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FAREWELL MEDICINE

**REPRESENTING PERSONAL NARRATIVE
& HISTORICAL MEMORY WITH ADINKRA**

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“GHANA: CROSSROADS OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA
INDEPENDENT STUDY PROJECT
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ABSTRACT

Development and positive action born of grief and loss are themes throughout this study of the historical cultural and spiritual significance of Adinkra symbolism and art. I've taken an inter-disciplinary approach to the subject. This work involves creative writing, textile art and historical and cultural studies. In this work, Adinkra's association with funerals and mourning is emphasized in order to provide a medium and conceptual framework for processing and representing aspects of the legacy of suffering and resistance created by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. The art of Adinkra provides fertile ground for this exploration of the links between image and narrative and personal memory and collective history.

INTRODUCTION

Five deaths were being commemorated in the village of Assonomaso, about 30 minutes north of Kumasi by tro-tro. Most everyone was wearing Adinkra stamped or screen-printed red, russet and black cloth. Adinkra is strongly, but not only, associated with funerals, death and conflict. There was a mood of celebration at the community gathering - smiling faces, handshakes, and enthusiastic conversation. At the same time, there was also grief, wailing women, tears shed. Conflicting emotions don't always cancel each other out; sometimes they describe each other, they define each other. Underlying the mixture of joy and sadness was a feeling of strength, unity and positive development. Funeral cards are records kept of how much each villager has contributed when someone has died. The Queenmother of the village explained, "Every person contributes 200 Cedis for the development of our village."¹

Development and positive action born of grief and loss are themes throughout this study of the historical, cultural and spiritual significance of Adinkra symbolism and art. I've taken an inter-disciplinary approach to the subject. This work involves creative writing, textile art and historical and cultural studies. In this work, Adinkra's association with funerals and mourning is emphasized in order to provide a medium and conceptual framework for processing and representing aspects of the legacy of suffering and resistance created by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. The art of Adinkra provides fertile ground for this exploration of the links between image and narrative and personal memory and collective history.

METHODOLOGY

I would not characterize my fieldwork as “data collection,” but rather as immersion and critical engagement with the topic. My immersion has been the form of an informal apprenticeship with an Adinkra printer in Ntonso and interviews. I interviewed Adinkra artists, an elder of Ntonso and the Queenmother of Ntonso and her brother. I’ve also done background research into Asante history and readings on the tradition of printing Adinkra cloths in the Asante Region of Ghana. I have relied primarily on written sources for translations of Adinkra symbols. I cross-checked these translations with printers in Ntonso, but language barriers prevented me from delving deeply into the origins and more subtle shades of meanings of the symbols which may not be recorded in written sources. My work is enriched by my observations of professional Adinkra stampers as well as my own participation in the stamping process. I have also created my own art work using Adinkra symbolism.

Below is a schedule of the basic interview question I asked Adinkra stampers.

How did you learn Adinkra stamping techniques” Who taught you?

How long does the process take?

Where did the art of Adinkra come from?

How did the tradition begin in Ntonso?

Who were the first Adinkra stampers?

What cloth do you print on?

How does the type of cloth and colour of cloth affect the meaning of the symbol?

How do the symbols change over time?

Who buys Adinkra cloth from you?

Traditionally, when and why do people wear Adinkra?

Below is a schedule of the basic interview questions I asked during my group interview of the Queenmother of Ntonso, her brother and a village Elder.

Where did Adinkra come from?

How did the tradition of stamping Adinkra begin in Ntonso? When?

When and why do people wear Adinkra cloth?

Who stamps Adinkra? Men and women? Is the occupation inherited?

Who buys Adinkra in Ntonso? Tourists? Villagers?

Why do people wear red, russet and black to funeral?

How have the symbols changed over time?

Are there any Adinkra symbols related to the slave trade?

These questions were asked through an interpreter.

THE POTENCY OF ASANTE SYMBOLISM

Asante culture is saturated with symbolism which connects contemporary life to history. Asante people have a strong belief in the religious, political and historical connotations of symbols. Symbols have helped build and keep the Asante people unified. At the start of the Asante nation, the chiefs from the various clans blackened their stools and buried them beneath a sword which the royal priest, Okomfo Anokye, planted in the ground. These acts symbolized that the ancestors of the various clans, whose spirits symbolically resided in the stools, were in agreement on the need to unify to form an Asante federation. The Okomfo Anokye sword is buried to the hilt. “No one should remove it or the Asante nation will crumble.”² Okomfo Anokye also presented the Asante people with a mysterious bag of “treasures” which cannot be opened for the same reasons the sword cannot be removed. The bag resides in a museum and has not been opened since it was presented in the 1700s. There are a large number of other symbols with sacred and complex meanings. A rich and vibrant realm of Asante symbolism involves textiles. Colour and design of kente and adinkra cloths and wax prints communicate, transmit silent messages. The talking drums, swords and staffs, the Asantehene’s silver and gold keys, the Golden Axe and stools are other examples of Asante symbolism.

