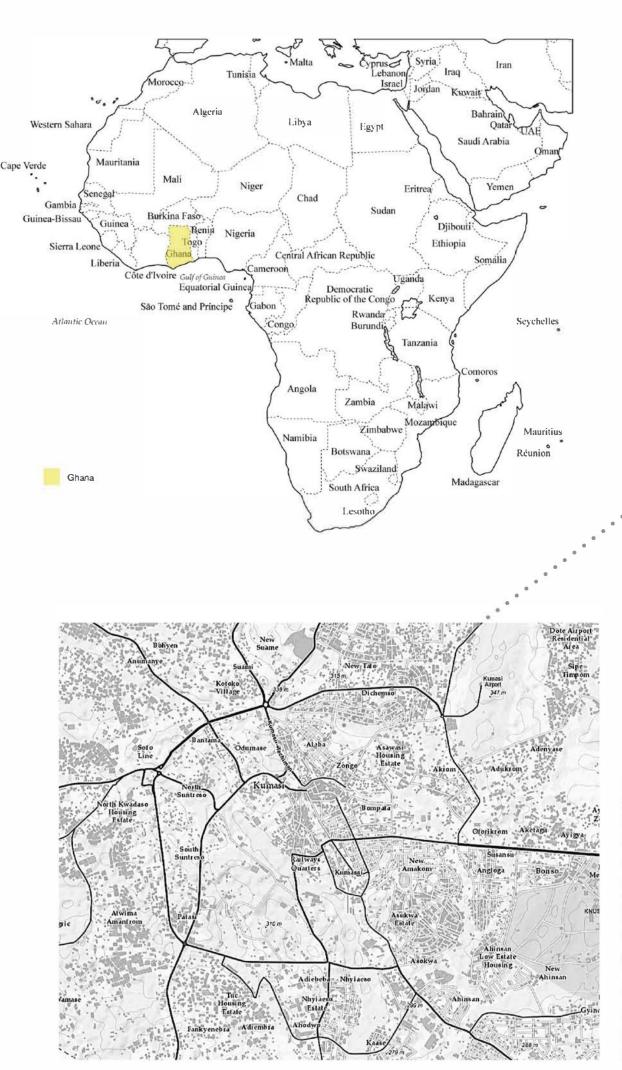
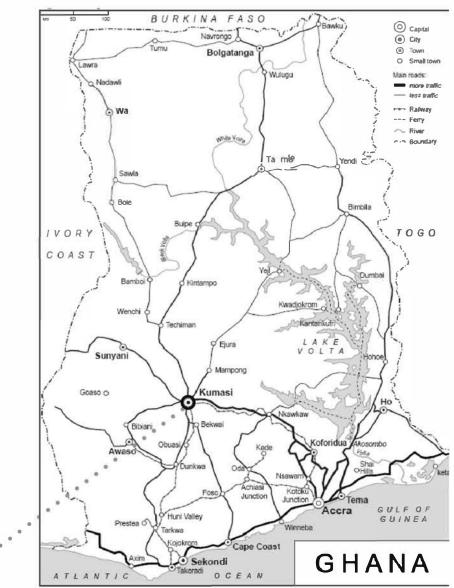
African Architecture and Identity: The 19th Century Asante Palace in Kumasi, Ghana





Ghana is 1 of 54 countries in the continent of Africa. The country lies along the Greenwich Meridian 0 degrees longitude. It is located in the north west coastal region of Africa bordered by the Gulf of Guinea and Atlantic Ocean. Ghana is also bordered on land by Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast) to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, and Togo to the east. Ghana is located in a tropical climate zone with wet and dry seasons (Adjaye, Alison, 2016). The country has two main rivers the Black Volta flowing north-south on the western border of Ghana and the White Volta that flow north-south to in the center of the country. The rivers merge into Lake Volta the largest artificial reservoir in the world formed by Akosombo Dam. From the dam the Volta rivers flow into one and into the Gulf of Guinea. The dam generates electrical energy for Ghana. There are over approximatey 19 languages spoken in the country. The capital of Ghana is Accra, which means ant. Kumasi is the second largest city of Ghana and know as foundational city of the heritage tradition of the Asante. The name Kumasi means "under the kumnini tree" established by the Asante King. In this area the most native languages spoken are Ga of Ga-Adangebe people and Twi of the Akan (Asante) people.

