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Author(s): Sharon F. Patton

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THE ASANTE UMBRELLA

SHARON F. PATTON

Swords and sword ornaments, linguist staffs, and stools are popular items in the study of Akan political regalia. That such insignia, usually cast or carved of wood and covered with valuable metals, invariably attracted the attention of Europeans is evidenced by the literature. The Asante, an Akan people, are especially noted for these objects, gold plated or gold cast. An often neglected item of regalia is the umbrella, though its ubiquity in West Africa has been noted by many European and Arab chroniclers, explorers, and political envoys. The umbrella remains an important political emblem, particularly for chiefs.

Descriptions of and references to the Asante umbrella (*kyinië*, pl. *nkyinië*)¹ occur mostly in the literature of the late nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. It is first mentioned, however, only three years after the earliest citation of Asante in a Dutch letter of 1698 (Wilks 1975: 110), though the reference is to an Asante umbrella of foreign manufacture. After the pivotal war against Denkyira in 1701, the Dutch Vice-Governor David van Nyendaël gave an umbrella to the first Asantehene (King of Asante), Nana Osei Tutu (Furley Papers, vol. 37:4, in Fynn 1971: 159). Another early document shows that Europeans were acutely aware of this item's popularity among Asante chiefs and the Asantehene; in 1707 Sir Dalby Thomas urged the English to send to the Asante umbrellas "of scarlet cloth, embroidered, lined, and well fringed. A bird or beast on the top of the stick. The kittesoll [umbrella] to be made to play up and down the stick, for their way of managing them is by turning them round and round, and playing them up and down which is, as I suppose, to give air to the person that goes under them. The stick is to be 7 foot long and the spread 5-6 feet broad" (Furley Papers, vol. 38:59 in Garrard 1980: 92). A year later the Dutch gave an Indian umbrella lined with calico to the Asantehene (Furley Papers, vol. 38:69, in Garrard 1980: 300). This diplomatic gift giving continued with the large gold-fringed example sent by H.W. Daendaels, the Dutch Governor-General, in the early nineteenth century (McLeod 1977: 98),

and, shortly thereafter, the 2.7-meter scarlet cloth umbrella with a gilt elephant finial, presented by the British (Bowdich 1819: 455-57).

When the Dutch envoy William Huydecoper arrived in Kumase in 1816, he was greeted by paramount chiefs carried in palanquins and shielded by large *nkyinië*. The next day, as he approached the Asantehene's palace with gifts that included a staff and an umbrella, he "could discern the place from a distance because of the thirteen or fourteen umbrellas there" (Huydecoper 1962: 17). Later in the evening Huydecoper observed that the Asantehene, Nana Osei Bonsu (r. 1800-23), guarded by soldiers and lighted lamps, was seated under a large umbrella (1962: 18). This is the first written account of this object's being displayed at night among the Asante, and it provides further evidence that it is more than a sun-sheltering device.

The following year the British envoy Thomas Bowdich, impressed by the Asante's architecture and art, made careful notations about a reception during an Odwira festival in Kumase. He noticed that "at least a hundred large umbrellas, or canopies, which could shelter thirty persons, were sprung up and down by the bearers with brilliant effect, being made of scarlet, yellow, and the most shewy cloths and silks . . . ; they were of various shapes, but mostly dome; and the valances (in some of which small looking glasses were inserted) fantastically scalloped and fringed; the fronts of some, the proboscis and small teeth of elephants projected, and a few were roofed with leopard skins, and crowned with various animals naturally stuffed Innumerable small umbrellas of various colored stripes, were crowded in the intervals" (Bowdich 1819: 34-35). Subsequent European historians, envoys, missionaries, and travelers² mention the social importance of the umbrella and the various, particularly the imported, materials they incorporated. Bowdich's detailed description was subsequently augmented by Thomas B. Freeman and Richard A. Freeman. In 1839 the former mentioned "paying my respects to the King and his numerous Chiefs and Captains, who were seated on wooden

chairs, richly decorated with brass and gold, under the shade of their splendid umbrellas, some of them large enough to screen twelve or fourteen persons from the burning rays of the sun, crowned with images of beasts covered with gold . . ." He noticed umbrellas, sometimes as many as 125 on one occasion, made of various colors and silk velvet that were "waved up and down in the air" (T.B. Freeman 1843: 46-48). Richard A. Freeman remarked on the construction of the umbrella and its overall design, colors, and fabrics, as well as its appearance in certain Asante paramountcies, including the capital, Kumase. He too noticed its importance as an indicator of status and prestige, writing that the "umbrella is the outward and visible sign of the dignity and importance of its possessor" and that "the glory and social prestige imparted by an umbrella varies with its size" (R.A. Freeman 1898: 56-57). The Basel missionaries Frederick Ramseyer and Johannes Kühne describe the entry of the king's Gyaasewahene into Kumase after his victorious military campaign east of the Volta River; Nana Adu Boffo "seemed to have attained the height of his ambition" when he "spoke of his slaves, umbrellas and gold" (1875: 138). They also noted that war booty included umbrellas and that the Asante honored a paramount chief with gifts of them: Nana Adu Boffo received "three gold bracelets, two large umbrellas, twenty sheep" (1875: 137). That the umbrella was an insignia of political rank is substantiated by their remarks. Robert Rattray (1923, 1927) and Alex Kyerematen (1961, 1964) show that it was still an important chiefly item in the early and mid-twentieth century.

Seen at a distance, the umbrella makes one become aware of, without necessarily seeing, the Asante who has prestige. The implication is wealth, but not all wealthy persons are chiefs, and only chiefs may use *nkyinië*. Instead the reality is social status attending political authority.

TOP: 1. DURBAR IN HONOR OF DELEGATES TO THE THIRD UNESCO CONFERENCE OF MINISTERS OF CULTURE, KUMASE, 1975. BOTTOM: 2. STATE UMBRELLAS. DURBAR, KUMASE, 1975.



Public festivals such as the Odwira (no longer held in Kumase after the exile of Asantehene Nana Agyeman Prempeh I [1888-1931] to the Seychelles Islands in 1896), durbars, formal receptions, adjudication, oath-swearing ceremonies, and annual funeral celebrations commemorating the deaths of important lineage members always have chiefs (*ahene*, sing. *òhene*) shielded by umbrellas (Fig. 1). These occasions are fraught with political significance. Before the twentieth century, reaffirmation of Asante's hegemony and hierarchical society necessitated frequent displays of political regalia, and the remembrance of the kingdom's glory and power requires such displays today. A chief's umbrella and stool are *de rigueur* regalia, with the former being displayed more often. It is seen during war, when the stool's display is deemed inappropriate or not mandatory. At least one umbrella shields the *òhene* whether he is walking or seated, even in the compound patio. The Asantehene may be protected by three *nkyiniè*. During funeral rites for the Asantehene an umbrella serves as a canopy for his body when it lies in state.

A chief silhouetted against the sky in a palanquin, shaded by one or more umbrellas, is a dramatic sight. By comparison, the stool carried behind at head level disappears in the crowd. While the

òhene "dances" in the palanquin during a durbar or festival, the umbrella is thrust upward, downward, and twirled in accordance with changing drum rhythms that signal the moment for the dance. Bowdich and others noted how this rising and falling movement makes visible and emphasizes the pantomimed war gestures of the chief, who usually holds a gun, a sword, or both while shifting his upper torso.³ Rifles thrust forward and swords held aloft and thrust forward evoke memories of the Asante's militaristic history. The aggressive gestures and orchestral drum shifts combine with the fluttering and rippling cloth to create a visual drama that contrasts with the chief's regal posture and restrained countenance during alternating moments.

As noted earlier, umbrellas were diplomatic gifts to Asante from Europeans who wished to facilitate lucrative trade. Examination of umbrella industries among the Dutch, British, Portuguese should help to determine the provenance and variation of Akan umbrella designs. For example, evidence indicates that umbrellas were brought to the Akan from India from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries and from England in the nineteenth century. While England had umbrella manufacturers in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, not until the early nineteenth century were there substantial numbers of such firms—nearly a hundred in London, Manchester, and Birmingham (Crawford 1970: 181). Most probably it was the ordinary cotton type that was exported. In 1851 critics noted that "England is without a rival in the production of parasols and umbrellas of the plainer descriptions" (Crawford 1970: 184). Companies such as Owen Owens & Sons of Manchester exported cotton ones to Rio de Janeiro and the Cape of Good Hope in the mid-nineteenth century (Crawford 1970: 181).

