operate freely. In other words, authoritarian home shapes the child's personality so that the child later in life accepts domination by authority and wants to dominate other people (Freire, 1972). In his popular conception of education, Freire stands strongly against the traditional narrative method of teaching and the Lockean view that children are "a tabula rasa"—and therefore like containers or receptacles—waiting to be filled with knowledge from teachers considered to be repositories of knowledge. This relationship involves a Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students). This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing and storing the deposits, memorizing and repeating (Freire, 1972). Freire (1972), like Stirner (1967), Giroux (1988), proposes problem posing education that leads to critical thinking. To Freire (1972) any system of education with the characteristics of what he describes as "banking" education, leads to nothing but disempowerment, dehumanization, domination, oppression and "culture of silence." The characteristics of banking education are recording the comments of the teacher, memorization of lessons, and repetition. An important part of banking education is the assumption by the teacher that the students are without knowledge.

According to Freire (1972), "the students (in banking education), alienated like the slave...accept their ignorance as justifying the teacher's existence— but, unlike the slave, they never discover that they educate the teacher." Also, in banking education,, the teacher is the primary actor while the students are passive. Again, the teachers act as if they know everything and the students know nothing. Teachers do the talking, while students are passive (or do the listening).

From the foregoing, it is clear that education involves the transmission of what is valuable, worthwhile or essential to children in order to maintain the society in which they find themselves. The problem, however, is who determines what is worthwhile. In Holt's (1969) analysis he has attacked what we might call the "essential knowledge" and posited as follows:

Behind much of what we do in school lie some ideas, that could be expressed as follows:

1. Of the vast body of human knowledge, there are certain bits and pieces that can be called essential, that everyone should know
2. The extent to which a person can be considered educated, qualified to live intelligently in today's world and be a useful member of society, depends on the amount of this essential knowledge that he carries about with
3. It is the duty of the schools, therefore, to get as much of this essential knowledge as possible into the minds of children. Thus we find ourselves trying to poke certain facts, recipes and ideas down the gullets of every child in the school, whether the morsel interests him or not, even if it frightens him or sickens him, and even if there are other things that he is much more interested in learning. These ideas are absurd and nonsense. We will not begin to have true education or real learning in our schools until we sweep this nonsense out of the way. School should be a place where children learn what they most want to know, instead of what we think they ought to know (Holt, 1969).

It becomes imperative then, to avoid the past domination of colonial and neo-colonial education, that Africans ask themselves the question: "what is the purpose of education to be?" (It might be multiple). In order to do this, and avoid imposition of state or colonial interests, we must inquire into the meanings inherent in traditional Akan educative practices. Once these meanings are determined, then we can ask how they might be used to avoid the imposition of hegemonic influences. Cataloging and accessing these meanings is the purpose of my qualitative study. By and large, it is apt to refer to George Counts' (in Lucas, 1969) summary of philosophy of education as maintaining the potential "to bring into comprehensive synthesis a theory of the nature of the individual, a theory of learning and educative process, a theory of personality, a theory of special function of the school. Perhaps we should also say that an educational philosophy should be a philosophy of life." It is clear from the above that Counts sees no distinction between the educational philosophy and the general philosophy of life. This position is shared by the Akan who see the aims of education as the general aims of life underlined by one philosophy. Lucas, (1969) believes therefore that, teachers need more than "a knowledge" of subject matter and a little practice teaching experience before they enter the classroom. They need knowledge about knowledge, about ramifications of the subject or subjects they teach, about how those subjects relate to other subjects and to knowledge—and life—in general. They need insight into their purpose as teachers—why they are teaching what they are teaching, and how these purposes relate to the institutional setting of the school and the values of the local community and the society at large. They need understanding of the nature of mind and thought.

HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN GHANA

Ghana, a former British colony, has a long tradition in the development of formal Western-styled education. The first European-type schools in what is now called Ghana (then Gold Coast) were established not by missionary societies (as they were

throughout most of Africa) but by the large European trading companies in their forts or castles along the coast (George, 1976). The Portuguese established the first of these at Elmina (West of the present Cape Coast), where the Dutch, who took Elmina from the Portuguese, started a school in 1644. In the following century, the Danes established one (in 1727) at Christiansborg in present-day Accra and the English another (in 1751). These served mulattos and children of African traders (George, 1976).

In the early nineteenth century a period of educational expansion began both as a result of governmental activities and renewed missionary activity, which had previously been sporadic and limited. After 1821—even before the missionaries arrived—the British Government proceeded to establish several schools in addition to the one at Cape Coast. The first Basel Society missionaries arrived at Christiansborg in 1828; and the first missionary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, at Cape Coast in 1835. They were to be followed by representatives of the Bremen Mission Society, who started work in what is now the Volta Region in 1847, and by representatives of other mission societies, who arrived late in the 19th and early in the 20th century.

In Africa in general, the tradition stems from the early contact between Africans and Europeans along the coast both for purposes of trade and proselytizing (Urch, 1992). This subject of history of Western type of education is one that has lent itself to much speculation in recent times. Missionaries have been described by some African nationalists as imperialist agents—that is a group of Europeans in league with European colonial officials and traders in the acquisition of territories and the suppression of the peoples and the exploitation of the natural resources of the African countries (Odamtten, 1978). The missionary societies in Ghana for their part have been claiming that they have played a big part in the development of Ghana. However, when in 1962 a bishop of Accra, Rt. Rev. Richard Roseveare criticized the Young Pioneer, national youth organization in the country, and described it as godless he was dispelled and described as “an imperialist agent in the editorial of ‘The Ghanaian Times’ (a government newspaper) (Odamtten, 1978). In a gist, one can say that the European contact with the Gold Coast, now Ghana, brought things good as well as things evil and today many seem to share the views of Sir Herbert Stanley, that “of the good things that it has brought we have to thank the Christian missionaries for the best,” that is the schools. (Asiedu-Akrofi, 1982).

Any history of “education” per se which starts from the arrival of missionaries, and not earlier, would be a “conceptual miscarriage.” That is to say that the concept of “education” in general goes beyond the limited equation of education to schooling. The view that was once generally held that there was no education in Africa before the Europeans arrived late in the fifteenth century was, without doubt, meant to use the word “education” in a restricted sense to mean formal instruction in European-type schools (Antwi, 1992). As opined by Busia (1962 and 1964) and Moumouni (1968), this view of education is no longer accepted because social anthropologists assert that education always occurs within a particular society, is given by a society and for a society. Accordingly educational goals and methods of

approach are bound to differ from place to place, from people to people and from nation to nation. Thus, the patterns of traditional and practical education had been developed to a considerable extent and were an essential part of the social organization of all communities in Africa. It should be noted that, education in Africa did not begin with the whites (Dubois, 1939). In a section set aside for the indigenous education in Akan and child rearing practices in Akan, I will discuss the pre-colonial indigenous education in Ghana. It will suffice therefore to refer to Dubois (1939) for stating that: the education of the native was especially addressed to teaching him to endure pain and provocation without showing it.

To provide the necessary background for later events in the education of Ghana, it is appropriate to give a brief summary of efforts of missionaries and colonial governments to plant Western-type of education in Ghana. It is an attested fact that a Western form of education was introduced to Ghana in the early sixteenth century not in response to any pre-existing demand but as a handmaid of Christianity, to serve the primary needs of evangelists (Antwi, 1992; Odamtten, 1978). Among the early “missions’ that built schools were Catholic chaplains attached to the Portuguese settlement—Fort Sao Jorge” (Fort saint George)—built in Elmina. This school established in the castle was provided originally to cater for mulatto children born to Portuguese fathers and Ghanaian mothers. According to McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh (1975), the Portuguese merchants came to Ghana (Elmina) to provide reading, writing and religious teaching to African children. However, most of the children were mulattos. This was because, the merchants, for fear of illness left their wives at home, and took consorts among the Africans.” Apart from the above, considered to be the main purpose of the colonial education, three other major purposes for colonial education have been identified as:

1. That, education was necessary since they needed interpreters, clerks, etc. to keep develop their trading business. In Folson’s (1995) statement, “the initial goal of the British colonial education was the supply of cheap African labor as translators and clerks for lower administrative level in the colonial economy and was limited to a small percentage of the Africans.”
2. To train their issues produced by their Ghanaian “wives”.
3. Evangelization of the native people—They thought Africans, being wicked as they are and killing them mercilessly, would change and be more friendly to them if they could soften them through the Biblical teachings. By so doing, they knew their trading would continue more soundly. However, there were genuine evangelists who felt pity for the “godless” Africans and therefore a need to preach salvation to them (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

The Portuguese who were the first Europeans to come to Ghana were followed by the Dutch and later by the Danes and English who built castles at Christiansborg and Cape Coast respectively and attached schools to them as the Portuguese had done earlier. The castle schools came to be run by the missionaries including The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (1752), the Basel and the Methodist

(1828 and 1835 respectively). At the turn of the twentieth century, most of the schools in the country were under missionary control. Even though the colonial government showed some interest and made attempts to control, or at least participate in their administration, it was not until the governorship of Sir Gordon Guggisberg (1919–27), one of the chief protagonists of the Phelps-Stokes report on Education in 1922, that the partnership of church and the state in educational matters became fully operative (Asiedu-Akrofi, 1982).

The first systematic effort by the colonial administration to regulate education took place in 1882 when an educational ordinance was enacted and applied generally to British West Africa. The educational system was to be modeled on the English pattern. The ordinance also provided for both government-financed and denominational schools, which would receive grants-in-aid according to their efficiency (Antwi, 1992). Education (Western-type in the form of schooling) remained accessible to a limited number until the time of Guggisberg. According to Antwi (1992), it was Guggisberg, who, on becoming the governor of the Gold coast in 1919, energetically seized the opportunity for educational expansion and reform. His sixteen educational principles announced in 1925 to the Gold Coast Legislative Assembly included the following:

1. Primary education must be thorough.
2. The staff of teachers must be of the highest possible quality.
3. Character training must take an important place in Education.
4. Religious teaching should form part of School life.
5. Equal opportunities to those given to boys should be provided the education of girls.
6. Co-education is desirable during certain stages of education.
7. Whilst an English education must be given, it must be based solidly on the vernacular.
8. A sufficient staff of efficient African inspectors of schools must be trained and maintained.
9. There should be co-operation between the government and the Missions, and the latter should be subsidized for educational purposes.
10. The provision of trade Schools with a Technical and literary education that will fit young men to become skilled craftsmen and useful citizens.
11. The provision of a University. (McWilliam and Kwamena-Poh, 1975).

In spite of all these laudable principles, education in Ghana staggered until the second World War after which the British Colonial Development and Welfare Acts breathed new life into education and hence the period between 1945–50 was marked by unprecedented expansion at all levels and by political activity which ushered in independence (Asiedu-Akrofi, 1982). According to Asiedu-Akrofi (1982), whereas the school had been the nerve center of Christian educational activity during the pre-independence period, the political activities in the country during and after the 1950s tended to transform the school into a nerve center for

manpower development for purposes of political stability and redemption of the African personality. As a corollary to the above, Antwi, (1992:38–39) has observed that, with the promulgation of a new constitution in 1951, the first nationalist government led by Dr. Kwame Nkrumah assumed office and August 1951, the Nkrumah administration introduced the Accelerated Development Plan for Education implemented in January, 1952, to provide for the rapid development of education at all levels. A free-tuition elementary education for children between the ages 6 and 12 was introduced. Within the period 1952–57 primary and middle school places tripled; the building of technical institutes widened the field of technical education.

Free and compulsory primary and middle school education for all children of school-going age began in September, 1961. According to Antwi (1992), available statistics show that the number of pupils enrolled in primary and middle schools doubled between 1961 and 1966. Within the same period the number of students in Secondary schools doubled; that of training colleges tripled; that of technical institutes quadrupled; and the number of undergraduate in the three universities tripled.

A new structure and content of education, which was approved in 1974 by the Acheampong National Redemption Council regime, did not come into effect until 1987, under the Rawlings' Provisional National Defence Council regime. The major characteristic of the new educational report for the reform was the emphasis placed on vocational, practical and technical subjects throughout the entire pre-university course. A second feature was the shortening of the duration of pre-university education from the old maximum of 17 years to 12 years to enable the government realize savings on educational expenditure (Antwi, 1992).

Summary

In this section, I have traced the history of education in Ghana from the missionary period to the present day. Traditional education is mentioned in passing as a recognition of its inherent value in the whole educational enterprise. The introduction of Western education by the Christian Missionaries culminated in the planting of Western culture at the expense of the Ghanaian traditional norms and practices, hitherto the basis of education. Educational reforms in Ghana over the years have all geared toward the increase of literacy rate and sometimes to contribute to vocational education.

Analysis of this section leads one to notice the lack of African culture in the educational curriculum. It is therefore significant to introduce an African philosophy into the Ghanaian curriculum to salvage children from continuous alienation from their society because of the education they get.

AFRICAN SOCIALIZATION PROCESS

Many scholars are doubtful about making generalizations on African cultures. Olaniyan (1982) has asserted that Africa is a continent of bewildering diversity and extraordinary dynamism while Fortes (1979) in a similar view opines that there is a vast difference between the simple culture of the Kung Bushmen of the Kalahari on the one hand and the sophisticated cultures of the Ashanti, Benin, Yoruba and Hausa of West Africa. This immensity and diversity, to Reagan (1996), might lead one to believe that it is impossible for us to discuss “African” educational thought and practice in any meaningful way because there is bound to be considerable variation on such a topic from one group to another throughout the continent. However, Molefi and Kariamou (1990) have argued that:

Africa...is one cultural river with numerous tributaries characterized by their specific responses to history and environment. In this way we have always seen Europe after the Christian manifestations. England, Norway, Ireland, France, Belgium, Germany, etc., were one culture although at the same time they were different. Asante, Yoruba, Madinka are also one, though different in the historical sense. When we speak of unity in Africa, we are speaking the commonalties among the people. Thus, a Yoruba who is different from an Igbo or Asante still share more in common culture with them than Thais or Norwegians. To the degree that the material conditions influence the choices people make,... Africans share similarities in behavior, perceptions, and technologies.

In examining African socialization process, one could also refer to it as a form of education in as much as “education is the preparation of young people for their future life in society so that they can live and actively participate in the society’s development (Mutane, 1976). As Agyeman (1986) has opined, “education does not exist in a social vacuum; it exists in and for a concrete society.... It is academically unproductive to argue as to whether education exists in a social vacuum or whether it exists in a concrete society, given the commonsensical assumed social context in which education is phenomenological placed....” In other words, it is any process by which a culture is deliberately transmitted from one person or generation to another (Uchendu, 1993). Thus, education is something that enlightens one, brings one into close contact with his culture and his society and prepares one for the future. African socialization process, sometimes referred to as traditional education or informal education was to produce people who are honest, respectable, skilled and cooperative who would conform to social norms of society. It was therefore a mistake for the early Europeans to assume that they brought education to an entirely uneducated people in Africa (Sifuna and Otiende, 1992). It is a mere abstraction therefore for the early Europeans to think that African children were left in total ignorance and that any form of learning prior to their arrival was a mere imitation of the old by the young. Sifuna and Otiende (1992) have argued that, “if

literacy and formal western schooling are the only elements that constitute education, then they were right; but if education is seen as a preparation for living in the society into which one is born, they were certainly mistaken.” According to Antwi (1992), any view that, there was no education in Africa before the Europeans arrived was based on the use of education in a restricted sense to mean formal instruction in European style schools. This view of education whereby the “educated” were those who received such instruction is no longer accepted because social anthropologists assert that education always occurs within a particular society, is given by a society, and for a society (Antwi, 1992). Most of the works on African traditional education have as well neglected the process of traditional education in any appreciable detail. At best, most writers talk about isolated “rites of passage” as the core of traditional education, but these rites only constitute the climax of a gradual process. (Agyarkwa, 1976).

Notably, the Akan culture, like other African cultures, is one where all other disciplines are intimately connected. The performance of any one ritual manifests aspects of socialization, education, religion, government etc. They all go hand in hand and are never separable. The concept of interdisciplinary learning is very prevalent in the African socialization process. Quoting Adebayo Adesanya, a Yoruba writer, Jahn, (1961) succinctly refers to this harmony and states as follows:

Adesanya has found a pretty formulation to characterize briefly the harmony of African conceptions. “This is not simply a coherence of fact and faith,” he writes, “or of reason and traditional beliefs, or of reason and contingent facts, but a coherence or compatibility among all the disciplines. A medical theory, e.g., which contradicted a theological conclusion, was rejected as absurd and vice versa. This demand of mutual compatibility among all the disciplines considered as a system was the main weapon of Yoruba thinking.... Philosophy, theology, politics, social theory, land law, medicine, psychology, birth and burial, all find themselves logically concatenated in a system so tight that to subtract one item from the whole is to paralyze the structure of the whole.

The unity of which Adesanya is speaking here holds not only for Yoruba thought, but presumably also for the whole of traditional thinking in Africa, for African philosophy as such (Jahn, 1961)

Summary

This section has discussed the common trends of some aspects of African socialization process. The similarities in culture among the different African ethnic groups are more marked than their differences and hence the name “African philosophy of education” even though the Akan of Ghana is the model for the study. The process, goals and content of socialization, especially the interdisciplinary nature, is identified and commended.

CHILD REARING AND SOCIALIZATION IN AKAN

Both directly and indirectly, the Akan youngster comes to know certain things and he comes also to know certain others. He also comes to believe certain things about his society and about himself as a member of that society, because his parents and “significant others” who are his teachers, make assumptions about their society (Agyarkwa, 1976). From birth till puberty, Akan children stay with their parents, some may live with their uncles or aunts. Wherever they may be the boys will follow the trade of their father or uncle and the girls the vocation of their mother or other kinswomen. The commonest is farming, but most combine with weaving, pottery, fishing and hunting. Whatever the trade or occupation which they engage in, the children will soon learn that on certain days, certain kinds of work are prohibited, because such days are set aside for some religious ceremony. This introduces the youngsters to the Akan traditional calendar, with its complex system of cycles. The mother teaches the children the need for personal cleanliness and traditional etiquette. According to Agyarkwa (1976), the Akan people do not have any puberty rites for boys. When boys know how to “wash their hands,” that is, how to comport themselves at gatherings with dignity, they are treated as adults; this is roughly between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Most Akan communities, however, do perform puberty rites for girls. The commonest is performed when the girl has her initial menstrual period. The essential point about these rites is that they mark the pinnacle of the direct and indirect instruction, which the girls have been receiving from their mothers and grandmothers. The education of girls emphasizes cooking, mothercraft and general housekeeping. Facilities are offered to the girls to frequently play the chef or “play house.” The future mother’s training is mostly practical. They watch their mothers at work, lend a hand here and there, often too they compete among themselves; especially to see who prepares the best dish when they “play house.”