The Golden Stool is the most revered symbol of the Asante people. It has played an important role in unifying the Asante people especially during their conflicts and interactions with the British colonizers. “The Asante realized that if care was not taken, the Golden Stool which contained the soul of the nation and which was the symbol of their unity, would be taken away from them by the British. They therefore organised themselves secretly to protect the stool. This action revealed to the government that it was not the occupant of the stool who mattered but the stool itself.”³

Asante people carried the Golden Stool into battle with them to make warriors fight more fiercely to protect the stool. The stool must never touch the ground, not even the Asantehene sits on it.

Visual symbolism that is connected to historical narratives and oral literature in the form of folktales and proverbs forms the core of Asante culture. The Asante people speak with symbols. “In Asante art, the visual power of an image is often coincident with proverbs, the power of speech.”⁴ There is this summing up of experiences and lessons learned and communicated through symbols and proverb, which are shorthand ways of speaking volumes. Proverbs are like verbal symbols. They are short witty says “deduced from several experiences and observations of events in life hitting the idea and pointing out the lessons ...A proverb never means exactly what it says. There’s always an implied meaning behind the witty words.”⁵ Asante gold weights are miniature works of art which symbolized and helped to create new proverbs.⁶ Gold weights and stools often incorporated Adinkra symbols into their designs.

THE HISTORICAL & CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ADINKRA

Adinkra and proverbs represents forms of non-written communication and representation. The functions and meanings of Adinkra are many and complex. Their interpretation depends on cultural context and historical perspective. They have been developed, adapted and discarded over time. These symbols whose origins are over a century old were used in traditional Asante architecture, on stools and on Asante goldweights.¹ Throughout modern Ghana, especially in the Asante Region, Adinkra symbols are used on public buildings and restaurants, billboards and signs advertising businesses and even T-shirts. These symbols have historical, cultural and religious meanings. Most of the symbols represent proverbs and maxims of the Asante people of Ghana.² The exact number of symbols varies according to who you ask, but they are estimated to sixty to one hundred. Some of them are no longer used and their meanings have been forgotten.³ New symbols and new versions of old symbols are also being created. “Asante people keep thinking of new symbols so the Europeans and Americans cannot come and take all of them away and own everything,” an artist told me at the Centre for National Culture in Kumasi.⁴

Traditionally, Adinkra symbols stamped on white cloth is worn on joyous occasions such as naming ceremonies, outdoorings of chiefs and church services. Adinkra stamped on red or black cloth is reserved for funerals, departures and in occasions of conflict or distress of some kind. Black is a colour which communicates mourning, grief, loss. Red represents conflict, danger and strength.⁵ Asante people wear red throughout funeral proceedings if they are mourning a family member according to one of my sources.⁶ In general, people wear all black to the two days of burial ceremonies when a person’s body lies in state and is mourned. Then, people wear red, black or russet and to commemorate the death and celebrate the life of those who have died during the funeral proceedings one week and one year after burial.⁷

Adinkra symbols allude to certain figures and events in history which impacted Asante people and culture. The symbols are visual text which can be “read” to reveal aspects of history which may not be recorded any other place other than oral literature. Adinkra symbols document cultural exchanges and influences involving the Asante

people. For instance, the *Osrane ne nsoromma* symbol which is interpreted as “faithfulness” is said to be inspired by Muslims from the north.⁸ Also, the *Kramo Bone* symbol which signifies deceit and hypocrisy is sometimes interpreted as a reference to the overwhelming influence of the Muslim religion on traditional African religions.⁹ “The Asante have always been very open to new inspirations and foreign forms were frequently adopted and infused with their own creativity and meaning”¹⁰ Also, *Akoma* is heart shaped and is said to represent the emotions and the need to be patient.¹¹ The symbol is obviously influenced by contact with Western thought and imagery depicting the valentine. The symbol, *Epa*, which depicts handcuffs as two overlapping diamond shapes, was probably created to document aspects of the slave trade and human bondage. Handcuffs were not used in the area previous to the slave trade.¹²

