



ADINKRA

A Ghanaian heritage

Kelvin K Fosu



.Education .Arts .Science .Technology .Research .Experiments .Hackathons



Arcolora



emelupper



TABLE OF CONTENT

Introduction

History

Making Adinkra

The stamps

Adinkra-Duru

Making of Adinkra prints

Uses

Symbolic meanings

Explanations of symbols

Extras from National Museum-Ghana

Conclusion

Appreciation

Appendix

INTRODUCTION

This book contains all that is necessary in making the Adinkra; the Ghanaian long lasting heritage. The explanations in this book are a result of an excursion to the Adinkra village at Kumasi, Ghana. And information is taking directly from experts. The Akans in Ghana say, ‘Adinkra means farewell or goodbye’, hence the use of Adinkra cloth as a funeral cloth. My assertion would conclude Adinkra’ meaning; the soul of something Adi (something), 3ne (and), kra (soul). Also ‘nkra’ means greetings hence, the ‘goodbye’.

HISTORY

KING Adinkra, an Ivorian King is the originator of Adinkra as it is believed that the king wore exceptional attire with well patterned symbolic ‘symbols’ which denotes special meanings. King Adinkra dies by the ‘sword’ of the Ashanti King, Nana Osei Bonsu in 1818 for insulting him. The death of King Adinkra passes on a new cultural practice in the Ashanti Kingdom; the patterns on King Adinkra’s cloth becomes the inheritance to the Ashantis which would be passed on from generations to generations.

Local folks of Adinkra village say, ‘the symbols were created by the first men to make the cloth and that the traditional symbols were (66) but as time went by, new symbols were introduced, hence some symbols could have more than one symbols but same meanings, as seen in Plate 1.0. And these symbols could have historic meanings, proverbial, parables, aphorism which I believe, forms the norms and values of people in the community and echoes their meanings when printed or affixed onto surfaces.

SANKOFA

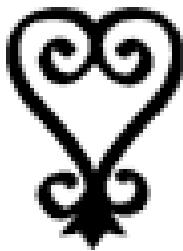


PLATE 1.0

MAKING ADINKRA

This section tells of how the Adinkra symbols are made, the dye/Adinkra-Duru and it's printing onto supports.

STAMPS

Adinkra stamps are cut-out shapes in gourds/calabash; drawn Adinkra symbols on calabash have their negative areas cut-out from the calabash forming the symbolic relief Adinkra. About four sticks joined to the back of the new form and tied at a joint to assist dipping and stamping/printing of symbols onto supports (fabric, paper) etcetera.



Figure 1.0 Carved Adinkra stamps from gourd (calabash)

ADINKRA DURU

Adinkra-Duru, pronounced Adinkra-Du roo (Adinkra medicine) it is the dye obtained by boiling the bark of the Badie tree overnight after it has been soaked for two, days to soften it and later pound it to obtain a thick brown liquid/dye, the pounded bark is then strained of the liquid with the help of a net and boiled for two hours and boiled again after leaving it for three days. I assert that the name Adinkra Duru is gotten from the fact that it is used to treat several diseases/sickness as the professionals at Ntonso Adinkra village in Kumasi, Ghana claim. Having tasted it at the village, I realized that the Adinkra-Duru is neither bitter nor sweet. According the folks in this profession, ‘more dye is obtained from the Badie plant when freshly harvested’.

