



July 2020

# *Okasamafo*

The communicator

## *Akwaaba*

It's hard to believe this is the first issue for our **third** year of sharing information from and about our Akan community here in this country. And we haven't really scratched the surface. In this issue, we continue our discussion on elder-ship from last year's Akom Kεse. Woda ase piiiii to all of you for your contributions, well wishes and abundant support for this project and our annual Akom Kεse. Please do continue to share your thoughts, suggestions, concerns, and stories with us via email and/or our FB page Akom Kεse. We look forward to hearing from you.

Okomfo Akosua Baakan

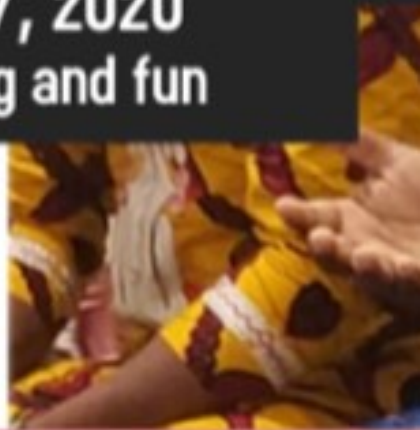
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# AKOM KESE 2020

July 31, to August 7, 2020  
8 days of virtual learning and fun



Featured  
Speakers



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Boakyewa



Okomfo  
Abena Nayo  
Nyarkowa

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## Akom Kεse 2020

(July 31 - August 7, 2020)

### Program at-a-glance

Friday, July 31	6 - 8 pm	Meet and Greet
Saturday, August 1	11am - 1pm	Townhall Discussion - Eldership
	2 - 4 pm	Mental Health and Spirituality
Sunday, August 2	11am - 1pm	Akom Songs
	2 - 4 pm	What role does the Akom Community play in Global Health and Development
Monday, August 3	6 - 8 pm	Tenets of Akan Culture
	6 - 8 pm	Akom Drum Rhythms
Tuesday, August 4	6 - 8 pm	Priest Meeting
	6 - 8 pm	Traditional Akan Foods
Wednesday, August 5	6 - 8 pm	Children's Corner
	6 - 8 pm	Book Club
Thursday, August 6	6 - 8 pm	Young People's Meeting
	6 - 8 pm	Acupuncture and Spirituality
Friday, August 7	6 - 8 pm	Obarima Meeting
	6 - 8 pm	Obaa Meeting

During the Town Hall Meeting at our 2019 Akom Kese Conference, the topic of discussion was Eldership. During that meeting the community developed a consensus on what eldership means, the responsibilities of an elder, and an elder's attributes. Guided by the vision of Akom Kese Board President Dr. Kwesi Amoa, the Akom Kese Board of Directors endeavored to operationalize the community's thoughts on eldership into a Council of Elders that will guide the Akom community now and for generations to come. In conducting our due diligence to understand the concept of eldership within the Akan culture, and in order to replicate this traditional relationship between the elders and the community, the Board established a Committee on Eldership. The Committee on Eldership was charged with researching eldership in African traditional societies. The Committee interviewed elders within the Akom community in America and in Ghana. In addition, the Committee researched the literature to understand the meaning of eldership and the process for selecting elders and other leadership roles within African traditional societies. This summary presents those findings.

### **What is Eldership**

Eldership is a title of esteem and of great responsibility that, while it tends to come with age, is not automatically given because of one's age. Eldership is serving as a steward and repository for the history, culture, beliefs, and practices of our community; an adherence to the society's accepted code of conduct; must be earned through good character; and is a dedication to continuous lifelong learning and teaching.

### **Attributes of an Elder**

An elder is not necessarily the oldest person in the community, yet is seen as a wise person and is of good counsel. An elder provides advice to members of the community, sets the tone for what is acceptable behavior, and leads the community, especially the youth, by example. An elder is a protector of the community and culture and is ever vigilant in so doing. And most important, an elder behaves and speaks with integrity throughout every facet of their life.

### **Akom Kese Proposed Plan of Action for Developing a Council of Elders**

For the past year, the Akom Kese Board has diligently sought wisdom and understanding on what eldership is and how this much needed role could be applied to the Akom community. In doing our research by conversing with elders in the community, here in the United States, seeking guidance from elders and practitioners living in Ghana, and by researching published academic papers and books on eldership, we propose a well-informed process of eldership for the Akom community, regardless of shrine house affiliation, based on traditional Akan practices of eldership and selection of chiefs.