Training of children is a shared responsibility with the father having overall command. Fathers say much more to their boys while mothers undertake to prepare their girls fully to fit them in the community and society. Lessons on nature and agriculture begin as early as a child learns to talk. Boys go to farm with their fathers in the early morning while girls help their mothers to put the home in order before following. Putting the home in order entails sweeping in and around the compound and fetching water from the well or stream. Sometimes if it is found convenient, a meal is prepared at home to be taken to the father and the boys already on the farm. Rest time at the farm is often the “education time” when stories about animals and plants are told (Tufuo and Donkor, 1989). The Akan girl uses miniature utensils alongside her mother and goes through all the stages, inviting her mother to taste her preparations from the wooden spoon and make her comment. From the miniature utensils and the oven, she passes onto adult cooking about the age of twelve. She is rebuked if she shows slackness in this important matter. She is taken beyond the age of mimetic nursing to baby nursing as soon as possible. She is present at the baby’s bath to fetch this or hand over that to mother (Bartels, 1976).

In accompanying her mother, sisters or other women relatives to fetch water, to gather fuel for fire, to wash clothes by the river, and when going to the marketplace, she is shown various curative herbs. In all the above trips, she helps out by carrying what she can, according to her physical ability. During a market day, if her mother has goods to sell, the girl learns by observing her mother's trading skills, which include negotiation ability and mental mathematical calculation (Telda, 1995).

The Akan way of certifying a child as having "graduated" from childhood is summarized in the proverb *akodaa hunu ne nsa bohoro a one mpanimfoo didi* (if a child is able to wash his hands clean, he dines with the elders). But "knowing how to clean your hands" is only part of the whole procedure of joining adult company. This concept includes cleaning of your mouth and teeth. Ashantis normally have short white teeth, which are cultivated from the time a person is about three years old. Having dirty teeth and odor is considered disgraceful in any Ashanti community and household (Tufuo and Donkor, 1989). The day of a child at the age three therefore starts with the washing of the face and next cleaning of the teeth. A special species of a forest tree—*Tweapea*—is used. It has the special property of removing all food particles from the teeth without injuring the gum. And the child shall only be given food to eat after the mother is satisfied that his teeth are clean. Brushing of teeth with a chewing stick is part of general personal hygiene. Insistence on personal cleanliness may sometime be embarrassing to an outsider. There seem to be too much attachment to having clean toes and nails, regular shaving of the beard and other parts of the body such as the armpit and sometimes the nostrils. Overgrowth of hair in every part of the body is looked upon with strong objection and feeling of contempt and scorn; overgrowth of hair is considered to be making way for cesspools of sweat and creating odor. Mothers therefore insist on thorough education on cleanliness at puberty when young women are prepared for marriage. This entails the use of specially prepared spices for at all times and seasons the body must be protected from bad odor (Tufuo and Donkor, 1989).

Summary

Operationally, socialization process in terms of goals and objectives is similar to the term "education." Both have in-built function of training the child to live well and be lived with in the society. The section has discussed the Akan traditional mode of rearing children, home making among Akan and how roles are culturally divided between parents and children and between boys and girls. Cleanliness and other childhood and adult activities culminating into "rites of passage" are discussed. These serve as a yardstick for an investigator to measure the informal, traditional or indigenous education among the Akan for this study.

INDIGENOUS AKAN EDUCATION

Listen Ocol, my old friend,
 The ways of your ancestors
 Are good,
 Their customs are solid
 And not hollow
 They are not thin, not easily
 Breakable
 They cannot be blown away
 By the winds
 Because their roots reach deep
 Into the soil.
 I do not understand
 The ways of foreigners
 But I do not despise their
 Customs.
 Why should you despise yours? (Okot p'Bitek, 1967)

The above poem is a reminder of the importance of maintaining indigenous values and forms that are familiar with any group of people from all cultures. As one group appreciates other people's customs and cultures by accepting their explanation for why they do what they do, it looks unthinkable and demeaning when they tend to look down upon their own without finding explanations for what they do.

Indigenous Akan education had its unique objective, content and methods meant to socialize the child in to the Akan society. The basic aim of the traditional Akan education was to train the individual to be a useful and acceptable member of society. Only things the child needed to know were taught and in the end the child's behavior and character had to conform to standards already set by society (Abbam, 1994). In effect then, the focal points were the individual and society, but the emphasis was more on society as a whole. The reason for this was that, every society whether simple or complex has its own way of educating its people (Abbam, 1994). The individual in Akan society is not separated and understood apart from the community. At birth one is not considered a person because the mere being born to a human family does not confer personhood on a baby. Accordingly Menkiti (1984) has stated that:

In order to become a person, one must pass through rites designated to incorporate one into the community of persons. In other words, persons become persons only after a process of incorporation. Without incorporation into this or that community, individuals are considered to be danglers to whom the description "person" does not fully apply. For personhood is something to be achieved, and is not given simply because one is born of human seed (Menkiti, 1984).

It is clear then that, in the Akan culture an individual is viewed beyond infancy in determining the causes underlying one's behavior in life. In Carl Jung's (in Hall and Lindzey, 1978) description of his archetypal psychology, he has opined that, "inherited archetypes consist of the animal instincts that humans have inherited in their evolution from the lower forms." What we can learn from Jung and which ties directly into Akan philosophy and psychology is that, psychology that begins with human beings beginning at infancy or even pre-birth is not sufficient enough to deal with the total behavior of individuals. The pre-human existence should be a source of psychological problem to be addressed in any educational structure (Hall & Lindzey, 1978). The rituals and rites of initiation as educational procedure therefore has meanings not only in the present world but from the "before world" referred to sometimes as the "after world." Among the Akans one needs to be prepared to take one's proper place depending upon the life the one led in the "other world"

In a similar opinion, Uchendu (1993) views indigenous education that it was to produce people who were honest, respectable, skilled, and co-operative who would conform to social norms of society. The family, considered as the primary and indispensable cell of African society, and peer group were very important agents in the education of the youth and the community saw it as its duty to educate its youth. To Fafunwa (1974), education as a process for transmitting culture in terms of continuity and growth was meant to disseminate knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society or both. African traditional system of education was therefore prevalent in Africa before the advent of colonialism, Islam and Christianity. Its principle was functionalism and more emphasis was placed on social responsibility, job orientation, spiritual and moral values. Methodologically, children learnt by doing (Uchendu, 1993).

In the Akan traditional setting, an educated man was one who could combine character with particular skill. In terms of organization, the best term to use is "informal" in as much as there were no classrooms and specialized teachers, no organized syllabus, with the incumbent picking up his material from everyone in the community (Abbam, 1994). The little boy did not refuse to give up his seat on public transport to an elderly person or else the whole passenger population would chastise him. This was a glimpse of how the values of the society were taught to the youth. In this context it was respect for old age. Among the Akan, Abbam (1994) has noted that, parents trained and supervised their children's lives to be at par with society's moral values. Some values emphasized were sociability, courage, solidarity, honor, endurance and diligence and the child could be chastised for going contrary to any of these norms and qualities. Traditionally, the Akan inculcated in children these values through "Ananse" stories (folktales). For example, children would not like to emulate the style of the person in a story who was terribly disgraced and ridiculed for being a cheat; they would rather emulate the hero who is identified with courage and honor, and praised. Chastity was taught to adolescents through other rites of passage including puberty rites.

Vocational training was both formal and informal and was a very important component in the content of education. Informally, parents taught their own vocation to their children and other times children were allowed to choose theirs

and they were sent to the relevant master craftsman for internship or apprenticeship. Formal training took the form of training of certain specialists like priests, hunters, master drummers, chief's spokesmen and herbalists (Abbam, 1994). There is a tradition among the Akan-speaking peoples whereby a prospective holder of an important traditional office, such as a future king or paramount chief, can be scheduled for a period and "educated" by the elders concerning his leadership role and responsibilities (Antwi, 1992).

Through games, gymnastics and dances, provision is made for the development of physical aptitudes (Antwi, 1992). The society had no use for frail individuals. Children engaged in a variety of games like running, jumping and balancing; and in our traditional society, wrestling was organized for boys and this helped them develop their physique. A game for girls called "Ampe" involved lots of jumping, clapping and throwing of the legs in a particular pattern and this helped the girls develop to be physically fit (Abbam, 1994).

Intellectual education found expression in History, Geography, Science, Religion, Logic and Oral Arts. Clan and community history was taught. The type of soil suitable for certain types of crops, weather changes that control agricultural regimes were also taught. Fallow system and shifting cultivation including both crop rotation and land rotation were taught [and this was Agricultural Science]. Children were taught Astronomy so that they could know the stars and the sky to be able to determine weather conditions on the seas and also the type of fish associated with those conditions. All these were thought to children in an informal structured manner. There were no classrooms where lessons could be changed from a subject to another. Rather, the everyday political, economic and other social activities including children's own observations were the process through which these subjects were learned. Children's belief in and acceptance of morals, lessons and roles drawn from legends, proverbs, and initiation ceremonies were reinforced by practical examples in adult life relative to the norms of the society (Boateng, 1985). According to Boateng (1985):

Social norms and group solidarity and respect for authority were given practical interpretation by adults through activities like *nnoboa* (men gathering on different days to help each other on the farm) and adults removing their sandals before talking to a chief or a king. To a large extent there was no conflict between what children were expected to do and what was happening in their immediate environment. What was real was not different from what was taught.... Custom and example were heavily relied upon as the principal educational agents (p. 120).

Another significant phenomenon was that children were also encouraged to acquire the skills of decent and presentable speech. Children were therefore taught proverbs which they were requested to use appropriately in everyday speech (Abbam, 1992). As both Abbam, (1992) and Wiredu, (1995) have observed, among the Akan, the educated person was the one who could back his arguments with appropriate

proverbs. Akan proverbs constitute an important mode of communication; used to develop the child's reasoning power and skill. It had to be mastered if a child was to be fully developed and be able to cope with the various occasions when they had to be used. Wiredu (1995) notes that, Among the Akans of Ghana, a value is placed on beauty of speech that might well appear extraordinary to other people. Beauty of speech here refers not just to beauty of delivery but also, and more particularly, to a characteristic speech deriving from both logical and rhetorical factors. Beautiful speech is one that develops a coherent and persuasive argument, clinching points—and this is crucial—with striking and decisive proverbs. Anybody not possessed of such a tongue can forget any ambitions of high office at the court of a traditional Akan ruler.

Character-building was also paramount in Akan indigenous education and as Fafunwa (1982) has put it:

Traditional education, as far as character -building was concerned, was certainly severe. But this was because of the importance, which African society attaches to this aspect of education. The habit of physical exercise, apprenticeship in a trade, a religious upbringing, a respectful attitude towards one's elders and active participation in community life are indispensable conditions for any African wishing to be considered a person of consequence. The lack of more formal education can be forgiven, but a person who does not fulfill these conditions inflicts the worst possible humiliation on both his immediate family and his more distant kinsfolk. Respect for one's elders, which is an important part of character training includes respect for all that represent authority: village chiefs, religious leaders, soothsayers, uncles, relatives and neighbors. Styles of greeting play an essential role in the expression of respect. Salutation is a complicated affair... with different modes of addressing relatives, elders, equals, chiefs, and so on, and special greetings for morning, afternoon and evening (Fafunwa, 1982).

Wiredu (1995) has also observed that, "in Akan society, one just does not address a person or group without first greeting them. Failure to observe this rule is regarded as a very serious lapse from good behavior."

In Moumouni's (1968) summary of the characteristics of traditional African education (applicable among the Akan as well), the following stand out as paramount:

1. Its great importance attached to it, collective and social in nature.
2. Its intimate tie with social life both in material and spiritual sense.
3. Its multivalent character both in terms of goals and the means employed.
4. Its gradual and progressive achievements in conformity with the successive stages of physical, emotional and mental development of the child.

In a similar vein, Fafunwa (1982) has enumerated what he refers to as the “seven cardinal goals of African education” as follows:

1. To develop the child’s latent skills.
2. To develop character.
3. To inculcate respect for elders and those in positions of authority.
4. To develop intellectual skills.
5. To acquire specific vocational training and to develop a healthy attitude towards honest labor.
6. To develop a sense of belonging and to encourage active participation in family and community affairs.
7. To understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large.

Summary

Having discussed African socialization process and child rearing practices in Akan in the previous sections, this section followed as a matter of corollary to situate Akan traditional education in its specific perspective. The process and goals of Akan education have been identified and discussed, bringing out some of the indigenous philosophies that served as foundations for the “informal” Akan education. A review of this theme cannot be ignored in the development of a philosophy of education that is based on Akan culture.

AFRICAN RELIGION

There are no people in the world that have not got a God of their own, a God who speaks their own language and who shares in the ups and downs of their particular nation. If a nation is warlike, their God also is warlike being, a super warrior. Thus for the ancient Scandinavians who were at one time the warlords of Europe, their God was Thor, the God of war and destruction.... We even hear of jealous and vindictive god.... To say that the God of a particular people is untrue is to declare that those people are themselves not quite people (Thairu, 1975).

This section will review African religion in the context of their general life orientation. A close observation of Africa and its societies reveals that religion is at the root of African culture and is the determining principle of African life. It is no exaggeration; therefore, to say that in traditional Africa, religion is life and life, religion (Opoku, 1978). Religion is therefore relevant in construction any form of African philosophy.

Africans are engaged in religion in whatever they do—whether it be farming, fishing or hunting; or simply eating, drinking or traveling. It is therefore no abstraction but

a part of reality and everyday life (Opoku, 1978). In agreement to the above, Sarpong (1974) has observed that:

Ghanaians, as indeed all Africans, believe in the existence of one Supreme Deity whom they regard as far greater than any other being. In everyday speech and talk, the name of this being is mentioned. For example, among the Akans one hears frequently: *Onyame ma ade pa kye me a...* (If God gives me a good morning...) Stories and popular sayings in which God is one of the characters abound. In many of them He plays no second fiddle, but is the hero, the just judge condemning the villain or rewarding the good. Ghanaian songs and verses heard frequently on drums as also the unwritten poetry of the nation, are full of praises of God and of His names (Sarpong, 1974).

The religiosity of the Akan also finds expression in their belief that each man was a spirit sent into the visible and natural world to fulfill a particular mission. In this case, Abraham (1995) in his work "A Paradigm of African Society" has stated that if a distinction can be drawn between worship and serving, then the Akans never had a word for worship. So even though Africans (and I mean traditional Africa) do not confine themselves in buildings/structures or to specific times or days in order to celebrate life and commune with "the Source of Life (Divinity)" (Telda, 1996), to the traditional Akan, the entire universe is a "temple" of life in which all life, visible and invisible are bound to one another and commune with each other and with the "Source of Life" (Divinity). In his preface to the "Religion and Art in Ashanti" Rattray (1927) has observed that as follows:

...here I only crave permission,...to state that I sometimes like to think, had these people been left to work out their own salvation, perhaps some day an African Messiah would have arisen.... West Africa might then become the cradle of a new creed which acknowledged One Great Spirit, Who, being one, nevertheless manifested Himself in everything around Him and thought men to hear His voice in the flow of His waters and in the sound of His winds in the trees.

Mbiti (1990) expresses a similar view when he asserts that:

In traditional African society, there are no irreligious people. To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of that community...to be without religion amounts to a self-excommunication from the entire society. (p. 2).

In her article, "We believe that the Earth is God's gift to us" Nana Boakyewa Yiadom I (1997) has stated that, the key to understanding the Akan is through his religion. For the Akan of Ghana, God is not only a universal Father, He is also our divine mother, *Onyame Obaatan Pa*, all knowing, omnipresent and sustainer of the whole

world. In fact, African religion, no matter the level of sophistication or education of the individual, permeates every aspect of his life, from seedtime to harvest, through the rites of passage, birth, puberty, marriage death and hereafter. We have no creeds to recite, as these dwell in the heart, and each one is himself the living creed.

According to Anane (1997), until recently, our perception of knowledge was bound by the philosophy and methods of Western science. Few people recognized that there are myriad sciences embedded in other cultures and civilizations. Unfortunately, attempts to find solutions to some problems afflicting the modern world have ignored religious and other cultural practices of indigenous people. In Anane's (1997) research, he has commended that it is gratifying that in Ghana today, some NGOs and scholars are recognizing the importance of various traditional religious beliefs or culture based systems in addressing alarming problems of environment and development. The Friends of Earth (FoE), Ghana has recognized how traditional or customary social institutions are promoting biodiversity, conservation and sustainable development, and has launched a project to conserve some sacred grooves in the country as part of its biodiversity program. These fetish or sacred grooves are patches of forest ranging from 0.5 to 1500 hectares; they may consist of only a few trees, stones or rivers, which serve a variety of purposes, such as burial grounds for royal families or habitats of traditional gods or fetishes.

The Ghana Association for the Conservation of Nature (Ghacon) (1997) claims that most of untouched forest cover of the Ashanti region is made up of sacred groves, with a few forest reserves protected by the government. In its campaign, the Ghacon advises the community about the construction of fire belts to protect the groves from rampant bushfires from nearby farms during the dry season.

In Anane's (1997) opinion, environmental conservation is not a recent phenomenon in indigenous African communities. Past generations knew about environmental degradation and the need for preservation. This knowledge found expression in traditional religious practices, because the African believes that everything belonging to the ecosystem and the environment has a strong spiritual meaning for humans. Indeed, the African's attitude to nature is deeply rooted in the belief that the Supreme Being for a harmonious continuity created all things and there must be a relationship of mutual obligations between all created things.

Anane (1997) further states that:

In other cases, rivers and streams are treated as sacred: their catchment area and surrounding forests are protected in the belief that the river god lives in the forest. Logging, cultivation, or entry on certain days by women during their menstrual cycle is forbidden. In certain parts of Ghana, forests are also venerated because they house a variety of wild animals that are considered sacred or totems. One example is the belief in a common ancestry with the leopard, which is the symbol of the Akan people. The forest in which these animals are found is sacred; killing this species is therefore not allowed. Certain trees could not be felled because they were considered *Nyame dua*

(God's tree) and therefore sacred and endowed with healing powers. Indiscriminate tree felling today was unheard of in the days when these traditional religious practices ensured the preservation of forests.

In spite of the part that traditional religion plays in the social, economic and political lives of the African people, Abimbola (1990) has stated that:

Millions of Africans today appear to be ashamed to proclaim publicly their commitment to the traditional African religion and thought. The colonization of our minds has gone so far to make us ashamed of our own religious heritage. Yet it is a well-known fact that most educated Africans turn to these same indigenous traditions as soon as they meet with difficulties at work or in the family.