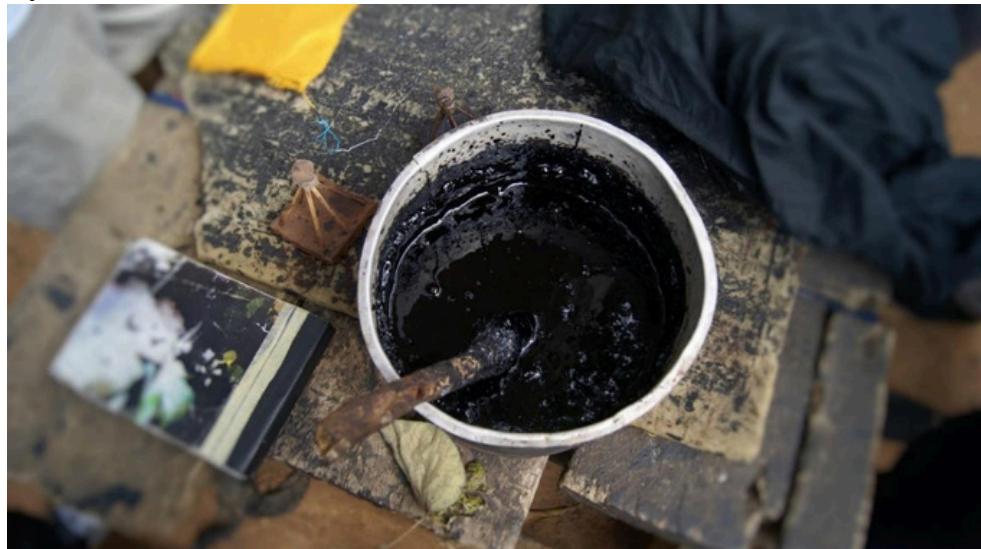


Figure 1.1 ADINKRA DURU

MAKING OF ADINKRA PRINTS

The support (cloth) is laid flat onto a flat surface. The handles of the stamps are held to assist dipping of the stamps into the Adinkra-Duru making sure it is not fully immersed into the liquid. As the stamp is removed, ensure that liquid does not drip onto the cloth.

Press one side of the stamp onto the support and press the whole body onto the support; either from left to right or right to left since it has a round shape as the calabash. Leave it to dry and voila!!,yaay!! You have created your first Adinkra cloth/print. Congratulations!!



Figure 1.2 BADIE stick



Figure 1.3 Badie been boiled



Figure 1.4 checking the thickness of the Adinkra Duru



Figure 1.5 Expert demonstrating the loading and stamping process of Adinkra making.



