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## The Religio-Political Functions of Akwamumanhene's Royal Regalia and Its Symbolic Interactionism

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### **Abstract:**

*The use of artifacts in chieftaincy has been with humans from the time of old. The regalia of any chief is used for purposes such as religious or political. The regalia of a chief plays a role in symbolism as it is used for communication. Hence, the need to study the history behind the royal regalia of Akwamumanhene as well as the philosophy embedded in the regalia to understand its symbolic interactionism. Using the Qualitative research method, the researchers set out to investigate the historical and cultural relevance as well as the religious and political functions of Akwamumanhene's regalia in Akwamu traditions. Some important respondents were consulted in order to interpret and seek further clarifications for some of the responses obtained through the qualitative inquiry methodology. The theory of symbolic interactionism by Blumer was used to comprehend the various components of Akwamumanhene's royal regalia. It was revealed that materials used for Akwamumanhene's regalia have both spiritual and symbolic significance, hence their religio-political functions.*

**Keywords:** Akwamumanhene, culture, interactionism, regalia, symbolism

### **1. Introduction**

Regalia is generally defined as the emblems or insignia of royalty, especially the crown and other ornaments used at a coronation of either a chief or in an academic class. Similarly, the distinctive clothing worn, and ornaments carried at formal occasions as an indication of status can be described as Regalia. This form of dressing has been with human society from ancient times and the use of these artifacts as a medium of communication has been with indigenous Ghanaian cultures since their existence, which serve as pieces of evidence of past historical events. They serve as a language of symbolism exhibiting the cultural and historical perceptions of the people and as a way of preserving them. These artifacts are unique historical sources that are seen as authentic primary sources for research (Prown, 1993).

The royal regalia in Zimbabwe, Pokeshe (2016) stated that *Bakatwa*, which is a type of a sword/knife with a wooden sheath and *mubato* which is probably oriental in origin denotes prestige and manly status and the elaborate carving and decoration of the sheath is a testimony to this symbolism. Like the *gano* (a small axe), most *bakatwa* are kept as cultural symbols never to be touched until the *kurongedzatsvimbo* (storing the staffs) ceremony. The *Tsvimbo* walking stick (staff), is the most common of the *saimba tsvimbo* regalia which is also the generic name for the *saimba* regalia (Pokeshe, Royal lineage begins at household level, 2016). However, in contemporary times *tsvimbo* is represented individually or in a combination of *tsvimbo* (staff), *bakatwa* (sheathed knife), *gano* (a small axe), bow and arrow (Pokeshe, Understanding origins and meaning of our royal regalia, 2014).

Significantly, in every culture, there is an accepted code of dressing of which the institution of chiefs is not exempted and every state, tradition or tribe attaches a great deal of respect and importance to its regalia. At every durbar and all festive occasions, the chief dresses to suit the occasion which sends a particular message to his people.

Kyerematen (1965) discusses regalia generally of kings and chiefs in relation to Ghana, as the various items used by the chief to set him apart from others. According to Kyerematen says among Ghanaian kings, chiefs and queen mothers, especially those of southern Ghana, ceremonial attire is essential to their image. One important item that cannot be left out is the woven cloth called *kente*. He argues that the regal dignity *kente* confers on the wearer in addition to the artistry of how it is manufactured makes the cloth very special. He goes on further to state that among the stools of chiefs in the southern part of Ghana, separately from the ones that are used for domestic purposes (bathing, dining, and relaxation), there are black and ceremonial stools included in the chiefs' regalia. The black stools were originally the personal stools of

the deceased chief given to them on their installation. These are preserved in their memory in stool houses (Kyerematen A. Y., 1965).

There are different Akan groups each having their own regalia story to tell, but many themes run throughout their concepts. Historically, regalia of a chief has been made of traditional objects made from materials such as bone, amber, ivory, shells, metal, animal skin, wood, stone, and even hair. These artifacts also help in denoting status and cultural affiliation. Regalia has always had a meaning that has been traditionally used throughout Ghana to tell a story (Sheehan, 2014).

