



The Iconography and Iconology of Adinkra Symbols: An Authentic Source of Themes for Teaching Drama in Education at the University of Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Ghanaians have identifiable symbols that are of great esteem and significance to them. The global world today is arguably threatening the survival of these symbols and the values they hold. Adinkra symbols are generally known in some circles of the Ghanaian society, however, a section of the population, thus the youth, seem unfamiliar with their knowledge and values. Symbols are representatives of objects, places, human beings, animals and events. These symbols are emblems that have been adopted in the past as tools for communication, information and education. Adinkra symbols are no exception in defining and identifying one's background and cultural identity. The design of adinkrahene symbol for instance is embedded with philosophical underpinnings reflecting religion, socio-cultural and artistic domains, which demonstrate an understanding of its meaning, worth considering as themes. The religious, social, and artistic symbols communicate quite extensively, intrinsic and extrinsic elements of culture and traditional values. This paper sought to identify and discuss Adinkra symbols, their meanings and significance and project their aesthetic and educational purposes as methods of observation, analysis, synthesis and interpretations as authentic sources for themes in teaching Drama in Education.

KEYWORDS: Symbolism, Iconography, Iconology, Adinkra symbols, Philosophy, Religion, Culture and Tradition.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF STUDY

Symbols are representation of identities that are used in place of another thing. Anything that is used to denote, convey, or stand for an event or circumstance which are used to describe an object or a situation may be referred to as a symbol. They aid in the conveyance of messages as well as the concentration of the mind on a certain notion or ideal. Symbols are employed to lead or guide our actions and to depict a past, present, or future occurrence. The Adinkra symbol is African, and for that matter a Ghanaian symbol which carries a deeper interpretation and meaning than just the visual representation. The visual and verbal analysis and understanding of these adinkra symbols and their multivocal meanings are discussed in this paper.

Drama in education, as a classroom-based methodology, fundamentally helps to expound on problematic subjects and to make learning delightful. The dramatic processes are aimed at developing skills of imagination, spontaneity, and mental flexibility. These skills are geared towards personal development and discovery. According to Siks (1977), 'The ultimate purpose of drama in education is to open the learner's minds, stimulate their imaginations and language abilities and spark their enthusiasm for continued development

and personal discovery" (pp. 9-10). Dramatic processes like mime, improvisation, creative dramatics, children's plays, etc. are used to help learners overcome challenging experiences they are likely to encounter whether inside or outside the classroom. Some of these challenges may include learning difficulties, truancy, hyperactivity, depression, excessive fear/ phobia, peer-pressure, etc. Children form exceptional and amazing images and ideas in their minds during playful moments and when they get involved in creative activities. These ideas become helpful in moments they are needed in real life situations. In my quest to find more interesting processes introduced to my students of Applied Theatre at the Department of Theatre Arts, University of Ghana I have included more indigenous Ghanaian art forms. Adinkra symbols as themes for Poetry, Drama and Prose is one of these art forms.

Ghanaians have been expressive since time immemorial. With over 52 languages spoken in Ghana, and so many ethnic divides, the national unity and coexistence is a commendable feat. The culture and tradition of indigenous Ghanaians is portrayed through clothing, food, music, dance, festivals, rituals, myths, totems and other visual arts. The beauty of visual expression and communication patterns of the Ghanaian are worth studying. In Ghana, every ethnic group



has its totem and symbols which communicate the virtues of the people and define their traditional background. The Ga-Adangbe tribe refers to these symbols as “Ga Samai”, the Ewes call them “EweDzesiwo”, and the Akans refer to them as “Adinkra”.