Adinkra allows people to connect the past to the present. Adinkra can also connect individual identity to collective identity. During a group interview which included an Asante queenmother and a village elder¹³, I asked if there are any Adinkra symbols related to slavery and the slave trade. At first my question was met with silence, but then everyone started speaking quickly and with passion. The elder emphasized that I, as an African-American, am from Africa. He said I should not forget that my ancestors came from this land. The elder said, “People did not wear Adinkra until after slavery times. We began wearing it because so many of us were taken away. We wore Adinkra after you were taken away,” the elder told me. He connected me to my ancestors. The elder continued, “Red means danger, something bad has happened, and that bad thing was slavery.” He described the wearing of Adinkra cloths as a way of communicating mourning, grief and danger. I asked if there were Adinkra cloths that the elders and he himself knows of cloths which document the suffering of the slave trade. “The old ones have such cloths, but they keep them hidden away. They are not for everyone, like tourists, to see.” Unfortunately, he told me that he did not have enough time to find these cloths.

However, he was able to show me two very old Adinkra cloths. They were both dotted with holes from age. One cloth was turquoise blue and stamped with various symbols (see Appendix for sketches). The other cloth was red and criss-crossed with a

pattern of black stripes. The queenmother's brother told me that both cloths were funeral cloths from "the olden days."

Adinkra cloth is strongly associated with funerals. This project focuses on the use of Adinkra as an artistic medium and conceptual framework to represent and process the suffering and loss of life caused by the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade and also people's ability to resist and survive the slave trade.

PROCESS IS ART

It is morning already the West African sun beats down. A dirt yard, a squat house, surrounded by other squat houses. Dark interiors and barefoot children playing outside. Women pass by balancing buckets of water on their heads, basis piled high with brad for sales. This is Ntonso. This small village is about 40 minutes tro-tro ride north of Kumasi. The village straddles the every busy Mampong road. Rickety but vigilant tro-tro are packed to the brim with sweating commuters, the hulking grey state transport buses and huge trucks transporting lumber and other goods speed by the slow paced life of Ntonso. Ntonso is one of the four Asante Region craft villages that line the road connecting Kumasi to the Northern Region of Ghana. Signs on the side of the road announce their specialities: Pankrano, Pottery Centre, Ahwiaa, Woodcarving Village; Bonwire, Kente Cloth. The sign for Ntonso is mysteriously blank. The bright red sign reads ADINKRA TEXTILES in yellow lettering, but the name of the village is missing. In some ways, Ntonso needs no introduction. Brightly coloured cloth covered with dark symbols hangs from tree limbs and on home-made display racks. One can see orange, purple, gold yards of cloth moving in the hot breeze. These clothes are meant to attract the bus loads of foreigners on the regular tourist circuit of the craft villages. Villagers and people who reside in the surrounding areas come to Ntonso mainly for the more sombre black, russet, blood red cloths.¹ These are the colours of mourning, conflict and danger in Asante culture.² Most of the Adinkra shops in Ntonso are modest affairs run out of people's homes or in kiosks along the road. Ntonso is known throughout Ghana as the centre, the root of Adinkra textile art; especially Adinkra produced using traditional methods.

Adinkra refers to the symbols stamped onto the cloth and the cloth its. The word, "Adinkra" means farewell or Twi language of the Asante people. Adinkra cloths are often worn by Asante people to commemorate death, loss or a loved one's departure. This may explain the name.³ But, this explanation does not account for the Asante tradition of using certain coloured and types of Adinkra to celebrate such occasions such as naming ceremonies, outdoorings of a chief, church services. Historians and elders find it hard to pinpoint the exact time of the origins of Adinkra art in Ghana. However, most

agree that the art began in Gyaman which is now in present day Cote D'Ivoire. The Gyaman War dates to 1818.⁴ "In the old days, Asante people went to Cote D'Ivoire and saw Adinkra stamping and they brought it back to Asante Nation," a village elder explained to me. (See end note personal interview) The king of Gyaman, Nana Kofi Adinkra, angered the Asantehene Nana Osei Bonsu Panyin by making a copy of the Golden Stool. This was a sign of disrespect and defiance of the Asante nation which had already conquered Gyaman. The Asantehene waged war against Gyaman, beheaded the king and took members of his royal court as captives. Adinkra symbol textile artists were among the captives. The captives taught the Asante the art of Adinkra. The Asante adopted and further developed the art. "The first Adinkra stampers in Ghana were members of the royal family of Ntonso. These names were Kwaku Nsiah and Pinchenhene."⁶ These men taught the art to others.

