

# The Akan Traditional Leadership Formation: Some Lessons for Christian Leadership Formation



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## ABSTRACT

Traditional and Christian leaders in Akan communities in Ghana provide leadership services for the same Akan people. For proper internal harmony and identity devoid of identity crises, the two leadership systems should not only understand each other but must be willing to learn relevant values and lessons from each other. The integration which has already taken place among Akan traditional leaders as they have over the years learnt Christian leadership values and lessons from churches and mission schools is yet to take place properly in Christian leadership formation. This article seeks to analyse the values and lessons in Akan traditional leadership formation and its significance for Christian leadership formation. Observation and interviews of the Akan traditional leadership institution at Akuapim, Akyem and Asante and examination of secondary materials on early interpreters of the interaction between the Akan traditional leadership institution with the Christian faith are used to gather qualitative data. Akan traditional leadership formation pays much attention to matters of royal consciousness, leadership as service, mentoring, the celebration of the Adae festival and oath swearing. Christian leadership formation that seeks to avoid the church being alien on Akan cultural soil will need to pay attention to the indigenous leadership formation when addressing issues on institutional memory, stewardship, women in leadership, leadership as service and accountability in Christian leadership.

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## INTRODUCTION

Robert Rattray, one of the early students of the Akan cultural world-views identified the existence of the Akan traditional leadership system before the arrival of Western missionaries, merchants and colonial authorities.<sup>1</sup> The Akan traditional leadership according to Addo Dankwa III, actually accommodated and created the environment for the survival of the new entries of merchants and Western European missionaries.<sup>2</sup> Kofi A. Busia in the *Position of the Chief*, affirms the significance of the traditional leadership institution in the post-independent Ghana.<sup>3</sup> According to Busia the significance of the chieftaincy institution was not only to be considered in the governance of the new nation but also the churches. established by the missionaries like the

<sup>1</sup> Robert S. Rattray, *Ashanti* (London: Oxford University Press 1955) vii.

<sup>2</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa III, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana – The Future* (Accra: Konrad Adenauer Foundation 2004).1

<sup>3</sup> Kofi A. Busia, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti: A Study of the Influence of Contemporary Social Changes on Ashanti Political Institutions* (Oxford University Press, 1951),2.

Presbyterian Church of Ghana, Methodist Church Ghana and the Evangelical Presbyterian Church Ghana.<sup>4</sup> The refusal of the churches to learn from the Akan worldview especially will render the churches 'alien' among the Akan people.

Nana Addo Dankwa III, a traditional leader, argues that the relevance of the chieftaincy institution must be seen beyond its sacredness and religiosity. The tension between the chieftaincy institution and Christianity is stemmed from the restrictive perception of the traditional leadership in its religiosity without consideration of other functions of the traditional leadership institution.

Odotei and Hagan have established the influence of the church and Christian education on Akan cultural values.<sup>5</sup> Kwame Gyekye has, however, argued for the existence of cultural values and lessons in the Akan cultural worldview that must be intentionally integrated into Christian missionary enterprise among the Akan people to make the Christian faith become deeply rooted in the Akan cultural soil.<sup>6</sup>

Although the nature, functions, significance and values of Akan traditional leadership have been stated clearly and strongly in existing literature, the formation patterns of the traditional leaders have not attracted equal attention of intellectual investigation. This article investigates the Akan traditional leadership formation system and subsequently identifies the values and lessons for Akan Christian leadership formation.

## METHODOLOGY

The research was pursued through primary and secondary sources. The Akan traditional leadership institution at Akuapim, Akyem and Asante were studied through observation and interviews. Significant individuals who have depth in Akan traditional leadership were selected for an interview, chosen from Asante Mampong, Akropong Akuapim and Kyebi. Further, significant available materials on early students of the interface between the Akan traditional leadership and the Christian faith were critically examined to establish the challenges that have existed between the Christian faith and Akan traditional leadership.

## THE NATURE OF AKAN TRADITIONAL LEADERSHIP FORMATION

The Akan attach much importance to the formation of their leaders. The nature of Akan traditional leadership formation can be observed during the pre-installation, confinement and post-installation phases. Many contemporary Akan traditional leaders have received missionary patterns of education and might have as well been involved in Christian leadership. Some of them might have reached the highest form of university education. However, when an individual is nominated for Akan traditional office no matter the level of their education, they would have to be nurtured in traditional leadership knowledge and values. The royals who are potential leaders are trained to acquire the desirable public behaviour and comportment. The insistence of traditional leadership formation raises questions about the mindset of the Akan on the adequacy of Western missionary education to respond to traditional leadership needs and values. The quality of traditional leaders in the Akan worldview cannot be compromised and the best way to guarantee it is to let the royals undergo indigenous leadership formation processes.

The kingship institution ensures unity, security and progress of Akan societies. For Nana Addo Dankwa III, the kingship institution guarantees law and order. He observed that "the institution of chieftaincy as a political system deals with maintenance of law and order within the society. It enforces the norms of the various groups by awarding positive favours in recognition of conformists and negative sanctions (punishment) against non-conformist."<sup>7</sup> What kind of norms then do the traditional leaders enforce as indicated by Nana Addo Dankwa III in the formation of potential leaders? The cultural and traditional identity values of the Akan people existed before the introduction of constitutions and contemporary structures of the nation-state. The cultural values have remained with the people. The maintenance of traditional values and their enforcement is what Nana Addo Dankwa III suggests is the task of the traditional leaders. The Akan people respect the authority of the civil government. It is also a fact that the authority of the traditional leaders is recognized and revered in Akan societies.

<sup>4</sup> Busia, *The Position of the Chief in the Modern Political System of Ashanti*, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Irene Odotei and George Hagan, *The King Returns: Enstoolment of Asantehene Osei Tutu II* (Accra: Institute of African Studies 2002), 151.

<sup>6</sup> Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values: An Introduction* (Accra: Sankofa Publishing Company 1996), vi.

<sup>7</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa III. *The Institution of chieftaincy in Ghana – The Future*, 26.

The Akan traditional administrative setup was originally military in both character and content. It was aimed at ensuring victory in times of war and to offer maximum protection and security to the leader and the territory. It further ensured efficient administration and peace within the community despite the fact that there were still tribal wars in Ghana. But the wars that necessitated traditional military systems and leadership have changed. The traditional leaders however, are operating the ancient institutions to fight modern-day enemies and challenges like poverty, disease, hunger, and illiteracy. Beyond the fight against modern-day social evils, the kingship institution defines the people; their identity, traditions and culture. The institution provides the pride and common values that unite the people. The values that the kingship institution inculcate as indicated by Nana Addo Dankwa III, are the traditional and cultural values of the Akan people. Cultural and identity matters are concerns of the heart. In that case, traditional leadership complements the effort of the governmental agencies in ensuring law and order especially the cultural identity matters that the laws may not be adequate to inculcate.

Traditional leaders complement the work of the security agencies in providing protection and security against external forces. They guard against cultural invasion and imposition. They also serve as sources of inspiration and motivation for the maintenance of indigenous values. In his attempt to describe the place of the Akan kingship institution, Nana Addo III indicates that “chieftaincy among Ghana has therefore emerged from the social fabric of the land. It means that unlike chieftaincy set-ups in other parts of Africa, the chieftaincy institution among the Akan is nobody’s creation and therefore cannot be easily destroyed. Among many human societies, the paramount reasons for getting together are security and protection against external enemies or aggression, and the need to have leadership that inspires and motivates.”<sup>8</sup>

The traditional leadership institution even in the presence of missionary faiths attracts recognition due to the inspiration and motivation that it provides to the members of the traditional society. Even though the traditional leadership institution has gone through some reforms over the years, its relevance and influence on the psyche of Ghanaians have been sustained. It even appears to be growing stronger and deeper considering the calibre of people who in recent years are offering themselves to be considered for traditional leadership. The attitude that politicians, Christian communities and ordinary people exhibit towards Akan traditional activities like festivals, that are organized and led by the kingship institution also attests to the relevance of the institution in contemporary Akan society. The sustainability of the Akan traditional leadership institution in the assessment of Nana Addo Dankwa III is a result of its integration into the social structures and life of the community. What kind of social structures, then, have guaranteed the sustainability of indigenous leadership formation in the kingship institution in Akan communities? How do these structures facilitate the leadership formation process during the pre-installation, confinement and post-installation phases?

