UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

CHANGING TRENDS OF MORTUARY RITES IN KOMENDA CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH GHANA

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis, with the exception of relevant materials quoted from other scholarly works which have been fully acknowledged, is the original production of research work by the researcher under the supervision of Dr. Lawrence Boakye and Dr. Rose Mary Amenga-Etego towards the award of MPhil in Religions in the Department for the Study of Religions, University of Ghana, Legon.

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to investigate whether the changing trends of mortuary rites affect the religio-cultural practices and socio-economic activities of the people of Komenda, in the Komenda – Edina – Eguafo – Abrem Municipalty (K.E.E.A) in the Central Region of Ghana. In Komenda, death is conceived as a separation from the living and the departure from the present existence to another state of existence. After death, the body decays whilst the spirit moves on to another world from where it can influence the daily life of the living relatives. Even though the people of Komenda cherish the importance of mortuary rites, they sometimes become disillusioned about the implications which are associated with the cost of funeral ceremonies.

Generic inductive and ethnographic approaches were employed. In regards to methods of data collection, a sample of hundred respondents mostly heads of households and ten key informants were selected from three communities in the study area. The researcher employs the use of interviews, and ordinary and participant observation methods to collect data from the field. The study examined the background history, the religio-cultural practices and the socio-economic activities of the people. The history of the Methodist Church in the Komenda Circuit was explored. The peoples’ belief in Supreme Being, divinities and ancestors, conceptions of man and death and hereafter were equally investigated. It also focuses on traditional mortuary rite practices and changing trends of these rites.

The people are homogeneous in terms of linguistic and cultural practices. There are no differences in their mortuary rites. Mortuary rites in the communities, by analogy, are projects undertaken by bereaved families. The cost implications of the rites call for the practice of reciprocity. Apart from the debt burden, death and its associated rites in the communities sometimes bring conflict, animosity, and acrimony among the children of the deceased, between the spouse of the deceased and the bereaved family, and also among the
members of the bereaved family. The researcher suggests that to minimize cost of mortuary rite celebrations, proper education is essential. The writer is hopeful that with these recommendations, problems associated with the changing trends of the mortuary rites will be minimized, if not completely eradicated.
DEDICATION

This research work is dedicated to my dear wife, Mrs. Dorcas Atta-Cudjoe and, my lovely children Ken, Chris, Bright, Vida, Dora, Mary (Adom), Clara and Emelia.

I also dedicate it to my father, Mr. Thomas Abraham Eghan (Uncle Tommy) and my mother, Madam Agnes Assimeku (All of Blessed Memory). This project is also dedicated to my Uncle, Opanyin Kobina Apagya, my entire family and the entire members of the Ebenezer Methodist Church, Alhaji-New Achimota in Accra Diocese.

I dedicate this thesis to my late beloved wife, Mary Atta-Cudjoe (Nana Adjoa Benenwa).
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research work is the output of collective efforts of a number of individuals who in one way or the other made inputs towards its completion. I first render my heartfelt appreciation to the Lord Jesus Christ for His protection and guidance throughout my postgraduate study at the University of Ghana. I go with Helen Baylor in her lyrics that “If it had not been for the Lord on my side”. May His name be glorified.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Mortuary rites within Ghana are held in high esteem and ones success in life, moral life, age, status and nature of death determine the kind of mortuary rites performed in one’s honour. Usually, the communities see mortuary rites and associated observances as a social and cultural obligation to honour the dead for the contributions they have made on earth for the progress of the community where they lived. It is also an expression of facilitating a smooth transition from the land of the living to the world of spirits.

Various beliefs underline the performance of these ceremonies. The people believe that if they do not perform these rites for the dead to join the ancestors, the displeasure and anger of the deceased would bring upon them great misfortunes. Indeed, people also have a belief that the performance of the rites would bring blessings from the spirit of the dead to the bereaved family and the community. Emile Durkheim observes that death rites enable a community to demonstrate its unity and solidarity for the bereaved families.

However, while fulfilling these good intentions of honouring the dead, the economic and social investments required by these mortuary rites divert scarce resources away from many pressing concerns of the families and communities involved. Mortuary rites have now become a fashion in such a way that the sorrowful nature of death and its related philosophical and theological purposes are taken away by merry-making and also as time to show-off by many people in the community. It is now perceived that in the olden days mortuary rites were less costly than the present and this poses a problem. If such are perceived effects of mortuary rites, then its performance should be closely examined.
Assessing the impact of mortuary rites on the life of a community might be useful to the understanding of how cultural practices affect community development.

In spite of the fact that death is a phenomenon that people try to avoid, like many Akan communities, mortuary rites constitute an important ceremony to the people of Komenda Traditional Area in that human efforts, time and resources are employed extensively to perform such rites. However, there are certain issues associated with the performance of the mortuary rites that are grave concern due to socio-economic effects and philosophical reasons.

This study covers around Komenda Traditional Area, henceforth “Komenda”. Within the Komenda Traditional Area, there are these divisions: British Komenda, Abrobiano, Kafodzidzi, Kwesikwaa, Kissi, Kwahinkrom, Kokwaado, Dompuase, Kyiase, Antado, Besease and Ebukrom. In other words, “Komenda”, as it stands represents all the thirteen communities outlined, thus, Komenda Traditional Area, in this work.