Figure 1.6 gently stamping the Adinkra stamp onto support



Figure 1.7



Figure 1.8 Direct printing of an Adinkra symbol

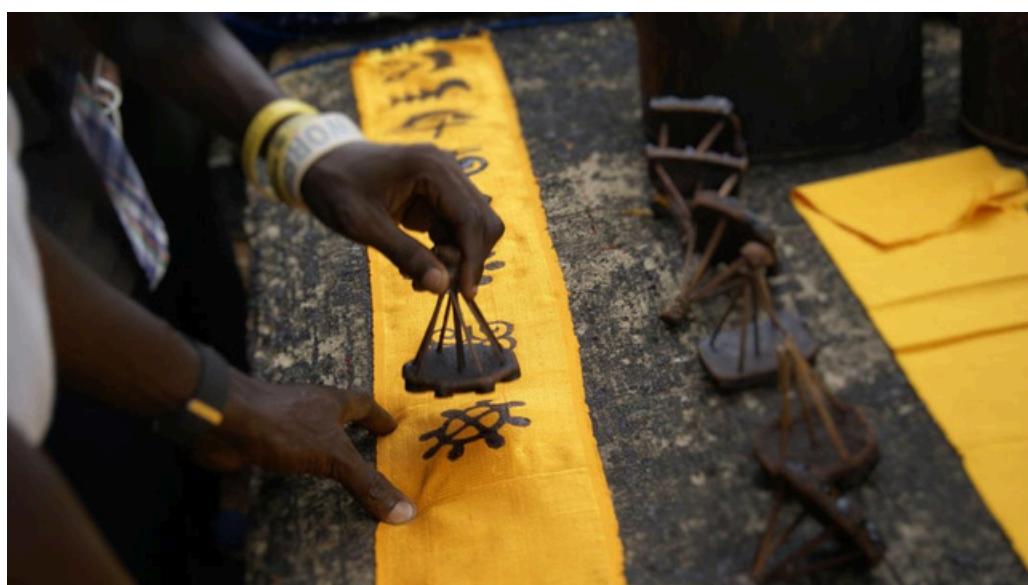


Figure 1.9 printed design



Figure 2.0



Figure 2.1

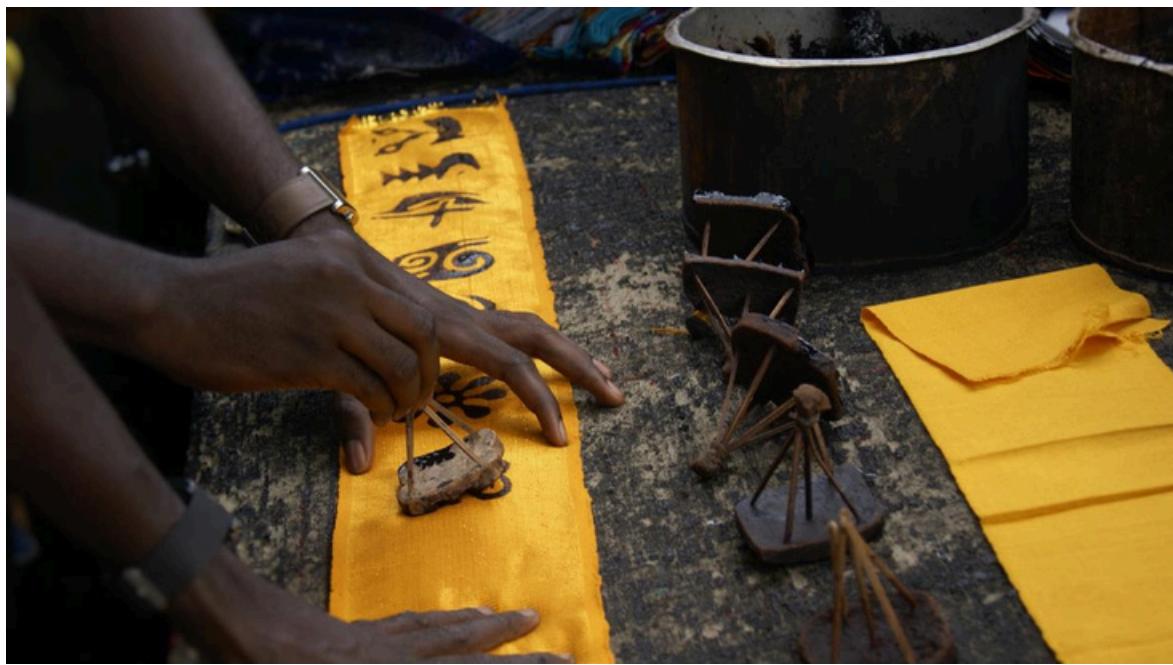


Figure 2.2 Raising stamp from support



Figure 2.3



Figure 2.4



Figure 2.5



Figure 2.6 printed Adinkra symbols



Figure 2.7



Figure 2.8

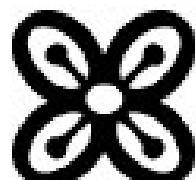
USES

Adinkra symbols have inspired lots of the arts and craft world in Ghanaian homes, offices etcetera;

- . Carvings on furniture, gates, doors, walls.
- . Jewelry-earrings, necklaces, wristlets, rings.
- . Forming designs and patterns on fabrics like outdooring ceremonies, funeral cloths; kente, Adinkra cloth.
- . The Adinkra Duru is used in treating common sicknesses like malaria, diarrhea.

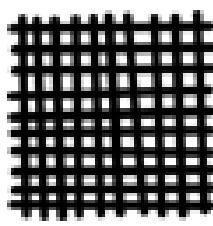
SYMBOLIC MEANINGS OF ADINKRA

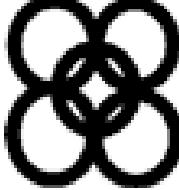
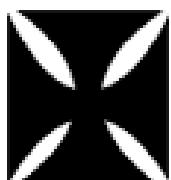
<u>SYMBOLS</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>ENGLISH TRANSLATION</u>	<u>MEANING</u>
	ADINKRAHENE	Chief of Adinkra symbols.	Greatness, charisma, leadership It is believed to have inspired The invention of all Adinkra symbols
	AYA	Fern	Endurance, Boldness
	AKOKONAN	Leg of hen	Mercy, Nurturing, Protection