Since time immemorial, Africans documented and communicated through various artworks and symbols or objects rather than text. Most of these artworks expressed the perception of the African society. Africans are also known for documenting their history and culture through artworks: painting, metal works, and sculpture, among others. Hanafy (2017) contends that centuries earlier, Egyptian artists communicated through artwork such as: painting, codified images, signs and symbols. These paintings and designs can be traced to prehistoric art forms. According to Drabsch and Bourke (2019), individuals producing early Egyptian artworks were undoubtedly skilled artisans. Western ethnographers and anthropologists who evaluated African art forms in the pre-colonial era, note that African art forms possessed superior qualities, which were not easily decoded or simply understood by the non-Africans (Abiodun 2001, Perani & Smith 1998).

In Ghana, early artists communicated their culture and values by representing artwork such as symbols. The Ewe and Ashanti communities communicated through artworks such as proverbial symbols. The Ewe are from the Volta Region of Ghana and are rich in cultural practices such as proverbial symbols that communicate to their indigenes. One will have to read through the lines before he can understand the meaning. (Dzobo 1975). As observed by Dzobo & Amegashie-Viglo (2004), proverbs can also be described as short, pithy, wise statements used to express pictorially or symbolically certain ideas and beliefs in which some familiar truth, advice and or practical concepts are leading. None natives may find it difficult interpreting those symbols. According to Agbo (2006), symbols are used to convey complex knowledge, abstract truth and ideas concerning the environment, life, and its meaning. There are similarities in symbols and proverbs. These concrete and abstract knowledge forms are sometimes translated into artistic mediums such as: canvass, clothes, and other aesthetic mediums.

The Asante occupy the middle belt of Ghana and they are popular in Africa for their uniqueness. Over the years, Asante artworks, particularly adinkra symbols, have gained recognition worldwide. The Adinkra symbols, as an art form, communicate to people who may understand its meaning. It is not uncommon to see the symbols boldly displayed by chiefs and traditional leaders during festivals and national events. In recent times they can be seen on books, clothes, buildings, pieces of jewelry and products. Institutions, schools and companies also use these symbols in their logos. Boateng, (2008), writes ‘the University of Ghana has an adinkra symbol in its crest’ he adds that the adinkra symbols

have become very important. The Bank of Ghana also uses the Gye Nyame symbol on the Ghanaian currency: two hundred cedis banknote. Kuwornu-Adjattor et al., (2016) espouse that the adinkra symbols have philosophical interpretations. The symbols were creatively crafted by indigenous African artists who have encoded non-verbal communication elements that have to be decoded. The adinkra symbols instruct, advise, predict, warn, encourage, and educate about Asante culture and for that matter Ghanaian values. As a collection of Akan patterns, the adinkra symbols have generated aesthetic pleasure among Africans home, the diaspora, and the entire world.

BRIEF HISTORY OF ADINKRA SYMBOLS

Adinkra is the traditional term for a mourning fabric used by the Akans tribe of Ghana (Anquandah, 2013; Asihene, 1978), who are predominantly found in the Ashanti region of Ghana. Adinkra is an Akan word that literally means pathing ways. Adinkra cloth is a stamped fabric, unlike the typical conventional Kente cloth, which is woven. Adinkra cloth is often a simple cotton fabric with numerous culturally significant motifs embossed on it (Damuah, 1982; Martino, 2018). This cloth has motifs stamped onto it as designs which carry different meanings, interpretations and messages as such. Adinkra symbols are the names given to these symbolic motifs. Adinkra, on the other hand, currently symbolizes a collection of Akan symbolisms. Antubam (1963) argues that these symbols are not only consigned to people who weave cloth such as Kente and printmakers on fabric. Carvers, goldsmiths, brass castors all use these otherwise popular fabric patterns to imbue their works with tradition and interpretations.