It is sad also, that the constitutions of many African countries guarantee religious freedom, but only for the world's two most powerful religions, Islam and Christianity. It does not cover traditional African forms of religion, which are regarded as fetishism or animism (Abimbola, 1990).

Summary

This section has dealt with African traditional religion and how it finds expression in the everyday life of African people. Religion is explained as a source of life and a profoundly indispensable phenomenon in all activities among the Africans. Traditional education which was based on the Akan religiosity which extended to all departments of their life orientation led them to solve some major world problems including environmental degradation, through their respect for the sacredness of the earth and all that inhabit it. These are some of the values that are purported to be reclaimed and maintained to contribute to solve similar problems afflicting the modern world. Even though the so-called "educated" shy away from practicing the traditional religion publicly, they still resort to it when they find themselves in inexplicable problems. African governments still lack the political and religious courage to openly recognize the significance and respect for African traditional religion.

FOLKTALES (AKAN "SPIDER STORIES")

The term "spider stories" as used by the Akan is a generic one, embracing a large body of stories. The expression, "spider stories" is a translation of an Akan word, which literally means 'spider words' or 'the spider's tales', or even 'words about the spider.' The Akan word for this is "Anansesem" (Agyarkwa, 1976). A spider story may not necessarily be of a make-believe type. It may well describe a potential or an actual happening. However, sometimes an Akan may express his incredulity about a piece of news by saying "This is a spider story." (Agyarkwa, 1976).

In Cole's (1983) statement, folktales are usually the first stories we hear as children, and almost no others can equal their power to involve us so totally. Akan spider stories are classified into four types: droll or farcical stories, apologues or tales with morals, etiological or explanatory tales, and myths (Rattray, 1930). In his study, Agyarkwa (1976) has explained that the droll or farcical stories make up a large group of spider stories. Most of the Akan "trickster" stories, that is, stories in which usually a huge animal or a wise person is outwitted, belongs to this group. The purpose of this type of story is to entertain or to criticize (or satirize).

1. Apologues or tales with morals among the Akans are similar to the Aesop's fables. Unlike the Aesop's fables, which are generally about animals, the Akan moral stories include both animals and people as characters.
2. Etiological or explanatory tales are about the most popular of the Akan stories. They explain the origin of physical characteristics of some animals and the etymologies of some words.
3. Myths as used as a classification of Akan stories, denote those stories which give an account of dealings or supposed dealings between human beings on the one hand, and deities on the other: The minimum criterion of myth is that it has to do with some divine beings (Agyarkwa, 1976). Generally, as Miruka (1994) emphasizes, the functional and the instructive role of folktales are not told just for their own sake; they have some important pieces of social instructions to impart. He asserts that the allegories of events and characters reflect on human life and are a source of learning. In the characters, be they animals or otherwise, we see the lazy, sages, cowards, agitators, the arrogant, etc. and the tales give us hints as to how to react to them. Some tales are targeted at the adolescents, maidens, warriors, and clan elders. etc. The aim, generally, is to discourage vice and encourage virtue and to give us guidelines on what is despicable (to be decried) and what is cherishable (be valued).

According to Miruka (1994), folktales present the philosophical essence of the society with regard to how they look at life issues, what they value and what they decry. Tales on religion, creation and supernature give the religious foundation of a group while biographies and historical tales present the mundane landmarks in what is the society today. In the realm of Akan oral literature, storytelling stands paramount as performing a direct pedagogical function in socializing into society. Boadu (1985), has stated how this educational function is performed in his essay, "African Oral Artistry and the New Social Order."

To him, oral artistry serves three broad purposes: ritual, entertainment and education. The priest's work is purely ritualistic—performing the naming ceremony of a newborn baby into the community, pouring libation (call of the ancestors), and serving as a link between people and the gods. Traditional singers at festivals and important social meetings perform to entertain. The pedagogic role of the artist in traditional African society is illustrated by the art of storytelling. An elderly person tells stories to the young ones around the courtyard in the moonlight. The storyteller

performs not for any financial gain but for other reasons—artistic commitment, for teaching the children the moral values of their society, and for exposing them to the socio-cultural background of their society (p. 85)

Summary

In the absence of written literature, folktales served the traditional Akan society as the source of literature from where moral lessons. This section has discussed the types of folktales and their function. Akan folktales are grouped into four main categories for their entertainment, moral, explanatory and mythological values. The functional and instructive roles are significant in the formulation of any educational curriculum model for a people who have most of their philosophies embedded in this type of oral literature.

PROVERBS

“Oba nyansafoo, yebu no be na yenka no asem” (Akan proverb) meaning “A wise child is talked to in proverbs” Boateng (1985). This Akan proverb summarizes the importance of proverbs. It also shows the respect that is accorded the one who understands and has the ability to speak in proverbs.

Dzobo (1992) describes proverbs as “normally short and pithy sayings which are very popular devices used to state metaphorically certain general truths about life.”

In Dzobo’s (1992) opinion:

Proverbs are very effective mode of communication, and their persuasive and their correct use in speech is always taken as a sign of sound education, maturity, cultural sophistication and wisdom (p. 95).

Proverbs form one major aspect of oral literature where one can easily identify the words of wisdom and worldview through thorough observation of life in general among the Akan. The educative and communicative power of proverbs in traditional Africa lies in their use as validators of traditional procedures and beliefs. Children are raised to believe strongly that proverbial sayings have been laid down and their validity tested by their forefathers (Boateng, 1985). Like other aspects of traditional African culture, proverbs are inextricably linked with the ancestral spirits and other forms of the magico-religious life. Among the Akan of Ghana, correct procedure in interpersonal relations is stressed through the large number of proverbs which outline patterns of accepted behavior. There is pronounced tendency on the parts of adults to moralize and to communicate their values indirectly to children by the use of proverbs (Boateng, 1985).

The Akan proverbs therefore reveal their profound philosophies underlying worthwhile activities and regulations in the society. Almost all the disciplines of Akan traditional education have different proverbs that guide their teaching and learning. In his work, *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe (1988) has stated that among his

people (the Ibo a West African ethnic group in Nigeria whose culture is similar to the Akan of Ghana), “proverbs are the palm oil with which words are eaten.” Accordingly, Wiredu (1995) has stated that among the Akan of Ghana, a value is placed on beauty of speech that might well appear extraordinary to other people. Beauty of speech here refers not just to beauty of delivery but also, more particularly, to a characteristic of speech deriving from both logical and rhetorical factors. Beautiful speech is one that develops a coherent and persuasive argument, clinching points and this is crucial—*with striking and decisive proverbs* (emphasis, mine).

Proverbs are among the other oral literary forms like fables, myths and maxims that are used to express beliefs, values and feelings in speaking and thinking. In analyzing the proverb “a proverb is a horse, which can carry one swiftly to the discovery of ideas, Dzobo (1992) has explained that:

This proverb defines accurately the symbolic function of proverbs. Instead of being an old-fashioned way of communication, proverbs lead us to conceive and understand the essence of human relationships, events, life’s situation and the behavior patterns of people. They establish certain value bases to help us comprehend and order our actions, and they enshrine the vital conclusions filtered from life’s experience (p. 95)

Proverbs help to answer philosophical questions in simple terms instead of treatises. The philosophical question “What is knowledge?” may be answered as “Knowledge is like a baobab tree and so no one person can embrace it with both hands.” In other words, knowledge grows and so there is no end to what any one individual can know (Dzobo, 1992).

Akan proverbs, like other proverbs, normally have primary and secondary meanings sometimes referred to as denotative or manifest (*explicit*) meaning, on the one hand, and connotative or latent (*implicit*) meaning on the other. For example, “The lion and the antelope live in the same forest yet the antelope has time to grow.” The explanation here is that the lion and the antelope firstly denote carnivorous and herbivorous quadrupeds, respectively; connotatively, however, the “lion” represents “forces of destruction” while the “antelope” represents man in his puniness and powerlessness. The main point of the proverb is that “There is a power in the universe that preserves the life of the weak and helpless in the face of all that threatens it.” (Dzobo, 1992). Even though it is not always easy to make out the connotative meaning of a proverb, if its connotative meaning is grasped, it is found to be a vehicle used by our fathers and mothers to approach, apprehend and recollect reality in their experience (Dzobo, 1992). Among the many uses of proverbs we can discern the following:

1. They express abstract truth. For example, “There is no quarrel between the eye and sleep.” The abstract idea is “learn to tolerate each other” (tolerance).

2. They are a guide to conduct. For example, “Once you have made up your mind to cross a river by walking through it, you do not mind getting your stomach wet.” The principle here is “be firm in carrying out your resolutions.”
3. They are a commentary on human behavior. For example, “It is usually the insect in your cloth that bites you.” The commentary is “sometimes it is your own relatives or close friends who will ruin or betray you.”
4. They express value. For example, “It is one’s deeds that are counted, not one’s years.” The value orientation here is “the meaning of time is in positive deeds’ (creative living).

Akan proverbial sayings are always preceded by credits to the revered ancestors. “It is our ancestors who said that...” is a clause that precedes proverbial sayings to affirm that the message from the proverbs began with the very genesis of the community. In that case proverbs may serve as prescriptions for action or act as judgment in times of moral lapses. Often a proverb, cited at an appropriate time during an argument can settle the dispute instantly, for the proverbs are believed to have been handed down by the ancestors and the predecessors to whom we owe our communal experience and wisdom (Opoku, 1978). In Boateng’s (1985), assertion, the lessons drawn from proverbial sayings help the child and the adult to see the world from the same viewpoint. Through such informal instructional devices, the African child comes to respect the values of his society without ever feeling that he is bombarded with instructions on proper standards of social behavior (p. 118).

Summary

This section has discussed both the denotative and connotative meaning and significance of proverbs as a very philosophical tool to transmit thoughts among the Akan. The uses to which proverbs can be put to bring out their educative implications are also explained. The moral lessons in all these proverbs and sayings have become sacrosanct and legalized in a manner that they can be referred to in arbitration at any Akan traditional court. In the Akan society, as in other African societies, the skillful use of proverbs is the hallmark of good breeding. (Akrofi, 1958)

AKAN ART AND SYMBOLS

Close to oral literature as a dwelling place for Akan indigenous philosophies is Akan art and symbols. For the powerful lessons that they provide, they are oftentimes referred to as the “symbols that speak.” According to Sieber (1986):

African Art is not produced solely for its aesthetic ends—that is, it is not art for art’s sake as is so much of recent Western art; rather, it is deeply embedded in the belief patterns of the society (p. 214).

In discussing the style and form of traditional arts of Black Africa, which characteristics the Akan of Ghana share, Sieber (1986) has stated that:

African art may be characterized as conservative, for it lay at the core of commonly held traditional belief patterns and strongly reflected those shared values, at the same time reinforcing and symbolizing them. It was radical in the sense that it was at the root of all beliefs and values. It was symbolic or representative rather than abstract or representational (p. 212).

As Opoku(1978) using the Akan of Ghana as a case study has observed that West African societies express their convictions of their moral values in their ceremonies, such as those connected with birth, on their drums, through their horns or through linguist staffs.

In his study, Opoku (1978) found at the Akan chiefs' palaces regalia that embody the treasured knowledge and wisdom of the land, and of particular significance among them were the linguist's staffs or umbrella tops. According to Opoku (1978), "these symbolic objects, in the form of human beings, animals, fruits, flowers or parts of objects, carved in wood or done in gold or silver, record certain cherished values." The Akan call the symbols found on regalia as described by Opoku (1978) above as *abosode*.

In Antubam's (1963) work, *Ghana's Heritage of Culture*, he has explained most of these symbols and the few below may suffice for analysis:

1. A hand holding an egg, usually found on top of a linguist staff or an umbrella, says "Power is like holding an egg in the hand. If you hold it too tightly it breaks and if you hold it too loosely it drops." Power must therefore be handled with great care.
2. A man trying to scrape a medicine from the bark of a tree by himself but finds that the shavings fall out of his receptacle emphasizes the need for cooperation, for the man would find the work easier if there was another person to hold the receptacle for him. In other words, many hands make light work. A double head, Tinta, whose message is "One head does not constitute a council," often represents the same idea.
3. A snail sitting on a linguist staff says "Let me be where I am; I am content with it." This calls for contentment, avoidance of envy and jealousy, which disrupts social harmony.
4. A chicken catcher symbolizes that the result of continuously chasing a chicken is that your hand touches some dirty ground. This emphasizes the need for moderation and temperance.
5. A crouching chimpanzee on top of a linguist staff means "When you meet a chimpanzee crouching do not ask him for a seat." This proverb emphasizes the need for adaptation.
6. A cock standing near its water basin and looking into the sky expresses the Akan proverb "The cock in drinking water raises its head to God in

thankfulness.” It is a warning against ingratitude, a vice condemned in Akan society.

7. A monitor lizard sitting on top of a linguist staff expresses the Akan proverb “Mine is to help and build up and not to let down my state.” This is an exhortation of patriotism (pp. 165–168).

In Opoku’s (1978) assessment, “these symbols express many traditionally cherished values, the practice of which leads to harmony between individuals, and internal cohesion in the community.” Other Akan art form where cherished values, lessons and sayings can be found are stools and ordinary cloth, Adinkra and Kente.

Akan stools take their names from the design between the upper part and the base (Okrah, 1995). Most of the designs are carvings of strong animals like the tiger and the elephant. Different Akan chiefs have peculiar names for their state stools and such names are carved as symbolic objects (Okrah, 1995). Different designs originating from other indigenous pictograms and ideograms are also used for different stools. Okrah (1995) in his work *Ghana Arts and Culture for the Home and Classroom* give examples of these:

1. *Kotoko-Dwa* (the porcupine stool) which is used exclusively by the *Asantehene* (the king of the Asante). The porcupine is the traditional symbol of the Asante.
2. *Osono-Dwa* (the elephant stool). It shows the authority of the chief who uses it. He is strong and protective.
3. *Nyansapo-Dwa* (the wisdom knot stool). Only the wise can untie the wisdom knot. It shows the wisdom of the one who uses it
4. *Sankofa-Dwa*. This is a proverbial stool meaning return to take it or turn around and look back for your roots.

According to Sarpong (1974), one of the commonest media of expressing Ghanaian symbolic art is the cloth. Whereas the *kente* is one of the two ceremonial cloths among the Akans used on joyful occasions, the *adinkra* is worn when people are sorrowful or sorrowing. The *adinkra* patterns or figures are stamped but they are woven in the case of the *kente*; *adinkra* designs are dozens. *Kente* symbols are mostly geometrical (Sarpong, 1974). In Sarpong’s study, he found out that, the square or the rectangle is a sign of sanctity in the male aspect of both God and man. It also stands for territorial power and extent of a male ruler. The triangle is a female symbol, the focal point for all state assemblies.

Kente designs

The designs in *kente* are meaningful and value-laden. The following, studied by Okrah (1995) are a just a few, depicting categories of historical events, achievements, proverbs, philosophical concepts moral values and social conduct.

Ohene aforo hyen (the chief has embarked the ship); *Kyeretwie* (catcher of tiger);

Abusua ye dom (the family is a force).

Sika fre bogya (money invites relations);

Baakofo mmu man (one person does not rule a nation); *Obi nkye obi*

kwan mu si (sooner or later one enters another one's path. In other words, do unto others what you would have them do unto you);

Nku me fie nkosu me abonten (don't kill me at home [in secrecy] and sympathize for me outside, in other words, a warning against a pretender who sheds crocodile tears)

Adinkra designs

Adinkra, which means farewell, is a cloth with Akan indigenous designs, which are mostly pictographic and ideographic. According to Manoukian (1950); The foundation of the Akan adinkra cloth is plain white cotton or cotton dyed russet brown (Ashanti mourning cloth color); the designs are stamped on this with dye made from the bark of the *badie* tree; the stamps are cut from old calabashes (Manoukian, 1950). Most of the designs in other art forms borrow from the *Adinkra* symbols. The symbol of God's omnipotence is a commonplace in Ghana. There are symbols of hope and another of wisdom (Sarpong, 1974). Sarpong (1974) has explained that:

1. The ram's head or horns symbolize innocence or guiltlessness as the sheep is said to be peaceful and guiltless animal, which is so much used for sacrificial purposes that other objects for sacrifice are referred to as sheep.
2. The leg of the fowl is the symbol of a parent, or guardian who is strict in dealing with his children without being brutal to them. It represents the proverb "A hen may tread upon her chicks but does not kill them." It is the symbol of absolute confidence in God. Such figures stamped upon white cloth, may show who should wear it, when he should wear it, how near he is to a dead person, his sex, etc.

The following are just a few of the designs selected from a study by Okrah (1995):

Gye Nyame (Except God);

Fihankra (the compound house);

Sankofa (return to take it, Look back to your roots); *Odenkyem da nsuom nanso onnhome nsuo, ohome mframa* (the crocodile lives in water, yet it breathes air not water. In other words, do not use someone's profession or role for judging all their actions); *Ese ne tekrema* (the teeth and the tongue—

The teeth and the tongue sometimes fight because they are in such a close contact. Thus, once in a while the teeth bite the tongue. But they continue to live near each other and must find a way to live together peacefully).

Color

Color too has a rich symbolism in Ghana. In his study of the Akan Sarpong (1974) has the following findings:

Gold or yellow among the Akan, Ga and Ewe especially, represents royalty, continuous life, prosperity warmth, maturity prime of life and the presence of God.

White represents purity, virtue, virginity, joy and victory.

Green represents newness, fertility, vitality and primeness in growth. The green color is employed a lot during puberty ceremonies.

Black symbolizes vice, deep feelings of melancholy, the devil, death and their power over life, and old age. Objects dedicated to the dead are usually colored black.

Red is used on occasions of melancholy, death of a relative, wars, national anger or crisis, violence or sudden calamity.

Blue is the color for love and female tenderness.

Green combined with white stands for bountiful harvest. while

Red and yellow colors stand for life and its power over sickness.

SUMMARY

In this section I have tried to review-related literature on African and Akan Art and craft and other symbols including carvings of linguists staffs, stools, cloths and colors. The significance and educative implications of these have been discussed in the light of Indigenous Akan philosophies.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Methodology

INTRODUCTION

The research design for this study was descriptive and interpretive. Thus, the study attempted to provide answers to the research questions both from the conceptual framework and the review of the related literature. I used a qualitative research approach. Qualitative understanding, it should be noted, is not just a matter of scholarly inquiry. The methods of qualitative inquiry are for studying and understanding people in whatever setting and under whatever circumstances one encounters them (Patton, 1990). For example, there are many problems to be encountered when a researcher decides to use a questionnaire to study unschooled people. First, there arises a problem of interpretation of research questions to unschooled respondent. Secondly, the translation of respondents' responses into the English language becomes another task.