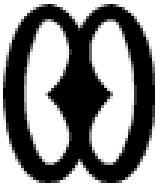
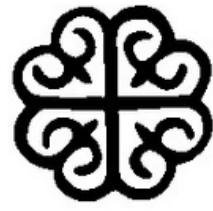
	AKOBεN	War Horn	Alertness, Caution
	AKOMA	The Heart	Patience and Tolerance
	AKOFENA	War Sword/ Ceremonial Sword	Authority, Gallantry, Graciousness, Chivalry
	BESE SAKA	Sack of cola nuts	Plenitude, Unity, Power, Authority, Affluence
	BI NKA BI	No one should bite the other	Peace, Harmony

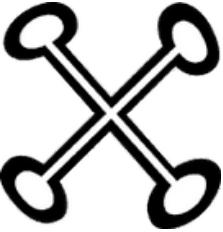
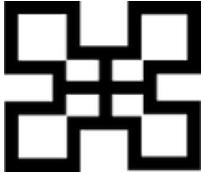
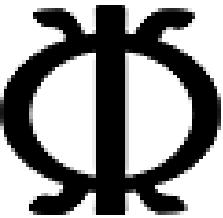
	BOA ME NA ME MMOA WO	Help me and let me help you	Cooperation, Interdependence
	DAME-DAME	DRAUGHT/ CHEQUURED GAME	Intelligence, Ingenuity
	DUAFE	Wooden Comb	Beauty, Cleanliness,
	DENKYEM	Crocodile	Adaptability

	DWENNIMMEN	Ram's Horns	Humility, Strength
	EPA	Handcuffs	Law, Justice, Slavery
	EBAN	Fence	Safety, Security
	ESE NE TEKREMA	The teeth and tongue	Friendship, Interdependence
	FIHANKRA	Compound House	Security, Safety
	FUNTUNEFUNEFU DENKYEMFUNEFU	Siamese Crocodile	Democracy, Unity, Diversity

	FOFO	A yellow-flowered plant	Jealousy, Envy, Greed
	GYE NYAME	Except God	Supremacy of God
	GYAWU ETIKO	The back of Chief GYAWU' Head	Valor
	HYE WONHYE	Burn, won't burn	Imperishability, Endurance
	KETE PA	Good bed	Good Marriage

	KINTINKANTAN	Extravagance, Puffed up	Arrogance, Extravagance
	KREMO BONE	Bad Muslims	Hypocrisy, Deceit
	MATE MASIE	What I hear, I keep	Wisdom, knowledge, Prudence
	MMARA KRADO	The law padlock	Authority and Justice
	MMUSUYIDE	The agent that takes out curses	Good fortune and Sanctity

	NYAME BIRIBI W SORO	God, something is in Heaven/ above	Hope
	NSOROMA	The Star	Guardianship
	NYAME DUA	God's Tree	Worship And Veneration
	NKYINKYIN	Twisting	Dynamism, versatility
	CNSCKCSNCNK	A Chain	Unity and human relations

	NYAME NNWU NA MAWU	God never dies therefore I cannot die	Infinite existence
	NSAA	A cloth used as a blanket.	Good quality and durability.
	CW FORO ADOBE	The snake climbs the raffia palm	Steadfastness, diligence
	OWUO ATWEDIĘ	Death's ladder	Morality
	WAWA ABA	Wawa seed	Hardiness