At that time firms were producing several thousand umbrellas a week, and Kyerematen says that the small black linen (and perhaps cotton?) umbrella, which the Asante call *akuromponkyiniwa* (*akurom*: "town;" *kyiniwa*: "small umbrella"), is mostly imported (1964: 91). The English also made silk umbrellas, some red with yellow fringe, but these were considered garish and inferior in craftsmanship to the ones made by the French. Where the English obtained ornate velvet and silk umbrellas of the type described by Sir Dalby Thomas in 1707 is conjectural; French production was also limited in the eighteenth century and earlier. The English probably purchased them in India for use as diplomatic gifts. Their trade rivals, the Dutch, gave Indian umbrellas to the Asante in the eighteenth century. Even earlier, the Portuguese, who engaged in lucrative trade on the Ghanaian coast in the sixteenth century (Garrard 1980: 73, 90), carried ones of Indian manufacture whenever they sailed (Crawford 1970: 67). In India ceremonial umbrellas are either domed or flat, have a wooden frame, and are covered with colored cloth or silk with fringe. They measure about 1.6 meters in diameter and the shaft is around 2.5 meters long. Some have a metal ornament as a finial. Designs vary according to the owner's rank and denote social status (Crawford 1970: 43-44). These Indian umbrellas were regalia among the coastal and pre-Asante Akan.

The umbrella was and still is made by Akan artisans as well. Its use and significance were established in Akan society when the Asante's political ascendancy began at the turn of the eighteenth century. The domical shape of the small umbrellas indicates that the Asante artisan copied a foreign prototype. All the earlier ones perhaps had wood frames, but now the Asante sometimes attach black linen to ready-made metal frames. Besides the black linen ones there are umbrellas of multicolored and patterned cloth, usually chintz and damask. The Portuguese, followed by other Europeans, exported linen and chintz to coastal trading forts. Quite possibly, the plain English umbrellas were re-covered with patterned cloth. One important modification that distinguishes the black from the multicolored version is the finial. The former has a brass fixture called *mmuasoo* (lit. "lid" or "cover") (Fig. 4), while the latter has a wooden finial called *ntuatire* (lit. "on top of head") (Fig. 3). According



3. A RECENTLY ENSTOOLED CHIEF AFTER THE FORMAL GREETING OF THE ASANTEHENE AT MANHYIA. CHINTZ UMBRELLA WITH FINIAL. KUMASE, 1977. RIGHT: 4. BRASS FINIALS FOR BLACK CLOTH UMBRELLAS. JOSEPH SARPONG IDENTIFIED THE LEFT AS FEMALE AND THE RIGHT AS MALE.



TOP: 5. FLAT UMBRELLA WITH KENTE CLOTH SHIELDING THE ASANTEHENE'S GOLD-PLATED CEREMONIAL STOOLS. DURBAR, KUMASE, 1975. BOTTOM: 6. UMBRELLAS SHIELDING THE ASANTEHENE. LEFT TO RIGHT: NANKANINI, OYOKOMMAN, BOAMAN. DURBAR, KUMASE, 1975.



to Kyerematen (1964), these small umbrellas, the *akuromponkyiniwa*, are for ordinary use, but I saw the same form during an Asante durbar. Field observations indicate that chiefs who can afford it have the decorative cloth type. Regardless of context and material, the small domical umbrellas shield low-ranking *ahene*, not paramount chiefs.

The large umbrella has the greater visual impact because of not only its size but also its varied shape, elaborate colors, designs and weaves, and sometimes embellished surface. Three basic shapes—conical, horizontal, and domical—are displayed during formal occasions of varying importance. The origin of the flat, horizontal umbrella is conjectural and perhaps predates the domical umbrella.⁴ The formal prototype is found in the Sudanic region. In the mid-fourteenth century, Ibn Battuta described a Manding prince, Mansa Sulayman, seated under an umbrella “which is a sort of pavillion made of silk, surmounted by a bird in gold” (1929: 326). The provenance of the horizontal and domical types in West Africa cannot be determined with any accuracy, but Thomas Crawford asserts that the probable source for the umbrella is Egypt, where it was “an item of religious and ceremonial regalia, rather than an article of fashion” (1970: 19), and that it was introduced in the sahel of western Africa by Muslims in the eighth century.

One thing is certain: the umbrella form is associated with status. Flat umbrellas, which are still seen in Kumase, were first illustrated in 1817 (Bowdich 1819: pl. 2). Their infrequent appearance and use of

particular textiles imply historical significance and symbolism. One example of the horizontal type appears with the supreme political emblem of Asante, the Golden Stool, and is popularly called Katamanso (“The Covering of the Nation”; R. Freeman 1898: 100-101; Rattray 1927: 130, fn.2; Quarcoo 1975: 46; McLeod 1981: 109). The same shaped umbrella is seen also with the ceremonial stools of the Asantehene and of the Mamponhene (Fig. 5).

The term “state umbrella” cited in the literature on Akan art (Rattray 1927: 130, fn.2; Kyerematen 1964: 89; McLeod 1980: 107) refers to the typical large or medium-large domed type called the *öbankyinië* (*öban*: “fortress,” implying government). It uses a wider variety of fabrics. The shallow conical umbrella observed by Bowdich at a reception during the Odwira festival (1819: pl. 2) is still seen in Kumase in a funerary context. It appears, in either a patchwork or appliqué design (Fig. 7), during a chief’s oath-swearing ceremony, when he is in mourning for his predecessor, and during the annual funeral ceremony commemorating the death of a chief. This type is seldom displayed publicly and is few in number.

All three umbrellas have a wooden armature and shaft made of either *twafoyededen* (*Harrisonia occidentalis*; Rattray 1927: 271; McLeod 1981: 107) or *babadua*, a type of cane (*Thalia geniculata*⁵) that is dried before construction. The domical *öbankyinië* is impressively large; the height of those I documented and those noted by R.A. Freeman (1898: 94) varies between 2.44 meters and 3.04 meters,

and the diameter between 1.83 meters and 2.44 meters, and sometimes up to 3.66 meters. A columnar mechanism called *kokopuo* moves along the vertical support, pushing the conical configuration of auxiliary spokes that in turn extend the major radial shafts. These stretchers for the fabric are secured by a peg pushed through a hole in the vertical stick. A fixture with a flange called *gyinaïë* is placed at the top of the umbrella (Fig. 9). After the artisan constructs the skeletal structure, he attaches the various fabrics.⁶

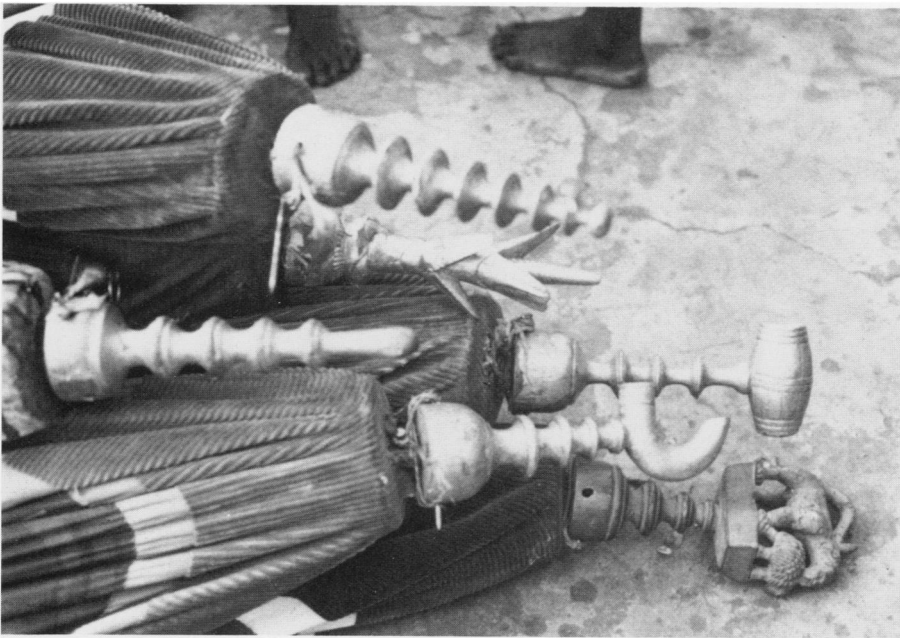
There is virtually no documentation of the Asante umbrella craftsman. Thomas Bowdich’s map of Kumase city (1819: 322) locates an umbrella-making village in an area just northwest of the Asantehene’s palace. Asante urban planning traditionally locates a specialized artisan community close to the palace of the chief, whether he is a village or divisional chief or the Asantehene. Villages where the entire male population specialized in a particular craft were a common feature of precolonial Asante society and pre-Asante Akan society.⁷ By the early twentieth century, however, some craft-specialized villages such as those for the goldsmiths or the umbrella-makers either disappeared, so that only one or a few artisans lived in a village or town, or became incorporated into a city district. Rattray (1927) mentioned only one craftsman residing in Banko village, which is near the traditional capital, Mampon Akrofonso, of the Mampon territorial division. Fifty-two years later, Marion Johnson wrote, without giving evidence, that the successor of the craftsman cited by Rattray resided in another village (not identified) “on the opposite side of the former [Mampon] capital” (1979: 63). In 1976 two Asante artisans I interviewed in Kumase (Manhyia district), Kwaku Sarpong and his son, Joseph, claimed that they were the only men knowledgeable in umbrella-making at their birthplace, Sewhia village, on Lake Bosomtwe Road.