### **Akan Royals, Family System and Leadership Formation**

The primary context for Akan traditional leadership formation is the family. Members of the royal family usually do the initial selection of candidates for leadership and their pre-installation formation. Only Akan *Adehyee* (royals), though not the sons and daughters of kings, can become traditional leaders. The sons and daughters of the female royals are the royals who have access to the throne. The royals are the owners of community lands. They are the descendants of the original founders and settlers on the land they occupy. The original settlers were mostly farmers and hunters. In the effort to explain the early beginnings of the kingship institution, Nana Addo Dankwa III,<sup>9</sup> narrated that the hunters in those days covered long distances in search of game. For proper preservation, they constructed temporary homes in the forest to dry the meat and later to convey it to their communities. Other people who later joined in conveying the meat requested for portions of land and also constructed temporary houses while waiting to transport the meat and other farm produce. The temporal houses gradually assumed permanent nature as settlers kept only family ties and made the newfound community a permanent home. Others identified new lands as they moved away from bad leaders, situations of war and famine, and became settlers on new lands.

Owing to the fact that the royals were the original settlers, they could determine the boundaries and locate each person on the portion of land allocated to them. The original settlers, therefore, settled land

<sup>8</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa III. *Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana-The future*, 1.

<sup>9</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa III. *Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana-The future*. 11.

disputes because they owned the land and therefore could tell what they offered to each person and their decisions on land disputes were accepted without difficulty. According to Nana Addo Dankwa III, the word *Odehyeε* comes from the Akan word *Ono na ode ne hyeε*. (S/he owns the land and its boundaries).<sup>10</sup> The word has gradually been corrupted to become *Odehyeε* (Royal).<sup>11</sup>

The descendants of the original settlers become royals in that particular community. The royals, therefore, share common ancestry, inheritance and remain the traditional leaders of the communities that their ancestors established. The Akan inheritance system is largely matrilineal. There are matrilineal and patrilineal systems of inheritance. The assumption behind the matrilineal system, which prevails in the communities on which this study concentrated, is that mothers possess and therefore transmit royal blood. Men are considered to transmit not *mogya* (blood) but their *sunsum* (soul) and therefore do not share their blood with their children as women do. Identification and association with a person's maternal family, therefore, determine access to inheritance in the matrilineal communities. Such royals inherit the properties of their uncles, mothers, brothers and that of their great-grandmothers and uncles.

The Akan concept of family is a group of people who trace common ancestry and are united by common blood and land. They comprise the dead, the living as well as the unborn. For their own security and welfare, leaders are selected from among them to assume leadership positions. Nana Addo Dankwa III is of the view that other members of the society who may not be part of the royal family look to the family heads for leadership and inspiration. He noted that "the origins of royal families, to which all other families within an area looked up to for leadership and inspiration, begins with the head of a settlement (town, village, hamlet) always selected from members of the founding family, or the family of the first settlers, which usually owns the lands or which comes from the lineage that owns the land. Among that group, the person with most leadership qualities, generally of a mature disposition and integrity is elected as head."<sup>12</sup>

The family head is not necessarily the oldest person in the family. One is selected for the office due to the mature disposition and integrity of the person. The family heads are the basic level in the Akan leadership structure. They ensure fair distribution of family properties and preservation of the property for the unborn generations. They also settle disputes among family members and seek the peace and unity of the family. A key function of family heads is the pursuit of morality and integrity among family members. The disgrace of a family member is considered a disgrace of all. A family's name and respect are deeply connected with the morality of the members. Members of a family accept responsibility for nurturing every member of the family to lead a sound moral life. The family association apparently defines an individual's identity. The first person to ensure morality in the family is the family head.

The chain of authority and power in the Akan leadership system emerges from the family levels. Traditional authority stretches from family heads, community heads paramount chiefs and the king of the nation. In the words of Nana Addo Dankwa III, "the Akan political structure is hierarchical. At the lowest level are the heads of the extended families, then there are traditional stool elders, and the *Adikrofu* (community heads). Above them are the *Ahemfo* (Chiefs), then the Divisional Chiefs, and at the apex, comes the *Omanhene*, (the paramount chief) who, strictly speaking, is the head of a traditional area."<sup>13</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa III identified the *Omanhene* at the apex of traditional authority but that may be true of the Akuapim state where he is the *Omanhene*. The Asante leadership system goes beyond the *Omanhene*. The occupant of the Golden Stool is at the apex of the hierarchy of the kingship institution. He is the head of all the Asante paramount chiefs. This hierarchy seems to be peculiar to the Asante kingship institution among the other Akan communities in Ghana.

### Selection Process of New Leaders

When a black stool or traditional leadership office falls vacant through death, abdication, or destoolment, the selection process begins from the female heads of the family who serve as the traditional mothers for the family and the community. The *Ohemaa* (queen mother) does the initial selection in consultation with other members of the family. Nana Addo Dankwa III argues that the decision of the Akan *Ohemaa* 'carries weight'

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Nana Addo Dankwa.

<sup>11</sup> The plural form of *Odehyeε* (royal) is *Adehyeε* (royals).

<sup>12</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa III. *The Institution of chieftaincy in Ghana –The future*, 11.

<sup>13</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa III. *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The future*, 12

in the selection process. In considering the place of the Ohemaa in selecting royals into the traditional office, he argues that “the customary procedure which culminates in the installation of a chief begins when a stool or skin becomes vacant. The queen mother and her immediate advisors meet to make a nomination but the queen mother’s voice carries weight. This happens under the Akan or the matrilineal inheritance system.”<sup>14</sup>

The royals who get selected for the installation process are royals who have exhibited the required values of the community and the family. They are considered to have demonstrated ample knowledge of the traditions and acceptable public behaviour. The selection is subjected to discussion, acceptance, or rejection of the kingmakers. The selected candidates are confined for traditional leadership formation in the values of the tradition. The association of morality, knowledge in the traditional values and leadership qualities with the selection process strengthen the widely accepted practice that traditional leadership formation begins prior to the selection moments. In the effort to select Akan royals for traditional leadership offices, what are the values that are given consideration in the process and how do the formation patterns ensure the education of the prospective leaders?