Joseph's father began teaching him the art of stamping Adinkra when he was a small boy of eight years. Now, Joseph is a grown man and the head stamper of Opoku Mohammed's Adinkra shop in the centre of Ntonso. Joseph is a thin man with a pot belly with curly coarse hairs covering it, a ready smile but also quick to take on a serious look when it comes time to work. The stampers usually dress in old cloths and often go shirtless because of the heat and to avoid dye (medicine) stains. The dark black-red dye used to print Adinkra is called "aduru". This Twi word means "medicine" in English. This is a large shop with four or five men working any given day.

There are two workstations, one on either side of the building. The men work on long, low tables of wooden planks supported by cement bricks. The printing tables are covered with foam cushions and burlap. Sometimes, a stamper will work alone. Other times, they will work in tandem with each other, alternating stamps or one stamping while the other draws out the lines to define the boundaries for the cloth. The Adinkra artist tools are stamps which are carved from calabashes, wooden combs for creating lines, cloth and the medicine. As far as composition goes, there are several designs according to function and aesthetic preference. The men discuss which stamps are appropriate before beginning to work. They usually limit themselves to four or five stamps per cloth depending on the size. Some of the most commonly grouped ones are *Gye Nyame* and the warrior hair do one, it seems, Adinkrahene and the eagle's talon one which Joseph

interprets as meaning change your life. The cloth used is cotton blends bought in Kumasi markets. Strips of cloth woven in Ntonso are also used for smaller pieces. Strips of *nwomuo*, a striped cloth similar to Kente, can be woven onto Adinkra cloths to add dignity to the piece.⁷

The cloth to be stamped is folded into even sections and stretched taut across the table. The cloth is held down for stamping using small nails pounded into the table with large stones. Adinkra stamping requires a lot of concentration and precision. The medicine is usually hot when the men stamp, and it is easy to burn yourself. It is also important not to waste the medicine or spoil the cloth by dripping or spilling any of its. The stamper kneels at the table, takes a stamp carved from a calabash, dips it into the medicine and presses the stamp onto the cloth. The stamper must have a steady hand and a keen eye. The symbols are stamped to cover the cloth which may be as large as six yards. It takes a special kind of skill to keep the stamps straight, even and neat. The whole process involves a rolling motion punctuated by the sound of the artist's tools interacting with one another. He leans back to dip the stamp into the medicine pot. Splash! Then, with a swift flick of his wrist he shakes off the excess ink. Drip, drip, drip. Then he leans forward towards the cloth. Clunk! The stamp meets the fabric. Medicine meets cloth

One workstation is shaded by a sun faded cloth stretched overhead and tied to four wooded poles. The other workstation is set up under the shade of a large tree where men also meet to play draft⁸ in the afternoons. This is a very male place. The occupation is usually inherited from a father or grandfather, Kobena, Joseph's adult son works with him at the shop. Long ago, women used to stamp Adinkra cloths with men, but now the occupation is considered to be "men's work".⁹ Women usually do the dying of cloths and clothing which will later be stamped for funerals. The cloths are dyed using the bark from a tree from Northern Ghana. This dye is called *kuntunkuri*. A heap of the reddish black bark that has been pounded and shredded sits in the yard. The cloth must soak in *kuntunkuri* and be left to drain several times for the cloth to turn a dark, burgundy stained black colour. The women then hand these cloths over to the men who stamp them with Adinkra symbols.

They stamp everyday that there is medicine. It takes Joseph about an hour to stamp one cloth. He averages eight cloths each day. The men run out of medicine every five or six days. Then, they work to prepare the medicine. Adinkra medicine is made from the bark of the *badie* tree which in Northern Ghana. The men from this shop make regular sojourns up north to a town named Atebubu near Yeji to collect *badie*. Producing medicines from the *badie* bark involves pounding, boiling, stirring, mixing. Iron ore slags, glossy black chunks are clustered on a wooden table. They are used to deepen the blackness of the dark russet coloured medicine.

Preparing the medicine

Peel the bark into small pieces about six inches long

Use metal bars to pound the bark and to loosen up the natural dye.