The traditional methods of construction in various regions in Africa not only registered sociocultural identity but also demonstrated sustainable practices and the innovative use of local materials. Researchers and practitioners have proposed that indigenous technologies and materials (conducive to climatic condition, topography and geographical location) can be implemented in modern built environments to ameliorate the damaging effects of colonization in Africa (Adekunle, Odeyale, 2008).

Anthropology and architecture intersect as important disciplines used as tools to define the space and place narrative of social and cultural analysis. This interdisciplinary research draws from both anthropology and architecture to define space and place narratives and to analyze social and cultural practices as they relate to traditional methods of construction and the connections between symbols and socio-cultural meaning. From an anthropological point of view, collective memory, ritual praxis, processes of symbolization, political and social organization with notions of territoriality and spatiality help understand the culture and embodied meaning of their worlds (Cassiman, 2011). Additionally, architecture defines the structural and spatial narrative to interpret social landscapes and materiality of identity formation.

The oral traditions of the Mande speaking group the Soninke (or Sarakulle) in the Western Sudanese empire, the origin of Ghana. Historically the records of events, traditions, ceremonies, royal coronations, births, deaths, marriages, battles of victories and defeats were stored in the minds of historians called griots or 'keepers of memories.' Every village and clan had a griot before the Soninke had a written language. The griot also recorded and told myths through poems called pui. In the accounts of establishing memory of the history of Ghana overtime and the expansion of the kingdom of Ghana the griots explain the transition of the city-states named Wagadu ("place of herds") to Ghana ("warrior king") (McKissacks, 1994). The Asante of today's modern Ghana likewise have grafted cultural traditions and methods of making that reflect traces of memory that tell the narrative of the past.

The objective of this research is to materialize the connection between culture and the built environment to ameliorate damaging effects of colonization on traditional structures.





Making And Meaning



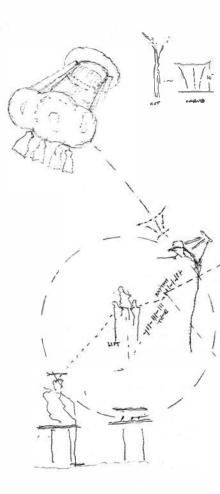
The Golden Stool and the Asantehiene Sir Osei Agyeman Prempeh II wearing a kente cloth robe. The Golden Stool, which takes precedence of the Asantehene, is lying on its side on its own chair of state the upper surface facing the spectators. (Ward, 1958).

The making of objects and symbols in society since antiquity define the purpose of existence in many cultures all over the world. Making was the fundamental idea of communicating the intangible elements of the mind into tangible objects of meaning. The Asante used gold the plentiful earth mineral of the region to create elements of wealth, power and spirituality of the culture. The most significant objects of the Ghanaian people are the Golden Stool and the Kente Cloth. They relay a message to the people to create unity in



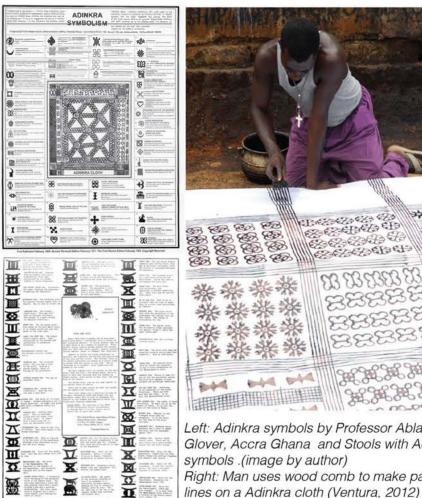
The Golden Stool (Sika' dwa) in it's chair with ceremonial bells of protection (Ewusi, 2018)