Another rationale behind the use of qualitative inquiry is the research-based belief that behavior is significantly influenced by the environment in which it occurs. In other words, behavior occurs in a context, and a more complete understanding of the behavior requires understanding of the context in which it occurs (Gay, 1996). Therefore, an encounter of the respondents by the investigator throws more light on how the latter would interpret the responses obtained from the former. The idea is that the investigator can situate the participant's response in the particular physical or emotional environment in which he or she was.

Miles and Huberman (1984) are of the opinion that, most studies, especially those that focus on the study of cultures of bounded groups such as tribes, towns, institutions and ethnic groups (using holistic ethnographic approach) have successfully applied qualitative methods. According to them,

Qualitative data are attractive. They are a source of well-grounded, rich description and explanation of processes occurring in local contexts. With qualitative data, one can preserve chronological flow, assess local causality, and derive fruitful explanations. Serendipitous findings and new theoretical integration can appear (Miles and Hueberman, 1984).

Again, qualitative findings have a certain undeniability that is often far more convincing to a reader than pages of numbers (Smith, 1978). Qualitative researchers are therefore not just concerned with describing the ways things are, but also with gaining insights into the “big picture.” They seek answers to questions related to how things got to be the way they are, how people involved *feel* about the way things are, how they *believe* what *meanings* they attach to various activities and so forth. In other words, qualitative researchers attempt to obtain a holistic in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study (Gay, 1996).

I applied the holistic approach or perspective since the study sought to understand a phenomenon [the Akan philosophy of education] as a whole. Concerning holistic approach, Jacob (1987) has stated that “the focus of holistic ethnographic study is analyzing and describing a culture or part of a culture as a whole, usually with the goal of describing a unique way of life and showing how the parts fit together into an integrated whole. Thus, holistic ethnographers frequently have an attitude of exploration and learning rather than one of testing.” Also, according to Patton (1990), “holistic approach assumes that the whole is understood as a complex system that is greater than the sum of its parts. It also assumes that a description and understanding of a person’s social environment or an organization’s political context is essential for overall understanding of what is observed.” At a more operational level, qualitative research is more holistic and process-oriented, rather than being more focused and outcome-oriented (in the case of quantitative research).

POPULATION

The Akan of Ghana comprising the Asante [including the Bono], Akuapim and Fante served as the population for this study. The Asante, Akuapim and the Fante are the three main branches of the Akan ethnic group of Ghana. I interviewed both “schooled” and the “unschooled” because first, I intended to investigate the ways in which some of the philosophies of the Akan are still kept in the reservoir of unschooled life.

Secondly, I wanted the participants to tell their own story about their perceptions of their philosophy of education irrespective of whether one has Western educational/schooling background.

Since though this study was not an action research my focus was not necessarily on a formal policy formulation. I therefore limited my interview to exclude administrators and policy makers in their professional capacities.

SAMPLE SELECTION

Sampling for my interview was purposeful in this study. The reason for purposeful sampling was to select information-rich cases whose study would illuminate the question under study (Patton, 1990). Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the

research. Participants for the study were selected from National Commission on Culture, Ghana Education Service, students, traditional leaders, traditional arts and craftsmen, parents and politicians.

Out of eighty-five participants in the study, I actively interviewed forty-six. Thirty-nine comprised student focus group and some informal discussion, which was neither structured nor prepared for. In the case of the politicians in my sample, a casual visit and the discussion of my research topic resulted into some questions and answers that brought out their opinions on the topic.

Among the forty-six participants that I interviewed were; The Living legend of Ghana highlife music, the chief director of National Commission on Culture, the Director of Curriculum Research and Development Division and the Ghana National dirge singer.

The technique of “snowballing” or networking was used. Bogdan and Taylor (1984) explain “snowballing” or chain sampling as being a sampling procedure which involves getting to know participants and having them introduce the researcher to other participants. In this case, recommendations from participants already selected helped me to locate several other potential participants. The following two examples may suffice for a description of how I obtained some participants through “snowballing”

On my visit to the Sunyani Center for National Culture, I spoke to the director of the folkloric group of the center about my intention to have him as one of my research participants. He was already aware of my study since I had written a personal letter to him, as a personal friend and a co-worker at the same center in 1991. Also the center had an official letter from the chief director of the National Commission on Culture that indicated my presence in the country for the study. After rebriefing Mr. Obeng about my study, he suggested to me that I could accompany him to Berekum a nearby town. He was on official duty to organize some traditional singing groups for the National Festival of Arts and Culture (NAFAC, 98) and he thought that I could seize the opportunity to see them play and also interview the musicians.

I went to Senase, Berekum to interview the musicians. I wanted to know more about the solo that precedes the songs that they sang. I realized that a solo preceded all the songs they sang by the leading singer. The melody, the rhythm and the content were similar to those of dirges. I therefore asked if they could tell me something about dirges too. The leader of the group said she could, but if I wouldn't mind she would take me to the national dirge singer who lives in Yaakrom, near Dormaa Ahenkro. Since Dormaa Ahenkro is near Berekum, I accepted to go and talk to the dirge singer. I went back to Sunyani and came to Berekum the following week to continue to Dormaa Ahenkro. I interviewed the dirge singer the same day and returned to Sunyani.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

I used the three data gathering techniques that dominate in qualitative inquiry: participant observation, interviewing and document collection (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Participant observation took the form of attending some of Akan ceremonies and rituals, modern classroom teaching and learning and the school atmosphere and everyday activities.

Interview also took the form of both structured and semi-structured format (Patton, 1990). Detailed interview questions and discussions generated from my observation. I had prepared some few guiding general questions relating to the conceptual framework of the study (see appendix H for interview protocol). I allowed the details of the interview to flow from my observation and the participants' response to the leading questions. The informal conversational interview was appropriate especially, during some of my observations. At the traditional court for example, I found it necessary and exciting to allow for a free flow of my conversation with the secretary. I relied on the spontaneous generation of questions in the natural flow of our interaction since the interview occurred as part of ongoing participant observation field work (Patton, 1990). With permission from the participants, I taped interviews. This helped me to capture every piece of information that the participants gave. I could stop writing intermittently to allow for a free flow of the discussion with a participant and also observe facial expressions and kindred gestures. For example, during my interview with one leading highlife musician, we both became so interested in the discussion that he wanted to capture my undivided attention. At some point he showed me some of the recent work he had produced and read a whole three pages of a poem to me. During my interview with some woodcarvers in a traditional home setting where all the children and other members in the household were present, lights went off but with my tape recorder the conversation went on undisturbed.

Document collection took the form of studying the trends of the related literature. I also observed, took pictures and collected some artifacts from different cultural places—palaces, centers for national culture, classrooms and homes.

My intention to use all the three data collection technique was to ensure “triangulation” in the research methodology. The use of multiple data-collection methods (referred to as triangulation) contributes to the trustworthiness of the data (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) are of the view that, the qualitative researcher draws on some combination of techniques to collect research data rather than a single technique. This is not to negate the utility of say, a study based on interview, but rather to indicate that the more sources tapped for understanding, the more believable the findings.

PILOT STUDY

In order to ensure that my approach, especially the interview technique, was appropriate for the study, I conducted a pilot study in the United States before I left

for Ghana. I first interviewed some Ghanaian students in Ohio University and later interviewed some other Ghanaians, especially Akans, in other states, either by telephone or by visiting those places (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; New York; and Silver Spring, Maryland). The appropriateness of interview technique I sought for included framing questions that are free from ambiguities.

THE AKAN RESEARCHER AND GAINING ACCESS

Gaining access, it must be noted, is a process. I therefore needed to acquire consent in order to go where I wanted, observe what I wanted, talk to whomever I wanted, obtain and read whatever documents I required; all these being done for the period of time that I needed, to satisfy the research purposes (Glesne and Peshkin, 1992). Even though I am an Akan, I still needed to seek permission before undertaking an investigation about the people for this book, which would be given to public consumption. I therefore wrote letters for permission to conduct this educational research in Ghana. Three different letters were written each to:

1. The Director General of Ghana Education Service,
2. The Director, National House of Chiefs, and
3. The Chief Director, National Commission on Culture.

USE OF THE AKAN LANGUAGE

Some of the written materials, which were to offer insight into the research topic, are written in the Akan language—Asante, Akuapim and Fante. These basically include the oral literature—the clan systems, proverbs, riddles, traditional calendar reckoning, names systems, folktales, traditional songs, dirges, drum language, etc. Contemporary writers, however, write a few, in the English language. Since I am fluent in both languages, in writing, reading and speaking, I did not encounter any bias in selecting any literature or written document. I used both languages in the interview process depending on a participant's convenience.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The purpose of qualitative inquiry is to produce findings. The process of data collection therefore is not an end in itself. The culminating activities of qualitative inquiry are analysis, interpretation, and presentation of findings (Patton, 1990).

In order to make sense of the massive amount of data collected, I reduced the volume of information by identifying significant patterns, and constructed a framework for communicating the essence of what the data revealed. As Patton (1990) has hinted, I presented a solid descriptive data, referred to as “thick description” (Geertz, 1973;

Denzin, 1989) in such a way that others reading the results can understand and draw their own interpretations. In the light of the above, I transcribed the taped interviews, which were mostly in the Akan language into the English language. With regard to interpretation, Patton (1990) has explained that, it involves explaining the findings, answering the “why” questions, attaching significance to particular results, and putting patterns into an analytic framework.

Most qualitative researchers agree that there is no one right way to go about organizing, analyzing and interpreting qualitative data. Description of analytical procedures is therefore meant to be suggestive rather than prescriptive (Patton, 1990).

In the case of this study therefore, I adopted the “cross-case” analysis. In cross-case analysis, answers are grouped together from different people to common questions or analyzing different perspectives on central issues (Patton, 1990). Answers from different people were grouped under the four categories identified in the interview. As I began reading the field notes including my observations and interviews, themes emerged and the comments I made in the margins of the field notes helped me to organize the data into the desirable themes or categories

In trying to analyze the sociological and the educative contents of the data, I adopted the “emic” approach in the analysis. As Peltó and Peltó (1978) have explained, an emic approach is a cultural behavior that is studied in terms of the inside view—the actors’ definition—of human events. That is, the units of conceptualization in anthropological theories should be “discovered” by analyzing the cognitive process of the people studied rather than “imposed” from cross-cultural classifications of behavior. This view is given credence by Boas’ (1943) assertion that “if it is our serious purpose to understand the thoughts of a people, the whole analysis of experience must be based on their concepts and not ours” (Boas in Patton, 1990). For example, in Fisher’s (1997) research on “Young Adolescents in TV Culture,” she allows the selected participants (students) to interpret by themselves, their role models—why they like a particular “star” and do not like the other.

In order to accomplish the descriptive and the interpretative goal of the study, I applied what Spradley (1979,1980) refers to as domain and thematic analysis. For an explanation, the domain analysis gives an overview of the cultural scene and some ideas as to how the surface structure of the scene is organized.

Thematic analysis helps to identify themes, that is, patterns across domains (Spradley, 1979). I therefore gave an overview of the everyday life and activities of the people and modern school atmosphere.

The techniques for identifying themes are several but I examined dimensions of contrasts for several domains to find similar dimensions. For example, folk sayings, songs and games including observation of everyday economic and social activities were examined for clues to themes. In this case, I came up with a four main themes, which are as follows:

1. The rationale (philosophies) behind the activities observed and participants' responses to the aspects of culture selected with and their relationship to the school system.
2. Participants' preparedness to maintain the indigenous activities observed and heard them relate in their own stories.
3. Factors that militate against maintenance of the aspects of indigenous cultures identified and
4. Suggested programs for incorporating the aspects of indigenous philosophies identified into the school curriculum.

RESEARCH SCENARIOS

Gaining access to the field did not present a barrier to me since I had already made initial, though informal, contacts with the departments concerned in the interviews for the study. During my visit to Ghana in the summer of 1997, I contacted the National Commission on Culture and also, spoke to some chiefs about my planned visit again to collect data for my dissertation.

I equally spoke to some teachers and education officers (administrators). I did not therefore encounter any difficulties during my visit for the actual research. The following are some of the formal envisaged scenes that I actually caught during the period of the data collection.

AT THE PALACE

After I presented a letter seeking permission to interview traditional leaders to the Acting director of chieftaincy secretariat, a letter was addressed to the president of the National House of Chiefs to inform all chiefs to grant me the needed assistance in my research especially those who would be sampled for the study (see a copy of the reply in appendix I). On August 3, 1998, I visited the Techimantia Traditional court to listen to arbitration in a land case. I noted the constitution of the court, the procedure and the passing of judgment. My experience at the court was very exciting and it provided an example of the cultural inquiry through which I got a sense of how folklore, proverbs, idioms, etc. play a part in the political, educational and social setting of traditional life. I later interviewed the secretary or registrar of the court who is also a trained certificate "A" teacher in an elementary school. The chief, who is also a teacher by profession, was interviewed in his capacity as a traditional head who is also well informed about western education.

As a native of the town, I thought they would treat me without the detailed traditional protocol, which precedes such infiltration into traditional settings like this by foreigners. I had discussed my intention to record the proceedings of the court with the registrar of the court the previous day. However, after some ten minutes into the proceedings, one of the two linguists facilitating the activities at the court drew the attention of the panel to my unofficial presence to record their proceedings. I then realized that the registrar had not officially informed the panel

of my mission. In order to avoid any confusion I apologized for not making sure that the right thing was done beforehand. I had prepared myself already because I knew that such things happen in a palace and if a stranger makes a mistake he would have to pacify the elders with at least a bottle of schnapps. I therefore presented a bottle of rum, which I was carrying in my bag, to the linguist and calm and happiness returned to the court. One of the panel members then asked me “Oh, are you the state linguist who is about to receive a doctorate degree from America?” When I answered “yes,” he told the panel and the audience that, “I heard it on the radio the other day but I don’t know him personally, oh, congratulations, my grandson.”

I observed the proceedings, conduct of the court and how a decision was reached. I took notice of the proverbs that were used every time that a chief or a panel member spoke and especially when the chief was giving the final word or verdict. I also took notice of the consultations with the linguist and other elders by the chief before the pronouncement of a judgment. After the court proceedings, I set another appointment to interview the chief and the registrar.

I also interviewed a queen mother in Sunyani. However, the interview of the queen mother went beyond the issues at a traditional court. I discussed issues of initiation of girls in which she is the one who pronounces a girl qualified for the ceremony (Sarpong, 1977). Meanwhile, I took pictures of some different scenes at the palace including the different “chambers” like the court chamber, the paraphernalia chamber, etc.

SUMMARY

In this chapter, I have outlined and described the data collection procedure for this research. I have also discussed the data analysis procedure. I discussed the process by which I selected the population and the reason for my purposeful sampling. In this case I mentioned some key figures in my sample and how the concept of “snowballing” helped me obtain other participants. I have also discussed the pilot study and how I gained access onto the field and how my competence in the Akan language eased the otherwise linguistic problems I would have encountered in terms of translation and approach to information rich participants who were illiterates in the English language.

Finally, I discussed some research scenarios that I encountered especially, a visit to the palace to observe a traditional arbitration including the mixed feelings of rejection and acceptance.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Presentation

INTRODUCTION

My intention in this chapter is to present a “thick description” of the stories told by the research participants and my own observations while on the field gathering data for this study. Thick description, according to (Geertz, 1973; Denzin, 1989) means presenting solid descriptive data in such a way that others reading the results can understand and draw their own interpretations. I will report some of the responses verbatim so as to get readers to evaluate for themselves the interpretations that would be assigned to the stories and observations in the succeeding chapter. This will enhance my application of ethnographic method to codify indigenous philosophy in its contemporary context, which is the purpose of the study.

Closely tied to the purpose of the study, as stated above, are two major components that need to be mentioned: the *theory* behind the statement and its *application*. For a clarification, the components may be reframed in the following questions:

Theory: What is the philosophy?

Application: What is the use of the philosophy?

THEMES AND CATEGORIES

After laboriously going through the responses of participants in the interview and my observation on the field I grouped the responses into themes for interpretation. One main concern was to identify the educational implications from the responses from participants. I realized from the literature review that the studies done about African philosophy overtly or covertly (Gyekye, 1987; Hountondji, 1983; Abraham, 1963; Busia, 1962, Wiredu, 1992; etc.) have been silent on how they (the philosophies) can be situated in modern educational philosophies. The topic for this study was selected with the aim of examining the possibility of forging a new future that builds on the positive aspects of the Akan’s past and present and on careful chosen ideas, methods and technology from abroad.

The following themes emerged from the research questions and interviews with the research participants:

1. The vehicles of Akan philosophies or some aspects of Akan culture and how they harbor what can be considered Akan philosophies.
2. The modern Akan's knowledge and ability to articulate their cultural values and preparedness to revive the missing Akan philosophies in the face of modernization.
3. Factors militating against or accounting for acceptance of the indigenous Akan philosophies
4. Suggested programs to bridge the gap or to unite Akan indigenous and Western education.

THE VEHICLES OF AKAN INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHIES

In discussing African philosophy in [chapter two](#), Gyekeye (1987) reminds us that, a great deal of philosophical material is embedded in the proverbs, myths and folktales, folk songs, rituals, beliefs, customs and the traditions of the Akan people, in their art symbols and in their sociopolitical institutions and practices. In his assertion, Iroegbu (1994) has postulated that African philosophy “is a quest for African wisdom.... It preoccupies itself with the nature, meaning and essence of all there is: past, present and future and of all that can be said to be one way or the other. This is both in their particularities (as beings), in their relationship to one another, and in their totality (as Being).” On the field to collect the data then, I made use of the following traditions which have the vehicular capabilities of transporting the indigenous philosophies of the Akan of Ghana: music (highlife and traditional), folktales, proverbs, riddles, drumming and dancing, art and craft and traditional governance and arbitration.

I also took special notice of the following observations that I made and they partially guided me in my interviews where they were applicable, while on the field:

I observed the following inscription in a bus while traveling from Accra to Sunyani:

“Peace be onto God Peace be onto you”

On the same bus a gentleman was preaching as the journey progressed. Two other gentlemen were on the bus who sold their traditional medicine in turns. Here too prayers preceded the sale of medicine in the bus.

One medicine seller explained and educated the traveling audience about the uses of different herb for the cure of different illnesses.

On another occasion, while I was traveling from Kumasi to Accra in a State Transport bus, I saw a woman carrying a bag in her right hand and attempting to give her ticket to the bus conductor. She had to apologize to the conductor for using her left hand to present the ticket. Thus, She said “kafra” meaning, “excuse me.” The conductor looked at the woman, apparently not understanding the woman's remark. The woman explained thus, “I said “kafra” (excuse me) because I used my left hand to give the ticket to you. The conductor smiled and said “thank you.”