Not only did the number of umbrella artisans diminish, but a diversification of skills developed as well among certain craftsmen. This characteristic is uncommon among traditional Asante artisans, but it presumably was necessitated by changing economic and social conditions. Johnson has suggested that umbrella-making became a part-time profession possibly in the twentieth century (1979: 63). Joseph Sarpong’s assertion that he also makes drums lends credence to Johnson’s data.

Comparison between the stool and the umbrella illustrates the point. Modern furniture has not replaced the stool. Because of the latter’s lower cost, durability, and portability, everyone, including chiefs, still owns one or more. As was the



7. CONICAL APPLIQUE FUNERARY UMBRELLA AT A CELEBRATION COMMEMORATING THE DECEASED. KUMASE, MANHYIA, 1977.



8. WOODEN FINIALS. SOME GOLD-LEAFED. TOP TO BOTTOM: BAMBOO (BABADUA), PALM TREE (ABË), GUNPOWDER KEG (ATUDUR KWADOM), WAR HORN (AKÖBËN), TWO ANIMALS. KUMASE, 1977.

case over two hundred years ago, there is a village where all the men know how to carve stools, and several are full-time professional carvers. In contrast, only chiefs use umbrellas, and not every *öhene* has one. The small number needed for display and their general preservation as a chiefly heirloom, combined with the fact that no new offices were generated within the bureaucracy after about the mid-nineteenth century, has meant a decline in umbrella commissions.

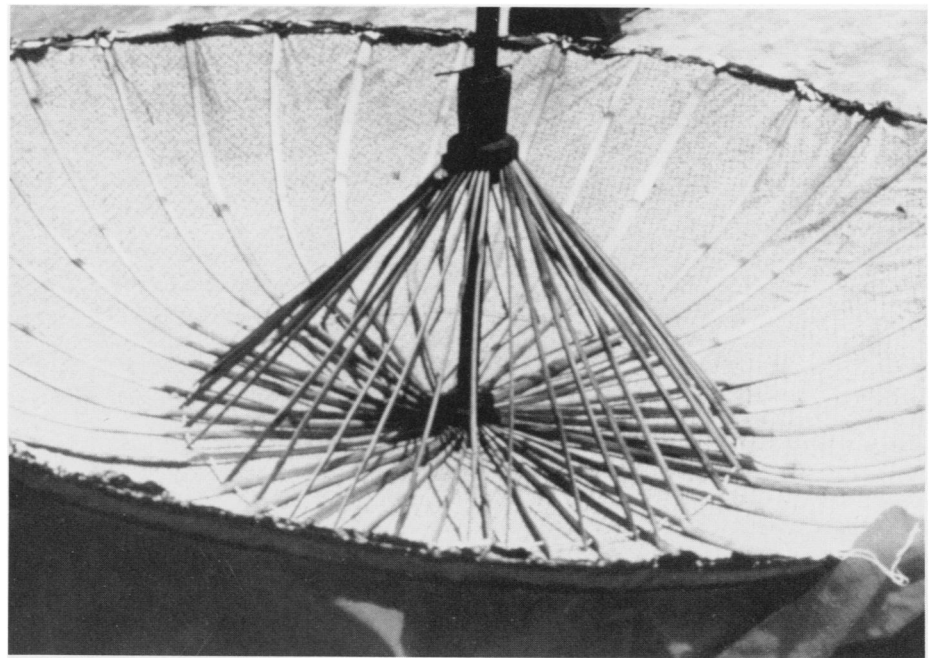
Kwaku and Joseph Sarpong are probably the artisans Marion Johnson mentioned as working only for non-Akan chiefs residing outside Kumase who prefer traditional Asante emblems of chieftaincy (1979: 63). Joseph Sarpong's comments to me, however, imply that Asante chiefs also buy their umbrellas. Traditional apprenticeship of son to father persists; Joseph, age 26 in 1976, had learned from Kwaku, age 46. Both had completed their training at the age of twenty. It takes about one day to make a small umbrella and up to three for a medium or large umbrella, costing in 1976 between 100 to 500 cedis (one cedi = \$1.15.)⁸ The price is considerably higher today.

References in the literature to the Asante umbrella usually center on the finial. Abstract or representational finials called *ntuatire* or *kyinië akyi* (lit. "umbrella back") depicting one or several objects are fastened to the umbrella. Multiple-image types are not popular among Asante and most Akan. The typical finial is wooden, usually metal covered or unornamented, and 25-30 centimeters tall (Fig. 8).⁹ Although the forms are not as varied as linguist staff motifs, they are reminiscent of them.¹⁰ The art history of linguist staffs (Cole & Ross 1977: 161;

McLeod 1981: 94-101) would indicate a development from nonrepresentational to representational forms, but this progression is as yet undetermined for finials. Bowdich's description of representational finials, such as one portraying a human figure, and his collecting a child's umbrella with a *sanköfa* finial (now in the British Museum) show that the figurative image on Asante finials was established by the early nineteenth century (Ramseyer & Kühne 1875: 70, R.A. Freeman 1898: 4). Herbert Cole and Doran Ross write that the most common *ntuatire* motif is the *babadua* (1977: 166); it explains why Rattray mistakenly used

the term to include all finials (1927: 130, fn.2). The shape duplicates the bamboo armature used in the indigenous wattle-and-daub architecture (Rattray 1927: fig. 88) and is very reminiscent of the Indian stupa with the stylized depiction of tiered umbrellas (Crawford 1970: ill. p. 36). The *ayá* (fern leaf) and the *aköbën* (war horn) are the next most popular motifs (Fig. 8; Cole & Ross 1977: fig. 340).

The finial as an integral part of the umbrella, displayed on those of important people, has a historical antecedent among the non-Akan in the Western Sudan. The Asante and other Akan adopted and adapted many Sudanic art forms and designs, especially those associated with status, rank, and political authority. Europeans in the nineteenth century surmised that they were clan totems; but this was verified neither in the nineteenth nor in the twentieth century (Rattray 1923: 65; 1927: 192). Some are clan emblems.¹¹ According to Joseph Sarpong, every *öhene* has a special symbol. However, since the limited variety of finial motifs precludes each chief's having one that is exclusively his, it is more likely that it is a chief's favored design. Perhaps only *ahene* of a certain rank could use certain motifs. Such a rule existed in earlier times for other chiefly regalia, and present data suggest it applied to the use of clan emblems. For example, the paramount chiefs of Nsuta and the royal Oyoko clans have special finial forms (Rattray 1929: 260, n. 3), but these honored *ahene* may appear with finials that do not depict clan emblems. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries only chiefs had the right to dis-



9. PARTIALLY CONSTRUCTED UMBRELLA SHOWING WOODEN ARMATURE. KUMASE, 1976.

play metal-covered *ntuatire* (Ellis 1887: 262-63; Rattray 1927: 130, fn. 2), a practice no longer apparent among the Asante. As is typical of traditional Asante regalia, the finial form denotes an aphorism or proverb (Kyerematen 1964: 91, Cole & Ross 1977: 166, Appiah 1979: 64-67, McLeod 1981: 111). The meaning is invariably connected with leadership. For example, the motif of the fragrant plant *prékēsē* “stands for the spreading reputation of a chief, for it can be smelled far and wide” (Appiah 1979: 66). Because of this, umbrella finials are cited as visible political emblems and indicators of chiefly status (Antubam 1963: 150; Quarcoo 1975: 28; Cole & Ross 1977: 168).