In Ghana, regalia forms an important part of communication and serves as a symbolic language reflecting our way of life and a means of documenting cultural values and traditions. For each set of regalia users, rituals and religion play a major part in the use of regalia since each item is representative and worn for a reason, ranging from aesthetics to recognizing marks of a society or group. The royal regalia of a chief is of extreme importance as they are composed of both symbolic and functional art pieces with deep metaphysical values including rich historical backgrounds influenced by the culture of the people. The regalia of a chief identifies and shows the importance and authority the chief has among his people. Hence, when these regalia and practices are not fully documented the repercussions will be the loss of such cultural knowledge of older generations who eventually die without passing on most of these traditions, histories, artforms, religious practices and values to future generations. Therefore, it is the aim of this paper to document artifacts in the collection of *Akwamumanhene's* royal regalia in order to preserve the cultural heritage of the people of Akwamu in the Eastern Region of Ghana.

The absence of this may lead to misrepresentations in cultural artforms as well as influences from the Western world coupled with their disregard for African cultural practices in general. Specifically, this paper seeks to examine the role played by the royal regalia of the *Akwamumanhene* in the traditional setup of the people of Akwamu.

## 2. Methodology

The Qualitative research method has been used in the inquiry due to the nature of the research design adopted in solving the problem under study. This enabled the researcher to investigate the historical and cultural relevance of the chiefs' regalia in the Akwamu tradition through interactions with respondents in a bid to interpret and seek further clarifications for some of the responses obtained through the qualitative inquiry methodology. Hence, ethnography, Historical and descriptive research methods as a qualitative research design was used in the study to gather information and data. Population for the study was made up of the people of Akwamufie.

Purposive sampling was used in selecting the sampled population for the research. This method of sampling was used because of the specific intent of the study as well as the data and information needed particularly in Akwamuman. In addition, Convenience sampling was employed based on the fact that there were some details that the chiefs, users, and producers had that were needed for study compelled the researcher to use the convenience sampling technique in the study.

The researchers conducted face-to-face interviews using a semi-structured interview guide to obtain relevant information and solicit opinions of respondents for the study.

It also included discussions and photographing of selected royal regalia, which the custodian of the royal regalia had granted permission for them to be observed and record relevant information on them.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1. Classifications of *Akwamumanhene's* Regalia

In order to present a clearer perspective of the results from the field, these regalia have been placed in a number of categories based on the services they provide as well as being moveable or unmovable. The various categories are the deities, drums, jewelry, headgear, stool house, foot mats, keys, platforms, staves, and horns. These became prominent as almost all respondents to the interview guides saw the royal regalia of the *Akwamumanhene* as not just the body adornments such as jewelry, and clothing but those other facilities that are not directly used by the king. Further, some regalia are under the care of other chiefs and attendants who work in the name of the king.

The first category under classification is the deities. Except for *Tutu abo* which can be located at *Anyensu* and *Sawa(mfodwo)* at *Perseh* deities which are located out of the research station, the rest are located and can be found in Akwamufie Township. However, some were not readily available for the researcher to take pictures.

There are a number of deities that are considered as part of the *Akwamumanhene's* regalia such as *Tutu abo (a war god)*, *Bosom Ayenso (Bosomasu)* which is used for purification, *Wontumi (Ogyeabour)* the god behind the bulletproof cloth made of the skin of a tiger, *Odum gyakata* (acts as the mediator to all other gods in the stool room), and *Gyebum* (also the god behind the executioners).

### 3.2. Deities

#### 3.2.1. *Akwamu Odwura* or *Apafram*

*Apafram* or *Odwura* as some suggest is a celebration of thanksgiving and Harvest by the people of Akwamu. Its first and foremost significance is to celebrate the braveness and Prowess of the people of Akwamu.

This is a celebration of most Akwapim towns during September and October. By its name, it is a period of purification as the word *Odwura* is the Akan meaning of the word purification. There is a period of purification and

cleansing before the real celebration. The cleansing period is a total of forty days. This period is declared for meditation and rest. This resting period is known as *Adae butuw* (a period when there is a ban on drumming and noise-making) in the Akan language. In the last week of the resting periods, activities such as clearing of the pathway leading to the royal mausoleum take place and still no one is allowed to eat any new yam. All dead relatives in the past year are remembered followed by a day of fasting. The festival is crowned with a grand durbar of chiefs on the last day.