In the same bus, a foreigner, presumably an Asian, was looking for his seat. He had a ticket numbered 19, which qualified him for a side seat on the bus. But another man, a Ghanaian, with a ticket numbered 61, who was supposed to sit on a middle seat, had turned his ticket upside down to read 19. Even though the foreigner looked timid in the midst of all Ghanaians and wanted to take the middle seat with his ticket number 19. In his desperation, most of the passengers assisted him to retrieve his seat from the Ghanaian.

I also visited the Techimantia Roman Catholic Junior Secondary School during my preliminary observation on the field. I went to the school to visit a teacher friend of mine. On my way to the school, I saw some students carrying palm fronds/branches to school. It was later found out that children bring to school fencing sticks and palm branches to fence school garden. At the school assembly, I saw a teacher inspecting students' cassava sticks brought to school for the school farm. I realized that children bring to school cassava sticks for planting in the school farm.

Also, during the entire period of three months that I stayed in Ghana, I observed in Sunyani and the other towns where I visited that school children were seen going to school during the entire period of the research, even though school officially vacated within the period. I observed that holiday classes have become the routine and the rule in the Ghanaian school system.

I also observed how household activities demonstrate some form of social division of labor. In all the houses that I lived likewise those in the neighborhood, a similar trend went on. Early morning sweeping and cleaning of houses remained the duty of women and girls. Among the tenants in the houses that I lived during the data collection, it was the girls' responsibility to sweep the house every morning. Washing of clothes and cooking also remain women's duty. However, adolescent boys wash their own clothes and sometimes, in the absence of girls in a household, they cooked.

Another area of excitement that I visited observed their activities was the market. On a market day, I observed sellers hawking at their stalls and in the open to attract the attention of buyers and customers. At the Sunyani Wednesday market, the I observed how sellers display their linguistic expertise and oratory skills after spreading their wares. They do it so effectively that almost anybody who passes by stops for at least for some few minutes to listen to their hawking which sometimes assume some rhythm and melodies to pass for music. One young man in his thirties selling second hand shirts at one thousand cedis a-piece hawked as follows: "Thousand— Hwe dee ani ye mono" (one thousand each, look for the one that looks new).

I also used the opportunity of my presence in the village where I used to visit my family to observe some parents and their children while on the farm. During the period, I would go to farm with my mother and aunts on Saturdays when the children would be available from school to join the family.

I observed that the activities preceding going to farm and on the farm were similar. The girls prepared for the farm by loading their baskets with the things that would be needed on the farm e.g. some cooking oil, water bottles, matches to light

fire in the farm and the like. The boys on the other hand prepared for the farm by sharpening their cutlasses and taking the lead.

In the farm both the boys and the men weed the thicker areas. The girls weed a little and go to prepare the afternoon meal. The women searched for foodstuffs to be carried home. Both boys and girls carry loads of foodstuffs or firewood when coming from the farm.

In one of the farms I observed a mother showing a nine year old boy how to plant cassava. She said to him as she demonstrated, “put the piece of stick (about eight inches long) in the ground horizontally and bury it completely.”

On another Saturday, I observed two kids planting cassava; one was digging the hole and the other one putting in the sticks and covering them. They did the same for cocoyam, corn and yams. With the planting of yams, the children dug the ground to prepare the mounds and the women put the yams in later in the day. The observations made so far reminded me of most of the issues raised by the literature, especially about Akan religiosity and hospitality as well as Akan child rearing practices.

AKAN MUSIC: HIGHLIFE AND TRADITIONAL FOLK MUSIC

Both traditional folk music and Akan highlife are very significant in portraying the uses of Akan proverbs, riddles and folktales. Talented musicians compose the music. In fact, most of them are illiterates who get their training through observation and practice. People who are interested and have the flair for music get together and compose their own music. One middle aged woman who was a traditional musician related to me how she became a musician, and the messages she uses in her songs to relay her meaning to her audience. In her exposition, she stated as follows:

I do not have any special training in music from anybody. I think it is a talent that I was born with. It all started when I attended a funeral and saw an old lady and her group singing. I became so thrilled that I decided to form my own group. I have since then composed my songs and I tell you, I compose about everything and at everywhere. I compose when I am in the farm, in my room in the night, at a gathering, and in fact, everywhere that I find myself.

With regard to how she composes her music she said:

I compose my songs about life in general, for example, I have no parents neither do I have siblings hence I composed a song entitled “Opanin ho ye na (An elder is scarce).” and another one “Me wu a hwan na obesie me (Who will bury me when I die?).” I have also composed songs about current issues including bush fires and their prevention, teenage pregnancy, family planning and the killer disease AIDS. For example in the teenage pregnancy song, I remind girls that:

“life is hard;
 stay clear until you become and adult;
 there is more time for you;
 don’t hide in darkness;
 go through puberty rites;
 it is more profitable.”

She further indicated to me that:

Folk music, referred to as “Nnwonkoro,” is the oldest form of music in the Akan tradition. It predated highlife, which is very popular at the moment with its guitar accompaniment. Traditional folk music brings out a lot of the Akan thought systems in life. Traditional musicians compose different songs to reflect all aspects of life. The songs they composed are used to give advice, educate, comfort and inspire the needy and down trodden people, children, adults, the wealthy and the poor.

All the traditional singing groups that I observed have names that are couched in proverbs with a meaning that teach specific lessons. The following are a few examples, “Saase” (So it is), “Wobeye nipa den” (whatever you do to a person), “Ate-a-bisa” (ask for explanation when you only hear it), “Fa gu me so” (put all blame on me).

In my interview with a very experienced Ghanaian highlife musician who has sang for the past thirty-five years, he preceded his discourse about highlife music with his views regarding Akan philosophies generally as follows:

You see, I believe that the first thing to think about in trying to maintain our culture or indigenous philosophies is the use of our own language. I sing in the Akan language to carry my message to everybody, both the schooled and the unschooled. You might know it or otherwise, but consider a country like Japan, after they attained independence from the British they quickly switched to the use of their own language in making everything, hence their progress. It is very regrettable that in most schools there is the rule that “vernacular speaking is prohibited.” But the most important aspect of a person’s culture should be their language; It is the vehicle for expressing one’s thought in everything—to ask for favors, to express gratitude, to cry and to do virtually everything.

We cannot blame the young musicians for not being able to compose music in their linguistic sequence since that is the language they have come to meet (mixtures).

With regard to the philosophies that are embedded in the music, highlife and traditional musicians claimed that they use their music to bring out the wisdom and

values in the culture. One musician explained that traditional story telling is value-laden and therefore he uses story telling to pass good messages to his audience. In his own words he claims that:

I always explain the educational implications in every story that I tell in my music and also give advice after the story for example, “Abenaa” (Nana Ampadu, 1972), Gyae Su” (Nana Ampadu, 1971). If I were not afraid I would say that all my music put together can pass for a second Bible!

Nana Ampadu made me aware that his songs are composed to address all aspects of life and educate his audience about different life issues as for example, the Akan concept of creation expressed in his song “Yaa Manua” (Nana Ampadu, 1974); Akan belief in death expressed in “Osaman bi te nkwantia” (Nana Ampadu, 1982); Akan philosophical sayings expressed in “Agya kyee me ade” (Nana Ampadu, (1970).

To refresh my memory of the story line of one of the songs mentioned above, the tape was played so we could appraise the song face to face with the composer himself. The content of the song “Abenaa” is translated from Akan to English verbatim by the author as follows:

Once upon a time, There lived a couple who had a daughter The girl was so disobedient that she was never prepared to take any advice from he parents and elders in the neighborhood. When she came of age she turned down all the suitors who approached her. She told her parents that she wanted to marry the most handsome and wealthiest man ever.

One day Abenaa went to the riverside to wash her clothes. As she washed her clothes a young man approached. Abenaa, after examining the eyes, the clothes and the shoes of the young man was at once hypnotized by such an unparalleled beauty and assumed wealth. He spat and the spittle fell straight in the middle of her two breasts. He felt so sorry and apologized by saying “I am sorry, someone’s beautiful daughter” Abenaa responded by saying “I am nobody’s daughter.” Then the young man said “I am sorry someone’s lover.” Abenaa responded again as “I am nobody’s lover.” The man went ahead and apologized this time by saying: “I am sorry, someone’s wife.” To this Abenaa replied, “I am a spinster.” Then the young man said, “I am sorry my own lover.” Abenaa then smiled and said “you are now speaking like a man.” There and then, Abenaa stopped the washing and took the man home to announce to her parents that she has found her husband.

Abenaa’s parents advised her that: “marriage to a complete stranger is like picking a ring from the street, it is always either too tight or too loose for your finger. We therefore entreat you to study your new husband for sometime and if it is found that he is fitting, we can see you off to go with him.” Abenaa, in her usual disobedient manner, flaunted her parents’ advice and said that, once she has decided to marry him she will have to leave with her husband on the

same day for his town. What can the parents do to a recalcitrant daughter of Abenaa's caliber?

They left the new couple to their fate. Abenaa and her new found lover set off. Lest I forget, in those days, there were no cars and so they traveled on foot. They walked for some appreciable distance and finally came to a dense forest. They spotted a small hut and the man asked Abenaa to go inside with him. Abenaa yelled: "What is wrong with you Mister!" But the young man, in a very composed countenance, replied that: "Abenaa my love, this is my town; I come from here and I stay here." Abenaa got scared to her spine. Before Abenaa "could blink her eyes," her husband had turned into a ghost—all bones without a muscle. The ghost conjured some strange disease to come upon Abenaa and flew her over to the outskirts of her own village. Abenaa walked back home and at the sight of her the parents became very sad. All that her parents could say was "Is this the end of you, Abenaa? How did it happen? It's all because of disobedience, insubordination and disrespect!" (Nana Ampadu, 1972).

The Akan folktales normally referred to, as "spider stories" is a source of valuable information in Akan communities. Highlife musicians use these story lines as the content of their music. Sometimes they tell it plainly for the enjoyment of children and adults alike. The knowledge and educational implications embodied in the stories are, first, most of the stories contain important moral values, such as obedience, truthfulness, selflessness, and so on. Second, there are bits of knowledge concerning the political, and social life of the people. This then is a source of civic education. Third, the stories contain important information about nature. This kind of knowledge may be divided into biological science (names of trees, animals and their habits, etc.): food science (detailed recipes), the names of the staple foodstuffs and so on; biochemistry (the techniques of food preservation and the medicinal use of herb) (Agyarkwa, 1975). The story cited above teaches about the value of obedience for one's parents and in fact, for old age in Akan society. The following scene that I observed while on the field shows how the value of obedience and respect translates into actual life of the Akan at present:

In a "trotro" bus, the driver's mate's shouted at an elderly woman. The action attracted the wrath of majority of the passengers. Some passengers reprimanded him harshly while others advised him calmly. One woman passenger said to the mate: "Se worekasa akyere obi a okyen wo a, ese se woto wo bo ase" (You need to exercise patience whenever you talk to someone who is older than you). The mate explained that: "I only said to her to sit anywhere and we shall stop at wherever she wants to alight; after all we are controlling the vehicle." In response a second passenger said: "But you should know how to speak in a respectful tone." A third passenger cut in and said: "You cannot talk to her like that, It doesn't show respect."

Then finally, a fourth passenger spoke calmly in the form of advice, as “You were right to tell her that she can alight from any seat. But in her hurry to get off the bus in order not to hold the bus up and to delay the other passengers, she might injure herself or get her cloth torn. The other day, I got my cloth torn from a similar situation

PROVERBS AND SYMBOLS

In the Ghanaian society, especially among the Akan, the use of proverbs cut across every aspect of life including language art, art and craft and diverse social settings. A person who is able to use appropriate proverbs in a discourse is considered eloquent and intelligent. The designs and symbols in cloths including the *kente* and *adinkra* (see the meanings of *kente* and *adinkra* in appendix A), state swords, native sandals, state umbrellas and linguist staffs have specific philosophies embedded in the proverb that goes with a specific symbol.

At the National Commission on Culture I asked a young lady I met at the receptionist desk to tell me the name of her cloth which she explained in Ewe as “wamo no mo dua kpo” meaning “the poor man doesn’t eat stones” Another lady sitting by said “its Akan version is ‘Efie aboseaa,’” meaning “home pebbles”(implying that when the pebbles in your own home grounds cut you, it is more painfully than outside pebbles. In other words a close neighbor’s offence to you is more painful than that of an outsider).

At the Sunyani Planned Parental Association of Ghana (PPAG) office, I asked the coordinator to explain to me the meaning of the design in his shirt made from a printed fabric. He said the meaning of the design is “dua koro gye mframa a ebu” (a single tree cannot withstand the wind; it would fall). He further explained that he lost his only brother just recently and therefore he has to wear black or red cloth to office or something traditional with a name that has a message

The Ewe, the second largest ethnic group in Ghana, next to the Akan, and the Akan are noted for their respect for and maintenance of the indigenous culture. I observed that these two ethnic groups give names to their art forms through a close observation and composing a proverb that teaches a lesson about the picture of the object that appears in the cloth. I became excited about the names of the designs in cloth decided to get more information about the names and meanings of some Ghanaian cloth. At a funeral in Techimantia, I got the chance to ask sympathizers about the meanings of the cloth they wore to the funeral.

I asked a middle aged woman wearing a cloth with the picture of a bird feeding its little ones the name of the cloth and she replied me instantly as “obaatan na onim dee ne ba bedie” (Only the parent knows the appetite of her infant child). The woman explained to me that, “When I wear this cloth to a funeral, it carries the message of my sympathy for the children of the deceased. As orphans, they are now going to fend for themselves in the absence of their real parent.

RIDDLES

Close to symbols and folktales discussed earlier are riddles and moral dilemmas in terms of Akan philosophies. Trumble and Pearsal (1996), define a riddle as “a question or statement used to test the ingenuity of another through divining the answer or meaning of such question or statement.” In Abbam’s (1994) discussion of Akan indigenous education, riddles were identified as mind tools for critical thinking. Riddles are therefore used to train the mind of both children and adults to think independently and critically about all issues through observation and experience of the individual. The Akan have one expression for both riddles and puzzles. They therefore do not distinguish riddles from puzzles. They are both referred to as “Agya rekoru” (when father was departing). This implies that a father or an elderly member who lived before had something philosophical that he bequeathed. We therefore need to search and find it. In other words, the mind should always search to find the truth and what is hidden. Riddles provide evidence of some effective techniques of traditional education among the Akan and Africa in general. They appear to have been in extensive use over the years. Both riddles and moral dilemmas state a problem and ask the audience to think out answers (Agyarkwa, 1976). I found two kinds of Akan riddles. These were:

1. the rigid-formula riddles with single or short answers, and
2. the discourse type of riddles which demand explanation and analysis in the answer to be given.

I engaged in an informal discussion and a game of riddles with primary school children. They gave the kind of riddles that followed a rigid formula. In this type of riddle they stated the facts of a situation or an object, giving a full description but leaving out the name of the situation or object to be supplied by the contestants. It follows a rigid formula, e.g. “When father was departing, he bequeathed to me something which is as follows.” Then follows the important clue. For example,

1. “a pair of shoes which are never worn out.” The expected answer is “a pair of feet.”

2. “When father was departing, he left two brothers who live in the same room. They each lean out their separate windows such that neither of them ever sees the other brother.”

The answer is as follows: The room is the human head; the brothers are the two eyes; the windows are the eye sockets.

3. “When father was departing, he left a gentleman; so long as he is alive he is playful and harmless. But when he is dead, the least mistake you make, trying to fondle him he will bite you seriously.

The answer is “bottle”; the time of its death is when it is broken. It is only then that it can cut someone.

In the discourse type of riddle I had an example in a practical experience.

A friend's mother came to me one morning to discuss with me how I can help her son to get a visa to go to America. I assured her that I would help by sending university admission forms to him for which I would pay the admission fee. I also said I would apply for him the American Diversity Visa lottery. At this time the woman thanked me and said she was going to ask me a question for an instant answer. The question was as follows:

A herdsman told his colleague that he killed his last cow and has preserved it so securely that he will be able to eat it for the rest of his life. The second man on hearing that left to kill the fattest among his cows and found a way of preserving the meat so that he can also eat it for life. He roasted some, refrigerated some, dried some and did everything he could to preserve the meat. As he started eating bit-by-bit the meat started getting rotten. He couldn't understand and so he went to his friend to ask how he could preserve his meat for a longer time without getting it rotten.

The question was "how do you think the first man was able to preserve the meat for ever?"

The answer is that the first man did not actually preserve the meat in his house. He distributed the meat of his cow to all herdsmen in the locality and even those who did not own any cows at that time. Therefore, anybody who killed a cow from then on also sent to him some piece of meat.

I found out that the woman was trying to use the medium of a riddle to hint me that I would be rewarded perpetually if I offer my assistance to others.

Both short and long discourse riddles discussed above reveal how riddles contribute in the development of critical and probing mind. Another role performed by riddles is a sense of observation, especially about things that are readily available in the environment. Thus, the audience engaged in the riddle game need to think critically in order to situate a particular riddle in actual life situation. Riddles also demonstrate how the Akan people can manipulate and weave vocabulary in a complex thought provoking and entertaining manner. For example, in order to set children's mind to think about the use of the feet they are riddled to think about the feet as a pair of sandals that do not ever wear out, as explained in the example above.

TRADITIONAL SYSTEM OF ARBITRATION

The traditional governance and arbitration exposes indigenous political philosophy that can contribute to any construction of Akan philosophy. I visited the traditional court at Techimantia in the Brong Ahafo region. I observed that constitution of the sub chiefs and elders for the panel was an odd number. They were nine. Later on, the chief told me in an interview that, when the number is odd there couldn't be a tie when there is the need to vote. He, however said that, "if for some reason the court sits with an even number, I have the power to veto an issue when there is a tie

in a vote.” The chief told me that, his court settles many cases, especially those that are customary in nature. According to him, they have the traditional “yardstick” to measure and judge those cases with absolute ease. He said, “for example, we can sit in the palace and judge a land case before we go to the land with the complainants. You know, traditionally, one is not supposed to weed across a river or a riverbed. Also there are specific plants that are used for boundaries. Some of these are banana grooves, “Ntomme,” pineapples and other kindred plants that can withstand the rigors of the weather and even bush fires. It is therefore easy to set a boundary again when a one is trying to deceive a neighbor on the same piece of land. These normally happen when the original owner of the land is deceased. We also ask some unique questions that may baffle an outsider in a land case but they all contribute to a fair judgment.”