It is not merely the finial that underscores the esteemed attributes of a chief. The cloth covering is equally important. There are at least four distinct textile areas on the umbrella: the exterior, interior, the portion around the finial, and the valance. The design or color of the outer fabric always contrasts with the fabric for the underside (Fig. 2), where, Joseph Sarpong told me, any type of textile can be used. The appearance of silks on the outer surface and less prestigious cottons on the inner surface seems to verify his remark; the artisan gives greater consideration to the exterior, as it is the more visible. On the domical state umbrella a piece of fabric, either round or square, always distinct in color or texture from the outer fabric, frames the area around the finial (Fig. 10). Finally, a cord separates a valance about 30 centimeters wide from the general umbrella form. The typically red valance is called *nkrawoö*. Nineteenth-century descriptions of state umbrellas displayed during Asante receptions and ceremonies identify other kinds of valances: fringed, scalloped, crenellated, serrated (Bowdich 1819: pl. 2) and appliquéd (Bowdich 1819: 34; R.A. Freeman 1898: 94). They are still seen in Kumase, but I did not observe any of these on Asante state umbrellas when I was there. The plain broad valance is characteristic of this type regardless of its shape.

Because both European and Indian manufactured and indigenously woven textiles are used, Asante umbrellas display a great variety of textures, patterns, colors, and designs. I had initially assumed that traditional locally woven cloths and cloth designs would predominate, as they do in chiefly attire for important occasions, when *ahene* wear stamped design cloth called *adinkra*, woven design cloth called *kente*, and occasionally appliquéd felt cloth called *nkrawoö*, especially the *akunitan* (“cloth of the great”). A durbar I observed in Kumase in November 1975 and illustrations in the literature on Asante refute this assumption. *Adinkra* cloth is not used on umbrellas. The only appliquéd

kyinië I saw in Kumase was a black-and-green one, which is displayed only occasionally, during the funeral anniversary mourning gathering or at an important meeting in the Asantehene’s palace if it occurs during this mourning period (Fig 7). However, several warp-stripe and weft-stripe (including *kente*) narrow-strip weaves worn by chiefs, as well as machine-printed imitations of them, often appear on umbrellas.

The Sudanic region primarily northwest of seventeenth-century Asante is the provenance and artistic source for narrow-strip weavings. The Akan adopted and adapted the warp-stripe and weft-stripe patterns from the heavy cotton or woolen-and-cotton textiles woven in great abundance by itinerant Fulani, Songhay, and Mande. These reflected a flourishing industry for narrow-strip weavings in the Niger Bend region and predated the ascendancy of Akan polities. By the time Asante gained control over the territories that constitute most of modern Ghana, they knew them as Sudanic or “northern” textiles and the designs as very old.¹² One cloth, called *nsaá* (“cover”), is made of camel hair and has dark brown and umber warp stripes that contrast with the natural cream tones of the remaining cloth. Its limited use as a cover for ancestral stools or as a lining for palanquins¹³ connotes its special significance, which is further underscored by the use of *nsaá* as a covering for one of the umbrellas, *Nsaá Kyinië*, that appears with the Golden Stool of Asante. The *Nhwewhe Kyinië* is the other state umbrella used with the Golden Stool.¹⁴ Katamanso (“The Covering of the Nation”), first cited in the literature by Ramseyer and Kühne (1875: 102), often replaces *Nsaá Kyinië*.

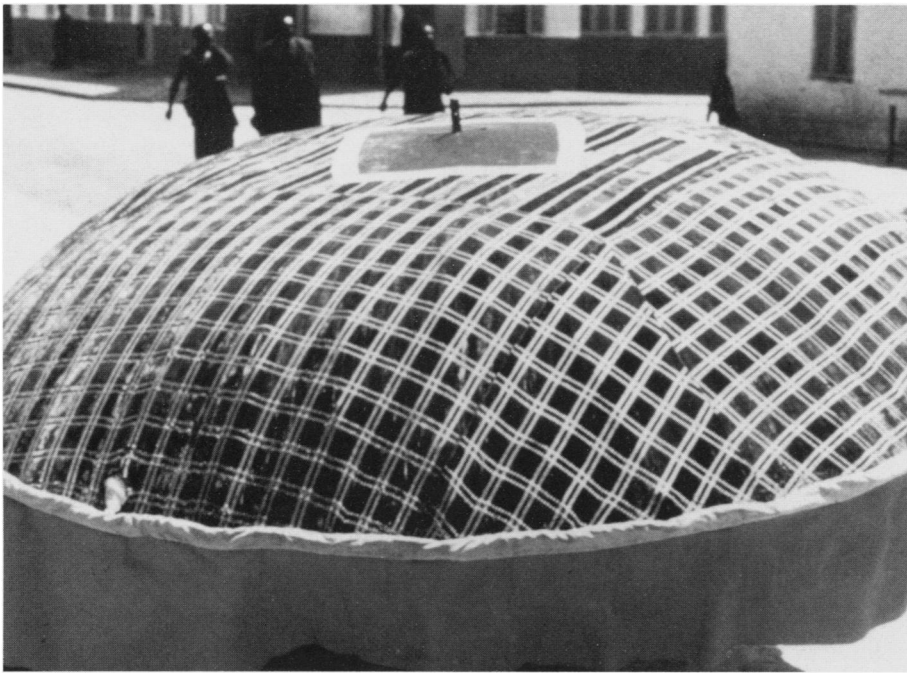
Another warp-stripe textile, *ahwepan*, is used on an important state umbrella. The *Oyokomma*, which was made for the first Asantehene and founder of the Asante nation, Nana Osei Tutu, displays the oldest *ahwepan* type, an elegant silk textile with green, red, and yellow warp stripes (Kyerematen 1964: 74; Lamb 1975: 18). That design is also called *Oyokomma(n)* (“Children of the Oyoko [clan]”) and refers to the royal lineage, the Oyoko Abohyen and its descendants, and therefore appropriately appears with the Asantehene during important state occasions (Fig. 6).

Other state umbrellas are covered with an early *kente* cloth design replicating the simple weft-stripe blocks of fifteenth-century narrow-strip weavings. One such example, *Nfoanfoa*, named after the cloth’s checkerboard pattern, was first designed for Asantehene Nana Yaw Akoto (r. 1824-33). Unfortunately, Kyerematen does not describe its shape (1961: 10). A similar textile pattern, con-

sisting of narrow white and blue weft bands interspersed among wider alternating black (or indigo blue) and red weft blocks, appears only on the horizontal umbrella (Fig. 5). The checkerboard design is an apparent imitation of the *khasa*, popularly called Manding cloth. Such cloths were an important commodity within the Mande trade networks that were in existence by the fifteenth century and continued at least until the eighteenth century, extending from the Sudanic region to as far as the Guinea Coast (Kea 1982:209). Major Mande entrepôts for the Akan were Bigbu (Bitu or Begho, Brong Ahafo region) and Bondoukou (Gyaman, Ivory Coast), both of which eventually came under Asante suzerainty (Wilks 1972: 371-75; 1975: 22, 28-29, passim; also n. 12 this text). By the eighteenth century, however, the Akan were duplicating Mande cloths (Lamb 1975: 88, 91, 149). Elaborately designed yellow textiles with warp and weft stripes, supplementary wefts, and weft inlays are used on another state umbrella called the *Oyokomma* (Fig. 11). The designs of this beautiful textile belonging to the special silk *kentes* termed *asasia* are also called *Oyokomma(n)* and are not to be confused with the warp-stripe cloth of the same name, used on the other *Oyokomma* umbrella. The warp-stripe *ahwepan* cloth historically is earlier than the simple or elaborate weft-designed *kente* cloth.

The older designs are used on visually distinctive and culturally important umbrellas. The horizontal ones displayed with the Asantehene’s and the Mampohene’s ceremonial stools and the Golden Stool of Asante have indigenously woven cloths that preceded the use of the elaborated *kente*. The oldest textile design, *nsaá*, appears on the *Nsaá Kyinië*, and the colorful warp- and elaborate weft-stripe weavings appear on domed umbrellas such as the one belonging to the Asantehene.