There is ample testimony that the people of Akwamu never forgot their ancestral leaders and state gods that led and brought them safely to their present home through their travels and settlements. The *Apafram* celebration of the Akwamus every year falls of the ninth *Adae* (is a period in the Akan society occurring every forty days when certain rites are performed to honor the ancestors) and has a three-fold significance. The First fold bothers on remembrance when the people are reminded of their leaders who helped to establish the Akwamu state. It is during this period when the chiefs and their people bring sacrifices to their deities in appreciation for mercies granted in the past and ask for protection for the future forming the second significance. The third and Above all is a period when people come together to renew family and social ties. The whole celebrations last a week, starting from Friday evening. This includes the *Odwurahuruda* or the bringing in of the *Odwura*. This is followed by a period of state mourning and fasting. The Omanhene, as well as All the Clan Heads, will visit both their parents' house to pour libation to their departed relatives. A funeral procession and parade through the streets to a sacred place called *Akyerernade*, by the *Akwamumanhene*, his sub-chiefs, captains and state executioners where the *Akwamumanhene* offers libation on the relics of generals, chiefs or important people killed in ancient battles. On the third day which is a Sunday, there is the presentation of arms to their captain (*Akwamumanhene*). This is preceded by a martial parade by warriors, which starts very early in the morning. Following in the afternoon is a rally of state executioners. In the evening, the *Akrahene* (chief of all *Akra* (the soul)) leads a team to the Volta to fill a covered brass pan with water from the river. The water is brought back home to the house of the *Kyidomhene* (Chief of the Rear-guard). The water is brought back under the shelter of a state umbrella, led by sword-bearers. This water is what the *Akwamumanhene* is to cleanse his subjects with. The *kyidomhene* steps forward at this point with the basin of water from the Volta and then *Akwamumanhene* takes three handfuls into his mouth and spouts them out. He then sprinkles some of the liquid upon himself and upon the crowds who bow down in obeisance. The priest of *Mfodwo* (adeity) then presents to the *Akwamumanhene* with water from the deity. The same process takes place. A calabash full of water follows from the deity *MpemKwadwo* (deity) which contains three knots of green grass which he picks one and places it between his teeth. Water from the *Obohene* (name of a god meaning the chief of stone) and *Tutuabo* (deity) follows to complete the presence of the war deities of the *Akwamumanhene*. Water from the deity *Daasikiyi* is the last to be presented (Nana Samenhyia Darko II, personal communication, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019).

It is during the *Apafram* (*Odwura*) celebration that the Omanhene get the opportunity to swear and renew his oath of office before the *Adontenhene* (serves as the interior minister and the one to lead in the Akwamuman war strategy) as he pledges his life, time and protection to the people of Akwamu.

### 3.2.2. Tutu abo

*TutuAbo* (literally translated as uproot stones) is arguably the most important deity of war for the people of Akwamu. He has the power to protect against gunshots and arrows. As Nana Ofei Boadu puts it 'I know of *Tutu abo* who is the first god or deity the Akwamumanhene does not play with. He is the number one deity'. He went to confirm that it is believed that *tutu abo* is the deity that was able to give Obiri Yeboah's (king of Kwaman about 1640–1660) sister a son and at the end of the day the son was named after the deity. He became Nana Osei Tutu I, In essence, the name actually is Osei Tutu Abo (Nana OfeiBoadu II, personal communication, 13<sup>th</sup> January 2019).

The strength of *tutu abo* can be attributed to its magical and medicinal herbs used during wars that gave them the power of protection. Although the age of *tutu abo* is not readily known the people of *Anyensu* with the Akwamu traditional area where the deity resides, confirm that the deity has served the people of Akwamu wherever they have gone. It is *tutu abo* who the *Akwamumanhene* traditionally goes to in consultation when in ill health, during wars, or even misfortune strikes. *Tutu abo* serves the needs of the people of Akwamu in various ways such as helping to find lost articles and protection of children from disease and death. Its main purpose, however, is to protect the leaders of Akwamu. Odeneho Kwafo Akoto III recognizes the traditional importance of this deity and others within Akwamu and as a strong supporter of culture, he makes sure that the needs of these deities and attendants are met.