Boil the bark in water several times in large iron kettle. The repletion is necessary for it to achieve the right consistency and colour. When the *badie* is almost thick enough, add chunks of iron to the mix and boil again. The process can take from 5-7 days. One batch of medicine lasts for about one week.¹⁰

Traditional methods of stamping Adinkra cloths are time consuming. New methods using silkscreen techniques are becoming more and more widely used to produce Adinkra. New techniques are physically easier, more easy to use for mass production and allow the artist to do finely detailed work which is obscured when stamps carved from calabashes are used. Unlike *badie* dye, which takes 1-2 years to set, these techniques use ink which can be washed immediately. “We are breaking with tradition, but traditions die hard. There are still many who do the traditional stamping in places like Ntonso,” an artist at the Centre for National Culture in Kumasi explained.^{xi}

PERSONAL NARRATIVE AND HISTORICAL MEMORY

I created three Adinkra cloths using traditional methods of stamping I learnt in Ntonso. I used Adinkra medicine from the *badie* tree and cloth purchased in Kumasi's Kejetia Market. With the exception of two symbols, I created all the Adinkra using handmade calabash stamps from Opoku Mohammed's shop. I had to use ink to paint *Epa* and *Ako-ban* by hand because the stamps were unavailable. Joseph helped me design "Ko Na Bra" and "Redemption Cloth".

I have relied on book sources for translation of the meanings of the symbols.¹ Joseph confirmed these translations from Twi to English. The symbols are somewhat divorced from their original cultural context because I have used them to illustrate my own story and the stories of my ancestors and non-Asante peoples. Considering that the Asante nation profited greatly from trade in slaves it is an empowering exercise to use Asante symbolism to describe the suffering caused by the slave trade and the resistance to the slave trade.²

The symbols on the cloths speak with one another. They converse to create a larger narrative.

1. *KO NA BRA*

The red funeral cloth commemorates the suffering endured by my ancestors who were stolen away from Africa during the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade. The colour symbolizes danger, conflict and mourning. This cloth commemorates those Africans who lost their lives during the journey into captivity and bondage. The title of the cloth is translated into English as "Go and Come". It refers to the Akan philosophy as departure as a stage of return. When an Akan speaking person is leaving, she will probably tell you that she is coming – *Mereba*. "I am coming", she will say as she walks away. This philosophy emphasizes the cyclic nature of life and the importance of return, journey and departure as interconnected concepts crucial to human development and spiritual growth.

Adinkra symbol used:

a. *Adinkrahene (Chief, forms the root of all Adinkra, authority)*

Great ones have fallen.

- b. *Kramo bone amma yeannhu kramo pa (We cannot tell the good from the bad because of pretence and hypocrisy – Deception).*

Many were captured and stolen away by their own brothers and sisters.

- c. *Nkyinkyim (Changing Oneself to Play Many Roles)*

In order to survive, our people have had to learn to adapt to adversity and physical and spiritual challenges.

- d. *Sankofa (return and take it)*

We must make the conscious decision to seek our cultural roots and values and apply them to our present situations.

- e. *Mate Masie (I Have Heard and Kept It)*

I listen to and learn from the stories of my ancestors.

2. *REDEMPTION CLOTH*

This cloth represents the spiritually and culturally empowering process of learning about our ancestors for members of the African Diaspora. This process of enriching our personal and collective identities is like building a home for the homeless. Our people have survived hard times, discrimination and abuse by being resourceful, clever in the face of adversity and adapting to a variety of situations. The white background of this cloth symbolizes growth, celebration and strength.

Adinkra symbol used:

- a. *Nkyinkyim (Changing Oneself to Play Many Roles)*

In order to survive, our people have had to learn to adapt to adversity and physical and spiritual challenges.

- b. *Fihankra (Safehouse)*

Empowering ourselves culturally and spiritually is like building a home which is safe from predators.

c. *Sankofa (return and take it)*

We must make the conscious decision to seek our cultural roots and values and apply them to our present situations.

d. *Sunsum (Spirituality & Soul)*

We must nurture and honour our spirituality. We feed our souls with knowledge.

3. *THAT WHICH CANNOT BE TAKEN*

This is a poetry scroll which the history and legacy of resistance in Sankana, a village in Northern Ghana. This piece commemorates those who were lost during the slave trade and those who fought the slave raiders. This is the story of survival and remembrance. This story incorporates the voices of those who were taken away and those who died as well as those who resisted successfully. Red, black and white cloth was used to symbolize a combination of pain, mourning, danger, growth and rebirth.