These three narrow-strip-weave types—the warp-stripe *nsaá*, the silk warp-stripe *ahwepan*, and the weft-block *kente*—are not commonly used on umbrellas. Most are covered with European or European-derived cloths and probably Indian cloths (Figs. 1, 2, 6, 10, 11). First the Portuguese and then the Dutch, soon followed by the Danes and the English, transported European and Indian textiles to the coastal trade forts (Fynn 1971: 12; Kea 1982: 207-9). Silk (*serekye*), including brocade and especially damask, velvet (*ago*), cotton chintz, corduroy, and various other linen, wool, and cotton weaves were traded to the Akan. In the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, the most important item among the personal goods exported to them was textiles; thousands of yards of cloth “frequently represented



10. STATE UMBRELLA. KUMASE, 1976.

40 percent or more of the total value of a ship's cargo" (Kea 1982: 208). The Asante's frequent display of imported cloth confirms this predilection for exotic textiles.

European textiles were not only traded but brought into Asante as gifts or as requested items. The Dutch, who garnered a sizeable percentage of the Akan trade around the turn of the seventeenth century, presented delicate and costly silks as diplomatic offerings. In 1701 Vice-Governor Nyendael brought blue silk with gold flowers and red velvet bordered with gold lace to Asante (Fynn 1971: 159). In 1816 the Asantehene requested from the Dutch factor Huydecoper "some lengths of old Dutch chintz, some plain red, black and green velvet" from Holland (1962: 18-20). The competitiveness of the British meant gifts that included cloths (Garrard 1980: 300). Juxtapositions of umbrellas covered with one or more non-African textiles create a prismatic array of colors and patterns. In addition, appliqué, embroidery, and machine-dyed or resist-dyed patterns sometimes embellish floral, plaid, and other cloth designs (Figs. 6, 7). Imaginative design schemes and ornamentation prevail among the European and Indian cloths.

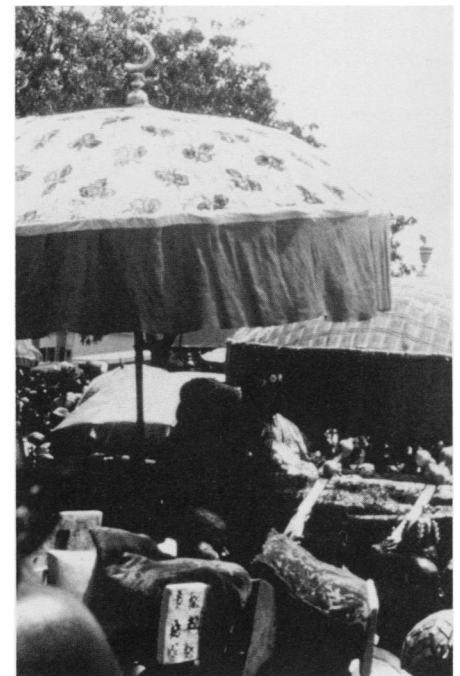
Only nine of the twenty-three umbrellas belonging to the Asantehene are named in the literature (Kyerematen 1961: 7, 10-11; 1964: 91; *Durbar* 1975: 12-14). The finial motif and the textile design may determine the name. Aside from the Oyokoman and the Nfoanfoa, the identified ones use foreign textiles. The Nyankontön ("Rainbow") umbrella has several broad horizontal stripes of golden yellow, emerald green, and black velvet. The Nankanini, named after its

puff-adder finial, uses blue damask cloth. It was designed for Asantehene Nana Osei Kwadwo (r. 1764-77), and appears with the Asante ruler during adjudications (Fig. 6). Another umbrella named after its finial, *Präkēsē*, first appeared for Nana Opoku Ware I (r. ca. 1720-50), but the textile design is not given in the literature by Kyerematen (1975: 14). The *Böaman* ("The Nation's Conqueror," lit. "to strike the *aman* [territorial divisions]"), displayed on formal state occasions, has crimson and black velvet patchwork with gold ornaments on the dome and valance (Fig. 6). The name is appropriate, for the umbrella was first designed for Nana Osei Bonsu (r. 1800-23), "eulogized as he who brings to his knees his enemies" (Kyerematen 1969/70:24). The *Böaman* is in habitual use. Rattray calls it the Asantehene's "Great State Umbrella" (1927: 130, fn. 2), and it was frequently cited by Europeans in the nineteenth century (Boyle 1874: 348; Ramseyer & Kühne 1875: 102; R.A. Freeman 1898: 94). Sir Garnet Wolseley seized an umbrella of the same design (perhaps the original) then belonging to Asantehene Nana Kofi Kakari (r. 1867-74) during the British-Asante War of 1874. It is described as "velvet, partly dark crimson, partly black, with gold trimming. The size is about 7 feet in diameter. The umbrella has a number of appendages, cut of leather and cloth, with square and round knobs. These are fetish charms, to ensure the good luck of the Royal Owner. A lion's claw, fastened to the ribs of the umbrella, inside and outside, is likewise a kind of charm or talisman. The umbrella was taken at Coomassie on Feb. 4 when our troops entered that city."¹⁵ The crimson and black velvet umbrella trim-

med with gold lace and surmounted by the *babadua* finial appears the same today. This state umbrella is significant regalia; along with the Asantehene's ancestral stools, and the Golden Stool of Asante, it is withheld from a newly appointed king until his enstoolment (Kyerematen 1969: 24).

A few European cloths are patterned with indigenous designs. For example, some silk damasks or velvets have narrow vertical strips of embroidery that give the appearance of multicolored *kente*. This *nwömu* cloth (Kyerematen 1964: 71) is seen on the umbrella called *Akoköbaatan* (Hen with Chicks"), which means "When the hen steps on the chicks the object of punishment is not to destroy but correct."¹⁶ Also made for Nana Osei Kwadwo, it appears during adjudications. Damask, the most popular umbrella fabric, may have commercially dyed imitation warp-strips.

It is perhaps because of its proverbial or aphoristic associations that scholars focus upon the finial when discussing the emblematic and symbolic aspect of the Asante state umbrella. Peggy Appiah (1979), Herbert Cole and Doran Ross (1977), Alex Kyerematen (1964), and Malcolm McLeod (1976, 1981) have noted the association between Akan visual arts and language, what Cole and Ross call the "verbal-visual nexus" of Akan art (Cole & Ross 1977: 10). The artistic variation in a motif or form such as the leopard is paralleled by a similar variation in a proverb that is part of the image, and which aptly expresses certain truths or situations in society (Cole & Ross 1977: 10-11).



11. STATE UMBRELLAS. LEFT: DAMASK; RIGHT: OYOKOMAN KENTE CLOTH. KUMASE, 1975.

Compared to representational sculpture, the verbal component of textiles is more subtle. Traditional narrow-strip-weave designs have generic names. They also have individual names, some of which pertain to a person or a historical event (McLeod 1981: 156-57). A name denotes one or more proverbs. *Kente* cloth designs typically have associated sayings, such as *sika fre mogya*, "Wealth strengthens the family bonds" (Lamb 1975: 130). The simple warp-designed *ahwepan* textiles also refer to proverbs; one is named *öhene kö akoraa*, "The man is dead when he travels to the village [ancestral abode]; but he is not soon forgotten" (Bishopp 1977: 39). Or there is *tiafo*, "he who tramples upon," a cloth used by the Asantehene (Rattray 1927: 242). Non-African cloths and perhaps some narrow-strip weaves typically lack proverbial associations. Still, recognition of the latter as pre-Asante cloths and their having names like *nsaa* indicate the special meaning they have for the Asante. European or Indian textiles with Akan designs, such as the damask with warp stripes, conceivably have greater communicative potential than plain damask. No aphorism is assigned to non-African velvets and damasks. Only a few fashioned in a certain pattern have proper names, and these may appear in a durbar, verifying Kyerematen's observation that such cloths are seldom used on ceremonial occasions (1964: 78). Two velvet umbrella textiles, Nyankontön, "The Sky God's Arch," and Böaman, "The Nation's Conqueror," are named according to their colors and patterns.

The verbal element of these cloths makes them visual metaphors. The application of a phrase or word to an object it does not literally denote, to suggest comparison with another concept, is a recurring aspect of traditional Asante art. During important public occasions such as a durbar, this visual metaphor reinforces traditional leadership roles. Predictability and lack of ambiguity in meaning undoubtedly account for the use of traditional textiles and the multicolored velvets on certain state umbrellas, especially those of the Asantehene. There occurs, then, the verbal-visual linkages in Akan and non-Akan textiles. Both the finial and the cloths as metaphorical displays typify Asante political art.