## Process

Based on our research, we will follow the following process for the election of elders:

1. Call for nominees.
2. Nominees are vetted by the shrines. The Akom Kɛse Board has selected three (3) shrines to consult. We are asking the shrines if the nominee is worthy of the title “Elder.” Whomever the shrines have deemed worthy will proceed to the next step in the process.
3. Formal letters of invitation sent to nominees.
4. Finalized list of nominees.
5. Swearing of oath.
6. 40-day preparation period.
7. Public outdoorings. Elders affirm their oath to the public and public reciprocates their oath to them.

We realize that many shrine houses have selected elders for their shrine family. However, this council of elders is for the entire community. It is our hope that the newly established Council of Elders will work in conjunction with other councils to continue to promote the good will and mission of the founders of Akan Culture in America: Nana Yao Opare Dinizulu I and Nana Okomfohema Akua Oparebea. Based on what the community has expressed, the Council of Elders will be expected to:

1. Create an atmosphere of trust and respect.
2. Maintain and uphold tenets of Akan culture.
3. Help to establish Abusia Panyin for households.
4. Establish communication with the Council of Elders in Ghana.
5. Witness all rites of passage held by the community, i.e. okomfo initiation/graduation, Ye go bra, Ayie, etc.

If you are aware of a person who you believe meets the criteria for eldership, please forward his or her name to Okomfo Dr. Kwesi Amoa at [amoakwesi@optonline.net](mailto:amoakwesi@optonline.net). Be sure to include your contact information and the contact information for the nominee. Nominations will close August 2, 2020.

Regards,

5

Akom Kese Planning Committee



Be sure to let us know what you are doing in the community.

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akomkese16@gmail.com.

Also, feel free to post them in our Akom Kese FB group.

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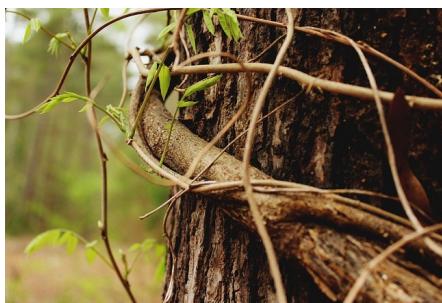
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## On Power...

What is power? It is defined as the ability to act in order to produce an effect. It is also the ability to be acted upon and to still be able to produce a desired effect. With power comes great responsibility. It is the foundation that creates the synergy that is demonstrated in the carefully carved relationships that we have with Onyame, the Abosum, and the Nsamanfo, all of whom are powerful.

And then there is us. **True power is demonstrated by those who have no fear of losing their power.** If one comes from light, and is considered powerful, then there is a moral obligation not to abuse that power. If you are blessed with the gift of power, and have been trained to use it to build others to that same capacity, that is true power. You have no fear that the one you have trained will surpass you. And, in fact, some will surpass you in one area or another. That is as it should be, because you were given the power in order to be a catalyst for that person.

If you have true power, you know and have confidence that more will come- perhaps in a different way, shape, form, fashion- but more knowledge is there awaiting you because nothing stays the same. As knowledge grows it extends like the limbs of the tree extend. The limbs of the great and mighty tree, that remains for hundreds of years, changes and grows but at the same time remains solid and stoic. If a tree grows too fast, it blocks the sunlight and the others that grow around it will slow in strength and vigor. However, if the tree grows at the right pace, it will assist in the nourishment that its companions receive. The great tree will provide shelter until the others can grow to fruition. It will grow towards the light and all that should grow around it will also find a piece of the light and grow towards it, eventually becoming strong, eventually becoming a forest. It will grow as a family should grow.



On Asuo's tree, where you find the family growing on it, Nana Esi and Adade medicine intertwined around it, that is most potent because they have worked together for the good of the all. It is for us to do the same. Not to seek power for the purpose of self aggrandizement. But, to instead use it to build and to grow a powerful community.

Nana Ama Nsia Agiriwah



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## Submitted by Bukor Nana Kwabena Brown

This is a great article [on page 10] to direct people to with proper citations. It appears to cover all the bases. It emphasizes the Immanence and Transcendence of God and deity for the African. A relationship which is close and very personal. This spirit of closeness to God and the spirits is one that the African imported into Christianity and "Jesus." This article corroborates my previously done research.

The following is primarily from the conclusion of my paper on Concepts of God in Africa published in the Journal of Religious Thought, 1982:

God is absolutely dependable and repeats good and positive acts over and over again for man and his other creations; and finally, God is thought to be man's ultimate and grand ancestor (i.e., representing one line of continuity and "being" and giving rise to and passing through the ancestors and subsequently the kings and all the people). It can be seen --judging from the Yoruba, Gikuyu, Zulu and Akan that the Concept of God is well developed amongst traditional Africans. The Akan have an altar to God consisting of a poll or branch with a three prong top containing water and ritualistic offerings for Nyame (God) used for blessing and purifying oneself. It is called Nyame Dua. There was a Temple of Nyame reported by Rattray in 1920. The priest of Nyame looked very Hebraic with locks coming down each side of their head with a star and crescent cut in the hair in the back of their heads. The word Amen has also found its way into Akan culture and is found in various songs and incantations. For example: Twediapon Yedwasio Amen. God, awareness of God, names and ways of approaching God via ancient and extant theologies migrated from East to West across Africa. These concepts, beliefs and practices seated themselves in West, East, Central and South Africa.