Adinkra symbols are believed to have originated from the Kingdom of Gyaman in Cote D’Ivoire. According to Gedzi, (2014) the Asante stool contains the soul of the Asante state. The annexation of Gyaman into the Asante kingdom following the killing of Nana Kofi Adinkra resulted in the birth of Adinkra symbols. King Adinkra wore patterned cloth, which was interpreted to express his sorrow on his final journey to Kumasi. History has it that, Nana Kofi Adinkra, the King of Gyaman was defeated and captured in a battle by the Asante Kingdom for creating a duplicate of the Golden stool. The Golden stool – Sika ‘dwa in the Akan-language is believed to have descended from heaven and landed on the lap of King Osei Tutu I in the 1600s. The Asantes believed that the stool represents ultimate power and the tribe’s cohesion. Adinkra means ‘goodbye’ or ‘farewell’ in Twi language. It is a sign of parting ways. In the 19th century, the Asante started painting the traditional symbols of the people of Gyaman on their cloth. This became popular and has become part of their tradition. During occasions like festivals and funerals, special symbols are used to complement the event. Currently, the adinkra symbols are used by many people in Ghana and abroad.

Another school of thought believes that the origin of Adinkra symbols stirs controversy and is a subject of debate among scholars. Attempts to trace the symbols' origins have prompted a variety of responses. Each of these responses come with its own claims of originality and validity. Some Asante artisans at Asokwa and Ntonso, the two primary centres of Adinkra design, which are cities in Ashanti region hold oral traditions that trace the emergence of the Adinkra symbols to two mutually incompatible sources. Some scholars such as Damuah, for example, noted that certain Asante craftspeople claimed that the "very early craftsmen who used adinkra patterns in cloth learnt the trade from "Odomankoma"; God" (Damuah, 1982; Danquah, 1944). On the contrary, some other artists believed that the symbols were adopted as a memory of the defeat of their monarch, Kofi Adinkra, by the Gyaman (an Akan clan found in modern day Cote d'Ivoire) (Damuah, 1982; Martino, 2018). In support of this claim, the ruler, Kofi Adinkra, incited the Asante to war in 1818 by fabricating a duplicate of the Asante's revered Golden Stool. Following Gyaman's defeat, Asante artists are said to have uncovered the designs in Gyaman's court.

While some scholars agree that the introduction of Adinkra symbols to Asante dates back to the aftermath of the 1818 fight with Gyaman, there are conflicting views on the symbols' origins in general. Danquah, for example, believes Adinkra symbols are ancient Akan burial ideographical symbols meant to bid farewell to the deceased's spirit (Danquah, 1944). As a result, Danquah claimed that the symbols were cultural relics of the once-powerful Sudanic kingdoms from which the Akan had moved to their current locations. Contrary to this assertion, Rattray, on the other hand, argued that the symbols were introduced through an Islamic source. Many of the symbols, he said, are Islamic in character and may have stemmed through encounters with Muslim traders during the Akan's trans-Saharan commerce. Rattray (1927) believes the symbols were originally amulet patterns, maybe created by the Tuareg Arabs. Although the origins of the symbols are unknown, it is reasonable to assume that Akan artists, particularly Adinkra cloth stampers at Asokwa and Ntonso have invested innovation in Adinkra symbolism over the years, leading us to conclude that they reflect a distinctly Akan history.

Temple (2010) notes that although Akan culture offers the framework for comprehending the traditions of the symbols, creative connections with the visual and verbal language of the symbols authenticate the various meanings. These meanings are connected with a specific symbol in diverse historical settings in relation to place and time. Traditional artists' creativity in adopting Adinkra symbols in the creation of cultural items has stretched the borders of Adinkra characters, making it nearly impossible to estimate the precise number of Adinkra symbols at this time. Scholars such as Mato (1987) is believed to have found as many as two hundred and eighteen Adinkra symbols.