Even without the language component, a cloth conveys a chief's importance and status. *Kente*, "the cloth that fits kings" (Bishopp 1977: 31), traditionally connotes prestige and therefore is appropriate chiefly attire. It "governs . . . the reactions of those who see it" (Bishopp 1977: 32), causing a response of respect and humility. *Asasia* textiles are indicators of status and wealth, as are imported silks and cottons. Well before Asante's attainment of political and economic power, the distinction of members of royal lineages and the wealthy was shown in their prerogative of owning certain cloths, particularly silks, with sometimes as many as fifty different designs (Kea 1982: 319). As a popular mode for the display of valuable textiles from India and Europe and of *kente* cloths, the umbrella is an important item of regalia.

Textile designs are not the only indicators of status. Nineteenth- and twentieth-century sources verify contemporary data about the relevance of umbrella size, number, and material. Important paramount chiefs may appear with one or more umbrellas; the Asantehene often appear with three (Fig. 6). Double-tiered examples virtually are nonexistent among Asante¹⁷ and never appear with a Kumase chief. While logically the more important the occasion and the owner's status, the larger the umbrella, this is not always the case. During his instoolment rites and ceremonies, the Asantehene dresses in white *adinkra* cloth and stands under the small black *akuromponkyiniwa* (Kyerematen 1969/70: 22). Humility is implied.

The use of silk or cotton umbrellas according to chiefly rank existed in the late nineteenth century (Ramseyer & Kühne 1875: app. 3; R.A. Freeman 1898: 93) and probably earlier. Norris notes that in the opening decades of the twentieth century, paramount chiefs were allowed to use silk for their state umbrellas, but only after they had obtained permission from the Asantehene to ensure that no umbrella pattern duplicated his (Norris 1926: 237). The paramount chiefs he listed in 1914 belonged to the *akan aman nnum* ("five polities of the first rank") of the nineteenth century: Mampon, Dwaben, Nsuta, Bekwae, and Kokofu (Wilks 1975: 95). Norris included the paramount chief of Kumawu as well. The historical importance of all six divisions, whose chiefs declared loyalty and support to Nana Osei Tutu and thereby formed the territorial foundation of Asante, means they probably had such umbrellas in the eighteenth century. In the early twentieth century other chiefs, the Agonahene and Kyidomhene, were given the right to use ones covered with silk. Asantehene Nana Kofi Kakari (r. 1867-74) granted the same license to the chiefs of Nkoranza and Wam, and Asantehene Nana Agyeman Prempeh I (r. 1888-1931) to the chiefs of Ejisu and Offinso. According to Ellis (1887: 262-63) and Norris, all other chiefs were restricted to black cotton (or linen?) and cotton print umbrellas. The use of cotton or silk as a determinant of social status paralleled rules of attire as documented among the Akan in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (Astley 1968: 632).

Additional research may indicate a rule governing the use of certain finials with certain textiles, which would reinforce the idea of the umbrella as an indicator of rank. Certain paramount chiefs display silver- and gold-covered *ntuatiere*. The Asantehene's are gold covered. Lists of which chiefs had metal finials occur only in the literature of the early twentieth century.¹⁸ Today many more chiefs own and display gold-covered finials, but low-ranking chiefs still use unornamented ones. One atypical example that appeared with a horizontal state umbrella is shaped like the Adinkra stool. This stool, named after the nineteenth-century Gyaman king, is also called Fotoaba and is regarded as a stool for affluent chiefs.

Special situations require *nkyinië* of a certain color. When Sir Garnet Wolseley approached Kumase in 1874 as part of a British military expedition, he observed Asantehene Nana Kofi Kakari seated under a large red umbrella. In Kumase, red umbrellas appeared during war or grave political situations (Ramseyer & Kühne 1875: 59, 294; Reindorf 1895: 139). The color, more commonly seen during funeral ceremonies, symbolizes intense grief and a sudden calamity (Antubam 1963: 82). Funerary umbrellas, few in number, are brought out at funeral celebrations or at a chief's oath-swearing ceremony. In Kumase I observed four shallow conical examples displaying the mourning colors of red and black, or red, black, and green, in patchwork or appliqué. One is black with an appliqué of green stylized ram horns and usually has a red cloth tied around the finial (Fig. 7). Lineage members use funerary umbrellas to connote not only the valiant death of a chief in battle and, by inference, all chiefs who have died in battle, but also the history of Asante, for the development of the nation is explained in militaristic terms: "The highest basis of honour in Asante was distinction in war" (Arhin 1983: 13).

Esteem for chiefs is conveyed by the Asante saying "Öse öhene" ("He is like a chief"), used to express admiration for a person. Regardless of wealth or education, a chief is the traditional model of social achievement, of leadership (Arhin 1983: 2). A hierarchical society like Asante entails the use of political emblems and regalia. The traditional ranking of settlements

(Wilks 1975: 93-96) and the "antiquity, size of population and the wealth" (Arhin 1983: 7) of a chief's district and ultimately the nation directly affect the quantity and quality of any such art form, like the umbrella. Expectedly, state umbrellas are visually impressive, and those of historically important paramount chiefs are particularly so. Even though further study on Asante *nkyinië* is needed, it is apparent that a ranking exists within this artistic genre. That of a village chief pales in comparison with that of a paramount chief, which is a large, domical, silk damask umbrella with a gold-covered finial. The horizontal umbrella covered with Asante textiles seemingly ranks above the most visually dramatic *öbankyinië*, or state umbrella.

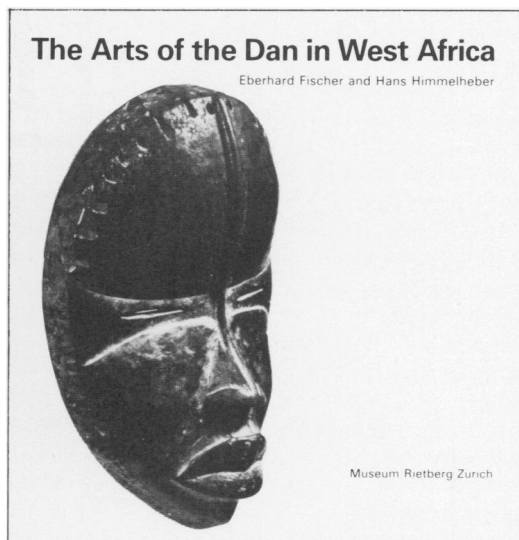
Umbrellas are an integral part of any Akan festival and occasion (Cole 1975: 22). Emerging amid the multitude of silk damask and velvet, cotton chintz, corduroy, floral printed fabrics, and the occasional silk damask with an overlay of traditional Akan textile patterns are umbrellas covered in Sudanic or Asante duplicates of Sudanic weavings. They display textile designs that are historically pre-Asante, which make them highly effective as political regalia. The small domical umbrellas reiterate and remind the Asante of their position vis-à-vis the chief, and the large ones remind the chief of his position in relation to particular lineages and divisional chiefs, and finally, the Asantehene.

Asante chiefs' stools are not usually shown with umbrellas. It is therefore impressive that the latter shield the ceremonial stools of the Bretuo clan representative, the Mamponhene, and of the Oyoko Abohyen clan representative, the Asantehene. Two other umbrellas are placed over the Golden Stool, but its infrequent display¹⁹ precludes an opportunity to examine the Nhwewhe Kyinië. Although its textile is not described in the literature, the cloth is probably pre-Asante, a Sudanic textile. Furthermore, the distinctive horizontal form of these four examples and their being the only umbrellas covered in the simple weft- or warp-stripe cloths add to their impact. As Ernest Gombrich succinctly put it: "Unfamiliarity breeds awe" (1972: 93).

These singular umbrellas are symbols, and context is important to understand not only their iconography but also their iconology. Their conventional meaning, known by adult Asante, "must be supported by prior expectations based on traditions" (Gombrich 1972: 87), and with each important public display they accrue significance. Probably those Asante elders who are conditioned by their own social and cultural experiences and who are well versed in the oral traditions comprehend the less than overt significance of certain regalia. McLeod understood it when he wrote that the umbrella "was obviously used to keep the chief physically cool, but it was also intended to promote a condition of spiritual peace and coolness (*dwo*) and to create around him a particular symbolic space" (1981: 109). How the Asante interpret or respond to these forms is conjectural, but it is clear that they take particular notice of specific umbrellas. The Nsaá Kyinië, the two umbrellas called Oyokomman, and the two flat *kente* umbrellas for the stools of the Mamponhene and Asantehene display the least ostentatious textiles. Their iconology is vested in Asante history and culture. For the Asante, explanation undoubtedly would be redundant and perhaps state the obvious. But it is readily apparent even to any non-Asante that umbrellas are chiefly regalia and that certain of them are mnemonic devices that transform metaphor and emblem into memorable image and symbol. □

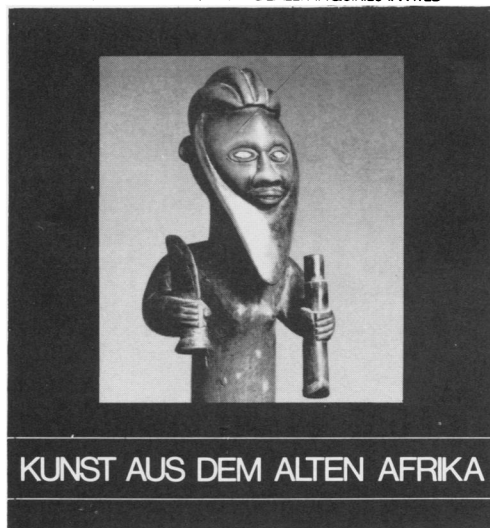
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female infertility, diagnosed by a diviner (Bourgeois 1981a: 32,33,36,37,39,46).