See; Rattray: Asante, and Religion and Art In Asante circa 1920 and 1922;

Concepts of God in Africa, William Brown, Journal of Religious Thought, Spring 1982

I hope this along with the attached article is able to create and stimulate interest in our traditional approach to God, Nyame, Olodumare, Mauga

# African Traditional Concept of God: A Critical Analysis

Excerpts Reprinted from Green University Review of Social Sciences, Volume 02, Issue 01, June-2015

Shafiul Islam, Academic researcher, Department of World Religions & Culture, University of Dhaka.

Md. Didarul Islam, Lecturer, Department of World Religions & Culture, University of Dhaka

## ABSTRACT

Oneness of God joined its moral vision with the traditional activities, which have opened the way to the triumph of the African traditional religious followers in their expectations of life and spiritual satisfactions. Monotheism's insistence on the concept of One God directs their lives in every dimension and point towards dignity, gratefulness, values, achievements, hopes, etc. It is important to note that within their traditional culture and religiosity, there is a potential spectrum of possible perspectives on the inner significances of the spiritual tradition, including how they associate with their feelings, social behavior and actions. This paper introduces varieties of prayer, types of offering, devotion toward God and routine works broadly found in different traditions and vary significantly among various tribes or societies. The critical analysis indicates various tribal aspects and identifies the diversity of African society and concept of One God in same vein. Diversity of Supreme God is quite com-

mon in various monotheistic religions. But the way of God's true appreciation and acceptance in African traditional culture can be really commendable and interesting as well.

Key Words: Morality, Concept of Supreme God, Tradition, Diverse Manifestations, Rituals, Offerings.

## INTRODUCTION

God is the Supreme entity to the adherents of the traditional religions of Africa and is considered to be the origin of everything in this universe. In Africa, God is viewed in both immanent and transcendent dimensions. This very idea of Oneness of the Supreme Being is core to the followers and this belief creates no place for the atheists in their traditional concept of God. There is no sacred text in written form, but the root of this traditional idea of God is mainly taken from proverbs, short statements, stories, religious rituals, prayers, songs, myths, etc. The knowledge of God is a gift given at the time of birth to a newborn baby. According to an Ashanti proverb, 'No one shows a child the Supreme Being'.<sup>1</sup> Knowing about God is believed to be an instinctive knowledge to the religious adherents. Along with the traditional culture, Islam and Christianity have inspired them most. African religions take inspiration and encouragement from the morality and belief system of Christi-

anity and Islam, but have their original exploration of religion. The African

God is characterized by many prime attributes including concrete knowledge. According to John S. Mbiti, "It is tough for a person to be detached from his/her religion, for to do so is to be served from his roots, foundation, his context of security, his kinship and the entire group of those who make him aware of his own existence"<sup>2</sup>. There are several examples of this thought. Human beings are limited in all aspect, but God is designated to be great, supreme, omnipotent (Almighty), omniscient (All-Knowing), Sustainer, Transcendent and Immanent, Self-Existent and Pre-Eminent, etc. No entity or being is comparable to God.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This is an explanatory and analytical research based on African traditional religions in terms of the life style and their inclusive faith in One God. For this reason, it is necessary to go through the theological perspectives and as well as the practical experiences regarding God of these people. Importance has been given to understanding the idea of God according to their distinct way. This article is mainly based on secondary sources like books, journals and internet websites. In addition, this work provides a deeper critical analysis. For getting a traditional idea of God, this research has especially emphasized on the books which were published before 2000 C.E.

### **GOD IN AFRICAN TRADITION**

African religious followers mostly adhere to the same faith about God like the Islamic and Christian concept of monotheism, but holding their own way of practicing rituals. That is why Monotheistic God appears to them with all possible qualities a God can be attributed to.

Islamic religious adherents all over the world hold the common sacred text (The Holy Quran) and their same faith in all aspect of their religiosity, except cultural variations of their national heritage and ethnic peculiarities. The very core or primary meaning of Islam is to have complete surrender or submission to One God. In the same way, African traditional religious followers surrender to their All-powerful God in almost each and every step they take for them. Whether they sleep or wake up from dream, or even go for their goals or vision in lives, or their sincerity to pray to that God, they are rarely to divert from their Supreme Being.