### **Akan Traditional Leadership Values**

Akan traditional leaders reflect the cultural values of their indigenous people and therefore much effort is made to ensure proper leadership formation. The key leadership values include public speaking, knowledge in the history of the community, indigenous diplomacy, legal system and spirituality within the three Akan communities, namely, Akyem, Akuapim and Asante the focus of the research. Traditional leaders learn traditional dancing, public speaking, how to swear the oath, how to wear the traditional cloth, history of the ancestors and the state. They value truthfulness, faithfulness, courage, and respect for the elders and traditions. They abhor taking bribes, chasing other people’s wives and too much desire for alcohol. Basic practices like how to wear the traditional cloth, are also taught. Okyeame Ampratwum emphasised in an interview that, ‘traditional leadership formation teaches public speaking, history, and governance. Potential leaders are taught the history of the community. From the ancient days, traditional leadership matters have been taught and learnt among the Akan of Ghana.’<sup>15</sup>

The concept of leadership formation is not a borrowed thought system from the Akan encounter with other peoples and cultures. Traditional leadership formation has remained an integral part of indigenous education. Knowledge in Akan values determines authority and stability in the traditional leadership office. The influence of leaders on their people is closely connected to their knowledge of the traditions. According to Okyeame Ampratwum, ‘if a traditional leader wants to have authority over their people, they must exhibit knowledge in the traditions. Some of them do not learn adequately. If it happens that way any ruler may misbehave in their presence. Other rulers give respect to the leader when they know that the ruler they are serving has learnt the history, governance, customs, and traditions. The public behaviour of traditional leaders is very important. They are expected to demonstrate much authority and knowledge in the traditions and have the needed respect for their ancestors.’<sup>16</sup>

Knowledge in the traditional leadership values further determines the leaders’ ability to maintain themselves in a traditional office. Demonstration of a lack of seriousness in traditional values and knowledge can result in destoolment. Lack of knowledge of the traditional values or the unwillingness to observe them is likely to cause the downfall of leaders. The formation patterns of Akan traditional rulers can be grouped into three main structures as indicated earlier on. Nana Addo Dankwa III in an interview identified the three major leadership formation patterns as, ‘the pre-installation, installation moment which involves the confinement moment and post-installation formation structures.’<sup>17</sup> Appraisal of the major traditional leadership formation patterns will disclose the values and the lessons inherent in the leadership formation process.

### **Pre-Installation Leadership Formation Pattern**

As noted earlier, leadership formation among the Akan royals begins before the selection and installation processes. Any member of the royal family at any time can have access to the stool or throne. However,

<sup>14</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa III. *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The future*, 21.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Okyeame Ampratwum June 1, 2004 Asante Mampong.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Okyeame Ampratwum June 1, 2004 Asante Mampong.

<sup>17</sup> Interview with Nana Addo Dankwa III Nov 22, 2004 Akropong Akuapim.

those who are eventually selected are picked not only because they are royals but also because they have demonstrated the desirable values of society. The leadership formation process, therefore, starts before the emergence of the opportunity for selection. Parents are the main educational agency for the pre-installation formation. However, other members of the family and community elders play active roles in the process. According to Okyeame Ampratwum, family members and even members of the larger community play an active role in the pre-installation formation processes.

Those who are selected for traditional offices, ought to exhibit some traditional values and qualities before the nomination and selection process. If one is not taught the art of public speaking, and he becomes Ohene-kyeame (chief linguist), he will tend to be his own spokesperson. Instead of allowing others to speak for him as the leader, the leader tends to be his own spokesperson. Every royal among Akyem, Akuapim, and Asante is educated. The way the royals walk, speak, etc are taught from childhood in the home. Nana Owusu Afriyie opined that 'the royals are taught to be calm, not to fight in public, have respect for elders, be hardworking, and not engaging in alcoholism from childhood by their parents and other family members. Such general moral education is given to the royals when they are young before their nomination to the stool. Family heads, family members and even other members from the larger community constantly remind them that they are royals.<sup>18</sup> The royals live and grow with such royal awareness and consciousness. The key values in the pre-installation formation process are royal consciousness among the royals but how are such values built and sustained?

### **ROYAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN LEADERSHIP FORMATION**

The major preoccupation of the pre-installation leadership formation is to shape the mindset of the royals towards acceptable leadership values. The process is pursued by making members of the royal family conscious of their royal status in the society. They are the custodians of the communities they live in. They inherit the hard work of their ancestors. Akan royals are expected to benefit from the heritage, improve upon it and hand it over to succeeding generations. The awareness of one's royal status demands nurturing. The society expects from the royals a display of knowledge in the customs and traditions. They are required to demonstrate desirable moral and cultural values. The opposite of such expectations attracts uncomplimentary comments and reactions. In the estimation of Nana Owusu Afriyie, 'such royals forfeit the opportunity of being selected for the stool.'<sup>19</sup>

Parents, family members and the larger community have a part to play in the formation of royals right from their infancy. All royals are supposed to receive nurturing in the traditions. Royals are taught from their childhood as indicated earlier on. According to Nana Owusu Afriyie, 'they may not make you aware that you are definitely going to be the next king. They make you aware that you belong to the royal family and teach you what it means to be a royal and consequently what the royals' public behaviour ought to be. From time to time, the elders teach them the history and traditions of the community. They are also taught drumming, traditional dancing and cloth wearing.'<sup>20</sup>

The pre-installation formation does not guarantee the royal family members automatic access to the throne. They are taught what it means to be a royal and the lifestyle of royals. Whether an individual will in the future become a leader or not seems not to be the major concern at this moment. All royals are supposed to be nurtured to acquire royal attitudes and values. When the pre-installation nurturing is properly done it facilitates the selection processes. Royals who are suitable are those who have exhibited the expected traditional values. The kingmakers are able to select such leaders due to closer monitoring.

The royals are going to be the future leaders and the elders want to monitor their formation from childhood. According to Nana Addo Dankwa III, 'the royals are expected to be educated in the culture, belief systems of the community. No royal will just be for the stool if he/she has not received proper traditional leadership formation.'<sup>21</sup>

Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, the *Asantehene*, affirms the fact that royal consciousness facilitates the formation and selection process of royals to traditional leadership. The pre-installation formation actually motivates the

<sup>18</sup> Interview with Nana Owusu Afriyie June 2, 2004 Asante Mampong.

<sup>19</sup> Interview with Nana Owusu Afriyie. June 2, 2004 Asante Mampong.

<sup>20</sup> Interview with Nana Owusu Afriyie. June 2, 2004 Asante Mampong.

<sup>21</sup> Interview with Nana Addo Dankwa III. Nov 22, 2004 Akropong Akuapim.

royals to pursue responsible royal behaviour. In explaining the pre-installation process, he affirms that, ‘you are born royal, you are from the *Oyoko* royal family and so certainly you know if you comport yourself well, one day you will be the king of Asante.’<sup>22</sup>

### **Mentoring in Traditional Leadership Formation**

Akan leadership formation patterns involve mentoring. Traditional leaders in other communities who have proved themselves as good leaders are identified and allowed to have a direct impact on future leaders. Royals are therefore sent to such knowledgeable leaders to live and serve them in the expectation that they will learn through the encounter. Such young royals live and function as ordinary persons in such palaces. They observe all the activities in the community in the hope that in their observation, participation, and service, they will learn from the environment. Parents do nurture their children. However, according to Okyeame Ampratwum ‘when they identify values, which they are not well equipped to handle during the formation process, they arrange and send their children to such people for proper formation.’<sup>23</sup> Parents normally teach their children such cultural practices like drumming, but when they get to a point where they need additional information then they send their children to live with other knowledgeable people in order to learn the trade as an apprentice.

There is a very high level of specialization in the functions in the palace. In the effort to explain the specialization of the functions, Nana Addo Dankwa III indicated that ‘various households have been assigned specific functions in the palace. Some are in charge of the King’s sandals, treasury, meals, drums, clothing, jewellery, etc. In the olden days, people had the pleasure to serve the king in such capacities. That gave them an opportunity to be closer to the king. It also provided them with security and protection. Such services in the palace were free. Members in such families gradually became very knowledgeable in the functions traditionally assigned to them. If they did not know enough, they went to other communities to learn.’<sup>24</sup>

There is a lot of routine in Akan cultural systems because they keep learning from one another. The Akan always want to avoid public ridicule and disgrace and therefore would want to be excellent and specialists in whatever they do. Some individuals gradually become specialists in all the specific functions in the palace and are recognized as such. According to Nana Addo Dankwa III, such people end up ‘as instructors in cultural practices.’<sup>25</sup> The traditional formation pattern encourages specialization as specific people are assigned to regularly perform some specific duties. Such individuals become instructors for others who needed knowledge in that trade.