SYMBOLS AS AUTHENTIC TEACHING TOOL IN DRAMA IN EDUCATION

Drama in Education primarily as a process serves a related purpose, as a teaching tool used to help learners explore factual knowledge and concepts, in other subject areas. Drama in Education as a concept is designed to offer teachers a wide variety of resources to introduce drama skills and activities into their classrooms; from theoretical discussions of pedagogy and concepts of theatre, to practical exercises. As a Drama in Education teacher at the University of Ghana, apart from the well-known Drama in Education concepts such as Creative Dramatics, and Children's theatre, I have introduced several other indigenous Ghanaian processes into my lessons to enable my students get rooted in our customs and traditions as well as exploring such processes for their personal discovery and development. Some of these processes included proverbs, symbols and games. I encourage my students to explore the use of symbols for instance as themes for poetry, prose and drama. In most cases, their imagination, capabilities and motivations are strategically exploited at different stages of their development. Regardless of the purpose to which drama is situated in a given situation, the experience can only succeed for a child when he/she has acquired some basic drama skills and has learned how to use these dramatic skills/processes with confidence and understanding. Symbols give clues and help individuals to create meanings and assist them in defining and understanding their culture, values, conventions, beliefs, and expectations of their community. This definition draws attention to a number of issues. Culture is exhibited at many depths, ranging from inner core of basic assumptions and values to outer core attitudes.

Adinkra symbols express various themes that relate not only to the Asante culture, Traditions, history, and philosophy but it has embraced the culture and traditions of the Ghanaian in general. The adinkra symbols express human behavior and attitudes; the nature of animal behavior; types or shapes of plants; and the order of the universe, as well as the mood and feeling of the person in the adinkra cloth without talking. Appiah-Adjei (2014). Gavua (2000), also contends that symbols are the non-verbal ways of expressing oneself. The symbols also in this era of digital technology, society demands less verbal communication and encourages expressing oneself in few words or non-verbal communication. These symbols have proverbial meanings infused in them.

THE ICONOGRAPHY AND ICONOLOGY OF ADINKRA SYMBOLS

Iconography is a concept that focuses on art content analysis. Panofsky (1955) explains iconography as the study of the visual and graphical depiction of the subject relating to creative expressions, as defined by many art historians. This is to identify what a given picture could symbolize in nature or in everyday life within a social context.

Iconology on the other hand, is the study of the meaning(s) intended by these visual representations. As a result, iconology focuses on the method of determining the symbolic value of pictures and motifs in connection to wider cultural themes which are the fundamental human impulses. Iconography and iconology therefore are intertwined and cannot be separated from each other. According to Arthur (2001) an Adinkra symbol may have historical, metaphorical or proverbial significance that underpin their graphical depictions. The adaptation of Adinkra symbols stimulates the users' visual and imaginative sensibilities and appeals to their knowledge of Akan culture for meanings. Additionally, it encapsulates the aesthetic mediums of symbolic and metaphorical understandings (Agbo, 2011). The representations, can be perceived as a unique historical experience.

Adinkrahene: The Symbol of Supremacy

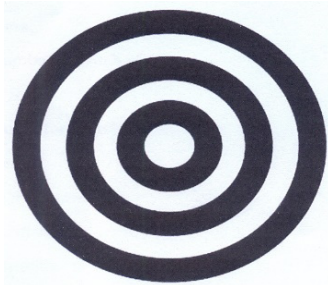


Fig 1. Adinkrahene symbol

The adinkrahene which means 'Adinkra King', has a symbolic interpretation as greatness and royalty. It is presumed to be the greatest and the foundation of all the adinkra symbols. Adinkrahene (King of Adinkra) has a unique design and philosophical interpretations that harmoniously synchronize its relevance. The adinkrahene symbol as the footing of all Adinkra symbols correlate with religious, aesthetic, social and cultural philosophical underpinnings. It has a circular shape, and smooth texture in appearance. The symbol is designed and painted with three (3) circles, the big circle contains a medium circle and a small circle. This symbol is believed to have played an essential role in the designing and painting of other adinkra symbols. The design, name, meaning and philosophical bedrock of the adinkrahene symbol elevate its status as king of all the adinkra symbols. The three circles of the adinkrahene connote superiority, completeness, absoluteness associated with leadership. Many Ghanaian societies perceive every King or Chief as a traditional authority in his community.