In case of Christianity, a true Christian believes in the Trinitarian Identity of God and these are to believe Him as 'God the Father', 'God the Son' and 'God the Holy Spirit'. Among African traditional followers, we find the 'Father God' in

societies like the Nuer, the Bambuti and in several other tribes too. If we talk about the Barundi people, here God is

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prayed to as a 'Spirit' or 'Spiritual Entity'.

The concept of 'Ex nihilo' and many other ideas are to be found in traditional practice of Africa, where they seem very much compatible with the Christians and Muslims. A thorough discussion and depiction afterward will make us clear about the mingling of African traditional religion, Islam and Christianity.

### **Greatness and Supremacy of God**

God is supreme and great over all visible and invisible beings or things that we believe to exist. One of the best Zulu names of God is 'Unkulunkulu', which means 'the Great-great-One' and like them the neighboring people call God as the 'Ndebele', which also means 'the Greatest of the great'.<sup>3</sup> Like them, the Tonga, the Ngoni, the Akan, the Baluba and some other tribes designate God as 'Great God', or Great One', or 'the Great King'.

### **God as both Transcendent and Immanent**

Many religions see God as transcendent or immanent dimension, but in African traditional concept, 'He is both transcendent and immanent'. He dwells inside human souls and He is also beyond any reach. People cannot even appreciate Him fully in their imagination.

### **Transcendent Nature of God**

God's transcendence outlook stretches over and beyond the whole Zamani period. He is the prime reality of being without lacking any incompleteness. According to a Bacongo saying, 'God is made by no

other; no one beyond Him is'.<sup>4</sup> The Akan refer to God as 'He Who is there now as from ancient times' and the Tonga people express Him as, 'the Ancient of Days'.<sup>5</sup> The Ngombe encloses this feature of God to the forest and that's why they call Him as 'the everlasting One of the forest'.<sup>6</sup> God's existence is never ending and it preceded the beginning of His creation too. He transcends all boundaries and all things we ever know. African people think that, the sky is beyond human reach and God dwells somewhere above.

### **Immanent Nature of God**

God has His immanent feature too for the need of His people. That is why, religious followers address Him through prayers, invocations, offerings and sacrifices by thinking Him near to them. God is contemporaneous to the traditional

people of Africa. He exists in all objects and He manifests through natural phenomena. The Ngombe prefer to designate God as the One Who fills everything.<sup>7</sup> The important concept is that, God's immanence here cannot be mixed up with pantheism<sup>8</sup> because His immanent character is associated with the acts of worship or in short practice.

### **Supremely Wise God**

God holds the supreme position and wisdom as well. He is absolute and beyond all knowledge. The Sona and the Ndebele report God as 'Father, Mother



and Son'.<sup>9</sup> To the Akan people, 'God is He Who knows or sees all' and according to the Zulu and the Banyarwanda, 'God is the wise One'. The Yoruba people say that, 'Only God is wise' and 'He is the Discerner of hearts' Who 'sees both the inside and outside of man'. Among the Barundi, 'He is the Watcher of everything' and the Ila society utter 'His ears are long'. So, God knows, hears, sees, observes and controls everything in this cosmos and beyond.

### **God as Almighty**

In a simple sense, God is all-powerful to the followers of the Ashanti, the Yoruba, the Ngombe and the Akan. To the Ngombe, the forest is full of struggle and they think God's omnipotence is linked up to the forest. They believe that 'He is the One Who clears the forest'.<sup>10</sup> The Yoruba hold a practical sense about God that 'duties or challenges are easy to do as that which God performs but difficult to do as that which God enables not'.<sup>11</sup> But the Zulu tribe thinks God in a political way that 'God is He Who bends down ... even majesties', and 'He Who roars so that all nations be struck with terror'.<sup>12</sup>

God's omnipotence also manifests in His power to this nature. According to the Banyarwanda proverbs, 'God has very long arms' and 'the plant protected by God is never hurt by the wind'.<sup>13</sup> God seems

as all-powerful also to many other tribes in Africa, such as the Vugusu, the Teso, the Gikuyu, the Akamba, the Kiga, etc. The Gikuyu address God in their prayer for rain, the Kiga believe God 'Who makes the sun set' and some hold that 'He makes quake and flows river', etc.<sup>14</sup> So in these above mentioned context, God is the sole possessor of all highest qualities and every being including mankind is lower and limited than Him.