The *Hemba* mask of the Suku is a wooden helmet with white-enhanced facial features carved slightly in relief. The pupils are lowered toward the crescent-shaped slit that allows the wearer to see out, the nose is often pointed, and the open mouth usually contains sculpted teeth. Suku works often have a stylized zigzag hairline, indented above the forehead and temples. The helmet is almost always topped with a sculpted human or animal figure (Bourgeois 1981b: 32-34).

According to Bourgeois (1981b), this mask type is worn by the most qualified initiates during the closing ceremonies of the *nkanda* initiation and in particular circumstances in connection with the deceased. *Hemba* corresponds to the Suku's collective image of their ancestors, the power of which is embodied by a Manichean vision: "powerful charm with both dangerous and benevolent properties." The latter includes curing gynecological problems and providing luck to hunters (Bourgeois 1981b: 32,34,37,38).

The Kongo of the Kasai, related to the Dinga and Lwalwa in Zaire, live near the Chokwe in northwest Angola, but their culture is completely different. They possess a *Ngongo munene* mask of hammered brass (Bastin 1961b: figs. 4-6), worn by the chief during his investiture. It is also brought out for secret funeral ceremonies. The structure of this mask is very simple. The example I saw was imposing in the nobility of its austere facial features, portrayed in slight relief on the laterally curved metal leaf. *Ngongo munene*, like the Chokwe *Cikungu*, represents the chief's ancestors who watch over their descendants. The mask is donned in a ritual ceremony to counter an epidemic or any other disaster striking the community. When not in use it is carefully housed in a small straw shelter, placed in the fork of a large tree, and watched by a guard who keeps away women and children (Bastin 1961b: fig. 7).

We have seen, then, that among the Chokwe, certain illnesses are believed to be "possession-sicknesses" (Heusch 1981: 175), attributed to a *hamba* spirit angered by the neglect of his cult. The Chokwe *mukishi* is a spirit incarnated by a mask. Its role is benevolent, often involving a kind of social control. Later it was learned that if the *mukishi* was not regularly honored by the donning of its mask, like the *hamba* it would cause illness that was curable only by a ritual of atonement. *Cikunza*, for example, has long been known to possess this mystical power of being simultaneously *mukishi* and *hamba*, probably because it is represented in carved amulets or symbols visible in *mahamba* sanctuaries. Neighboring peoples also have such masks. However, it was only recently that aged informants, recalling a distant past, revealed to me that the *akishi Cikungu*, *Cihongo* and *Pwov* once had this dual function in the religious beliefs and practices of the Chokwe.¹⁰ This new information considerably enriches our knowledge of these prestigious masks. □

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A Treasury of African Art from the Harrison Eiteljorg Collection by Theodore Celenko. Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 1983. 248 pp., 169 b/w and 60 color photos, 9 maps, bibliography.

ARNOLDI, notes, from page 33

1. The exhibition "Somalia in Word and Image" is funded by a grant from the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education of the Somali Democratic Republic, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and private grants to the Foundation for Cross Cultural Understanding. The show is tentatively scheduled to travel to the National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C.; the Lowe Museum, University of Miami; the University of Florida, Gainesville; the University of Missouri, Kansas City; the Museum of Cultural History, UCLA; and the Museo Pignorini.

2. Personal communication, John William Johnson, 1984.

3. Personal communication, John William Johnson, 1984.

4. Translation by B. W. Andrzejewski, 1982.

5. Translation by B. W. Andrzejewski, 1982.

6. Puccioni 1960: 5; personal communication, Virginia Luling, 1983.

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PATTON, notes, from page 73

Data for this article, obtained in Kumase in 1975-1976 and 1977, pertain to the traditional Asante capital and imply similar interpretations for metropolitan Asante (Kumase and the major territorial divisions) rather than greater Asante (Kumase, the major territorial divisions, and the peripheral territories). For further information about the traditional political structure and the Golden Stool, see Wilks 1967, 1975.

Grants from the Program of African Studies, Northwestern University, and from the University of Houston made research possible. An abbreviated version of this article was presented at the Symposium of African Textiles, University of Minnesota, May 1982. I also wish to acknowledge the editorial comments of Doran Ross (UCLA Museum of Cultural History) and the translation of the Akan (Twi) terms pertaining to the umbrella, done by Peter Pipim (National Museum of African Art, Smithsonian Institution).

1. For technical reasons it is not possible to employ the *epsilon* symbol occurring in certain words in this article. *African Arts* has substituted *ë*, the nearest equivalent in standard type. Similarly, *ö* has been substituted for the *open o* symbol.

2. Armitage 1901; Boyle 1874; Brackenbury 1874; Dupuis 1824; Ellis 1887; T.B. Freeman 1843; R.A. Freeman 1898; Huton 1821; Ramseyer and Kühne 1875; Reindorf 1895.

3. Bowdich 1819: 33; T.B. Freeman 1843: 42; Ellis 1887: 271; R.A. Freeman 1898: 57; Armitage 1901: 2.

4. Kyerematen simply states that the form is derived from the use of suspended leaves and predates the European-made umbrella (1964: 89). Ludewig Römer's comments of 1760 lend credence to the use of leaves as a symbolic shelter for the Asantehene when he describes the Asantehene as seated "under a big tree made of gold with many branches and leaves" (1965: 33). The context of Römer's or later 19th-century (McLeod 1981: 107) observations is unknown, but it may refer to a funeral celebration when members of the deceased's lineage sit under a canopy of suspended heavy cloth (urban areas) or leaves (rural areas).

5. Personal communication, Joseph Sarpong, Jan. 1976.

6. Richard A. Freeman describes the umbrella's construction (1898: 94), followed by R.S. Rattray (1927: 270; figs. 154,155). According to Rattray the same woodcarving tools are used except for a piece of spokeshave. Today the set of tools differs from those used in other woodcarvings; Joseph Sarpong, an umbrella artisan, identified eleven tools that include scissors (Kumase, Jan. 1976).

7. They existed among earlier Akan states such as Denkyira and date from at least the sixteenth century. Craft specialties groups indicate the influence of northern, Sudanic culture (Patton 1980: 123-24; Laundry 1972).

8. A chief alone or with his elders commissions an umbrella. In 1976 a large umbrella cost 400-500 cedis; a medium one, 300 cedis; and a small one, 100 cedis. Umbrella craftsmen do not carve the finials.

9. Bowdich observed one covered in animal skin and a "small black image with rusty hair" (1819: 276-77). The former belonged to the Adumhene, Nana Adum Ata, and the latter to the Asafohene, Nana Kwaakyie Kofi. Quarcoo cites an image of a mourning chief (1975: 55). Doran Ross observed painted finials for the Dwabehene.