### 3.2.3. Bonsam bo

It is a place where the king stands to purify himself. Every year, the king stands here to purify the state. Water from the major deities of the king to him in the palace. The king uses the water to purify his people and the state. The king also thank the ancestor for a successful year of strength and prosperity. Secondly, when there is a calamity or a bad omen, this is where a ram is slaughtered as a form of sacrifice to appease the ancestors. When the king does not want to go to the stool house all rituals can be performed at this place. It is only the king who is allowed to step on it.

The *BonsamBo* (literally meaning the devil's stone) with its location serves as a conduit between the people of Akwamu and the ancestral spirits. This deity reminds the people of Akwamu of living a sanctified life. However, it also reminds them of the fact that on a yearly basis there is the opportunity to appease the gods for clemency. According to Nana Samenhyia Darko II, there are a few chiefs who are only permitted to step in the area. These are the *Werenpimhene*, the *Gyaasewahene*. The king sits on the deity for these two chiefs swear their oath of allegiance to him. Yes, a chair is placed on it and the king then sits on to receive the oath (Nana Samenhyia Darko II, personal communication, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019).

### 3.2.4. Bosom Asu (Bosom Ayenso)

This is a god who is located in the middle of Akwamufie and used for purification. This deity is under the care of the Queen mother of Akwamu. She went on to say that the deity was brought by the fathers of Akwamu. The deity is about a hundred meters away from the queen mother's palace. It is kept in a walled environment and painted white. It also has a very big *Odum* (Milicia excelsa) tree in the compound as a result of a prophecy given by Okomfo Anokye (a traditional priest and friend to Akwamuman) that the growth of an *Odum* tree grows by itself in the center of the town will be the sign that Akwamuman will survive (Nana OfeiBoadu II, personal communication, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019).

*BosomAsu* was brought by our forefathers. It is under the care of the queen mother who is myself. It forbids the eating of pork. Secondly, no one is supposed to send a human corpse close to it. Purification rites are performed at the shrine when you engage in the thing you are not supposed to as a royal. It serves as a rallying point for the people of Akwamu especially the *Aduana* clan. It also serves a healing and directional point for all royals. *BosomAsu* interprets all illnesses and situations concerning the royals.

### 3.2.5. Odum Gyakata

Who acts as the linguist to the other deities and spirits without whom you cannot approach the others in the stool room. *OdumGyakata* is kept in the stool room away from the public and it is called into action as and when necessary. This was what the Akwamumanhene's Tufuhene said when asked about the involvement of *OdumGyakata* in the daily life of the Akwamumanhene. The Queen also confirmed this accession that *OdumGyakata* will always be called into action when the king needs to put on the Mahoney cloth. Basically, the presence of *Odum* gyakata in the palace and Akwamu for that matter brings about a sense of security to the people of Akwamu.

### 3.2.6. Aprede

*Aprede* is a drum that is set behind the king when he sits in public. In the olden days during wars, anytime the fighters are tired and they want to rest then this drum is played to ward off an enemy attack. There is a particular set of drums in the palace and the *Akwamumanhene* is the only person who has it. Even though people have started imitating called *Aprede*. 'This my father tells me'. In those days when *Aprede* is being beaten, the entire team is covered with a cloth so no one sees the people inside playing it. You can only hear the sound. It is also most of the time used to communicate to the king directly such that they have a certain beat that when they play it, it can off make him happy. There is one that makes him angry. The *asafo* (warriors) song too forms part of the royal regalia. There are special songs that are sung while the king sits in state. There are others that are used when the king is entering another kingdom. The songs are selected based on the occasion. These songs are used to rally support and communicate with the king. Whenever the *gyaase* group is playing the *Aprede* drum. They become possessed and the spirits take control. It is the playing of the drums that invites the spirits to descend before you can perform any rites. Now the team is not covered when playing.