### **Self-perfect God**

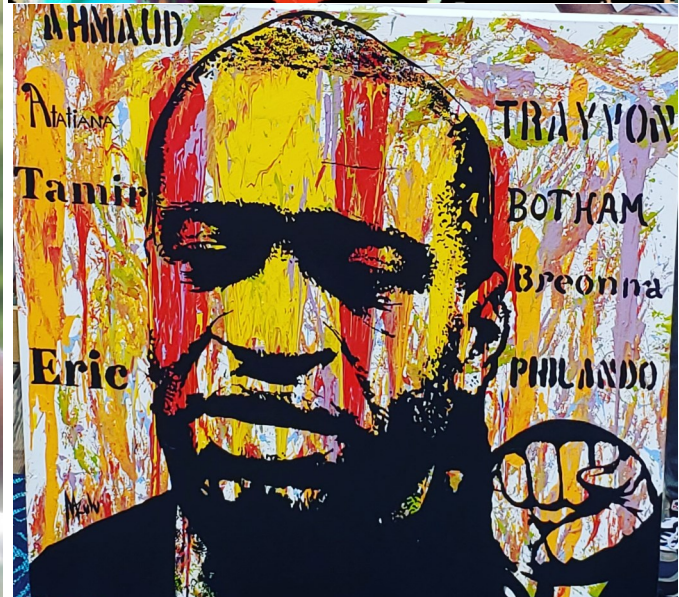
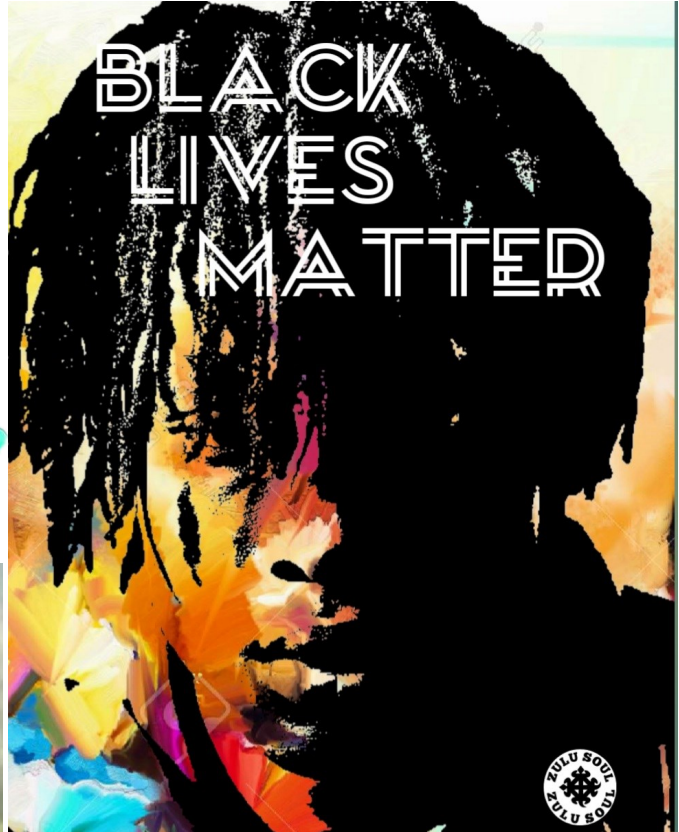
God is Self-dependent, Self-supporting, Self-sufficient and Self-containing too. Self-existent and Pre-eminent features of God are found mainly among the Gikuyu, the Zulu and the Bambuti groups. In a biological sense, The Herero say that 'God has no father and is not a man and does not even eat at all'.<sup>15</sup> The Gikuyu believe that God has,

"No father nor mother, nor wife nor children; He is all alone

He is neither a child nor an old man;

He is the same today as He was yesterday".<sup>16</sup>

As His theological aspect, the Zulu group thinks God as 'He Who is of Himself' or 'He Who came of Himself into being'.<sup>17</sup> The Bambuti designate that 'God was the First, Who had always



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been in existence, and would never die'.<sup>18</sup>

### **Spiritual Outlook on God**

Along with the greatness of God, African traditional concept also holds the view that, He is a 'Spiritual Being' or a 'Spirit'. Since the beginning of human consciousness about God, He remains unseen and thus there is no physical manifestation of God to the people. But God is a never ending creative force, that inspires people to go for innovative ideals and actions. One of the most explicit Shona hymns describes God as 'the Great Spirit' Who piles up rocks to make mountains, causes branches to grow and gives rain to mankind.<sup>19</sup> According to a traditional Pygmy hymn:

"In the beginning was God Today is God  
Tomorrow will be God Who can make an  
image of God?  
He has no body  
He is as a word which comes out of your  
mouth.  
That word! It is no more, It is past, and still  
it lives!  
So is God".<sup>20</sup>

To support this evidence of God's spirituality, societies like the Shilluk, the Ga and the Langi call Him to be like air or wind. Air has no visibility in that sense but we can feel its presence. Though, there is no one or no intellect can examine Him and that is why the Ashanti designate Him as the

Fathomless Spirit. As God is unknown to us, some refer to Him like the Lunda which means the God of the unknown or the Maasai which designates the Unknown or that of the Ngombe which means the Unexplainable. God is not a stranger to the African people. People have personal characteristics, but God's essential attributes are mysterious and almost totally unknowable.