Some of the great Asante kings were mentored outside Manhyia, the seat of power for Asanteman. The current Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, admits that he was mentored at Sefwi Wiawso in the Western part of Ghana.<sup>26</sup> According to Otumfuo Osei Tutu II in an interview he granted Kwaku Sakyi Addo during his installation, he admitted the relevance of mentoring in the contemporary traditional formation pattern. He noted, ‘I lived with the Sefwi- Wiawsomahene. That was an exposure that gave me quite an experience because I wouldn’t have known that part of the world at all. Living in the court of the Sefwi -Wiawsomahene, learning the intricacies that the traditional aspects of life in the palace entail, and at the same time going to school. I must say that broadened my knowledge of the whole of Ghana. For example, the Western Region is a part of the country that people don’t even know particularly. I still cherish those good moments and I still have very good friends there. Nana Kwadwo Aduhene for example was a father to me, he was an uncle to me and he also took care of me. During several school vacations, he never even allowed me to come to Kumasi.

<sup>22</sup> Odotei and Hagan, *The King Returns*, 151.

<sup>23</sup> Interview with Okyeame Ampratwum. June 1, 2004 Asante Mampong.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with Nana Addo Dankwa III. Nov. 22, 2004 Akropong Akuapim

<sup>25</sup> Interview with Nana Addo Dankwa III. Nov. 22, 2004 Akropong Akuapim

<sup>26</sup> The present Asantehene was born Kwaku Dua on May 6, 1951. He is the last of the six children of Nana Afua Kobi Serwaa Ampem II Asantehemaa and Opanin Kwame Boakye Dankwa of Kentinkyire. At the age of five, his uncle Oheneba Mensah Bonsu, who was enstooled chief of Kumasi Kyidom division as Hiahene in 1952, took him under his wing with the intention of providing him with traditional education. In order to combine Secondary education with traditional training he was sent to the Omanhene of Sefwi- Wiawso, the late Nana Kwadwo Aduhene for his secondary school education at the Sefwi –Wioso Secondary School in 1964. Nana Kwadwo Aduhene was said to have been knowledgeable in Akan customs and traditions. As a young man he was sent to Sefwi Wiawso to live and learn from the Omanhene who was considered very knowledgeable in Ahensem.

That gave me a very good insight into people there, their behaviour and that sort of thing and I respect and cherish them very much. These are some of the attributes, some things that I gained that some of my relations never gained- a clear understanding of life on the other side of Asante.”<sup>27</sup>

### **Service in the Palace**

The pre-installation formation process in Akan traditional leadership involves providing services in the palace. An outsider may presume that royals do not involve themselves in menial services due to the high sense of recognition associated with Akan royalty. Akan royals however, are expected to serve in the palace like any other servants. Does it then mean that the Akan do not recognise the royals during their youthful periods? Serving together with others is a pattern of Akan traditional leadership formation. According to Okyeame Ampratwum, ‘as the royals get involved in the various services in the palace, they learn the desirable practices and values that are associated with palace life. Service at the palace is one of the major learning patterns in traditional leadership formation. In addition to mentoring, service in the palace contributes a lot to traditional leadership formation.’<sup>28</sup>

A reflection of the palace service pattern indicates that through observation, and participation, the royals learn to lead. Service in the palace during the pre-installation phase exposes royals to knowledge that ordinary servants in the palace also possess as they serve together with them. According to Okyeame Ampratwum, ‘some of these servants have accumulated knowledge due to their continuous service in the palace. Their acquired knowledge and experiences, which have not been documented in books, can be exposed through observation and interaction during the moments of service. They further learn the value of humility and equality with all people. Their call to serve is a call to higher service by leading the society in achieving the goals and values of the society.’<sup>29</sup>

The idea of leadership as service is therefore nurtured in the royals as they perform services in the palace. Royals who do not participate in services in the palace are considered to be ignorant about traditional governance and practices in the palace. Moreover, the ordinary servants in the palace consider such royals as proud and lazy. The assessment of such ordinary servants in the palace is given much recognition during the selection process. According to Okyeame Ampratwum neglect of services in the palace, ‘is an indication that such royals, if nominated will not enjoy the cooperation of the ordinary servants who make a vital contribution to traditional governance in the palace.’<sup>30</sup>

### **Confinement of Nominated Leaders**

Royals who are eventually selected for Akan traditional leadership are confined for more systematic and direct instructions on leadership formation. The confinement takes place in different places depending on the particular community. While the people of Akropong- Akuapim confine the selected leaders regularly at the *Mmogyanwe* house, the Asante Mampong traditional area allows the person to identify any place including his own home for the confinement education. The confinement period varies in different Akan communities. The formation values and process are however very similar. The selection of traditional leaders is done on the assumption that the candidates have demonstrated the ideal values that are associated with traditional leadership. What then can be considered to be the essence of confinement in the traditional leadership formation process?

The confinement period serves as a moment for the kingmakers to closely observe the new leader and to know their strengths and weaknesses in order to provide the necessary education. According to Kwabena Safo, ‘the selected royals are kept in *Apatam* (the selected place for the confinement formation process), for the traditional education.’<sup>31</sup>In explaining the purpose of the confinement education Nana Owusu Afriyie opined that ‘at *Apatam* they are taught the key values of Asante customs and acceptable norms like public speaking, relationship with other kings, self-control and history of the state. Some days are set for education. It mostly depends on the status of the king. Some are kept for 40 days, 21 days or 14 days. The various

<sup>27</sup> Odotei and Hagan, *The King Returns*, 153.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with Okyeame Ampratwum. June 1, 2004 Asante Mampong.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Okyeame Ampratwum. June 1, 2004 Asante Mampong.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Okyeame Ampratwum. June 1, 2004 Asante Mampong.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Kwabena Safo. June 3, 2004 Asante Mampong

divisions are requested to meet with the new king to educate him on the functions of that division. The queen and other elderly knowledgeable women play a very keen role during the *Apatam* period as they do a lot of education.<sup>32</sup>

The traditional leadership formation process attempts to avoid taking chances. The confinement phase in the traditional leadership formation processes is intended to guarantee that the most desirable candidate has already been chosen. Confinement provides the opportunity for the kingmakers to scrutinize the candidate closely. According to Nana Owusu Afriyie, 'identification of weaknesses does not necessarily mean rejection of the candidate. It is rather an awareness of the need for additional formation for the nominated leader. The idea is to draw the candidate closer to those who possess traditional accumulated knowledge so that the nominated candidate may learn about the institution adequately. The confinement phase ensures that all that is worth learning and teaching in the leadership formation process is properly done'.<sup>33</sup>

The confinement period further creates the opportunity for the people who are knowledgeable in the traditions to gather around the new leader for effective teaching and learning. The confinement period gathers persons knowledgeable in Akuapim history and culture to ensure the proper formation of the Okuapemhene. When they are selected to occupy the stool some knowledgeable elders are tasked with the education of the selected ruler. They educate them on public behaviour, for instance, respect for elders, governance, history, drum language, and traditional dancing. These elders are well informed of the traditions and history of Akropong and the whole Akuapim State.