The Golden Stool, Sika Dwa Kofi, has been the symbol of power in Asante Kingdom since the 17th century. According to oral tradition, Okomfo Anokye, a High Priest and one of the two founders of the Asante Confederacy, conjured the Golden Stool, decorated with golden bells, and caused it to descend from the sky where it landed at the feet of Osei Tutu I the first Asantehene, King of Asante. Beginning with Osei Tutu I, the Asante have believed that the Golden Stool houses the soul of the Asante nation. The Stool, made of gold, stands 18 inches high, 24 inches long, and 12 inches wide. It was cut and carved from a single tree and overlayed with gold. It was never allowed to touch the ground and was considered so sacred that no one was allowed to sit on it. Each new Ashante king is lowered and raised over the Golden Stool without touching it. (Ewusi, 2018).





The national flag of Asante the yellow symbolize the gold mineral wealth, he green represent the rich rainforest cozone, and the black represent the people with the Golden Stool in the middle representing unity and the ulitimate symbol of power.



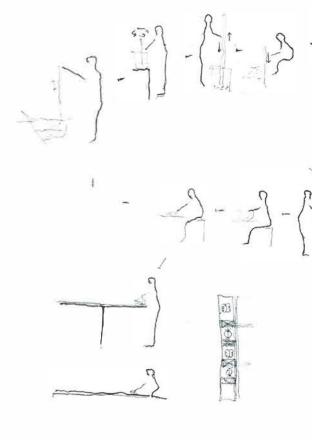


symbols .(image by author)

Right: Man uses wood comb to make parallel

means farewell or goodbye. It is a group of symbols created by the Asante as a writing system. Each symbol can be associated with an aphorism that offers insight to the Akan way of life. The Adinkra and their accompanying proverb was and still is a form of communication system that preserves and ransmits the cultural and spiritual values of the Asante. These symbols were also used on the facade of buildings designed by the Asante (The Spirituals Project, 2004).

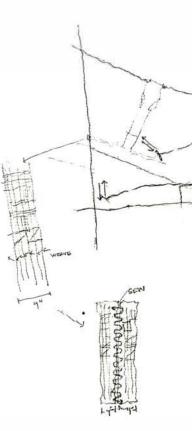
dinkra is an Akan word that



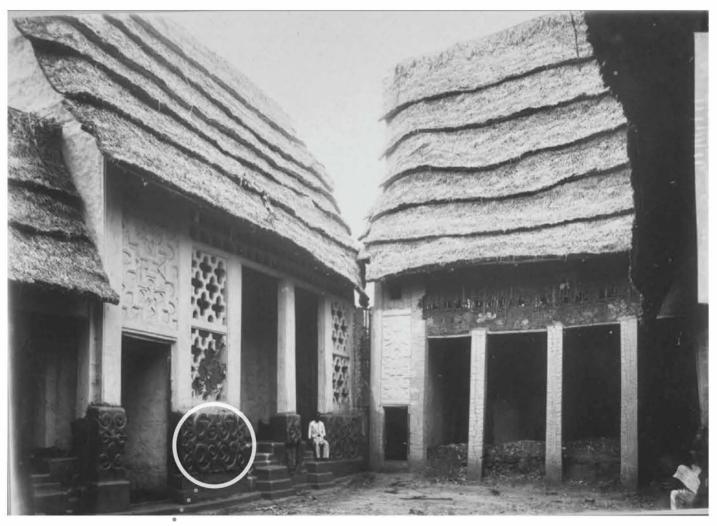


Kente cloth Right: Weaver in a loom making Kente cloth in Accra, Ghana. (image by author)