### **God as Eternal Being**

Eternity of God is very much associated with His nature. According to the Ngombe, 'God is the everlasting One of the woodlands'. The Ashanti and the Baganda assess Him directly as 'the Eternal One'. The Tonga group compares God as heaven and thus they expressed His immortality as that 'The heaven never dies, only men do!' Like them, the Baluba, the Ila and some other groups refer God as 'He of many suns' or 'He of the suns'. But the Yoruba describe Him in a different flavor like 'the Mighty Immovable Rock that never dies'. God is unchangeable and will remain so forever. The Yoruba hold the same idea that 'one never hears the demise of God!'<sup>21</sup>

### **Moral Features of God**

Apart from above manifestations of the African God, He has given numerous moral attributes too. Followers from the Ila, the Bacongo, the Akamba, the Igbo, the Herero, the Banyarwanda and several others believe Him to be very Kind,

Merciful, Generous to His people, Fortune Provider, Pitiful, etc. In time of personal and natural problems or difficulties, people feel the need of His urgent help and feel Him as Merciful.

God causes rain during drought, provides fertility to all animals and averts calamities. The Vugusu consider that material prosperity comes from God; the Nandi invoke God daily to grant fertility to the women, cattle and fields; and the Langi believe that rich harvests come only from God.<sup>22</sup> God uses to solve difficulties and that is why, the Akan and the Akamba call God as 'the God of comfort'.

Most of the African believers think that God does only good to them and they need not to be worried at all. The Ewe firmly believe that 'He is good, for He has never withdrawn the good things from us which He gave us'.<sup>23</sup> But for the evil deeds, they do not categorically blame God. They think those as the works of spirits, magic workers or as punishment for their own misdeeds. That is why, God always seems to be 'Just'.

The Nuer consider that, God throws things out and He is ever rightful. According to the belief of the Ila tradition, God can never be charged, since He is above the level of 'fault', 'failure', 'wrong' and 'unrighteousness'. The Yoruba think in the same way that 'God is the pure King . . .

Who is without blemish'.<sup>24</sup> So, African God is ever Holy to them.

After the above mentioned human comprehension about the true nature of African concept of God, several activities of God are going to be discussed in brief.

### **God as the Creator**

The title 'Creator' is very much associated with the 'Oneness' of God. God as a creator appears to be so true through His activities over the African traditional believers. Two of the four popular Akamba names of God are 'Maker' and 'Cleaver', which are complementary to each other. God created this universe and thus supplied materials for its maintenance too. The Ovimbundu title for God is 'He Who supplies the needs of His creation'.<sup>25</sup> He provides life, health, rain and other things for our sustenance. The Akan consider God as 'Borebore', which means 'Creator, Carver, Architect, Excavator, Hewer, Originator, Inventor, etc.'<sup>26</sup>

As a supporting example of God's creation among the Banyarwanda, women believe that God shapes their babies in the wombs. Women leave water ready before going to bed, so that God may use it to create children for them. It is known as; God's water'; and He is known as 'the Giver of children'. During



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pregnancy period, the Bambuti women offer food to the God and say:

“(God) from Whom I have received this child, Take thou and eat”! 27

The people believe that ‘there was nothing before God created the world’. The concept of ‘ex nihilo’ (‘ex nihilo’ stands that God created this every visible and invisible thing of this universe out of nothing) is very much known to the Nuer, the Banyarwanda and the Shona. The Lunda describe God as ‘the Father Creator’ and the Ila hold three designations of God as Creator, Moulder and Constructor.

Regarding the creation procedure, different tribes hold different views. The Vugusu believe that God created heaven at first with the sun, moon, stars and clouds; then He created the earth, followed by the creation of man; and lastly animals, plants and other earthly creatures. But the Nandi, the Lozi and the Mende consider human being as the last work of God’s creation. Some also believe that along with the creation God also established laws of nature and human behavior too.<sup>28</sup>

For example, The Yoruba hold that ‘God is the Author of day and night’ and regard each day as His offspring.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, the Zulu think that their marriage custom and circumcision are ordered by God. It is also held that God continues with His creative work throughout the universe. The Twi say that ‘God never ceases to create things’.<sup>30</sup> Creation needs

necessary things to survive as well. That is why, for example, the Nuba pray for the cattle during their rituals that:

“God, we are hungry Give us cattle, give us sheep”!