In the Akyem Abuakwa traditional area, the confinement usually takes place in a house of an elder who is considered knowledgeable in the culture. During that period of confinement, the nominated leader is taught all the things that pertain to chieftaincy. According to Addo Fenning, the nominated leader 'is taught how to speak in public, how to dance, how to wear his cloth and the proper mode of dressing. That is the moment that the nominated leader is ushered to kingship so that when he sets out of confinement, he knows how to treat his people, talk to his people and how to conduct traditional meetings'.<sup>34</sup>

It is fascinating to note that the Akan would not allow any ordinary person to educate the newly selected leader during the confinement. The educators are the key actors who are going to run the traditional administration with the leader. If confinement education is to ensure the education of selected royals in the key Akan values, then it stands to reason that the only people who can provide that kind of education are the palace functionaries. It is to reinforce the role of these educators in the values of Akan traditional leadership. A close observation of the confinement in Asante traditional communities indicates that they (the nominated royals) are kept in *Apatam* for the traditional leadership education.

The confinement education does not only ensure the formation of leaders in the desirable traditional values and knowledge. The confinement period moreover, encourages practical transformation in the public behaviour of traditional leaders. The nominated leaders do exhibit much transformation in their public behaviour after the confinement education. They are helped to avoid some undesirable behaviour, which may be part of them. According to Addo Fenning, the transformation that the new traditional leaders demonstrate is as a result of the confinement formation. 'You notice a lot of transformation in them after the period due to the education they receive. The Akan traditional leader is to demonstrate much dignity and higher moral standards. The acceptable lifestyle in the nominated leader is sustained while undesirable behaviours are corrected. The transformation that takes place in the lifestyle of traditional leaders is a result of the confinement formation'.<sup>35</sup>

The confinement moment is, moreover, a public affirmation that a leader has been found. When one is allowed to be confined in *Mmogyanwe* at Akropong, it signals to the other royals who have an interest in the vacant office that a leader has been found. According to Emily Akuffo, 'the acceptance of a nominated candidate at *Mmogyanwe* is to announce to the others that the process of selecting a new leader has been completed. When an Okuapemhene is selected he is confined for twenty-one days for the elders and other rulers to educate him. The moment a selected royal is allowed to enter *Mmogyanwe* it means he has been accepted for the stool. He learns everything about the stool. He is taught how to handle the sword when

<sup>32</sup> Interview with Nana Owusu Afriyie. June 2, 2004 Asante Mampong

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Nana Owusu Afriyie. June 2, 2004 Asante Mampong.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Addo Fenning. June 6, 2004 University of Ghana Legon.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Addo Fenning. June 6, 2004 University of Ghana Legon.

swearing oath, how to greet, how to dance in a palanquin, drum language and history.<sup>36</sup>

The new leader does not learn only his functions in the traditional administration during the confinement moment. He also learns the functions of others in the palace. Such information is necessary because after installation the leader assumes the position of educator in traditional leadership. Akuffo opined that the new leader 'is expected to make corrections when others go wrong and teach them the ideal values. Through association, the royals learn the traditions and the customs. It is true the king does not perform all the functions in the palace. However, he is expected to know them thoroughly in order to make corrections when necessary.'<sup>37</sup>

Confinement education further prepares the new leader to manage the indigenous communication system. Drum language and traditional dance are indigenous patterns of communicating important messages. The leader is taught such lessons for him to function properly. According to Okyeame Ampratwum, 'every drum has its unique dance. *Kete* attracts different dances. There are various dances for *Fontomfrom*, *Bomaa*, *Mpintin* and *Adowa*. The dances are designed to communicate. The king's part in the dancing usually is very short. For instance, when the king is in a palanquin, he moves his hands from the left and right and hits both hands on his chest indicating that all parts of the state belong to him. If there is tension in the town there are ways to indicate that he is still in charge. The king is expected to know and understand all the various dances. The king can respond to the drum language with the appropriate dance only when he has a thorough understanding of the drum language. Traditional dances are directed by the drumming.'<sup>38</sup>

The confinement formation is very holistic. It is to prepare not only the physical dimension of the traditional leadership role. It also intends to prepare the spirituality of traditional leaders. Confinement is a devotional and spiritual discipline for leaders to build their emotional and spiritual capacities. George Hagan has expressed the formation of the total life in indigenous formation in the following words, "in enstooling a chief, Akan see the change of status as affecting the total individual person. For the Akan, the total person is made up of *nipa dua* (the body), the *kra* (divine element) and *sunsum* (the personal life force). Thus, as soon as the name of a royal is put forward and accepted, the personnel of the royal household, and the *Gyaase* unit in charge of household responsibilities of the palace, confine him for a period of time to initiate change in his total person. During the period of confinement, the chief-elect submits to physical and spiritual exercises to emerge a new person, and he is subjected to a regime of special diet, regular washing and anointing with special herbs and ointment and regular ritual observances, all to give him good spiritual health, physical strength and good looks."<sup>39</sup> The spirituality of leaders is considered a key component in the leadership formation process in Akan traditional leadership. In a sense, the leaders are prepared to respond to both their own spiritual challenges and that of the societies they govern. The confinement period prepares the leader mentally and spiritually for the challenges of leadership.

The physical appearance and outlook of the leader are taken care of by the kind of meals he is served during the confinement period. The new leader is put on a special diet with regular washing. He is expected to portray Akan beauty. Hagan, commenting on the confinement education of Otumfuo Osei Tutu II stated, "the Asantehene-designate was put in confinement to prepare him physically and spiritually for the onerous responsibilities ahead. He was fed special foods and taught the history, customs, constitution, music, dance etc. of Asante, and how to walk, speak and govern the people in a way befitting a king."<sup>40</sup> The confinement period when handled properly ensures knowledge of the desirable values of the Akan kingship institution. It further promotes transformation in the public behaviour of leaders, develops their spirituality and positions them to effect traditional education among other leaders.

### Choosing Royal Stool Names

Royals who are selected to occupy Akan leadership positions are required to adopt royal stool names (*Nkwonnwadin*). The names that they adopt are made public during the installation process. Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, for instance, was called Kwaku Dua before his installation. The name that a new Akan traditional

<sup>36</sup> Interview with Emily Akuffo. May 14, 2004 Akropong Akuapim.

<sup>37</sup> Interview with Emily Akuffo. May 14, 2004 Akropong Akuapim.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Okyeame Ampratwum. June 1, 2004 Asante Mampong

<sup>39</sup> Odotei, and Hagan, *The King Returns*, 144.

<sup>40</sup> Hagan, 'Return of the King', in Odotei & Hagan (ed). *The King Returns*, 19.

leader selects is an affirmation that he wants to identify with the moral and leadership values that the original bearer of the name demonstrated. The selection of royal stool names provides patterns for leadership formation as they are connected with moral and leadership values. Moreover, the educational significance of the black stool names that Akan leaders select facilitates the process of continuous leadership formation.

### **Oath Swearing**

The oath swearing takes place after the confinement phase. It serves as the peak of the installation process in Akan traditional leadership. Until a new leader swears the traditional oath, he is not considered as fully installed. The new leader first swears to the other leaders as they, in turn, respond to the oath by assuring their loyalty to the new leader. The oath swearing has been considered as a social contract between traditional leaders and their people. Nana Addo Dankwa III argues that the oath is not only a social contract but it provides the political direction of the rulers. He noted that “our ancestors therefore instituted the oath swearing systems, which, in effect, is a sort of social contract binding both the family offering leadership and the families forming the community to observe strictly the agreement they had accepted. The leader had jurisdiction over all the members of the community and gave political direction, led tribal armies to wars, settled disputes, administered land and did many acts for the good governance of the community.”<sup>41</sup> The people and the new leader set up together the parameters of power and authority. The breach of them incurs removal from office.