In a land case at the palace, one chief asked the defendant the following questions:

You claim that you have been the owner of the land all these years. Do you fell the palm trees on the land and use the proceeds yourself or you report to someone else?

What are the demarcations for your piece of land?

Did your grandmother cultivate the virgin forest of the land or she inherited someone’s secondary forest?

In the Akan traditional system, cases involving land are so delicate that some rules apply. According to the secretary of the court traditional court in Techimantia where I visited to hear a land case from the beginning to the end, the above questions were relevant because in Akan culture, a person “squatting” on someone’s land (as a tenant) has no right to fell palm trees on the land and keep the proceeds. She will always have to seek the consent of the landlord. Secondly, the owner of the land should know the exact demarcations of the land and the plants or trees that are used for the boundary markers. Special trees and plants that can withstand bushfires and other rigors of the weather or a riverbed are used for demarcation.

Thirdly, the owner of a land is the one who herself or a relative weeded the virgin forest.

In her defense, the defendant who claimed that her mother weeded the virgin forest of the land and therefore passed it on to her asked the following questions to the plaintiff in the case:

You are claiming that your uncle gave the land to my mother for a brief eriod of time. Could you please then answer the following questions to the hearing of all herein gathered;

DEFENDANT: Were you alive when my mother died?

PLAINTIFF: Yes.

D: Did you attend the funeral?

- P: Yes.
- D: Did you attend her fortieth day celebration?
- P: Yes?
- D: Can you tell how long ago it is since my mother died?
- P: Not exactly but it is over thirty years.
- D: My mother died forty years ago. What do Akans do when they celebrate the fortieth day of a deceased?
- P: It depends upon the family. I cannot tell what your family would do.
- D: I want to tell you that Akan custom is the same at least for this town.

The fact is that among the Akans, of Ghana, on the fortieth day of a deceased, the family comes together to settle the final account of the deceased. That is the day people come forward to declare if they owed the deceased in cash or in kind. They also tell the family officially if the deceased owed them in cash or in kind so that settlement could be made.

PREPAREDNESS TO REVIVE AKAN INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHIES

In this section, my intention is to bring out the responses of participants with regard to their preparedness or otherwise to maintain the Akan indigenous philosophies in the face of modern opposition. I deciphered from the participants' responses and through my own observations whether or not these philosophies can withstand the test of time.

My observation of current trends of the various educational agencies pointed out that most Ghanaians, especially the Akans, are prepared to imbibe the use of indigenous philosophies. The broadcasting stations organize various programs and competitions in the use of the Akan language and Akan proverbs among both adults and school children. I learnt that Thursday afternoons, from 3pm to 4pm are reserved for competition in Akan proverbs on Sky FM in Sunyani, Brong Ahafo. Also, on the national television, 5pm on Saturdays are reserved for story telling program, "By the fireside."

In most of the schools that I visited, I also observed that drumming the "atumpan" has replaced the ringing of bells since the early 1990s, with the introduction of the new educational reform in Ghana. It was interesting to note that, different rhythms were drummed for the different times on the school timetable for the day such as assembly, start lesson, change lesson, break time and closing. The student drummer of the Twene Amanfo Secondary Technical School

told me that the following rhythms go with the different times on the school timetable:

Assembly: “Twene Amanfo mma mommra” (children of Twene Amanfo, come together).

Start lesson: “monhye adwuma ase” (start work).

Break time: “monkodi agoro” (go out to play)

One teacher that I interviewed at Anglican school in Sunyani defended the use of the drum by saying that:

I feel strongly that it is a right move to bring this innovation. The bells we used in the school were difficult to come by. The drums are readily available. We use the same drums during cultural studies lessons. It has also created employment for the people who carve the drums. In that case many of the children have developed interest in carving drums during our art and craft periods. All the materials are also available within our own environment.

When I asked her about the parents reaction to the idea when they made the change over she laughed and said:

At first some parents frowned at the idea. Some were of the opinion that we are switching from the curriculum to the teaching of drumming at the expense of the regular subjects. The die-hard Christians were of the view that we were introducing Paganism in the school. However, after the idea was explained thoroughly at a Parent-Teacher Association meeting, understanding reigned in the minds of everybody.

I also learned from a seventeen year old student at Twene Amanfo Secondary Technical School in this research that his interest and flair for the use of proverbs and the use of idioms has sharpened his desire and expertise in the area of cultural studies in the school. He said that:

Many of my class mates and even sometimes, my teachers consult me in the cultural studies and language class and that makes me feel so satisfied and psychologically balanced. I also compete with other people on the radio in proverbs and that has also won for me popularity. I will learn it to obtain the highest degree in education just like you.

In extempore, the student tried to show his expertise in proverbs by giving about twenty proverbs off the top of his head. He was able to tell when all those proverbs were appropriate in a conversation or discussion.

One participant from the Center for National Culture reacted to the manner in which schools have been made to maintain a greater part of the colonial legacy in the curriculum of the education system in Ghana. He expressed that:

“We are biting more than we can chew in our educational system. Our policies in education have not been uniform because we don’t know our direction. For example, in religion, “Christians direct their attention to the birthplace of Christ and the culture that is found there e.g. farming in Israel is predominantly that of livestock because of the vegetational zone prevalent there.

The Christian Communion is made up of bread and wine that is found locally. Their naming system is also localized. Ironically, we Africans import the bread and wine for communion and even import so called Christian names!”

Similarly, one queen mother shared the view that, there is the absolute need to maintain the indigenous philosophies if the people are to maintain their “Akanness” and to be liberated from mental bondage that most developing countries find themselves. She said:

Our philosophies are the totality of our culture. Our wisdom and how we view the world are all enshrined in our culture because it is our life. For example in a court procedure in the Asantehene’s palace, all the sub chiefs speak before the Asantehene sieves the speeches and makes the final statement. In this case all views were respected in the administration of the state.

On the issue of religion the queenmother explained again to as follows:

The white man came to meet us knowing God; we had names like “Nyamedua” meaning “God’s tree”, “Nyankonsuo” (God’s water) referring to rain water. How could we have these names if we did not have the concept of God already?

A primary school teacher in Sunyani with twenty-three years experience opined that much as he has no qualms about the teaching of culture, he would, however, suggest some modernization in the way it is taught. For example, if the use of some medicine goes with the slaughtering of an animal, the purpose of slaughtering the animal for the medicine should be explained and made clear to everybody say, if that aspect is for thanksgiving. He said that there is nothing wrong with traditional dance for instance; but some so called “born again” Christians do not allow their children to learn the traditional dance and other oral tradition in school. These parents think dirge singing for example is devilish and satanic. But after all these, the teacher claimed that, children who have undergone the traditional form of

training exhibit characters of courtesy and respect in the school through their speech and action. He said:

The use of “curse threat” works very well for children from traditional homes since it serves as a warning against wrongdoing. The children who claim to come from Christian homes are comparatively less sociable—they hesitate to mingle with the kids from traditional homes.

From the foregoing, it becomes apt to refer to Iroegbu (1994) for stating that:

Some people think that the Western values of materialism and megalomanialism have so corrupted the today African that the values of the African past have no chance of survival, worse, of being an integral part of developmental model. This viewpoint fails for its lack of moral nerve and historical accuracy. Many of the African values are still pervasive of today African life, for example hospitality, sharing, religiosity and humanness. These and numerous others are indispensable corner-stones of authentic development (Iroegbu, 1994).

On a casual visit to the Brong Ahafo regional minister and the Sunyani district chief executive in the office of the regional minister, generated a discussion of my dissertation topic. After stating my mission in the country and hence the courtesy to visit them, the regional minister asked that I tell them what my research is all about. I told them that:

“My dissertation is on African philosophy of education.” When they probed further to know what I meant by the topic, I said that: “The basic intent of my study is to contribute to the already existing literature that seek to correct the erroneous impression that Africans did not have education before their contact with the Europeans. Secondly I wish to use the findings of the study to dispel the belief that one still needs to have Western education before the one can be recognized as having education and true intelligence.”

The regional minister then said:

“I think your topic is very interesting, I really bemoan about the way we are discarding our own culture. I am of the opinion that there are many good things that our forefathers bequeathed to us. Our language is a typical example. You are a visual example. Imagine the way you can speak the Akan language at state functions to the admiration of both the literate and the illiterate in this country. But it is sad to learn that some parents do not want their children to learn the Ghanaian language in schools.”

The district chief executive on his part said that:

“I think with time, people will revive their inherent cultural values. I am personally interested in the cultural outreach program being organized by the Center for National Culture in schools within the district. The administration used to help fund the *Tanokrom* weekend cultural and entertainment program. I think the issue of language needs to be addressed. We need to inculcate in the children the respect for their own mother tongue. If a child is taught in his own mother tongue, he understands it quickly and easily.”

I spent about thirty to forty-five minutes with them and left. They wished me well and asked that I should not hesitate to contact them if I needed their help during my stay in the country.

FACTORS MILITATING AGAINST THE REVIVAL OF AKAN INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHIES

Among other factors that militate against the resuscitation of the indigenous philosophies, organized Western religion stands supreme. In his opinion Iroegbu (1994) has expressed that Among the problems that beset genuine African philosophizing today are Western education, receding African past and language.

A participant from the Center for National Culture in Sunyani, one of the research sites, in explaining to why the center for national culture stopped organizing their hitherto weekend cultural and entertainment programs for the youth and adults stated as follows:

Among the other factors for stopping the program being financial and complaints from some adults that the place gets too crowded with children being uncontrollable and stepping of their feet during dance time, religious considerations stand paramount. Christians complained bitterly in this town that some of the cultures taught during the programs were incompatible with Christian principles and did not meet their doctrinal requirements. They openly condemned our programs and fasted and prayed towards the extinction of the programs.

One teacher in the Anglican Primary School in Sunyani in her reaction to the question, what belief systems do the children bring to the school?, explained as follows:

Children bring their religious values. Most of the children exhibit Christian and Islamic principles. The traditional religion is now left for those in the district. The children are also aware of some cultural practices especially, greetings.

Even though the teacher made me aware that she is supposed to teach, in the primary school, all the three major religions in the country—Christianity, Islam and Traditional Religion, she, however, said:

I am interested in cultural festivals in the schools. They portray the philosophy of “Sankofa” whereby we go back to learn the good things from our culture. I am however, of the opinion that the Traditional religion should be minimized because the practice has so many dirty things in it. One parent in Sunyani, in her response to the question as to how she educates her children about some of the wiselores in the Akan tradition said the following to me:

I really like to teach my two girls a lot about oral tradition, especially how to “keep themselves,” the history of our family and things like that. But they will not listen to me. They just tell me that “these things are archaic, leave us alone.

A former employee of the Center for National Culture, now resident in the United States that I interviewed on the telephone told me that, by his estimation, most African cultures legalize irresponsibility. He was so obsessed with fury about the very idea that some educated people who have as well traveled feel the need to go back to the African roots. He identified African problems as emanating from the very culture that some people still hold onto and, opined that African culture has no place in the twenty first century. He said:

Most of the customs practiced in the name of African culture retard progress. Consider communal living for example. To me, so many people living together under the same roof is not a value to be upheld. In one house, you will see the grandmother, the mother, the daughters and sons, the daughters’ children and sometimes, the great grandmother. Among the Akans, this type of communal living is accepted with the reason that the children are not the responsibility of the father alone but the maternal family as well. The result of this phenomenon is that the father of the children has less or sometimes no financial responsibility towards the upbringing of his own children. Birth control is not encouraged in such a system. Another Akan custom even demands that the ancestors should not be prevented from coming back to this world and hence couples are honored for many births. How can we sustain the society with such an attitude in this era of technological and computer age. All the countries considered developed do not follow these so-called African values. Instead of improving upon the inventions in Africa, we stop at the first stage and pride ourselves that they are cultural artifacts. For example, we still use the same old style to weave the *kente* cloth as well as the dyeing and the stamping of the *adinkra* cloth. We still use the raw hide for our leather bags and they are smelly when they come into contact with water. We keep on retarding our own progress in the name of maintaining culture. What culture!

When I asked him if he doesn't see any positive aspect of the culture that need to be taught, he replied that:

My friend, I have been a teacher and worked with the Center for National Culture. There is nothing in the so-called annual cultural festivals that are organized by the Ghana Education Service. The best school and students (in the cultural festivals) are those that can do something that is more ancient in structure, be it art, craft or dance. My point is that we are moving forward and anything backwards retards progress and therefore contributes to underdevelopment. Even the so-called respect for old age by children is just a ploy to restrict children to speak their minds. They all constitute child abuse. Gone are the days when parents married for their sons and husbands were imposed on girls. Let us face realities, African cultures are more retrogressive than progressive.

When I asked one musician to comment on the above assertion about African culture for being retrogressive or otherwise, he said that:

“Since teachers are themselves the products of the system we are partially condemning, we cannot get anywhere.” In other words, those who can be counted on to advance the cause of African philosophy are already “miseducated” to shun the African life and world mentally, socially, environmentally, physically and epistemically. They rather have become the apostles of the non-African world. They are, in the vast majority, Eurocentric. Children have the feeling that they are more modern and more civilized than their illiterate parents and therefore will not kowtow to their suggestions as to how they should plan their lives.

Also, what Iroegbu (1994:134) refers to as the three C's, colonization, civilization and Christianization, are still working in full force against the authenticity and autonomy of Africa and its people. With regard to language, it is the soul of culture, the heart of the environment and the spirit that motivates and directs a people's life. African thought in a foreign language therefore is not fully African thought. Iroegbu is therefore right to say that, “African philosophy done in foreign language is not yet authentically African philosophy.” In a similar opinion Makinde (1988:56) has asserted that, “until philosophy is written and taught in an African language, African philosophy may turn out in future to be nothing but Western philosophy in African guise.”

SUGGESTED PROGRAMS TO RESTORE AKAN INDIGENOUS PHILOSOPHIES

The participants in the study were of the view that the cultural festivals that go on in schools need to be reviewed. One participant at the Center for National Culture was of the opinion that:

What is missing prominently in the teaching and retention of culture and our philosophies is “technology.” Apart from talking about how our indigenous political, social and economic life could help mold a better system for us, we should also talk about technology, e.g. crafts. We should make use of the things from our own environment and make the things we need from them. We have, for example, so many uses for our clay, bamboo, palm tree etc. My point is that, we have to build on something that our forefathers or ourselves have started, for our own use. Tell me, how can you justify the practice where teachers accept eggs and money from children for craft during examination. But that is what happens in some schools. I feel that an environment should be created for the materials to be brought to the school for the children to work on them in the school.

Other participants are also of the view that oral tradition should be used immensely as a vehicle to transport indigenous philosophies to the children. One participant from the Center for National Culture suggested that since academic subjects end in examination and sports festivals end in competition, Cultural studies should end in festivals. The festivals should embrace all aspects of indigenous life as is taught in the schools including chieftaincy, initiation, food, names systems and naming system, etc. Cloth wearing, for example, he suggests, should be optional on such a day so that children could wear any type of indigenous cloth for others to learn from one another.

One queen mother was of the view that as the school is taking all the children’s time, it is very expedient to teach culture as a matter of necessity in our schools. If that is not done, very soon, our country would become crowded with individuals who are neither Ghanaians nor foreigners. In line with the idea expressed, a coordinator at the National Youth Organizing Commission came out with the following suggestion:

That, instead of burdening school children with too much academic work both in and out of school, it would be more beneficial to organize a Community Youth Cultural Program. The aim of such a program will be to create the requisite conditions that will enable the youth develop their creative abilities and to ensure that they are in a position to contribute positively to the development of the nation. In this case the too much special classes during vacations could be substituted by different camps of a mixture of school

children that can bring and share with their counterparts the aspects of indigenous culture they know from their different homes.

The use of folktales or “spider stories” is also important since it inculcates into children indigenous wisdom and social dos and don’ts. Even though the spider’s character is a dual one, they are imitated depending upon the end of the story that is told. Poetry recitals also have very important educational implications. The words in the Akan poems motivate children to do valuable things. They can also be used to educate children on important current issues like AIDS, teenage pregnancy, drug abuse among teenagers, family planning and common diseases and their prevention.

Another important concern was the use of a foreign language to write the syllabus of Ghanaian languages in the school curriculum. A physical education director at the Curriculum Research and Development Division in Accra expressed concern about the way Ghanaian language is ignored in the curriculum and said: “No country can achieve progress if her children learn in a foreign language” He also opined that there is a deficiency in the language policy of the country. According to him, at the pre-school level the children are introduced to English at that early age. However, the language policy is that the Ghanaian language should be used as the medium of instruction from in the first three grades of the child’s education. What happens then is that, parents who want to avoid confusing their children, and have the means to do so, take their children to private schools where they will continue with the use of the English language, to which they have already been introduced at the nursery level of their education.

A broadcaster in Kumasi was of the opinion that, most of the cultural programs organized in schools, such as the cultural festivals, have not succeeded in achieving their intended aims. The reason for this failure is that children do not see any successful continuation of the Ghanaian culture they learn in school after these festivals. He said, however, that gradually, people are developing interest in the culture and very soon “water will find its own level.” For example, jingles that are made on the radio in the Akan language attract very high fees. This tells people that those who maintain their culture, especially the language can also gain respect in some areas. He said a one-minute jingle in Twi cost three hundred thousand cedis in Kumasi and this is more than the monthly salary of a teacher.

SUMMARY

I have presented the raw data gathered from the field in this chapter, so far, with some few explanations and support of the literature to participants’ responses, where applicable. I situated the responses of participants in the four different themes that seek to answer the research questions. These are vehicles of Akan philosophies, knowledge and acceptance of Akan indigenous philosophies, militating factors and suggested programs to restore the straying Akan indigenous philosophies.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion and Interpretation of Findings

INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter described some aspects of the life orientation and activities of the Akan with the background of Akan indigenous culture and customs. An attempt will now be made at an interpretation of the data so far described, which confirms most of the findings and assertions made by earlier researchers, indicated in the literature review in chapter two. For example, the functional and the instructive role of folktales are not just told for their own sake; they have important social instructions to impart.

Generally, the Akan people of Ghana are still interested in passing on to their children the indigenous value systems in the face of modern opposition. Participants seem to be aware of the value-laden implications in the various aspects of the Akan indigenous life and philosophies and how these can best compliment the present school system. However, apathy about possible contribution of Akan indigenous philosophies were found to be the result of concept of the so-called “Born-again Christians,” Western education, and modernization. These have advanced the arguments that any attempt to go back to learning indigenous Akan philosophies will turn the clock of development back.