During *Odwura* after the king had gone to the *Banmu* (mausoleum) to perform all rites, the king now goes into his room to dress up for the occasion. At this point, the drummer and orator will be singing appellations and drumming. Those times 'we were kids but we all will be dancing to the beat of the drum' as Kwaku Katogo puts it. All of us will be possessed including the king as he is called by the drums to dance in public. At this point, all the families will be crying and saddened because when the king misses a single step he will be sacrificed (KwakuKatogo, personal communication, 2nd February 2019). At this time also all the various drums will be playing with the exception of the *Aprede*.

Anybody who uses it uses this drum uses it in the name of the king. An example if the shorthorn of the king which always accompanies him when stepping out. The drum belongs to the *Akwamumanhene* but can also give it to any sub-chief he chooses to represent him at a durbar. The representative goes with the *Aprede*.

### 3.3. Palanquin

The palanquin used by the *Akwamumanhene* is believed to be the oldest palanquin and being handwoven in Ghana which has been in existence for 350 years makes it very unique (Nana Samenhyia Darko II, personal communication, 18<sup>th</sup> February 2019). The whole frame of the palanquin is made of wood and the joints are tied together with ropes from trees. The covering and body are made of long grass that has been woven and the inside is lined with a thick woollen-like material. There are three loops on each side for the carriers to use; these loops are made of the elephant's skin.



Figure 1: Akwamumanhene Palanquin at the Museu

3.5. *Regalia and the Role They Play in Akwamuman*

Name of Regalia (Akan)	Translation (English)	Role played
<i>Gyebum</i>		Fortification for the executioners
<i>Daasikyi</i>		War god who controls cataracts and falls to help during wars.
<i>Kwame Bour</i>	A stone called Kwame	For installation without which there can be no legitimacy of an Akwamumanhene
<i>Wontumi (Ogyeabour)</i>	You can't (reflector of bullets)	The god behind Mahoney who fortifies it to become bulletproof
<i>Mpebi</i>	Don't desire for one	A monument and sign for others not to rush and swear
<i>Prɛmpɛ</i>		Used to summon chiefs or announce a particular occasion to the people
<i>Kɛnku</i>	Announcing to kill	Announces execution
<i>Nkonwa fie</i>	Stool house	A place where ancestral stools and other deities are kept
<i>Asipim</i>	Chair	A four-legged chair signifying firmness in chieftdom
<i>Ogyeabour</i>	Mahoney	Fortified to reflect bullets against the chief during war
<i>Danta</i>		Fortified undergarment for the Mahoney.
<i>Ntakra kyew</i>	Feathered	Announces the presence of the king and used as a decoy sometimes
<i>Adedi</i>	Reign	During installation and legitimises the reign
<i>Asendi</i>	Judgement	Worn for adjudication
<i>Ahenema</i>	Sandals	Attracts respect bring memories of the wealth and elegance of earlier kings
<i>Egude</i>	Jewellery	As a form of protection, conduit for handling mystical powers, acts as a window to the past and used to grace important occasions
<i>Dom Nsafe</i>	Christiansborgkeys	Symbol of resistance by the Akwamu against European domination

Table 2

## 4. Discussions

Deities play an important role in the lives and traditional set up of the people of Akwamu. Just like the model of culture and human information behavior, the people of Akwamu see their deities as givers of health even though the younger generation believe in the modern idea of healthcare, they still depend on the deities to help them feel at ease and safe. The belief of the people of Akwamu that the deities are capable of helping them resolve problems was evidence of their faith in the ancestral spirits.

The *Apafram*, for instance, is very significant, and like Nana Afrakuma II and Nana Samenhyia Darko II said its celebration was in three-folds. This is based on the application of the theory of symbolic interactionism where the player and the society puts on the meanings to the different stages of the celebration being (i) A period of remembrance is the first when early warriors and kings who facilitated the founding of Akwamu state are reminded of their achievements. (ii) The period when chiefs and people are allowed to bring sacrifices as thanksgiving for past mercies, and lastly (iii) Ask for future protection. A period where there is the Renewing of family and social ties forming part of the celebration. Corroborating this, Odeneho Kwafo Akoto II opines that the *Odwura* festival is purely an exhibition of culture and rich tradition other than just a funfair. In effect, the celebration becomes a political, religious and social event. Strengthening the social ties, it is only during the *Apafram* celebration that the Omanhene get the opportunity to swear and renew his oath of office before the *Adontenhene* and in effect the people of Akwamu, as he pledges his life, time and protection to the people of Akwamu.