A critical examination of the content of Akan traditional oath and the swearing period indicates that the oath swearing component in the installation process provides more than a social contract in traditional governance. It provides grounds for leadership formation. The oath swearing provides the opportunity to offer deep information not only to the new leader but also to the larger community. The core values of the oath swearing education for the leader are to be God fearing and to be willing to serve the people. The oath swearing moment is a very deep learning moment. According to Okyeame Ampratwum, ‘the new leader is provided with a lot of helpful information. As they work with Nananom and the elders they are expected to be *ye ano mmum* (learn how to manage information). ‘You do not say all you see and hear in public.’ Also, they are expected to be frequent in the palace and serve. They are not expected to plot against their elders. The new king is also reminded of the need to respect his family members. They are all royals and qualify to become traditional leaders. The leader is not above their family heads and elders. Moreover, they are taught to be careful with other people’s wives. The king must not play games with other men’s wives. Each of the leaders has specific advice and education they provide. But they all end up in the fear of God and willingness to serve the people.<sup>42</sup>

The leaders in the oath swearing exercise accept and affirm in public the context of their power and authority. Nana Addo Dankwa III argues that the oath swearing ceremony sets the parameters of traditional authority and power. In demonstrating how the oath swearing contributes to education in handling of traditional power, he noted that the leader, “is made aware of the fact that the stool is always greater than the occupier, a fact that is an eloquent check on despotism. A chief has limited power, for he could be destooled if he incurs the displeasure of his subjects. He cannot act independently of the traditional council or head of the community; the chief can do no legal act affecting the interests of the community without the knowledge, approval and concurrence of the councillors.”<sup>43</sup>

The new leader is made aware of the situations that can cause him to lose traditional power. The new leader demonstrates his willingness to lead the community and declare his intentions for the provision of good governance and protection during the oath swearing. New leaders do not only demonstrate their thorough knowledge of the history but also demonstrate their visions and intentions to the people they govern, the intention that the people will use to assess their leadership. According to Nana Addo Dankwa III, ‘when the new leader holds the sword he is to mention all the names of his ancestors. That is the time he assures the people of his willingness to be faithful, courageous to lead them to fight their enemies and the readiness to continue the good works of his ancestors. The oath swearing indicates the new leader’s preparedness to build on the foundations that his predecessors have laid. He does that by respecting the deeds and memories of the

<sup>41</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa III. *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The future*, 72.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Okyeame Ampratwum. June 1, 2004 Asante Mampong.

<sup>43</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa III. *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The future*, 17.

ancestors and also emulating their examples where necessary.<sup>44</sup>

The sound of the names of Akan traditional leaders and some of the titles they adopt may depict them as powerful and autocratic leaders. However, closer reflections on the oaths they swear indicate that they are not autocrats. They could be removed from office if they go against their own promises and oath. Akan traditional leaders function within acceptable traditional norms and power. Hagan has observed that the oath makes the leader the supreme judge, lawmaker and military commander. However, the oath also exposes him to the judgment and power of the ordinary people. Hagan argues that, “the oath of the King-designate placed him under the law and the power of the people. He would be judged by his subjects by due process of the law if he conducted himself in a way that would bring this high office into disrepute. It was also by these oaths, that the King wielded power as supreme judge, lawmaker and supreme military commander.”<sup>45</sup> The Akan traditional leaders are always reminded by the oath they swear which determines the basis of their removal or maintenance in office.

During his installation as Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II swore the great oath of Asante in the following words.

TWI	ENGLISH
<i>Osei ne Poku Nana ne me</i>	<i>I am the grandson of Osei and Poku</i>
<i>Bonsu Nana ne me</i>	<i>I am the grandson of Nana Bonsu</i>
<i>Agyeman Nana ne me</i>	<i>I am the grandson of Nana Agyeman</i>
<i>Me wɔfa ne Kwame Kyeretwie</i>	<i>Nana Kwame Kyeretwie was my uncle</i>
<i>Opoku Ware II yɛ me nua Panin</i>	<i>Opoku Ware II was my senior brother.</i>
<i>Se enne me nua Panin Opoku Ware ko n'akuraa, na Kumasefu Adaworoma, mode ne tuo ama me, Se manfa anhwɛ mo so hwɛpa, amma mo amanmuo pa, sɛdɛɛ me nananom yɛɛ a, me to Ntam Keseɛ.</i>	<i>Today, my elder brother Opoku Ware is gone to the village and by the grace of Kumasi people you have given his gun to me to rule, If I do not rule well as my ancestors did I violate the great oath.</i>

Otumfuo Osei Tutu II in his oath swearing to Asanteman established the fact of his royal ancestry. He indicated the genuineness of his royalty by associating himself with such great Asante kings as Osei Tutu I, Kwame Kyeretwie and Opoku Ware II. He could make this connection as a result of his pre-installation education and the confinement moment education. If he could not establish his connection with the line of royal ancestry, he would not be considered eligible. The very fact of bringing himself in continuity with his ancestors also indicates his willingness to emulate their examples. The Asante people would judge his leadership and service by the content of his oath. Otumfuo Osei Tutu II indicates that if he does not rule the Asante kingdom as his ancestors did, he violates the great oath.<sup>46</sup>

### ADAE FESTIVALS AS POST-INSTALLATION LEADERSHIP FORMATION

The *Adae* festival and the nomination of royals for consideration for enstoolment have been identified as the moments that the black stools are used for the traditional leadership formation. The *Adae* is translated as a bedroom or resting place. Akan people believe that the older a person becomes, the more he or she assumes the status of wisdom and maturity. Those who seek wisdom and knowledge from such elderly members of the society are therefore advised to visit them in their resting places for education. *Adae* celebration has remained one of the celebrations that is commonly recognized in Akan societies. The *Adae* celebration gives the people the opportunity to get closer to their ancestors. According to Nana Addo Dankwa III, during the *Adae* celebration, it is assumed that the ancestors are resting in their bedrooms. The royals and traditional leaders in their desire to acquire wisdom and knowledge get closer to them at every *Adae* celebration to benefit from the accumulated knowledge of the ancestors.<sup>47</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa III argues that the primary motive for the regular visitations to the black stool room during the *Adae* celebration is educational and not so

<sup>44</sup> Interview with Nana Addo Dankwa III. Nov. 22,2004 Akropong Akuapim.

<sup>45</sup> Hagan, ‘Return of the King’, in Odotei & Hagan (ed). *The King Returns*, 17.

<sup>46</sup> Hagan, ‘Return of the King’, in Odotei & Hagan (ed). *The King Returns*, 17.

<sup>47</sup> Interview with Nana Addo Dankwa III. Nov. 22,2004 Akropong Akuapim.

much of spiritual as to offer the ancestors worship. According to Nana Addo Dankwa, ‘since the black stool constitutes the history books of the periods of reign of the chiefs whose memories the stool represents, when a chief goes to the stool house during the *Adae* festival period, the court historians take the opportunity to narrate to the chief the good deeds of the past chiefs, whose memories have been preserved with black stools. The idea is to enable the living chief to learn about and emulate the good deeds of the noble ancestors.’<sup>48</sup>

The *Adae* then is the celebration of the memories of the ancestors. Traditional leaders are the key benefactors of the stool room education. The stool historians who are the main agents of nurture are the heads of the stool carriers. In the stool room, they narrate to their learners the history of each stool. The frequent visit of traditional leaders to the stool room should be seen as classroom participation in history lessons. The Akan stool historians therefore use the black stools to inform the people of the good deeds of their great fathers and royals.