While making sacrifices, the officiating elder prays:

“God, increase cattle, Increase sheep, increase men!”<sup>31</sup>

Along with God’s own creation, He also determines human destiny as well. The Yoruba, for example, hold that a person faces God to choose his destiny before his birth and during creation time God fixes that person’s life span.<sup>32</sup> According to the African traditional concept, everything of human life is determined by God. So, God creates us and protects us too. He is creator along with the provider or sustainer. As a result, the Ashanti, the Barundi, the Tonga, the Nandi and other people collectively think God as the Creator, Protector, Guardian and Preserver.

For full study with endnotes and references, visit:

<https://green.edu.bd/journals/review-of-social-sciences/>

# *Dewuru bo pa pa ne yo*

## Special announcements

AGOOOO!!! AGOOO!!! AGOOO!!!

We the Grant, White, Perkins, Brown, Warner Clan would like to express an overwhelmingly jubilant Congratulations to our Mamma, Sister, GrannyMa, Aunti, Educator, & now the ***Newly Crowned*** Dr. Brenda Akosua Owusua Grant Warner on attaining her Doctorate in Education (Ed.D.).

Mamma Kosh has diligently fulfilled the requirements of her online classes, endless hours of research, & assignments over the past four years from the comforts of her home. Discipline, drive, determination, & family support fueled her along the way. We thank everyone for their support, prayers, and encouragement over the past four decades and onward. Woda ase Piiiiii



Akobenz Youth Collctive

Vision & Mission Statzment

Our youth are our future. We see them moving forward with hopes, dreams, and aspirations that demonstrate a positive self-image that will also encourage and foster trust among them while generating a deep feeling of responsibility toward their communities.

It is the mission of the Akoben Youth Collective Inc. to build awareness of self for African American youth based upon African, African American, and West Indian values and mores. In doing so, we will guide youth in building social skills, cultural awareness, and a sense of self worth.

It is our mission to assist youth in understanding their role in and responsibility to their communities. In order to accomplish these goals, the youth will be given a series of tasks to accomplish, at the end of which they will earn badges that mark the achievement of each milestone. As they advance through the process, we will facilitate the development of future leaders who are an asset to their families and communities.

Originally established in 2006 by Nana Ama Nsia Willock, Akoben Youth Collective will be relaunching this fall. To be added to our mailing list, please send an email to:

[akobenyouthcollective@gmail.com](mailto:akobenyouthcollective@gmail.com)

# *Nkaee...*

In remembrance...



Okomfo Abena Anum  
Ababio



Okomfopanyin Nana Kojo  
Ansa Abredu Abrau Ayesu



Okomfopanyin Nana  
Ama Ansa Atei



Okomfo Yaayaa-Maria Aboagyewa  
Boakyewa Hunt



Baba Kwame Agyei Akoto



**Odupon atutu ~ A mighty tree has fallen**

Nana Kwame Amartey Dente was enstooled Krontihene to Nana Yao Opare Dinizulu in 1985.

*Celebration of life for*



*Nana Kwame Amartey Dente*

*Sunrise*  
*November 13<sup>th</sup>, 1948*

*Sunset*  
*May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020*

*Funeral Service*

Tuesday, June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 – 10:30 AM

J. Foster Phillips Funeral Home, Inc.  
179-24 Linden Boulevard  
Jamaica NY 11434

Nana Esi Dinizulu and Nana Adzua Opare  
Officiating



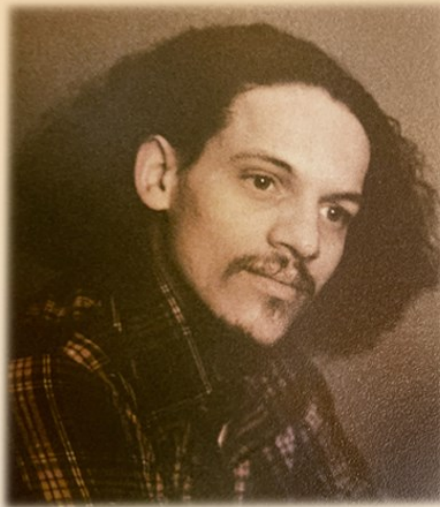
***Agoo, Agoo, Agoo!***

**THE COPELAND FAMILY  
&**

**THE NANA AKONEDI ADVISORY BOARD, NAAB**

*Officially announces the transition of our Father, Grandfather,  
Brother, Comrade, and Friend,*

**NANA OKOMFO KWAME BAAKAN OSUNWOLE TOPRAH**



After a battle with cancer, Nana Kwame succumbed to his illness on March 25, 2020, in Philadelphia, Pa. Nana Kwame Baakan Osunwole Toprah was a founding member of the Nana Akonedi Advisory Board, NAAB, a body of elders representing shrine houses under the Nana Akonedi Shrine Order in the United States. He diligently worked to document the history of our group. In 1994, Nana Kwame became the first in his line to graduate as a Nana Asuo Gyebi priest in the Akan tradition, and as an Osun priest in the Ifa tradition, under the tutelage of the late Nana Okomfo Aba Osunyomi Afolabi Sarpong. Nana Kwame was later blessed with the name, Toprah, by our late chief priestess, Nana Okomfohene Oparebea of Larteh, Kubease, Ghana, West Africa. He always spoke of that experience with reverence and pride. Nana Kwame Baakan Osunwole Toprah is survived by his children and grandchildren. He will be missed as a caring member of our community.