Even though one cannot emphatically state or guess the age of the deity *Tutu Abo*, oral history has stated that the deity has served and been served by the people of Akwamu wherever they have traveled due to the protective power they possess. Through magical and medicinal herbs it has used during their wars for health and remedy when misfortune strikes. Similarly, due reverence is given to *Bonsam Bo* as only two chiefs apart from the Akwamuhene are permitted to step in the area where it is situated when these chiefs come to swear an oath of allegiance to the king as he sits in state there.

On the part of *Bosom Ayesu*, it serves a place for purification rites a rallying point for the people of Akwamu especially the *Aduana* clan and all royals for that matter. *Bosom Asu* interprets all illnesses and situations concerning the royals. One of the things that constitute a taboo for the deity *Bosom Asu* is the presence of dead bodies. Offenders are charged 7 rams and 7 bottles of drinks for pacification. Water that is also used is not from Akwamufie town where the deity is hosted. It is brought from the river *Ayensu*. In the ancient period, circumcised persons are not supposed to go there. Similarly if you a female who has tasted a circumcised penis before you are not supposed to go there. There is a kind

of skin rash that affects you any time you break any of these taboos. You will have to come to the deity for purification and not any hospital.

The presence of *Wontumi (Gyeabour)* a war god in the palace and brings about a sense of security to the people of Akwamu. When it comes to sacrifices used to fortify and pacify the deities, modifications have been made due to knowledge and civilization such that in place of the human sacrifices, the newly born lamb is used currently for sacrifice to represent the human flesh. Other minor deities that serve the Akwamuhene in various ways were also identified such as the Sanaa being the deity to provide money. The *Wontumi* who is a war deity is invoked during wars and for protection.

The Sword (*Afena*) which carries symbolic and specific messages comprise of the blade usually made of steel and may be designed for cutting, piercing or both. The hilt (handle) is the next component made up of the grip and the thump which is designed to prevent the hilt from sliding from the hand. During durbars and other occasions, it is only the Akwamumanhene who holds the state sword distinguish him from other dignitaries present. On other important occasions, sword bearers hold their ceremonial swords to design a horseshoe formation in front before the Akwamumanhene as a form of protection from intruders. Politically there are swords that are used in oath swearing ceremonies. It was revealed that in the olden days, chiefs went to battles holding their swords with their subjects to fight but in contemporary times they dances hold the sword to reminisce how their ancestors fought for their freedom. The state sword most usually has philosophical designs used to communicate a thought to the people.

The drum has also been an influential part of the Akwamu culture. It was also revealed that for example, the type of animal hide used for certain drums was very significant to differentiate the sounds they create such as the drum called *Etwea a esi pow mu* (literally translated as a tiger in the forest) which sounds like the roaring of a tiger. In agreement with Uzukwu (1997) who describes the drum as a unique symbol or instrument of communication in Africa and even compares the drum to the Bible and the Koran. Hence, literature has affirmed that the drum has played an important role in most African cultures, making a cultural medium through which communication is achieved.

The sound of every drum in terms of its loudness and the distance it travels is largely dependent on the wall thickness of the log. The Pressure drums believed to have been developed by the Yoruba people of Nigeria and capable of imitating the tones and rhythms of spoken language is played to render praises or poetry to a deity or king hence drums such as the *Prempɛ*, *Krenku* and *Aprɛde* found included in the regalia of the *Akwamumanhene*.

The *Mpebi* drum, for instance, instills some kind of discipline and order among the chiefs working under the *Akwamumanhene*. Now when you are a sub-chief and boldly to swear that you will go to war promising victory, and rather lose a battle. You are beheaded and your jaw bone hanged on this drum to serve as a reminder. This becomes a lesson and a sign for others not to rush into swearing an oath.