Numerous African traditions, believe that Kings are the heads of traditional communities. They are deemed as supreme leaders, and the owners of the land. Currently in Asante kingdom, King Osei-Tutu II is the owner of Asante land. The King decides the developmental agenda of the town and passes judgment on matters brought before him. Usually, Kings are the final arbiter of matters in African societies. Kings remained important in African society (Winters, 1983). The

number three (3) as an odd number is often used to represent the unique, spiritual, and social position of authority. The philosophical, religious and aesthetic intricacies embedded in the adinkrahene symbol therefore complement the name, meaning, design and interpretation. The creators of the adinkrahene symbol crafted it with indigenous philosophical and artistic underpinnings that make it significant.

In indigenous African communities, tradition demands that during the performance of final rites for the installation of a King, he is held by the elders to sit on the stool three times before final sitting on the stool, an affirmation of the King's permanent confirmation. Social events such as naming ceremonies prescribe that the child's name is mentioned three times by the audience to confirm and accept the name. Dead people's names are removed from the group register by mentioning the departed's name three times without a response, which signifies the final name deletion. Artistically, the circles of the symbol are symmetrically balanced with equal space in between them. The black and white colors used in painting the symbol are neutral colors. Kings in African communities are expected to be neutral and balanced in their dealings with their subjects.

THE SANKOFA SYMBOL

Adinkra symbols are generally communicated in verbal and non-verbal forms that influence their visual representations. The visuals of Adinkra symbols depict a variety of proverbs or funny sayings (Yankah, 1995). Sankofa is a term from Ghana's Akan language that means "recovery". The literal meaning of Sankofa is "go back and get". "San" means "to return", "ko" means to go, and "fa" meaning "to fetch or get". Sankofa is a metaphorical term that refers to at least two Akan proverbs that are similar. The first being "Se etow'akyiri a fa, nasankofa, yenkyiri", meaning it is never too late to recover what you left behind, for the recovery of something which has been ignored is a virtue (Denteh, 1968). The second being "Tete wo bi ka, tete wobikyire, ntisankofa, yenkyiri" also meaning "the past has a lot to say, the past has a lot to teach, thus going back for something of the past is of a virtue" (Quarcoo, 1994). Sankofa is drawn from an Akan proverb "Sankofa yen kyiri" meaning, there is no crime in going for your past. The symbol signifies sifting for the best or going to the past to fish out the best out of the worst. Sankofa also means positive revision. One interpretation of this symbol for me has always been that, we should not despise our humble beginnings. The Sankofa symbol has two design illustrations, the literal and the abstract formats. The literal design is a bird, with the neck bend backwards and holds an egg in the beak. Suggesting that the bird picked the egg from behind. The abstract form appears in a design of a heart shaped loved sign with two or three rings coiled in the heart shaped. At the base of the heart shape are single rings coiled in the opposite direction contrary to the coils in the heart shaped. This appears to present a support or stand on which the heart shape rest for stability and balance. The

visual interpretation of this symbol is that, “it is never too late in life”. The Sankofa symbol carries a message of love and hope from the abstract design. It teaches the value of being patient in life whilst you take the opportunities that come along the journey of life.



Fig 2. Sankofa Adinkra symbol.



Fig 3. Sankofa Adinkra symbol.

According to Temple (2010), the concept of Sankofa has been taken as a symbol of history and identity. Sankofa is likely the most prominent symbolic ideological framework for projecting the historical middle passage experience of peoples of African descent in the diaspora. It is also perceived as the desired reintegration of peoples of African descent back into continental African society. (Temple, 2010). The reference to Sankofa is thus a call to reconsider certain important (but possibly overlooked) features of the past and revive them for both present and the future.

Obi Nka Bi the symbol of Peace, Harmony and Justice

The Adinkra symbol, “Obi nka obi or Bi nkabi”, is depicted by two fishes, one with the tail of the other in its mouth. “Obi nka obi” literally means “no one should bite the other.” This symbol is based on two fishes biting each other’s tails. It cautions against provocation and stands for peace, harmony and justice. This symbol, speaks against tit-for-tat situations and denotes the need for harmony, especially in situations when a single action might result in a retaliatory response.