Participants provided practical suggestions for the resuscitation of Akan indigenous philosophies. Holiday camps may replace holiday classes with resource persons from the locality replacing the normal school teachers in the teaching of some trades and customs. School festivals and ample use of the local Ghanaian language should also be addressed.

In sum, it was found out that most Akans Ghanaians, both the Western educated and the “uneducated” by Western standards, teachers, students and pupils, parents, musicians, craftsmen and cultural administrators and curriculum developers lament the erosion of indigenous values. My observation and interviews unearthed recommendations to revisit the use of folktales and the encouragement of the youth to use the Akan language rather than the practice where children are discouraged in the use of their own language with derogatory and painful punishment. They also recognize and appreciate the invaluable contributions of some customs like puberty rites and improvement upon their own indigenous arts and crafts, which will

enhance meaningful progress that suits the environment. The successive sections of this chapter will therefore be reserved for a discussion of the findings stated above and how they relate to the literature reviewed.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

From the analysis in chapter four, I observed that the participants have inward interest in the maintenance of indigenous culture. They seem to realize the philosophical import in the different aspects of the culture and their educational implications for the youth. However, the general concern was about the erosion of the indigenous language by the strong overflow of foreign language, the blind denial of their own art and craft, values inherent in “spider stories,” proverbs, riddles, etc., and slow killing of the taste for their own local food and technology.

Language is identified as the live wire and the vehicle of the culture of any group of people. It is the medium that unites the adult population and the youth whether one group is illiterate or otherwise. Thus, I found that it is unfortunate for the Curriculum development division to push Ghanaian Language from the core to elective subjects.

As one experienced highlife musician also stated, he sings all his songs in the Akan language because they are his target audience. He said:

I will not sing in another language when the speakers of that foreign language are not my target audience. Also, I want to tell you that, whenever two people befriend each other, it is a form of competition. Each wants their philosophy or principle to reign over the other. The idea has its macro counterpart with nations. If any stronger nation wants to prosper over a weaker nation, the bait she puts on her hook is her culture. Once the weaker nation attempts to take the bait, the stronger nation pulls up the line and the weaker nation leaves all in her culture and take that of the stronger nation. The foreign language has eaten into the fabric of our culture too much. For example, in our radio stations, they always play English songs and set some short time for the local music which they call “time for highlife.” Why should there be a time for highlife when the country itself is a highlife country? Another example is that in many churches the leaders use English to preach when over seventy percent of the congregation cannot understand English! This, to me is very unfortunate.

It was also found that more often, primary school teachers in public schools meet the wrath and confusion of parents when they use the Ghanaian language as the medium of instruction as directed by the language policy in Ghana. It would be recalled that the language policy in Ghana states that for the first three grades at the primary school level, Ghanaian language should be used as the medium of instruction in the first three years of the child’s formal education (George, 1976).

The area of indigenous art and craft was also found to be of much concern. The Akan express their interest in the hand made fabrics, the stools and other carvings, especially those that have symbolic meanings. One lady who was wearing a traditional designed cloth was very happy to tell me the symbol in the cloth she was wearing and the meaning of the symbol. For example, at the Arts Center in Accra, I found out that the sellers of artifacts and the traditional fabrics used the weapon of explaining the symbolic meaning of their wares to attract tourists and local people alike.

For example, The key holders, “kente” ties, necklaces, native sandals, walking sticks, umbrellas, state swords, different “adinkra” symbols in wall hangings, etc. all had meanings which were both fascinating and educative. One carver in Sunyani explained to me that: “in this house everybody can carve. All the children know the different trees used for the different carvings, “Osese” for the stools, “Tweneboa” for the drums and “Papaa” for carving mortar. The trees that are poisonous like “Potrodom,” are shown to them so that they do not use them for the carving of mortar. The two carvers the researcher spoke with viewed the concern of the Education reform in Ghana, where credence is being given to indigenous trade as a laudable one. Their concern, however, is that carvers like themselves, who do not have Western educational teachers’ certificate can still be made use of in the schools because the teaching of carving has nothing to do with fluency in the English language. One participant cracked a joke that, “an applicant was denied an entry visa to the United States on the basis of his illiteracy in English language. He looked at the visa-issuing officer and asked him through an interpreter that, “are you telling me there are no dumb and deaf people in the United States?” And if they understand the language through signs, why can’t I understand it too?”

Oral tradition was also identified as an area of interest where many participants expressed concern for its revival. All the participants that the researcher interviewed, musicians, teachers, cultural administrators, parents, students and traditional leaders (chiefs and Queenmothers) were of the view that there is the need to revive the oral tradition especially, the “spider stories.” An educational director stated that:

I think we are laying too much emphasis of drumming and dancing as the totality of culture in our schools. This breeds nothing more than unnecessary competition among schools. I feel that we need to concentrate on our oral traditions like story telling and drama that have moral values. One teacher suggested that parents or some elders in the neighborhood could be invited to the school as resource persons to tell “anansesem” (‘spider story’) or oral history on a specific topic.

He stated further that: “In the olden days, before the coming of churches, our people used folktales as a channel to preach for a required social change.” In his estimation, he accepted that oral tradition is a vital aspect of the Akan traditional heritage that should be included in the educational curriculum. However, the teaching of oral literature as a routine at different levels in the educational system

should not lure us into complacency. It needs to be situated in a cultural context for example through the cultural festivals or dramatization.

In p'Bitek (1973) proposition, "Oral literature is not what is written in a book. It is a live, dynamic, participatory experience. Even if one were to read all the anthologies of African oral literature and all the theoretical and analytical works about it, without ever witnessing and participating in a performance of oral art, the one would be illiterate as far as oral literature is concerned."

Customary practices like "Bragro", "Kyiribra", "Dipo", and "Trokosi" were the areas that were found to attract some controversy among the Akan people of today. The "Born again" Christians and some Western educated individuals opined that they were completely against the perpetuation of such customary practices.

However, it was also found out that the Akan are still interested in the retention of these customs but with some modifications. One queen mother was of the opinion that the customary practices have their negative as well as positive sides and therefore be maintained with some modifications. She said:

"The introduction of churches has come heavily on the indigenous initiation and other customary rites. But Queenmothers association has passed a resolution to liaise with the pastors to consult our register before blessing a marriage. My child, let me tell you, the "kyiribra" and even the "Trokosi" among the Ewe both have their positive and negative aspects. It brought some fear into the people not to sin because whenever one's bad deeds were found out some punishment awaited either the offender or his generation yet unborn."

Children were also found to be more interested in subjects that were familiar with their home background and they do well in those subjects. In the focus group of seventeen students, most of them expressed the intention to choose subjects that were close to their home background. One girl said:

"I am more interested in catering, especially when it comes to the Ghanaian dishes because I knew how to cook them all even before the teacher taught the recipe to the class. Even, sometimes our Madam consults me in class."

Some also sought to do courses that would help them gain employment within their locality. One boy remarked that:

I will pursue Visual Art course so that when I complete and could not make it to the university, I can still settle on my own and be writing sign posts for a living.

Western educated Akan people are of the view that technological development need to be executed by Ghanaians and for that matter, other African countries by moving

at their own pace. A participant from the center for national culture expressed the following concern:

Indigenous technology is an aspect of indigenous culture that is conspicuously missing on the school timetable. Some time ago Art and Craft was very prominent on the school timetable but it died out. It would be appropriate to have children use materials from the environment to create whatever they their imaginations direct them to do.

The above assertion is validated by my experience at the “Regional Toy Festival” for Basic schools in Sunyani in the Brong Ahafo Region. Pupils’ observation and need coupled with availability of materials in their environment prescribed their invention capabilities. I interviewed a JSS pupil from Yeji, a fishing village in the Brong Ahafo region. He had made a pontoon and a corn mill from empty cans. When asked why he chose to make those items, he said:

I always see the pontoon of the Volta Lake and I wish that one day I could make the actual pontoon to help my own people to cross the lake. I also made the corn mill because we use the corn mill a lot since we have a lot of corn and millet and we take all of them to the milling machine.

In general, participants did not dismiss outright the institution of indigenous tradition. The “born again” Christians who reprimanded the resuscitation of indigenous cultures, irrespective of their philosophical and educational import were particular about the aspect of religion. One primary school teacher quipped:

I am interested in the cultural festivals since they portray the philosophy of Sankofa—going back for the good things in our culture. However, I think some ideas like traditional religion should be minimized.

One cultural administrator also stated that:

I feel that culture is a way of life. It ensures national identity. If children are denied the learning of their own culture, they will lose this identity and employment in the country will subsequently suffer. I feel that everything that needs to be taught is being taught though it might not be in the right way because of financial problems. I, however, strongly believe that traditional worship should not be taught. I am against any form of traditional religion and will always fight against it.

The three major factors responsible for the somehow negative attitude by some Akans towards any vigorous revival of Akan indigenous philosophies were the impact of foreign religion, especially Christianity, Western education and modernization (referred to, sometimes, as civilization).

Religion continues to reign as part and parcel of the life of the Akan. This is manifested in the inscriptions in passenger buses, stalls, kiosks, and names of restaurants and bars. Examples of these religious inscriptions were as follows: God is King, God never sleeps, Grace awaits in heaven, God is alive, I am calm looking up to God, Peace be unto God; Peace be unto you, God's time is the best, If God does not sanction your death no man can kill you, etc. These inscriptions, it should be noted are religiously generic and did not indicate one's profession for Christianity or traditional religion.

These observations about religious inscriptions confirmed earlier researchers' assertion that the Akan, and indeed Africans express their religiosity in every aspect of their life anywhere they get the chance (Opoku, 1978; Sarpong, 1974; Abraham, 1995; Mbiti, 1990; Telda, 1996).

I agree with McWilliam (1975) that, educational problems in a country like Ghana must be looked at from purely African point of view. If education is to help the children they are meant for, then that education needs to be adapted to the needs of the individual and the community (Scanlon (1964). It is regrettable that what Iroegbu (1994) refers to as the three C's (Colonization, Christianization and Civilization) or better still Western education and religion has drawn a wedge through the indigenous philosophies such that the Akan have the onerous task of collecting the dregs and pieces together again. Having found the factors that militate against the indigenous philosophies, the solutions seem to be half way through. Even though religion has been identified as the most prominent factor for the rejection and the almost demise of the indigenous philosophies, other studies assign different factors to this mishap. Education and social change is another possible cause (Foster, 1965). According to Foster (1965), the most significant latent function of Western formal education is the fostering of conceptions of social status, which diverged from the traditional model. The long years of Western education has been rooted into the Ghanaian system so much that the participants in this study perceive Western education from a positive viewpoint and consequently have developed philosophies about education, which reflect that viewpoint (Yeboah, 1997).

In spite of the adherence of Akan to Western education and religion like Christianity and the taste for other western fashions, they still realize the harm they will cause when they completely despise the indigenous philosophies. Akans still express concern about maintaining national identity. They are as well trying to make use of the resources that are readily available in their own environment. There is the realization that if this identity formation and utilization of local resources are not achieved; Ghanaians will continue to play a second fiddle and potential appendages to other nations.

As described in [chapter four](#), that the participants in this study affirmed their are preparedness to accept the revival of indigenous philosophies. However, there is the need for modifications. The national television and radio programs on Akan philosophies are a testimony of the interest that the people still have and their preparedness to maintain the indigenous cultures. As stated already, "Akan drama"

and “by the fire side” were examples of the revival of interest in local programs that have indigenous culture as a background.

Another finding in this study was that, children brought up in traditional homes or whose parents have less Western education were more interested in the indigenous philosophies. For example, In the focus group of students from the Mmeredane Estate school in Sunyani, all the students who expressed the desire to pursue subjects that pertain to local cultures had traditional backgrounds. On the other hand, the children from Western educated homes were not so fascinated about the indigenous philosophies. They have even developed more taste for continental food at the expense of Ghanaian dishes.

The Centers for National Culture, the department charged with the maintenance of the nation’s culture, were found to be concerned about the sustenance of the indigenous culture, both oral tradition and the traditional art and craft. The administrators, however, decried the nonchalant nature with which some teachers teach culture in Ghanaian schools. One administrator at the National Commission on Culture was disappointed that the commission is no more consulted in the drawing of curriculum in the for the country.

In the case of the Ghana Education Service, her concern for the maintenance of indigenous culture was manifested in the fact that it has a department of solely responsible for the teaching and expression of culture in the schools. They also have included in the school calendar, a cultural festival that takes place annually. At the basic education level cultural studies is fused with Ghanaian Language taught as a core subject.

Traditional leaders and parents are determined to keep oral tradition and indigenous philosophies. During the fieldwork, I found that traditional courts still operate among the Akan and in fact, the whole country. These courts have been charged by the central government with the responsibility of arbitrating in customary cases like divorce and marriage cases, stool land cases, seduction and taboo violations, etc.

Akan highlife and traditional musicians still use the medium of music to transport to the youth the values in indigenous philosophies. The proverbs, folktales and riddles and their meanings and educational imports abound in the Akan music. It could be safely concluded from the above that the educational agents described above engage themselves actively in the revival of Akan indigenous philosophies.

As described in [chapter four](#) the most potent militating factor against any possible visit to indigenous philosophies is the Christian religion. Akans who confess to be “born again” Christians are maintain a strict uncompromising stand for any visitation to Akan indigenous philosophies. However, Akans who claim to be ordinary Christians view indigenous philosophies as efficient educational tools in many respects. The ordinary Christians, like other participants in the study—cultural administrators, parents, traditional leaders—nevertheless, suggested some modifications in some aspects of the customary practices and rituals such as, some detailed rituals performed on girls going through puberty rites. Akans express interest and excitement in Akan jingles when they are played on both local and

national radio. This was an indication to me that, Western educated Akans who cannot speak the Akan language fluently regret their linguistic insufficiency in their own local language. Also, both Akan youth and adults are attracted to the Akan programs shown of the national television especially, “By the fireside” and “Akan drama” on Saturdays and Sundays respectively.

This is a clear manifestation that the Akan, Western educated or otherwise still harbor nostalgic quest for the indigenous Akan philosophies.

CHAPTER SIX

Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The study dubbed “the wisdom knot” has so far been purposed to untie the “knot” to really see of what the indigenous Akan philosophies consisted. The research has investigated the knowledge of the participants in the Akan indigenous philosophies and the participants preparedness to adopt these philosophies. Also, the study sought to find possible programs through which these philosophies could be incorporated into the school curriculum to assist children in learning the values of the indigenous philosophies.

The entire study was grouped into six chapters. Chapter one described the overview of the study, theoretical and methodological framework, background of the study and the statement of the problem. Then followed the research questions and the limitations of the study.

The study explored and described indigenous philosophies and their educational implications in the Ghanaian educational system. The Akan ethnic group was used as the case study. This researcher was convinced that the study would contribute to the existing literature on indigenous philosophies and what earlier writers have referred to as traditional education in general. It was therefore envisaged that the investigation would bring to light valuable philosophies embedded in the Akan culture and that suggestions would surface as to how to situate these philosophies in the modern educational system in Ghana.

The fact is, over the years, education has been perceived in the light of schooling and that anybody without Western structured classroom education in English language is considered illiterate. Development has also been viewed in terms of Western science and technology.

Chapter two dealt with the review of existing literature. A summary of current literature was made on ten topics that I deemed fit among other areas that dealt with the topic under investigation. In the main themes dealing with philosophy and themes dealing with some aspects of cultural studies were selected. The four topics that dealt with philosophy were African philosophy, African education, Philosophy of education, and history of education in Ghana. The topics dealing with some aspects of culture found to harbor most indigenous philosophies were African

socialization process, child rearing and socialization in Akan, indigenous Akan education, African religion, folktales and proverbs.

The discussion in the chapter on literature review pointed to the fact of the debate about the discipline dubbed “African philosophy.” Its acceptability or otherwise in the realm of academia was discussed and settled with the notion that a discipline prefixed with “African” has its own peculiar characteristics and does not necessarily have to conform to the tenets of Western ideologies. The general characteristics of African education system at present and its lack of functionalism was discussed. This was tied in to the history of education in Ghana. It was realized that the many reforms in African education has not succeeded in arresting the root problems of education in Africa. These problems were identified to be the colonial legacy type of education that has in its trail the issue of civilization, religion, and language.

Different philosophies of education were discussed in the section, philosophy of education. In the main the works of John Dewey, Paulo Freire, Joel Spring, Henry Giroux and Stirner were cited. The Islamic philosophy of Al Gazali was also discussed to show some comparison in how education can be constructed upon different philosophies.

The other sections examined the common trends of some African socialization process and the Akan traditional mode of rearing children. Hence the section treated Akan traditional education in its specific perspective and brought out some of the philosophies that served as foundations for the “informal” Akan education. African religion and its expression in everyday life were also discussed as one of the pillars that provide foundation for the construction of learning systems among the Akan. It was also significant for folktales and proverbs to be discussed in this chapter. In the absence of written literature, these oral narrations served as the source of literature from where moral lessons were drawn.

In [chapter three](#), the researcher discussed the research methods that were used in the investigation for the study. The exploration of the problem required, as appropriate, the qualitative research paradigm. The study sought to find what the “Akan philosophy of education.” Since such a study could not easily be reduced into surveys and frequency distribution tables, the ethnographic procedure was deemed the best and appropriate method. The four major themes or categories that came out after the observations and interviews on the field were the following:

1. What could be considered Akan philosophies (of education) or where Akan philosophies (of education) could be found.
2. Knowledge of and the preparedness of the Akan people to revive the vehicles of the indigenous philosophies.
3. Factors militating against the revival of the vehicles of the Akan indigenous philosophies and
4. Suggested programs to restore Akan indigenous philosophies.

In the investigation, I was not concerned only with describing the ways things were but also, with gaining insight into the “big picture.” Thus I sought answers to the questions related to how things got to be the way they are, how the people involved feel about the way things are and how they believe what meanings they attach to the various activities and so forth. I also applied the holistic approach in the study since the study was framed to understand the phenomenon (Akan philosophy of education) as a whole. In other words, the study was purposed to understand participants’ perspectives and how they attach meanings to the indigenous philosophies.

The chapter discussed the population of the study, which was the Akan of Ghana comprising the Asante, Akuapim and Fante. The sample selection was also treated as purposeful since the study was for quality and not quantity; thus, information-rich cases were selected including traditional leaders, cultural center administrators and educators, whose study would illuminate the question under study. The research instrument was examined to include the three data gathering technique that dominate in qualitative inquiry: participant observation, interviewing and document collection. A pilot study with regard to the interview technique was done on some Ghanaians, especially Akans, in the United States of America to ensure the appropriateness of the interview questions.