Figure 2: *Mpebi* drum at the Bogyawee palace museum

In reality, you must be sure right before you swear to the king. The drum has been kept for approximately 500 years now. Hence the lesson is to check all citizens including chiefs.

Apart from the fact that the chief does not move without his *Prempɛ*, This drum summons the chiefs as well as announcing particular occasions to the people. 'So where ever you find yourself and you hear of the sound of the *Prempɛ* you have to come home' as the drummer puts it. This drum is not played anyhow so when you hear the sound then it's a call of summons.



Figure 3: Prèmpèdrum

As the name goes, Nana Samenhya Darko II theorized *Krènkù* to mean announcing the departure to execute. Hence hearing the *krènkù* being beaten three consecutive times indicates that the *Adontenhene* who is the custodian of the drum is announcing the execution of capital punishment to the whole world.

Similarly, there have been some modifications in the way the *Aprèdè* is played. The drums' primary role is to communicate to the Akwamuhene alone so all can only hear the sound but cannot understand. Now both the drum and its players are not covered like in time past. It is played to put the king different moods depending on the occasion such as making him feel bold, happy, sad or make him angry. It was established that the players become possessed when playing as the spirits take control since the playing invokes the spirits. It is the playing of the drums that invites the spirits to descend before you can perform any rites. In certain instances pouring of libation is done before the players start playing. When it comes to the stool house, there are a number of guidelines and regulations for everybody wanting to go in with no exception. This is necessary in order to keep the sacredness of the place as well as the safety of all persons from the wrath of the spirits.

The stool identified as part of the chief's regalia symbolizes the link between him and ancestors of the land as stated earlier it is the ancestral authority that legitimatizes the reign of a chief, as it is believed the spirits reside in the stool that symbolizes the link between the chief and the ancestors.

There are three significant traditional chairs peculiar and very symbolic to the *Akwamumanhene*. This is supported by Zaki (2008) that, chair in ancient Egypt was a symbol of authority and prestige and they come in various types and shapes (Zaki, 2008). Even though the modified version has been renamed *Asipim* (to stand firm) as a confirmation of the chairs' strength and its stability as well as the commitment of the chief (Ross, 2002).

The first one has the symbol of a lion spitting fire on the chair and he sits on when the Akwamu state meets for state functions. The second one which is for the *Aduana Abrade* clan has the symbol of a dog spitting fire. This the *Akwamumanhene* uses when the *Aduana Abrade* clan meets as a clan on an occasion. A third one having a symbol of two dogs with both spitting fire. The third chair is used when the *Dormaahene* visits during durbars. This is to showcase the link between the two kings as twins according to history.

Another *Asipim* which with deep significance is the gift from one *Asantehene* to the *Akwamumanhene* as a show of appreciation has been kept over 300years. The animal skin used to serve as the seat is worn out but other parts are kept to show how valuable the chair is to the people of Akwamu and to keep the friendship alive. This *Asipim* had a waistband (*danta*) as part of the gift to *Akwamumanhene*.

Based on symbolic interactionism, there is also the belief that when the king puts on the *Ogyeabour* he cannot be harmed by any bullet shot at him, just like the *batakari kese*. The reverence of this cloth with its accessories is so ingrained in the people that it is accepted as a deity.



Figure 4: Mahoney (Ogyeabour)

Rattray (1927) discloses that the use of headgears by chiefs symbolizes the one who reigns and denotes his status, as well as sovereignty and authority. A crown is the traditional symbolic form of headgear worn by a monarch or by a deity, for whom the crown traditionally represents, power, status, legitimacy victory, triumph, and glory, as well as immortality, righteousness, and resurrection (Rattray, 1927).