10. In 1977, Herbert Cole and Doran Ross recorded at least 100 linguistic staff motifs. Ross states that subsequent research indicates 200 motifs (personal communication, 1983), and he believes there are probably 70 or 80 Asante *ntuatre* motifs. Over 40 finial motifs are identified in the literature and in Asante, from Mampon, Nsuta, Kumase, Dwaben, Ejsu, Bekwae, Ofinso, Dnyaewa, and Assumewa. They are listed as follows, with their Twi name if known: chicken (*akökötan*), elephant (*ësono*), war horn (*akiben*), two birds, palm tree (*abë*), bird turned toward back (*sanköfa*), stool (*dwa*), human head (*tiri*), fragrant plant (*prëkëšë*), one stool

atop another, illustrating the proverb *Obi-te-obi-so* ("One sits on another"), lion and antelope, bird with cannon (*ad-wetakyi*), woman and child, cock, blackened figure, hand holding a broom, pot on three heath stones (*abusua kuruwa*), hand with extended finger (*'gye Nyame* or *toakyi rifa*), hen and chicks (*akokobatan*), raven (*anene*), palm nut tree or cocoa pods, human jaw, bamboo (*babadau*), puff adder (*nankanini*), begging woman, gunpowder keg (*atur-duru kuwadom*), oil lamp (*kanea*), sword or hand with sword (*akofena*), hornbill, leopard, seated child, cast metal container (*kuduo*), fern (*ayá*), star (*ösromma*), horse, porcupine (*kóikó*), hornbill and python (*akryranwan nanka*), cobra of Amanseé (*Amanseé prammire*), honey badger (*sisi kwabrofo*), shield (*ékým*), gong (*odawuru*), sectioned fruit surmounted by a padlock, illustrating the proverb *Oyoko ne Dako atoa atam enam*, "There is no division between the Oyoko and Dako clans; they are like *atoa* fruit".

11. Personal communication, Doran Ross, 1983; Quarcoo 1975: 46; Rattray 1929: 260, n. 3.

12. Several textile production sites existed in the Niger Bend region and immediately north and west of the Akan. One such place, Bighu (Brong Ahafo), was an important Mande entrepôt from the fifteenth century to the early eighteenth century. Itinerant Mande traders developed lucrative markets and long-distance trade networks near and through Akanland. Among the Mande, weaving lineages were attached to trading lineages, and at times weaving and trading occupations existed in the same lineage (Perinbam 1980: 468-69). Even after the cessation of gold trade at Bighu, the continued cloth production and trade in the early seventeenth century indicate the Akan's liking of Mande and other Sudanic cloths (Wilks 1982; Kea 1982: 282-84; da Mota 1972; Hopkins 1973: map 6; 59, 51). For Akan trade on the coast in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, see Kea (1982: chap. 6), and in the nineteenth century, see Fynn (1971: 4-5, 8-9) and Arhin (1983: 9).

13. Palanquins are lined with both the warp-stripe (*nsaá*) and weft-stripe design similar to the Fulbe *khasa* (Picton & Mack 1979: fig. 106). McLeod is the only author on the Asante who mentions that the Bantamahene owns a *nsaá*-covered umbrella (1981: 109); for the historical significance of the Bantama divisions see Wilks (1975: 23, 379). Narrow warp-stripe cloth may be protective covers for umbrellas when stored (Rattray 1929: fig. 7).

14. The Nhwelwe Kyinié has a valance with four attached mirrors; according to Kyerematen, it is named after its final, *akófena*, or "sword" (1958: 19). He also writes that it was designed by Asantehene Nana Osei Bonsu (r. 1800-1823) (1961: 7). If the drawing in Bowdich is to be believed, it appeared during his reception and, more important, is horizontal in shape (1819: pl. 2). This state umbrella for the Golden Stool must post-date the Nsaá one. The Nsaá Kyinié has a final in the "original form of a stool, the Foa" (Kyerematen 1961: 7). The term Foa normally is used in the context of metal casting (Rattray 1923: 307, 1927: 311; Garrard 1980: 119, 121). The form may be similar to the Forowa, a circular stool that predates the rectangular stool.

15. I thank Doran Ross for bringing to my attention this description, "Coffee Callee's Umbrella," in *The Illustrated London News* (Mar. 21, 1874, p. 278). Seen by Ramseyer and Kühne (1875: 102; also Claridge 1915, vol. 2: 142), it was made with red velvet bordered in gold lace, a material brought by the Dutch in 1701 (Fynn 1971: 159). Richard A. Freeman mentions gold cloth appliqué shaped as half-moons, stars, and animals (1898: 94). The motifs observed on the present umbrella probably are gold-covered wooden forms that appear similar to *abótire* (chief headband) motifs: shells, a hand, and an abstract shape: a square with the apex of a triangle angled at each corner of the square. The last motif indicates Sudanic artistic influence; it is seen on early-nineteenth-century Asante leather bags and on a twentieth-century Asante painted cloth, both in the British Museum (Bowdich 1821: fig. 13; Prussin 1980: figs. 12, 14). I agree with Prussin that these motifs, deriving from Sudanic leather amulets of talismans, have a similar significance—spiritual protection—when used on chiefly regalia.

16. For an important account of the history of this motif and its adoption by the Asante, see Rattray (1929: 260, n. 3).

17. Doran Ross recently observed a double-tiered umbrella for the paramount chief of Assumegya, by the mid-nineteenth century a minor division located south of Kumase (personal communication, Nov. 1983). Double umbrellas are typical of the coastal, eastern, and western Akan (Kyerematen 1964: 93; Cole 1975: cover).

18. Norris lists the following in 1914: Mampon, a silver war horn and gold nut tree; Dwaben, a gold war horn and a gold human jaw; Ejisu, a silver horn and a gold nut tree; Kumawu, a wooden horn and a gold nut tree (1926: 237). Rattray notes that the Asantehene's finials are gold; those of the paramount chiefs are silver, with the exception of Dwaben, who has one gold finial (1927: fn. 2, 130). According to Quarcoo, only the Mampon and Ofinso chiefs have the right to use a silver war horn. He writes that the war horn emblem originally belonged to the Mamponhene and when "cast in gold," it is the favorite umbrella top of other paramount chiefs, such as Assumegya, Kumawu (Quarcoo 1975: 45).

19. Traditionally the Golden Stool is displayed during two important political and religious ceremonies: the Aday Keseé and the Odwira. The Annual Yam Festival, the Odwira, no longer occurs among the Asante since Nana

Agyeman Prempeh I was exiled in 1896. The festival still occurs among non-Asante.

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MONTS, notes, from page 59

1. For technical reasons it is not possible to employ the open o symbol occurring in this and other words in this article. *African Arts* has substituted ö, the nearest equivalent in standard type. Other substitutions are ë for the epsilon symbol, and ng for the eng symbol.

2. A translation of Dapper's account of Sande activities may be found in Fyfe 1964: 33-34.

3. Traditionally, the secret societies alternated sessions; the men and Poro were said to "own" the country for four years, and the women and Sande would "own" it for the next three years. In recent times, Poro activities have sharply declined, and women are allowed to initiate a Sande lodge at almost any time.

4. Like the Sande, the Poro traditionally engaged in the musical training of its initiates. But since Poro sessions have not been held in some Vai areas for over forty years, young boys no longer receive a formal musical training equal to that provided to girls by the Sande society.

5. During the absence of the *kengai* of the Sande lodge at Kobilya, a male slit-gong player rehearses the dance troupe. He and the Sande *kai* (a man appointed to handle affairs between the Sande and the town at large) are the only men allowed to enter the secluded Sande areas.

6. The Vai term *tömbö kë* has a dual meaning: "to dance" and "to play." Thus, a male masked dancer is referred to as *tömbö kë feng*, "plaything" (pl. *tömbö kë feng möe-nu*).

7. I have used the pronoun "her" in reference to the masked dancer, Zoba. I am, however, aware that some writers regard Zoba as a male spirit (see Johnson 1961: 2). Gender reference is not a controversial matter among the Vai, who constantly refer to Zoba as *musu nyana* (lit. "woman devil.")

8. According to Koelle (1854: 203), the Sande masked figure is not called Zoba but Nou, which he describes as "a masked woman in the sande ceremony, intended to represent a demon or the devil." Büttikofer published the first sketched examples of the Sande masker as we know it today (1890, vol. 1: 254; vol. 2: 336). In addition, his volumes contain information on the role of the masker in Sande ceremonies. Ellis describes the aims and principles of the "gree gree bush" (a generic term for Sande) and mentions in some detail the costume design and role of "Zo-ba" in a Sande graduation ceremony (1914: 53-56). There is also an early twentieth-century photograph of Zo-ba (1914: 114). Additional photographs of the Vai Sande masker from this era may be found in Johnston (1906).

9. The medicine (*boli*) associated with Zooba may be carried on the dancer as an amulet and be used to enhance the dancer's performing ability. Other Sande medicines for social control are symbolically represented by Zooba in non-dance situations. For example, Zooba's presence during litigation reminds men of powerful Sande medicines when violations of traditional law occur against women, or when men are accused of violating Sande laws.

10. For an excellent discussion of Sande rituals, see Holsoe 1980: 97-111.

11. Holsoe reports a recent case where a Zooba dancer stumbled during a performance and was forced to seek refuge in a neighboring chiefdom for three years (1980: 106).

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