The agents of traditional education who use traditional books such as black stools have proved themselves as good historians over the years. They actually attract sanctions if they do not handle the lessons with the accuracy it deserves. Okyeame Ampratwum who has been in the black stool room history education for 35 years said he always tries to avoid possible mistakes because if he does so he will be reprimanded. The continuous celebrations of the *Adae* have contributed towards the preservation of Akan cherished memories and leadership values. The *Akyeame* have been identified as teachers of history in the stool room. Nana Addo Dankwa III has opined that, ‘it is not true that the ancestors eat. It is not biologically correct. They are dead and gone but their memories should be preserved so that we would be able to learn about them when we go to the black stool room during the *Adae* period. The *Adae* period is the period that we celebrate the remembrance of our ancestors. We have remembrance of the saints in Christianity. This is our version in the kingship tradition. The *Adae* is a remembrance moment. We call it *Adae* and a lot of people either do not know the meaning of *Adae* or they dispute by intention. *Adae* is a bedroom. It is a place where they say the older you are the more experienced and wise you have become and most of the old people are so bedridden that if you want to go and learn from them you go to their bedroom hence *Adae*. *Adae* is the period when the new chief is sent to the stool room, which is more or less the *Adae*. The stools are supposed to be the ancient chiefs who are in their bedrooms who are either resting or sleeping. Whenever you want to know about the secrets behind their success you go to them. That is the reason why their memories have been preserved for the living to follow their footsteps in order to be remembered in the future. You go there and the stool historians narrate to you the history of each stool.’<sup>49</sup>

### **Destoolment as a Sign of Failure of Leadership**

Violation of oath may lead to removal from office and denial of ancestral status after the death of the leader. The Asante traditional kingmakers who are mandated to install leaders have the mandate also to remove them from traditional offices. Removal from office is linked, however, to the neglect of the leader’s oath and vows to the people and the ancestors. Before the destoolment process is initiated there must be enough grounds to demonstrate a violation of the oath on the side of the leader. Destoolment is an indication that there has been a failure in the traditional education and formation processes. According to Okyeame Ampratwum, ‘the king swears to observe certain values. The other chiefs in turn swear to him of their loyalty. After he has received the stool and powers and it happens that he does not observe that contract e.g., collects monies he is not supposed to collect, visits other people’s wives, etc, he is considered a disgrace. After giving him enough time to learn and he is not prepared to learn then they start reporting him to Manhyia. When found guilty at Manhyia they slaughter a sheep and pronounce his destoolment.’<sup>50</sup>

The immoral behaviour in support of destoolment charges involves bribery, infidelity, a disgraceful action towards the state and disobedience. These are some of the values that leaders are taught during the confinement and oath swearing period. Demonstration of such unacceptable behaviour is therefore considered a failure of traditional leadership formation. Failure of education should not be seen only from the side of the leader. It is also understood as a failure on the side of traditional educators. Until a formal complaint is laid

<sup>48</sup> Nana Addo Dankwa III. *The Institution of chieftaincy-The Future*, 73.

<sup>49</sup> Interview with Nana Addo Dankwa. Nov. 22,2004 Akropong Akuapim

<sup>50</sup> Interview with Okyeame Ampratwum. June 1, 2004 Asante Mampong

against the leader, his supporting elders accept the responsibility for all his mistakes. The elders are supposed to advise and educate the leader. The elders accept the responsibility of the leader on the grounds that they would continue the formation of the leader in matters in which they have not adequately educated the leader. When the *Ohene* makes mistake, it is the duty of the elders to correct and accept responsibility for the mistake but they are to advise him in private so that such a mistake is not repeated. When the elders feel at any time that *Ohene* does not respect and take their advice, that is the time they give up on him. Until then the king does not make mistakes, it is his *Akyeame* and elders who bear responsibilities for the actions of the leader. As soon as the elders separate themselves from the mistakes of *Ohene*, it is an indication that the *Ohene* is on his way out.<sup>51</sup>

The failure of traditional leadership formation on the part of the elders is when they keep accepting responsibility for the mistakes of the leaders in the hope of correcting them. When the elders decide not to accept the responsibility of the leader any longer, they are indicating that they have exhausted the formation processes and therefore the failure of the formation of the leader is due to his inability and unwillingness to learn. The acceptance of the mistakes by the elders demonstrates the fact of continuous formation in the kingship institution. This shows that the Akan concept of education and formation is continuous and life-long. Akan traditional leadership formation is a process. The post-installation formation process is to assist the leaders to stay focused and provide good governance and prosperity for the society. Education is a process among Akan societies and it does not cease. There are always people around the leaders who have the responsibility to educate and advise them.

### **Alien Akan Churches?**

Busia has opined that if the Christian formation and ministry fail to integrate Akan indigenous resources and values in their formation patterns, they will end up building 'alien churches' in Akan communities. Busia submitted that 'the people's interpretation of the universe must be appreciated if Christianity, or any faith based on the universality of moral values, is to become meaningful within their culture. The author submit further that unless Christianity comes to grips with this problem, in non-European countries, Christianity will remain an alien and superficial addition to more hospitable creeds.<sup>52</sup> Christianity for Busia must be rooted in the traditional worldviews of the people the church intends to serve. Efforts on integration in other areas of African Christianity must definitely be extended to leadership formation to avoid Busia's 'alien church' theory among Akan Christians.

### **Some Lessons from Akan Traditional Leadership Formation**

The study has identified some specific leadership patterns in Akan Traditional Leadership formation that provides lessons for the consideration of Christian leadership formation. Akan traditional leadership formation values and patterns as has been noted from the study share some similarities with Christian leadership formation. The study, therefore, seeks to suggest some significant areas of common grounds for deeper reflections and integration for Akan Christian leadership formation.

### **Vision and Responsibilities in Leadership**

Vision in leadership is very crucial. Vision sets the scope of operation and performance for leaders and their people. It must, however, be noted that it is not enough to have a vision. The leader's vision must connect to the needs and fears of the people. Public trust and confidence in the leadership system is equally very important. The Akan Oath Swearing helps leaders to set their vision and function in office. The new leader calls on the people to reflect on the past performance of those who had served them before and in the process situate the future with the past with the firm assurance that there is not going to be any form of deviation from good leadership and governance.

Beyond the tradition, customs, power, pomp and pageantry of the kings and chiefs of Akan people lies the onerous responsibility of governance. In the past, kings fought wars to defend, protect and extend their territories. Now the frontiers of war have changed. The enemies are poverty, hunger, disease, squalor,

<sup>51</sup> Interview with Okyeame Ampratwum. June 1, 2004 Asante Mampong.

<sup>52</sup> Kofi A. Busia. *The African world view in S.G. Williamson (ed.) Christianity and Africa culture*, (Accra: Christian Council, 1955), 6.

illiteracy, crime, injustice, environmental degradation, depletion of resources, greed, covetousness, ignorance and conflicts. These are the challenges of the new millennium. Now the quality of life of the people entrusted in their care is the test of the relevance of the unique leadership of the kings and chiefs of Ghana.

The Bible enjoins Christian leaders to develop a vision to guide their performance. Without vision, the people perish (Prov. 29:18). Moses who received the original vision about the Promised Land could not enter it with the people. Joshua who took over the leadership mantle from Moses definitely was to be guided by the past and the Exodus experiences. Christian leaders are expected to emulate the good examples of the past and allow the knowledge to inform the process of developing a vision for their leadership. Paul instructed Timothy that what he had received from him, he must entrust to faithful hands (2Tim. 2:2). Leaders that Timothy identifies definitely must be able to connect with Paul, Timothy and many more. Indeed, Christians are surrounded by many witnesses and those who have ended their earthly services must remain a source of strength and vision for leadership responsibilities.