Adinkra symbols used:

a. *Kramo bone amma yeannhu kramo pa (We cannot tell the good from the bad because of pretence and hypocrisy – Deception).*

Many were captured and stolen away by their own brothers and sisters.

b. *Ako-ban (war cry, a call to arms)*

We fought to protect ourselves and preserve our families.

c. *Epa (captivity, slavery)*

Our hands were bound, our feet shackled. We longed to run free.

d. *Adinkrahene (Chief, forms the root of all Adinkra, authority)*

Great ones have fallen. We lost our mothers. Our fathers. Our sons. Our daughters

e. The colour black

We mourn the lost ones.

f. Biribi wo soro (Hope)

Together, we gather up hope and the will to survive.

g. Aya (Defiance)

Like the fern, we insist on life even in the most unfriendly times and places.

h. Fihankra (Safehouse)

We work together to build a safe house. We protect each other from harm.

i. Denkyem (Adaptability)

Like the crocodile who breaths air those he lives in water, we scattered ones adjust to new climates, new worlds, new languages.

j. Sankofa (return and take it)

We must make the conscious decision to seek our cultural roots and values and apply them to our present situations.

k. Mate Masie (I Have Heard and Kept It)

I listen to and learn from the stories of my ancestors. I will pass them on.

I come away from this study with a sense of how collective history and personal memory can coalesce and mingle in the realm of visual symbolism and poetry. Images speak words.

FAREWELL MEDICINE

I have used several different approaches to engage critically with this subject: textiles art, creative writing, history and cultural studies. The inter-disciplinary nature of my project reflects the inter-disciplinary nature of Adinkra symbolism. Adinkra can be appreciated for its aesthetic and cultural values, historical allusions and its connections to spoken language, parables and proverbs. One limitation of this project is my limited ability to explore the proverbs behind the Adinkra symbols because of language barriers. The different aspects of Adinkra cannot be totally separated because they are so tightly intertwined. In this project I suggest new ways to interpret and use Adinkra for artistic and personal expression.

In the future, I would like to do more work exploring the way using symbols and language to communicate pain, loss and mourning can promote spiritual and emotional healing. The healing powers of Adinkra Medicine are implied in the following transcript of an interview with Kofi Frimpong, a stamper in Ntonso.

Kofi: When you go to America, you can make cloth with the Adinkra stamping.

Angela: Yes, but will it be the same thing?

Kofi: Why not?

Angela: I don't think we have the *badie* tree in America. I won't be able to make the medicine.

Kofi: It will be different if you don't have the medicine, but you can use the *obrunyi* medicine, the white man's medicine.

Angela: What is that? Dye? Ink?

Kofi: Yes. They use ink in Europe and America. You will be stamping just to make an example to show your family what Adinkra looks like. You will be doing it for the looks, not because you need the medicine, like now.

The artistic process and even the physical act of stamping Adinkra and creating my own pieces gave me the space to develop a stronger connection to my ancestors and a

more positive perspective on remembering their pain and celebrating their resistance and ability to survive captivity and injustice. Creating Adinkra has offered me the opportunity to document both the positive and negative aspects of the legacy of my people during the slave trade.

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- Frimpong, Kofi. Personal interview with Adinkra artist based in Ntonso, Nov. 1999.
- Joseph. Personal interview with Adinkra artist based in Ntonso, November 1999.
- Group interview with Queenmother of Ntonso, her brother and the village elder, November 1999.
- Nyante, Mark. Personal interview with Adinkra artist based at Centre for National Culture in Kumasi, November 1999.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

¹ Personal interview with Nana Akosua Akyiaa.

POTENCY OF ASANTE SYMBOLISM

² Tour guide of Okomfo Anokye Museum, Kumasi, Ghana 11/99.

³ Kwadwo, Osei. An Outline of Asante History, 47.

⁴ Cole, Herbert. Icons: Ideals & Power, 15.

⁵ Bonsu, Nana. The Wit of Akans, 2.

⁶ Gillion, Werner. A Short History of African Art, 156.

THE HISTORICAL & CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE OF ADINKRA

¹ Ghana Museums & Monuments, Asante Traditional Buildings and Jefferson, Louise E., Decorative Arts of Africa.

² Agbo, Adolph, Values of Adinkra Symbols.

³ Agbo, Adolph, Values of Adinkra Symbols, 25 and Ghana Museums & Monuments, Asante Traditional Buildings.

⁴ Personal interview with Mark Nyante, 11/99.

⁵ Group interview with the Queenmother of Ntonso, her brother and an Elder, 11/99 and
Personal interview with Joseph, Adinkra artist based in Ntonso, 11/99.

⁶ Personal interview with Kofi Frimpong, Adinkra artist based in Ntonso, 11/99.