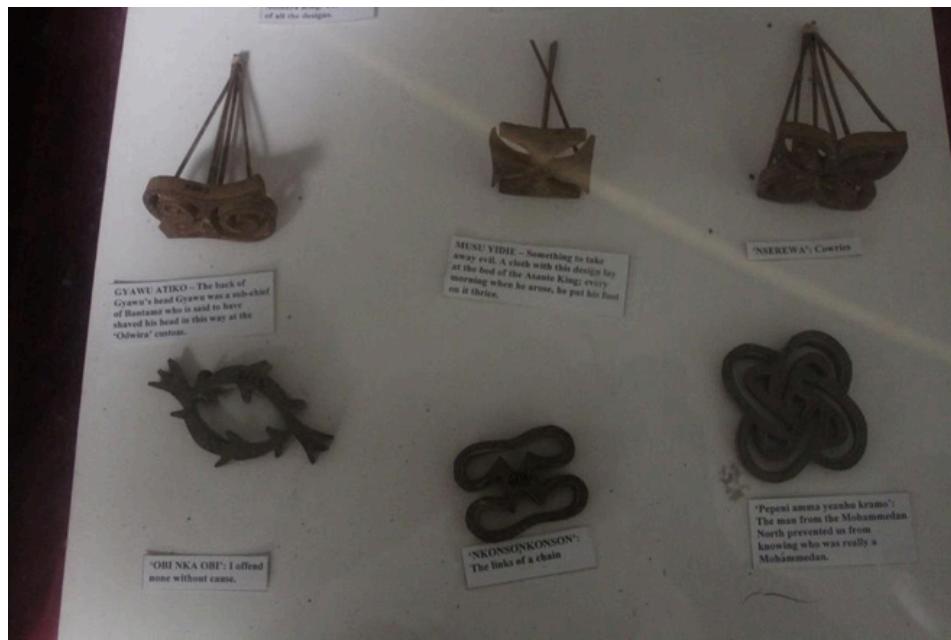
EXTRAS FROM NATIONAL MUSEUM-GHANA



Showcase displaying the tools and materials for Adinkra making

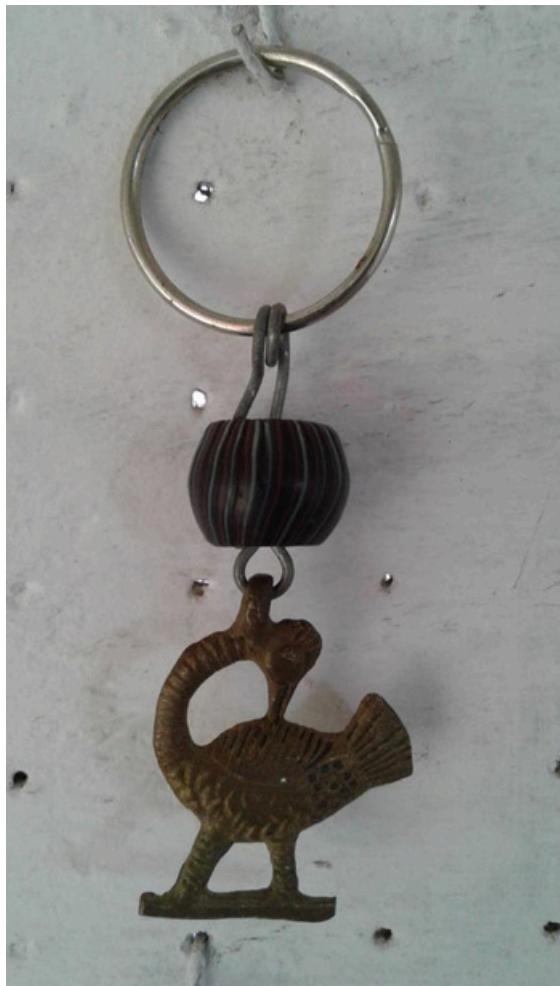




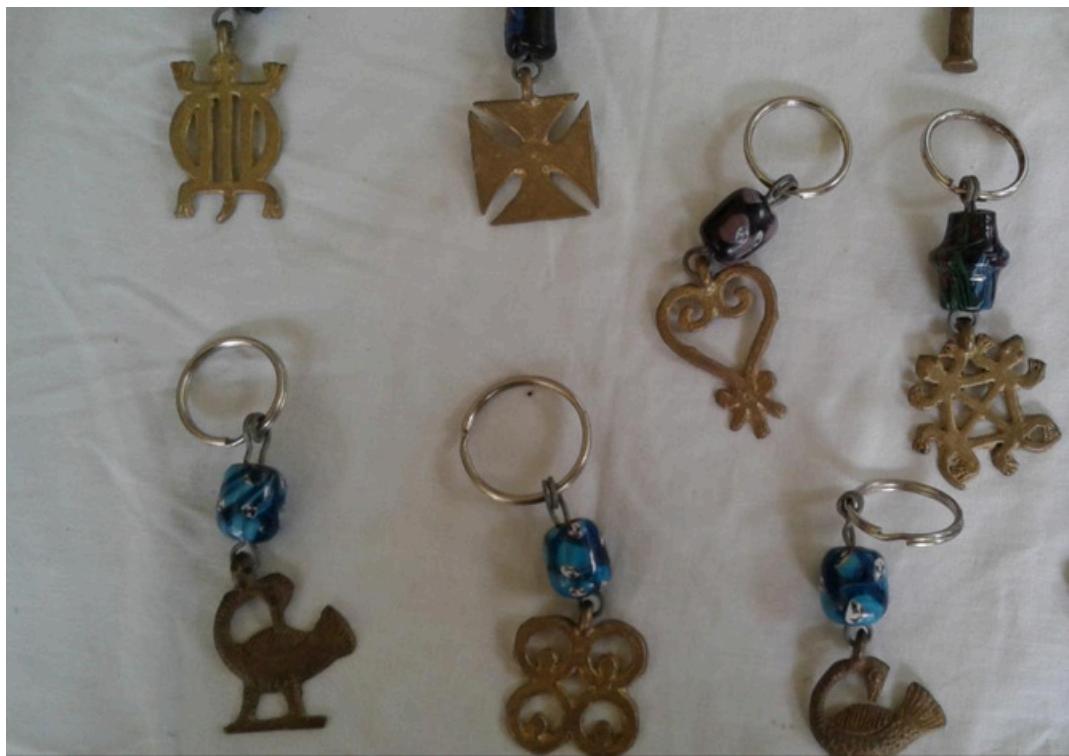




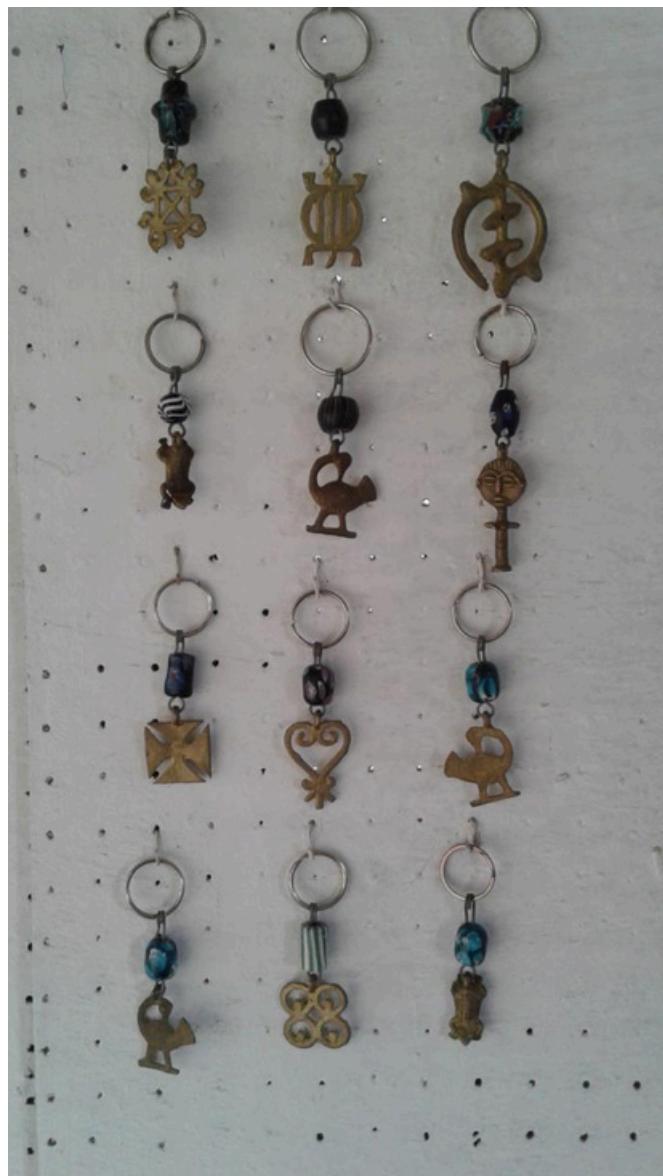
Key holder cast in Gyε Nyame Symbol-ART by Sename Craft



Key holder cast in Sankofa Symbol



Key holder cast in Adinkra Symbols



CONCLUSION

Adinkra symbols have been used for several years for varied reasons and are a source of inspiration to many Ghanaians and foreigners; designers, craftsmen and users alike.

APPRECIATION

I would like to thank the village folks at Adinkrah village for their support in providing great information about Adinkra.

APPENDIX





ADINKRA

A Ghanaian heritage