### **Leadership as Service**

The focus of Akan traditional leadership is service. Service remains the central theme in the oath swearing during the installation moment. The new leaders assure the people that they are in to serve. Service, therefore, determines the social contract between the leaders and the people. They subsequently associate their preparedness to serve to their ancestors who had provided quality services to the community. Moreover, the new leaders publicly declare their willingness to be subjected to traditional disciplines and sanctions including destoolment if they fail to serve the people. An Akan philosophy on leadership says that *Odehyee anko a akoo dwane*, (if the royal/leader does not fight then the servants are free to flee). The motivation for leadership must always be a heart for service.

Christian leadership similarly is a call to service. Jesus declared to his disciples that he was among them as one who serves (Lk. 22:27). He washed his disciples' feet as a demonstration of his servant leadership. He admonished his disciples not to perceive leadership as the others who might want to lord it over the people they lead. Some churches have accepted to call their pastors ministers in order to bring home strongly the fact that ministry is service. The concept of service in Akan leadership does set a common platform of engagement for Akan Christian Leaders for investigation on the quest for leadership thoughts and values.

### **Leadership Mindset and Formation**

Akan leadership formation is deeply rooted in identity foundations. The assumption of a royal as a potential leader drives the nurturing patterns and efforts. All Akan royals are subjected to leadership formation. Even though it is a known fact that not all the royals will have the opportunity of becoming chiefs and queen mothers, they all do have a very fair knowledge about the values and skills that are required for good traditional leadership. The leadership formation structure is from birth to death. At all ages, the concept of royal consciousness facilitates leadership formation and nurturing of leadership values.

The mindset of Christians likewise is very crucial in matters of faith and ministry. Paul calls for the mind of Christ to dwell in Christians (Phi. 2: 5-11). Even though Christian education and formation do not directly bring Christians into leadership, the concept of the royal priesthood (1 Pet. 2:9) suggests to all Christians the need to be equipped for ministry. Christian leadership is a matter beyond the premises of the church. If Christians consider their functions in the public service as part of their calling, it stands to reason that they are in leadership. The shaping of the mind-set and consciousness for life and leadership share affinity with the Christian concept of the mind of Christ which must dwell in the people of God for life and ministry, an affinity that must be explored extensively for Akan Christian leadership formation.

### **Conduct and Behaviour in Leadership**

Akan traditional leadership formation gives much attention to matters of character in leadership. Conduct and behaviour are considered as core moral standards for leaders. Moral standards are projected in the confinement period, advice to the new leaders by the kingmakers and the oath swearing. Moral values such as respect for others, self-control, chastity, boldness, truthfulness and courage are highly expected from traditional leaders. A leader with moral deficiency is exposed to rebuke and destoolment.

Christian leaders are equally expected to be blameless. They are expected to demonstrate high moral standards as they serve as models and examples for the believers in word and conduct. Some Christian leaders have lost the opportunity of leadership as a result of immoral conduct. Akan Christian leadership formation ought to explore the subject of conduct and behaviour from the Akan traditional leadership formation patterns for the purpose of cultural identity and integration.

### **Institutional Memory in Leadership**

Institutional memory is an integral part of Akan traditional leadership formation. The past is always expected to inform the present as efforts are made to move into the future. Akan institutional memory is embedded in symbols and orality. The black stool and the selection of names bring new leaders into the realm of knowledge about the past. During the confinement period, the new leaders are educated in the past deeds and achievements of former leaders hoping that the new leaders will be well informed about some specifics about the past as they prepare to lead. The regular interactions with other court historians like the *Okyeame*, *Ohemaa* etc. assist the new leader to be brought up in the relevant information and knowledge.

The book of Hebrews states that 'we are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses' (Heb. 12:1). Moreover, the living church in each generation has a lot to learn from the examples of the heroes of the faith. The list of the heroes of faith (Heb. 11: 1-11) is very instructive in the church's effort to identify and learn from Akan Christian ancestors and pioneers of the faith. The *Adae* festival provides information on how to identify the leadership patterns of ancestors and past leaders of the Akan traditional leaders.

Church records and documentation are supposed to build the body of knowledge to guide would-be Christian leaders. Moses kept some of the manna for future information and education (Exo 16:33). Similarly, Joshua kept stones from the river to serve as a memorial for the formation of generations (Josh. 4:19). Education in Church history and other workshops are intended to update members and leaders about past deeds and achievements.

### **Stewardship and Accountability**

Akan traditional leaders are held accountable for their actions and stewardship. They hold the heritage in trust for the past, present and future generations. Unfaithfulness and corruption are enough charges for destoolment if proven to be true. Stewardship and accountability in leadership are equally very Christian practices for leaders. Leaders are expected to be good stewards according to the stories that Jesus told. One of the qualifications that Paul gave in selecting Christian leaders is faithfulness and good stewardship.

### **Women in Leadership**

Women's wisdom and power are much recognised and appreciated in Akan traditional leadership process. The office of the *Ohemaa* is a key component of the kingship institution right from the selection of leaders until their departure from leadership. The main sector that provides professional and consultation in traditional governance is the office of the *Ohemaa*. In times of making important decisions, the *Ohemaa* is to have the last word. The consultation of *Aberewa*, (the elderly woman considered for consultation during decision making moments due to her accumulated knowledge) during the making of important decisions in Akan traditional kingship illustrates the recognition of Akan women's wisdom. Women in leadership is a very visible phenomenon in the Akan traditional leadership system. There are preserved leadership positions. Women also play supporting roles to other traditional leaders. Women's leadership is acknowledged and highly respected.

Even though some churches have challenges with women in frontline church leadership, the fact remains that there are several leadership positions for women. The role of women in traditional leadership moreover provides the platforms for engagement in women in Akan Christian leadership.

### **Continuous Leadership Formation**

The regularity of the *Adae* celebration and its continuous leadership formation dimensions are instructive for the development of Akan Christian leaders. The *Adae* festivals set the platform for continuous education and formation for Akan traditional leaders. The regular celebration of the *Adae* comes with a sense of urgency and compulsion to traditional leaders. The religious side of the *Adae* festival does not take away the continuous

formation dimensions as leaders are expected to learn from the regular reflections of the ancestors whose deeds and examples the black stools represent.

Continuous studies and formation are also Christian spiritual disciplines. Continuous ministerial formation by the churches is seen in regular ministers' conferences, workshops and seminars. Even though a minister may not be disciplined to the point of dismissal for not attending such continuous ministerial formation activities, they are highly recommended for attendance and participation.

## CONCLUSION

The Akan traditional and Christian leaders both seek to provide leadership for the same Akan people. Beyond the religiosity of the Akan traditional leadership institution that has dominated the Akan culture and Christian faith engagements since the period of early western missionaries, it has been noted that the Akan traditional leadership formation system presents Christian leaders in Akan communities, leadership formation patterns and values for serious consideration and adoption. While the Akan traditional leadership formation has already pursued, the integration of Christian leadership formation patterns, the Akan Christian leadership is yet to fully resolve the tension between Christianity and Akan culture. For the purpose of cultural identity, integration and formation of Akan Christian person there is the urgency of cultural integration in the Christian leadership formation system. The denial will sustain Busia's 'alien' Christian fear which does not give the Christian faith what it takes to be well rooted in Akan cultural soil.

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## APPENDIX

### Interviews

- Interview with Addo Fenning. June 6, 2004 University of Ghana Legon.
- Interview with Emily Akuffo. May 14, 2004 Akropong Akuapim.
- Interview with Okyeame Ampratwum June 1, 2004 Asante Mampong.
- Interview with Kwabena Safo. June 3, 2004 Asante Mampong.
- Interview with Nana Addo Dankwa III Nov 22, 2004 Akropong Akuapim.
- Interview with Nana Owusu Afriyie June 2, 2004 Asante Mampong.