⁷ Group interview with the Queenmother of Ntonso, her brother and an Elder, 11/99.

⁸ Agbo, Adolph, Values of Adinkra Symbols.

⁹ Group interview with the Queenmother of Ntonso, her brother and an Elder, 11/99.

¹⁰ Ghana Museums & Monuments, Asante Traditional Buildings, 24.

¹¹ Agbo, Adolph, Values of Adinkra Symbols.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Group interview with the Queenmother of Ntonso, her brother and an Elder, 11/99.

PROCESS IN ART

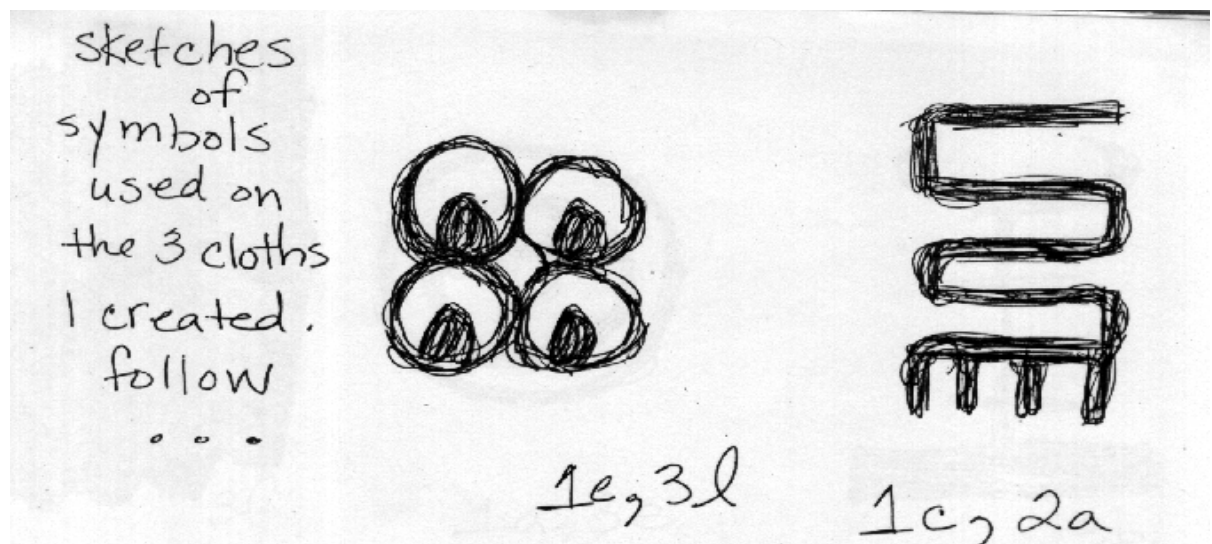
- ¹ Group interview with the Queenmother of Ntonso, her brother and an Elder, 11/99 and Personal interview with Joseph, Adinkra artist based in Ntonso, 11/99.
- ² Group interview with the Queenmother of Ntonso, her brother and an Elder, 11/99.
- ³ Quarcoo, Alfred, The Language of Adinkra Symbols.
- ⁴ Ibid.
- ⁵ Quarcoo, Alfred, The Language of Adinkra Symbols and Agbo, Adolph, Values of Adinkra Symbols.
- ⁶ Group interview with the Queenmother of Ntonso, her brother and an Elder, 11/99 and Personal interview with Joseph, Adinkra artist based in Ntonso, 11/99.
- ⁷ Personal interview with Joseph, Adinkra artist based in Ntonso, 11/99.
- ⁸ Draft is a typical board game for Ghanaian men.
- ⁹ Group interview with the Queenmother of Ntonso, her brother and an Elder, 11/99 and Personal interview with Joseph, Adinkra artist based in Ntonso, 11/99.
- ¹⁰ Personal interview with Joseph, Adinkra artist based in Ntonso, 11/99.
- ¹¹ Personal interview with Mark Nyante, Centre for National Cultural/Kumasi, 11 /99.

PERSONAL NARRATIVE & HISTORICAL MEMORY

- ¹ Quarcoo, Alfred, The Language of Adinkra Symbols and Agbo, Adolph, Values of Adinkra Symbols and Glover, Ablade, Adinkra Symbolism, Chart.
- ² Kwadwo, Osei, An Outline of Asante History, 97 and 20.