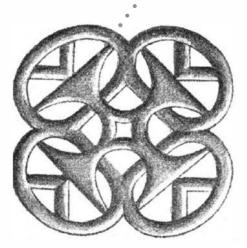
African traditional textiles are a visual representation of history, philosophy, ethics, social conduct, religious beliefs, political thought and aesthetic principles" - Abraham Ekow Asmah. The narratives of Kente cloth and Kente weaving vary in measure and degree. Kente weaving is an indigenous technique dated far back as the 16th century in Ghana, The Asante people pioneered Kente weaving in Ghana, having an aged story of two brother (Nana Kuragu and Nana Ameyaw) who learned the noble art by observing a spider spin its web on a farm they visited. Each geometric shape has a symbolic meaning collective revel a hidden message. The technique of weaving is also displayed in the construction of traditional buildings through the woven lattice walls called wattle and daub, and the thatch roof system



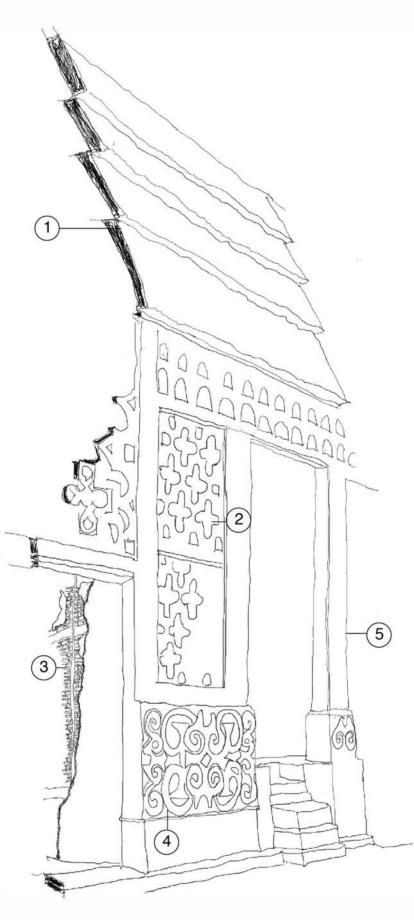
Royal Palace_Structure of Memory



Palace of Asante King Kumasi Ghana destroyed by the British in 1896 (Lisapo Ya Kama, 2020).

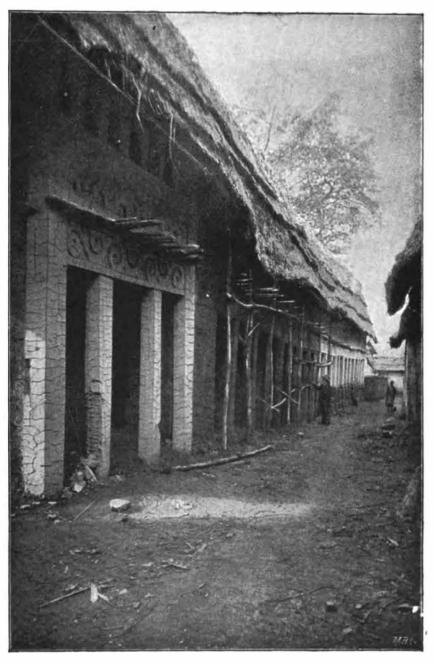


Ornament in red clay on the King's Palace (Ramseyer and Steiner, 1901). The Adinkra symbol on the plinth is called Dwenini aben/Humility and Strength. Dwenini refers to a "ram" and it signifies humility. Aben refers to "horns" it signifies strength (Asmah,



Detail Drawing of the Asante Palace

1. Thatch roof 2. Ornament brise soleil system 3. Wattle and daub wall construction 4. Plinth with "ram and horn" Adinkra symbol 5. Column with base "ram and horn" Adinkra symbol



King's Palace at Kumasi, entrance to the courtyard (Ramseyer and Steiner, 1901).



Wattle and Daub construction a typical wall assembly used to create buildings by the Asante. It consist of a wood framework, builders craft a woven lattice of horizontal and vertical branches or wood posts, upon this system wet laterite balls are pressed onto the lattice surface at a thickness ranging from 6 to 9 inches (ANO Institute of Art and Knowledge, 2020).

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