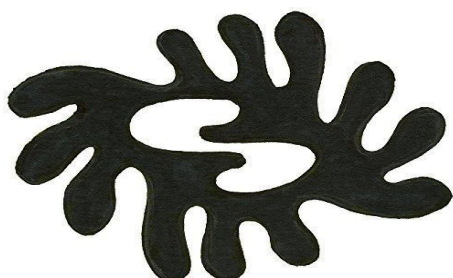


Figure 4, Obi nka obi. (Abstract Adinkra form)

Nkyinkyim; the Symbol of Versatility

Nkyinkyim literally means “twisting.” It is a symbol representing the tortuous and cumbersome nature of the journey of life. These twists and turns require one to be versatile and resilient to survive. The proverb associated with this symbol is “ɔbrakwanyenkyinkyimii,” which literally means “Life’s journey is twisted”. We must therefore learn to be versatile and show forth dynamism in our way of life. It also portrays resilience, thus, one has to strive to survive in this twisted life.



Fig 5. Nkyinkyim ; the Symbol of Versatility

Funtumfunefu Denkyemfunefu, the Symbol of Beauty and Diversity

Funtumfunefu Denkyemfunefu represents two mythical crocodiles or lizards (depending on how one perceives it) with one shared stomach. Funtumfunefu as illustrated below, shows a Siamese lizard or crocodile with two heads, two tails but one stomach. These two heads may crave for food from different settings and/or eat with different mouths, but their stomach remains the same. The idea behind this symbol is that, there is no need to fight over multiplicity or diversity, because there is beauty in diversity. It is a symbol of unity in diversity giving a common destiny as an idea for sharing. The proverb from which the symbol is derived is “Funtumfunafu Denkyemfunafu, wowoyafunu koro nansowonyabiribi a wofomefiriseaduanne no de no yete no wo menetwitwie mu,” meaning; the lizard or crocodile may share one stomach, but when they get something to eat (food) they strive over it, because the sweetness of the food is felt as it passes through the throat. This symbol, to a large extent, points us to the greedy nature of man, of which some may be oblivion over. This symbol admonishes humanity to learn to tolerate each other as we all strive to reach our goals in the world.



Figure 6

Aya; the Symbol of Endurance and Perseverance

The Aya symbol is derived from the fern. The fern is a hardy flowerless plant which has feathery fronds and reproduces itself by spores released from the undersides of the palm fronds. It grows and flourishes in difficult places, as it needs very little amount of water to survive. Fern can withstand the harshest climate. It is therefore, used as a symbol of resourcefulness in the mist of enduring moments, with the aim to succeed through perseverance and defiance against difficulties. It serves as a reminder that it is possible to go through the difficult seasons of life and still strive for success

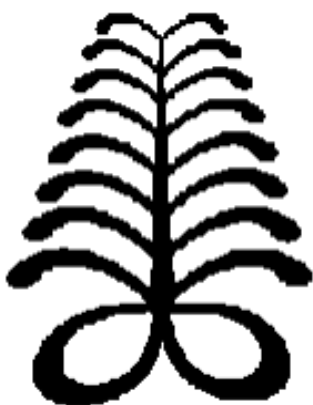


Figure 7

Akobem; The Symbol of Readiness

Akobem means “war horn or war is at hand” or the spirit and essence of readiness when called to action. In the olden days, the war horn was sounded to assemble kingdoms for war. Everyone had to be alert and ready to interpret the message when the symbol is sent to a given community in order to respond appropriately with the right message or action(s). The symbol is like a horn which could be blown to warn indigenes of danger in order to prepare for an impending danger and attack. This symbol therefore represents vigilance, and to be very attentive and watchful in order to sense an imminent danger for the right action.