I also discussed how I got entree or access to the field officially for the data collection. The official consent was acquired after being granted exemption from the Institutional Review Board to conduct the research on human subjects. I prepared the human consent from which was to be read to participants for their consent before any interview could take place. Then, finally three official letters were sent to the Director General, Ghana Education Service, The Chief Director, National Commission on Culture and Acting Director, Chieftaincy Secretariat, Accra-Ghana seeking permission to interview their employees and patrons (see appendix B). I received replies to all the letters I sent to Ghana allowing me to undertake the interviews with those who fell within my sample frame.

The Akan language was used side by side with the English language in the data collection since most of the participants would be more comfortable and expressible with their mother tongue. I also explained the data analysis and interpretation. This was envisaged to be basically, to look for emerging themes as the data collection progresses. With the themes and the responses from participants, their stories could be situated in the indigenous philosophies of education. Finally I envisaged a traditional court proceeding in a palace as one research scenario to observe. From the imagined scene I formulated some leading research questions and who to interview in the chief’s court.

The sites of the research were Techimantia and Sunyani in the Brong Ahafo region and Accra, the capital city of Ghana. Techimantia and Sunyani are both historical towns in the sense of the interesting stories surrounding the origins of the towns. The rural settings and in-depth interviews to solicit the stories that have indigenous philosophies were mostly got from these two towns. Accra was the place

where I found most of the renowned participants and those involved in curriculum development.

The research participants were selected from Center for National culture, Ghana Education Service, classroom teachers (Elementary, JSS and SSS), individual students, focus group students (JSS), focus group students (elementary), Chiefs and Queenmothers, broadcasters, musicians, a caterer, a carpenter, a hairdresser, coordinators of Planned Parental Association of Ghana and National Youth Organizing Commission, politicians, a dirge singer, woodcarvers, a drummer and parents (see appendix G for a description of the participants).

Even though access was officially requested in written form, most of the participants were identified and interviewed through family, school friendship apart from the official network. Permission was sought from individual participants by reading to them the participant consent form. The sampling procedure applied was the purposeful or snowballing variation, which yielded eighty-five participants from varied socioeconomic and occupational backgrounds.

The data collection took place between June 25 and September 11. For the eleven-week period, I was in Ghana collecting the data on Akan activities that could be considered to be bases of their philosophies upon which the child rearing styles are constructed. I found out how the Akan people of today relate to these philosophies and their preparedness to keep them. I used both semi formal or semi structured face-to-face interviewing, observation, note taking and audio taping of participants' responses. I also used open-ended interview protocol design in the interview. This was meant to solicit information from participants' religious and educational background, two factors, which were responsible for maintenance or otherwise of the indigenous philosophies. Through this scheme, I was able to obtain information about their knowledge in indigenous philosophies and cultures and how they are being taught in the modern school system. I also noted their preparedness or otherwise to accept these philosophies.

Data analysis procedure included the application of typological and content analysis as discussed in [chapter three](#). I therefore identified and coded the primary patterns in the data, which were relevant to the research questions outlined in [chapters one](#) and three. The themes or categories that emerged from the process were:

1. The vehicles of Akan indigenous philosophies,
2. Preparedness to “fuel” the vehicle,
3. Factors militating against the smooth running the vehicle and
4. Suggestions for maintenance or otherwise of the vehicle.

The vehicles of Akan philosophies—*aspects of the culture found to harbor the intended philosophies (of education)—were sampled to include Akan folktales, proverbs, riddles, child rearing practices and traditional judiciary system and process. Participants discussed with the researcher their knowledge and preparedness to keep or otherwise, the aspects of culture that are harboring the Akan indigenous*

philosophies. The values inherent in the philosophies were discussed. The factors militating against the maintenance of the philosophies were found to be in the main, Christian religion and Western education with its attendant Western civilization.

CONCLUSIONS

Having opened apart, participants' concerns through observations and interviews, with participants telling their own stories, wish to draw the following conclusions from the study.

First, the Akans of Ghana showed a great deal of appreciation for the values in indigenous Akan philosophies. They know where they are hidden— in their folktales, proverbs, food science, technology and music. They also realize that the Akan culture goes beyond the common traditional drumming and dancing and that, it extends onto daily social and economic activities that are responsible for the rearing of the Akan child to become a useful member in the society.

Secondly, the Akan people are prepared and striving to get their indigenous philosophies passed on to their children. This was manifested in the zeal with which the modern Akan accepts and shows interest in many aspects of the Akan culture, especially those that give them their unique identity such as their traditional customary laws, native art and craft, etc.

Thirdly, Religion and Western education were identified to continuously militate against the maintenance and revival of indigenous cultures and philosophies. Western education, however, has another soothing effect in as much as it shapes the elite's mentality to now appreciate their own culture. It has been realized that the Western culture adopted by the "educated" Akan has not been of any practical long lasting help. The inherent problems accompanying the adoption of the Western culture are so difficult to solve. For example, it is a big problem now to change the already European bequeathed education system to a localized one. Language policy has become a very delicate issue and Akans continue to cling onto the English language for their political, social and economic activities. This situation excludes many Akans (the illiterate) from active involvement in the socio-economic and political life.

Finally, participants provided suggestions for the revival of Akan indigenous philosophies, especially how they can be incorporated into the modern Ghanaian school system. The implementation of any such program, however, needs some "strong" hands and commitment, especially from the educational policy makers.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Based on the findings and conclusions from the study, I recommend, for the construction of African philosophy of education, the following:

First, it should be noted that philosophical foundation is the backbone of any educational enterprise in any society. The implicit goals of African traditional education need to be revisited in an attempt to construct African philosophy of

education. However, this does not mean that Africans should throw away their present educational system and replace it with the indigenous education system. It rather means that education in Africa needs examination of African needs in order to fashion the curriculum to meet those needs.

Educational programs need not be designed to satisfy the colonial masters and other Western countries. Instead, availability of resources needs to be taken into consideration so as to prepare children to effectively make use of those resources for the benefit of their people. Children also need to know their own environment before they are introduced to the outside world. Subjects like history, geography, economics and other social studies and science subjects should be situated in the local environment to be meaningful to children especially in the elementary schools.

Secondly, parents need to encourage their children to respect the Akan philosophies and values. One way to do this is to retain their children in schools where the Ghanaian language is emphasized rather than taking them away to another school where the speaking of Ghanaian language is suppressed in favor of English. Teachers should also find another way of encouraging pupils to improve upon their English as a subject rather than making rules stating that it is prohibited to speak vernacular in the school. This kills children's interest in their own language and to also have a low esteem for their illiterate parents. Students should be encouraged to build upon their talents in whatever field of study they find it.

Again, curriculum developers and educators need to have a clear philosophical foundation for the schools curriculum. It is unprofessional to have a Curriculum Research and Development Unit that feels strictly beholding to the central government in curriculum development. There is the need for stake-holders in education to have a presentation in any commission that is formed to plan curriculum for the country. In this case, parents and teachers should particularly be proportionately be represented in any curriculum reform.

Indigenous philosophy based subjects need to be included in the Ghanaian schools timetable as core subjects. For example, oral literature should be made participatory and interactional activity both between teachers and class and among learners. They should be relevant to students' experience, thus for example; a theory such as myth or legends should arise out of the concrete life experiences of the performers.

Also, the use of African languages should be integrated into teaching. Thus an African language need to become the medium of education first in the primary schools, later in secondary schools, and finally, in the universities. Another example of programs that should be mounted in schools for the integration of African traditions into teaching involves traditional African technology. Each community should be able to promote the traditional technology of its own region.

Also, elders, families, and communities with valuable knowledge should be absorbed into the school system in order to avail of their wisdom.

The Education Service, acting on behalf of the government, needs to expand its recruitment of teachers to include skilled and talented people in the community on full time or part time basis to teach some subjects that require special skill and

talent. It would be more rewarding in terms of both efficiency and employment to get the skilled people in the community to teach special indigenous technological skill than the certified teacher who is well versed in the conventional school subjects.

There is the need for reevaluation of after school programs. There should be some way to check how past students did after school. The Statistical Department of the Ghana Education Service should put on record the number of students from the Basic education level who make it to the Senior Secondary and Tertiary levels. The number of students using the vocational skills acquired through the new educational reform in Ghana should be recorded as well. This will help appraise the system where an attempt is being made to use our resources available in the school system.

The most critical decisions, which leaders of Africa must take, lie not so much in the economic or political fields, but in the fields of culture and of basic human values. True independence means the abolition of Western political and economic dominance from Africa, and the reconstruction of our societies on the basis of African thought systems.

FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study could be replicated separately in both rural and urban settings to determine the differences of how purely rural or urban settings have Akan indigenous philosophies left and valued. This study looked at a wide panorama of the indigenous philosophies and how they can be constructed in a learning system. Further research may take apart different aspects of the Akan culture and institutions separately and discuss in detail the philosophies of education inherent in them. For example, “Akan folktales, proverbs, riddles or traditional judiciary system, etc. as a vehicle of philosophy of education.”

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The findings from this study show that philosophy of education, as bedrock upon which any learning system is constructed, did prevail in indigenous cultures. Indigenous Akan society, for that matter, constructed unique philosophies that were value-laden. These philosophies were mainly couched in the oral tradition of the Akan owing to its lack of recording materials through the use of manuscript.

In spite of the militating factors of religion and Western education, the Akan people of Ghana still feel obliged to maintain their ethnic and national pride by clinching fast onto their unique cultures and philosophies of the past. They have come to the realization that it is only through the vehicle of their own culture and available resources that they can construct any meaningful system of education for their children. Traditional leaders, cultural administrators and parents likewise teachers and educators bemoan the fast eroding and the anticipated demise of their rich culture and the importation of western cultures in its stead.

My stand is that, it is high time the educators and policy makers in conjunction with traditional leaders and cultural administrators in Ghana in particular, and Africa in general, stood up to find lasting solutions to the educational systems in Africa. The system where African governments take all things from the Western cultures, including education, “hook, line and sinker” because of the education they have already had, will not help Africa in our march towards the twenty-first century. It should be borne in mind that, cultural imperialism is more catastrophic than political colonization in as much as the latter is subsumed in the former with its attendant woes of economic domination.

African education needs to be constructed along the lines of African cultures and philosophies bearing in mind what is available in their own environment. After all, education is nothing more than a transmission of a society’s culture from one generation to the other (Peters, 1966). We cannot continue to educate our youth for a world that does not yet exist in Africa, just to please some former colonial masters. The mere presence of colleges and universities should not be taken to mean education. The colleges and universities can skillfully be used to miseducate (Malcolm X, 1965). There is the urgent need to work toward eliminating the stain of academic colonialism and cultural imperialism to salvage the African child from the malaise of “academic impotence.”

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APPENDIX A

Definition of Terms

Abosode

Any embossment on the Akan art or craft, which is symbolic and has an analogical or proverbial way of speaking.

Accra

The capital city of Ghana with a population of about 2,000,000 people.

Adinkra

The name *adinkra* means “farewell.” It is the name of the Akan traditional cloth made from stamping designs in a plain or dyed cloth. The designs or symbols of the Adinkra are supposed to be meaningful to those who use them. Adinkra used to be worn only to funeral celebrations to make sense of the meaning of the word, “saying farewell to the deceased.

After world (Asamando)

A world beyond this palpable earthly world believed by Akans as the spirit world where the souls of individuals go when they die.

Akan

A group of Akan-speaking people from Southern Ghana. The Akans belong to the Tano language family to the east and west of the Tano river in the coastal and forest regions of the West African countries of Ghana and La Cote d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast). In Ghana, the Akans are found mostly to the east of the Tano River in the Ashanti, Brong Ahafo, Central, Western and Eastern regions of the country. They speak dialects such as Akuapim, Asante, Fante, Kwahu and Akyem, collectively called the Akan language, part of which is more popularly known as Twi. The Akan form about 45 percent of the general population of Ghana and are believed to have migrated from Western Sudan and the area of the Niger bend to settle in the Southern region of present day Ghana (Kondor, 1993; Danquah, 1994; Sarpong, 1977 and Safro, 1995).

Ananse

The spider, an eight-legged insect used in Akan folktales as a symbol of intelligence and deceit.

Atumpan

Akan set of two drums referred to as talking drums used in most of their musical ensembles.

Before world (Asamando)

The spiritual world believed to be the dwelling place of all spirits from where they come into this earthly world through birth.

Berekum

A town in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana with a population of about 500,000. It is the administrative capital of the Berekum district.

Born again Christians

Modern breed of Christians who claim to be more devout than conservative Christians, who are tied to old doctrines.

Bragoro

Puberty rite performed for Akan girls in Ghana.

Cedi

The statutory paper currency used in Ghana today as a medium of exchange. The name “cedi” is a distortion of *sedie* (cowry shell), which used to be the medium of exchange in the region of present day Ghana before contact with the Europeans.

Dipo

Puberty rites performed for Krobo girls in Ghana.

Kafra

Akan word for “excuse me.”

Kente

Akan cloth woven with thread of different colors and in different geometric designs. The colors and the designs have symbolic meanings.

Kontire

It is one of the Akan divisions of a town considered to be next in command to the royal family of a town. In the absence of the chief of the town therefore, the head of this division, *Kontirehene* (the chief of the Kontire) takes control of the town.

Kontirehemaa

The queenmother of the Kontire division.

Kumasi

The administrative capital of the Ashanti region and the second capital city of Ghana. It has a population of about 1,500,000.

Kyiribra

A disgraceful rite performed on Akan girls who become pregnant before they have been initiated into adulthood. Thus, the one who defies “bragoro.” (“kyiri” means to avoid and “bra” means menstruation. Literally, then “kyiribra” is avoidance or defiance of menstruation rite, *bragoro*).

Nnobia

Coming together of a group of people to help each other on different days in turn, especially on the farm.

Nnwonkoro

Akan traditional musical ensemble. Originally composed of only females, now males are accepted into it.

Nyamedua

A tropical tree with special three-forked branches considered to have some spiritual and medicinal value for warding off evil spirits when placed in front of a house.

Nyankonsuo

The Akan word for rainwater.

Obaatan pa

A good mother (parent).

Onyame

The Akan name for God.

Other world (Asamando)

The spirit world as compared to this earthly world.

Papaa

A non-poisonous species of forest tree used to carve mortar.

Potrodom

A non-poisonous species of forest tree used to carve mortar.

Senase

A village near Berekum.

Sankofa

The word is a combination of three Akan words “san-ko-fa” meaning “return-go-take.” It means return to take it. It implies going back to one’s roots to take the values left behind. Among the Akan, a bird moving forward while at the same time turning the head back with the intention of taking what it has left behind as it moves forward symbolically represents the idea.

Sunyani

The capital city of the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana with a population of about 700,000.

Tabula rasa

A blank or erased slate or tablet.

Techimantia

A town in the Brong Ahafo region of Ghana with a population of about 100,000. The royal clan of this town traces its ancestry to Kumasi, the seat of the Asantehene.

Trokosi

A religious practice among the Ewe people of Ghana, which allows for girls to be kept in a shrine to atone for the sins of their ancestors.

Trotro

A term in the Ga language used by people in Ghana to refer to minibuses used for public transport within cities and towns.

Tweapea

A species of a forest tree with special property of removing food particles from the teeth when chewed and used the tuft that forms at the end to brush the teeth. It does not injure the gum.

Tweneboa

A species of forest tree used to carve drums in Ghana.

Weltanshauung

Composed of two German words: “welt” meaning “world” and “Anschauung” meaning “perception.” The word therefore means “a particular philosophy or view of life, or conception of the world.”

APPENDIX B

Description of Participants

The participants in this study included the following categories:

Teachers

I interviewed fourteen teachers in all. Five of them were elementary school teachers in Techimantia. Of the nine teachers interviewed in Sunyani, four of them were senior secondary school tutors while the two were junior secondary school tutors and three elementary school teachers.

Educational administrators

Two education officers were interviewed from the Ghana Education Service. One of them was an officer in charge of cultural studies at the regional education office. The other was the director of the Armed Forces Educational unit.

Students

Four students were interviewed individually. Two of the students were in junior secondary school and they were skilled in Art and Crafts. I spotted them at the regional toy fair in Sunyani. Two others were in senior secondary school, one the drummer of the school, who uses the drum to call the students to assembly and other activities both in and outside the classroom. The other student was a talented student in Akan cultures who has been representing the school in the regional proverb competition, a weekly program on the regional FM radio station.

Also interviewed were two focus groups of students. The first group comprised seventeen students from the Mmredane Estate Junior Secondary School in Sunyani. They were made up of ten girls and seven boys with ages ranging between fourteen and sixteen. They were selected to represent their school at the regional toy fair organized by the Ghana Education Service in Sunyani. The second focus group was made up of about twenty primary school pupils who were playing together.

Curriculum developers

Three officers were interviewed from the Curriculum Research and Development Division at the ministry of education in Accra. The director of the unit and his deputy as well as the officer in charge of Physical Education and Language were interviewed.

Cultural center administrators

At the National Commission on Culture headquarters in Accra, I interviewed the chief director and the public relations officer. The chief director was also a

traditional chief of his town while the public relations officer was a former teacher as well as a former parliamentarian of the constituency where she used to teach.

At the regional Center for National Culture in Sunyani, I interviewed the Chief administrator who has been at the center for the past twenty years. I also interviewed the artistic director who is in charge of the folkloric group of the center, the regional research officer of the center, and a twenty-two year old member of the folkloric group who is their master drummer.

Musicians

In Accra I interviewed the general secretary of the Musicians Union of Ghana who is also considered the living legend of Ghanaian highlife music; a man claimed to have produced the greatest number of single pieces of songs in the world as at the time of the interview. I also interviewed two traditional singers, one in Senase, Berekum and the other in Sunyani. They were both composers and lead singers. The one from Senase had her own singing group while the one in Sunyani who is a dirge singer as well, teaches traditional songs to different traditional groups and schools.

Broadcasters

Two broadcasters were interviewed. One in Kumasi was the host of Akan programs at the OTEC FM radio station. The other was in Sunyani, also the host of Akan programs at the BAR FM radio station.

Carvers

Two carvers who were brothers were interviewed in Sunyani. They carve both mortars and drums. Both of them had ten years of education.

Drummers

Two drummers were interviewed, one a student and the other a member of the folkloric group at the center for national culture, both in Sunyani.

Traditional leaders

Two traditional leaders were interviewed. The chief of Techimantia who was also a teacher was interviewed in his capacity as a chief and the traditional leader of the town. The *Kontirehemaa* the queen of the *kontire* division of Dua Nkwanta, a board member of the national commission on culture and the national president of the hoteliers association of Ghana was interviewed. She was interviewed in her capacity as a queenmother and a cultural administrator.

Parents

Four parents were interviewed, two in Techimantia and two in Sunyani. They were all mothers of more than four children, illiterates and above fifty years each.

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