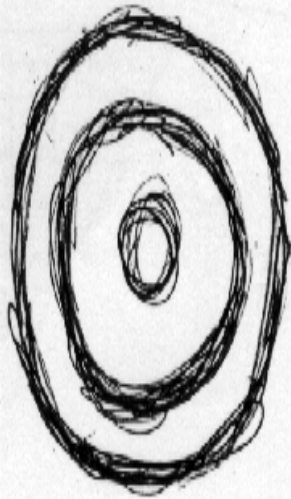
FAREWELL MEDICINE

- ¹ Personal interview with Kofi Frimpong, Adinkra Artist based in Ntonso, 11/99.

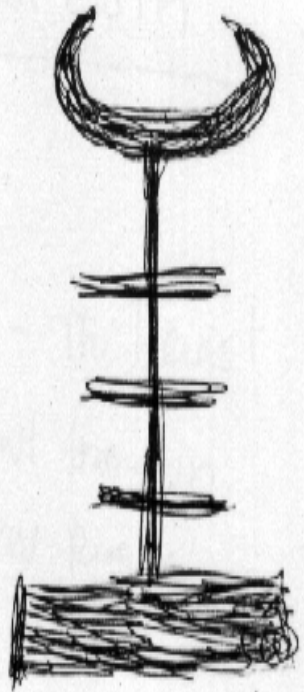




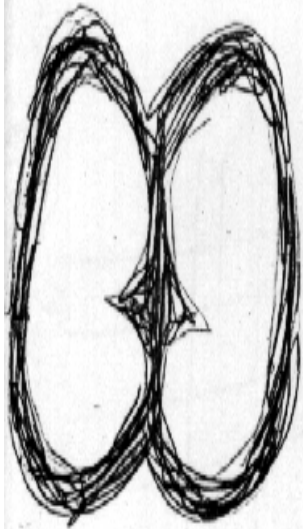
3f



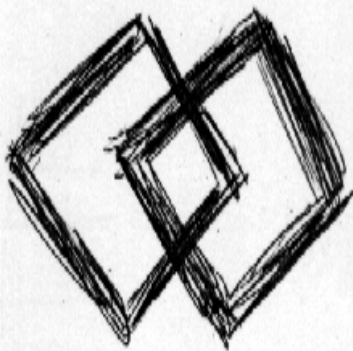
1a, 3e



3b



3c



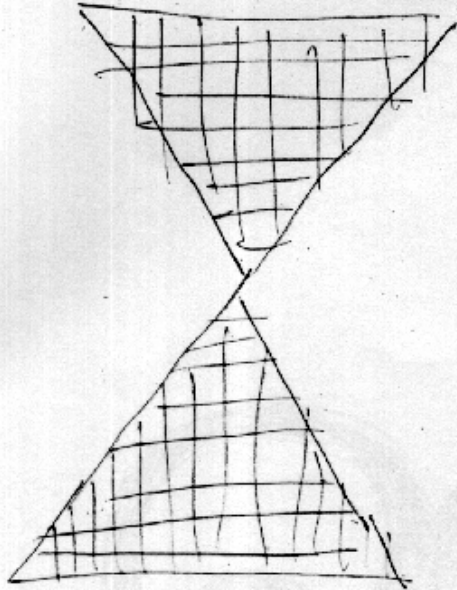
3d



1b, 2

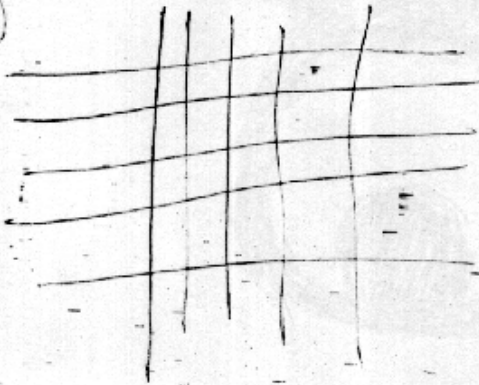
Rough Sketches of Symbols
from old Adinkra cloths

①



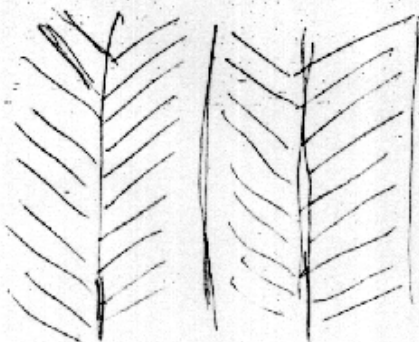
Aso wbo - The breast
of a fowl found in
Northern Region

②



bush cow's back

③



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