No further information is available at this time, but this official announcement can be shared.



***Damirifa Due! Due! Damirifa Due!***





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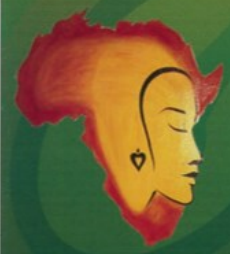

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## The Color of My Skin

I love the color of my skin  
Warm and smooth, brown, black, yellow, red, tan  
And blue black all over.

As I gaze into the beauty that reflects centuries of  
Cultural pride in the mirror  
I can't help but notice the richness and quality  
That lies right above my bloodline, not to mention the  
Aesthetic qualities that abound

Looks good on and with any color of the rainbow  
Stands out in a sea of faces that reflect a race  
Of royalty and grace


As we flow to the beat and rhythms of the drum,  
Our skin qualities are awesome  
That envy calls others to try and denigrate us

Ain't we Drop Dead Gorgeous?  
Like a peacock showing off and strutting his or her stuff  
Comes a magnificent set of ivories that sets  
The stage for our ebony hue

The hair that adorns our magnificent crowns  
Serves as a cradle to the  
Civilization of the world  
That speaks out to the great minds throughout the  
Centuries of Africa that the world shall never forget

We are the children of the sun, daughters, sons,  
Mothers and fathers of the dusk  
We are the essence of Asase Yaa full of richness  
Beyond belief

Yes, I love the color of my skin  
And so does the world



Tamara A. Hunter, APC  
Therapist

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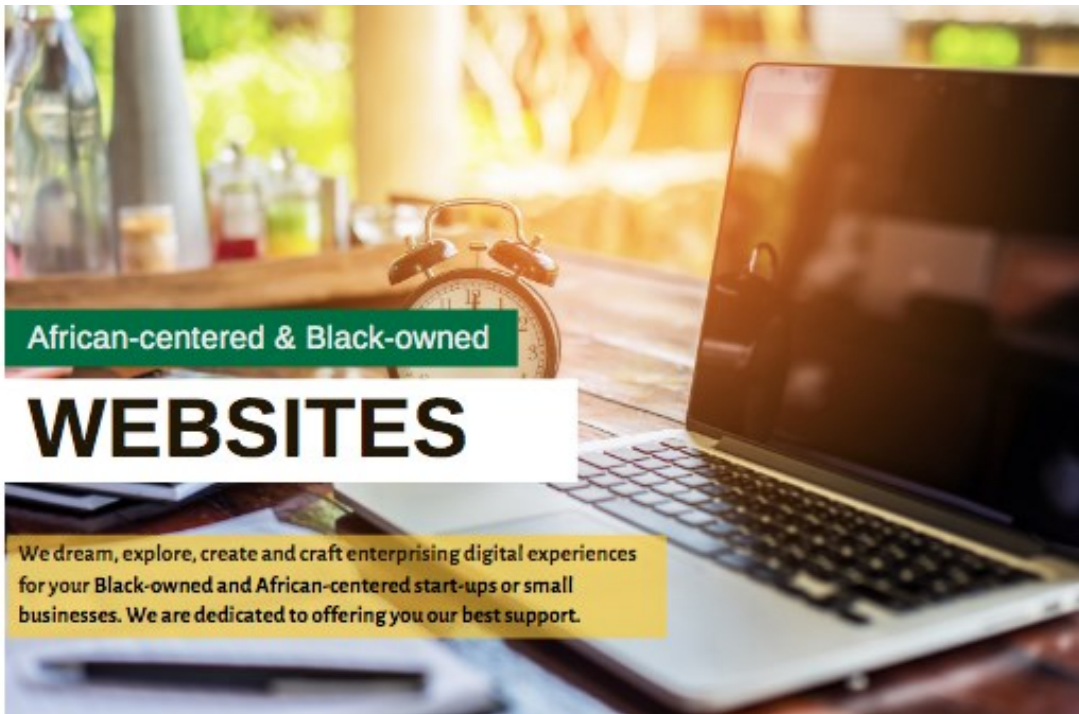




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*Woforo dua pa a na yepia wo*

It is when you climb a good tree that we push you.