The significance of the headgears worn by the *Akwamumanhene* is also derived from the material used in its production. The headgear usually has talismans with symbolic objects to communicate a message to the general public on it. These messages boarder on the sovereignty of the Akwamuhene. (Three main sources of raw materials are used. Being the feathers of an eagle who the king of the sky, the lions' skin and the shell of large sea turtle representing the king of the forest and the toughness of the turtle in the sea. Symbolically the king can fight in the sky, land, and water (sea). Signifying the superiority of the *Akwamumanhene* in the sky, water and on the land. The *Akwamumanhene* wears the headgear to distinguish himself from others during social occasions since he is the lord of lords at the function. The special headgear accords the *Akwamumanhene* an amount of respect from his people and identifies him among the gathering. A particular headgear worn by the *Akwamumanhene* communicates to the people. The talisman in the headgear protects the *Akwamumanhene* from both physical and spiritual attacks due to its fortification. Consequently, the throne is seen not like a bench where a number of people sit on but a stool for only one person. Hence the importance placed on the quality of raw materials used in producing the various regalia. These talismans are man-made objects which are usually covered with animal skin believed to possess mystical powers to drive away and protect the *Akwamumanhene* from evil spirits and attacks which is the main function of a talisman.



Figure 5: Asendi Headgear



Figure 6: Adedi Headgear

Just like other Akan states, the Akwamus also regard the royal Jewelry included in their royal regalia to acts as a window of Akwamus past, revealing the mindset of their ancestral societies. *Akwamumanhene* on occasion wears jewelry made purely of gold to emphasize the kind of importance attached to this jewelry. The designs and symbols are a representation of past events and incidents.

Respondents believed that materials used for the *Akwamumanhene's* regalia have spiritual significance and symbolic while giving examples of a few materials and their spirituality. Even though only a few were used basically because of their qualities such as softness, hardness, and durability. They, however, stated that the concept of regalia, in general, are more than just for aesthetics but very functional and symbolic in their use. This claim, therefore, affirms the symbolic nature and use of the regalia as functional and ritual objects with symbolic implications. All respondents (100 %) upheld the fact that the royal regalia of the *Akwamumanhene* have cultural connotations whenever they are used. In the same vain the unadulterated culture and values of Akwamuman are showcase when they are used.

Generally, apart from Jewelry being used as an adornment of the human body, it features as an important part of Ghanaian art and culture and widely used to grace important occasions. It also serves as a storage of wealth for the state. These Jewelry included in the royal regalia reflects the history and life of Akwamus from religion and politics to social behavior and are also linked symbolically to various proverbs.

The history behind the castle keys as state regalia shows the war skill and cooperation between the *Akwamumanhene* (king Basua), Nana Asomani, and his subjects (warriors). The Christiansborg keys are very important to the people of Akwamus because it has helped them build new and strong ties with the Danish community to promote the study and appreciation of their shared heritage. The inclusion of the confiscated Christiansborg keys as part of Akwamu



State regalia is not only physical evidence of history but also a symbol of resistance by the Akwamu against European domination and exploitation of their human and mineral resources.



Figure 7: Christiansborg Keys

## 5. Conclusion

This study has revealed a strong connection between the spirits of ancestors and the people of Akwamuman in their day to day activity. Hence the Royal regalia also plays a unifying role for the people of Akwamuman. However, cultural beliefs, values, and traditions are subject to change with time by the influence of information technology and civilization. Summarily every royal regalia has specific roles they play and messages that they transmit. Others are also made purposely for spiritual reasons. Ancestral royal regalia such as the deities are sought after for the benefits available as they are regarded as the landowners and elders of the community. Furthermore, the deities of the land are believed to influence and promote the growth of the community as well as farming in all respect.

## 6. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from the results of the research, it is recommended that a day should be set aside periodically by the *Bogyawe* Palace, and by extension, the handlers of the Akwamumanhene to display the royal regalia to inform people of Akwamu on the meanings and importance and significance of the regalia. It is important to note that such exhibitions should not attract any fee so as to attract more patronage. Secondly, traditional leaders and their elders must be more liberal in providing the needed data and information for documentation and publication of cultural knowledge, which are locked up in stool rooms and in the minds of the elderly who die with such knowledge. Finally, the documentary evidence of stool regalia could serve as supplementary means of preserving indigenous knowledge as well as useful cultural materials for education.

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