Figure 8

Dwennimmen the symbol of Humility and Power

Dwennimmen “the ram’s horns” literally means think and get satisfaction. This symbol represents strength, power and authority (in mind, body, and soul) with wisdom and

humility. What is it about the horns of a ram? The ram is strong, fierce and can be very intimidating. The ram or sheep in truth is a very humble and calm animal easily guided and shepherded. This symbol is prominently featured in the logo of the University of Ghana. The symbol portrays calmness, tranquility and serenity. It teaches one how to keep his/her inner peace even in the face of adversities and chaos.



Figure 9

Adinkra Symbols as Themes for Writing Poetry and Short Stories

Symbols have been explored extensively in training students in the skills of writing. The innovative themes and philosophies generated from these symbols are inspiring. Although these symbols may have Ashanti origin in Ghana, their connotations are universal and speak to every subject. The symbols portray diverse philosophies, meanings, and themes offered to augment our work as teachers, researchers, facilitators and transformers of our society. Our students are also helped to learn more about some of the rich traditions and cultural values that are gradually wading into extinction. These creative ways of learning tend to make the students more relaxed to be able to concentrate their attention on the skills that are taught. In so doing, they are developing their creativity, analytical minds, critical consciousness and their passion of involvements in the various strategies taught in class. These intuitive experiences can therefore transform them not only in Drama in Education but also in other expanded fields.

DWENNIMMEN

Knowledge is Power

Knowledge is Power

Knowledge, they say is Power

Knowledge puts you at the highest Tower

The tower of greatness and reverence

Is it for nothing that the Premier University in GhanaThe University of Ghana, Legon, has Dwennimmen embordered in her Logo?

From Art to words the symbol quotes:

Dwennimmen Think and Get satisfaction, the symbol denotes

Dwennimmen

That knowledge brings absolute power and satisfaction

The satisfaction that uplifts you, and calls you to action

but does not make you arrogant

Rather, it brings humility

Humility and dexterity

As the saying goes, the higher you go, the cooler it becomes

The temperature decreases with height

The Science and the Signs prove this right

The more knowledge you gain the humbler you become

Legon, a Ga word which translates as the Hill of Knowledge

Teaches us not only to crave for more knowledge with humility and integrity

But to expend it to others with candor and versatility

No doubt, the other Universities in Ghana may think

The University of Ghana, Legon is too conservative

Truly, we draw our strength from the knowledge gained with humility

Yet we are humbled and conscious not to arrogate this strength to ourselves

Yes, we stand on the shoulders of giants

Yes, we Proceed in Truth and Integrity

To make our nation proud

Tabitha H. Deh.

CONCLUSION

Iconography which focuses on the content analysis and Iconology which gives the meaning(s) intended by the visual representations of these adinkra symbols have been explored in this paper as themes for writing poetry and short stories. The creation of the adinkra symbols is not just for aesthetics and beauty, they also connote religious, traditional, cultural and philosophical expressions with authentic educational connections. These symbols depict very important verbal and nonverbal communication attributes of the Ghanaian. Sankofa symbol for instance connotes; "it is never too late to go for what you left behind". The symbol therefore provides another opportunity and hope in life. The symbol itself comes in two different designs as depicted above. The first being the shape of love, with two to three rings coiled inwardly in the love-shaped symbol which suggests that in all endeavors, love should reign. The second one is a bird that holds an egg in its mouth with the neck bend backwards suggesting that the bird picked the egg from behind.

The multiple meanings associated with Adinkra symbolisms

are as a result of the dynamics of their use and circulation in different cultural settings. The symbols are also carved on linguist staffs and traditional stools for domestic use which encapsulate evocative messages that convey wisdom for life in the environment. These symbols have been explored as themes and subject matter of writing poetry and short stories in my Drama in education class. The poem below is an example of what my students do in class but this time around the lecturer decided to put her hands to work. There has always been a show of enthusiasm from students about the concise nature of these symbols and the broad knowledge they depict instead of using long phrases and sentences as themes.

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