Mortuary rites as understood among the people of Komenda include any of the ceremonial acts or customs employed at the time of death and burial. Mortuary rites otherwise referred to as “death rites” start from the moment of death of a person, the preservation of the corpse, pre-burial mourning, burial, post-burial mourning and the calendrical periods including 40th day, One year celebration and 10th Anniversary. It may, however, be presumed that, the changing trends in the mortuary rites have consequential socio-economic and traumatic effects on the deceased family members; widow/widower, children and significant others. The socio-economic effects are likely to be extended to the other members of the bereaved families, church and community.

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2 See Terminology in p. 18
Kofi Asare Opoku and J. S. Mbiti suggest that the Akans believe that death was created by God and is part of the rhythm of life.\textsuperscript{3} They explain that death is a non-negotiable part of life; for those who die continue to live in the land of the spirit, which is a replica of the world in which we live.\textsuperscript{4} Death is not something that we enjoy talking about, at least not seriously. It is against this background that this topic “Changing Trends of Mortuary Rites and Komenda Circuit of the Methodist Ghana” has been chosen for the study.

This thesis is therefore an attempt to study the traditional mortuary rites in Komenda. It also seeks to examine the possible factors influencing these changing trends and the traumatic and socio-economic effects that are brought to bear on the people as a result of the practices of these mortuary ceremonies. Finally, this research would explore the responses of the Methodist Church in the Komenda Circuit of the Cape Coast Diocese to these trends.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to Martin Heidegger, as long as an individual is born, death is inevitable. Death is inescapable for humankind. Again, as death is potentially present in the individual man, future is also said to be present.\textsuperscript{5} This study is not about the inevitability of death, but the financial burden and the traumatic effects of the changing trends of mortuary rites on the bereaved families, the Church and the entire communities of Komenda. It also explore the response of the Komenda Circuit of the Methodist Church to the practices associated with the changing trends of mortuary rites in the area.

\textsuperscript{4} Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 59.
1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study seeks to identify and discuss the changing trends of mortuary rites in the Komenda traditional area and the Methodist Church’s response to it. The following are the specific objectives of the study:

1. To examine the indigenous mortuary rites of the Komenda traditional area.
2. To identify and discuss the changing trends of mortuary rites among the people of Komenda.
3. To explore the philosophical underpinnings of mortuary rites from an African (Akan) perspective.
4. Identify and discuss the responses of the Methodist Church in the Komenda Circuit of the Cape Coast Diocese to the changing trends of the mortuary rites.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was directed towards finding answers to the following questions:

1. What are the indigenous ways of celebrating mortuary rites in Komenda?
2. What are the changing trends of mortuary rites in Komenda?
3. What are the philosophical and theological basis for the performance of mortuary rites among the people of Komenda?
4. How does the Methodist Church in the Komenda Circuit of the Cape Coast Diocese respond to mortuary rites?

1.5 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The Komenda as part of the Akan community was chosen due to its population size, geographical area, socio-economic activities, and religio-cultural practices of the people.
They are homogenous group united through their language and social institutions such as kinship and traditional authorities. Furthermore, cultural anthropologists, sociologists, historians and others in religious fields have written extensively on them. However, their works are different to the objectives of this research, which seeks to find out the socio-economic and traumatic effects of the practice of these changing trends of mortuary rites on the bereaved families, the church and the entire populace of Komenda.

The Methodist Church in Komenda was also chosen because it has been in existence about 180 years (27th July, 1837). It is a Protestant Church which has a similar belief system with most Protestant Churches in Ghana and more specifically in Komenda. Another reason is that the Methodist Church is one of the churches that allows accessibility to relevant records and documents to all people, especially the “insiders”. The Methodist Church has been of great assistance to the researcher who is also an “insider”.

The issues of funerals had been a concern to the church. For instance, the banning of wake-keeping (also referred to as wake) was initiated by the Methodist Church Ghana. Furthermore, the Methodist Church was chosen because, as a social institution, it has a social responsibility to respond constantly to social change, for example, mortuary rites. The Methodist Church has also adopted the Akan indigenous mortuary rite practices ever since its establishment in the Komenda Circuit.

1.6 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

This research is a qualitative study and it employs analytical approach. Analytical approach is the use of an appropriate process to break a problem down to elements necessary to solve it. Each element becomes a smaller and easier problem to solve. It is very intuitive, simple and based on how the researcher approaches everyday problems. The approach offered the
researcher the opportunity to use facts or information already available, and helped analyse critically the changing trends of mortuary rites. In addition to the analytical approach, theological and philosophical concepts were employed in the study. The theological view was alluded to because the subject matter looked into some issues involving the Creator, the ancestors, the divinities, and death and the hereafter. The researcher investigated the philosophy behind certain concepts, myths, sayings and beliefs of the Akan traditions, and proverbs that undergird the practice of some mortuary rites.

Ethnographic approach was also employed in the study. H.R Bernard and G. Ryan state that ethnography literally means “to write about a group of people, period of time.” Simply put, ethnography is the systematic study of people and cultures. It is designed to explore cultural phenomena where the researcher observes society from the point of view of the subject of the study. Employment of ethnographical principles has helped the researcher’s cultural perspective on the changing trends of mortuary rites of Komenda people. Ethnography is also used to enable the researcher to preserve the uniqueness of the people’s religious beliefs and practices, especially, on mortuary rites. The luxury of time, proximity to the field site, and the ability to coordinate data collection in an integrated manner made the research more fluid.

The researcher depended on primary and secondary sources. Dependence on primary data brings out a greater amount of originality, reliability and accuracy because data collected provided first-hand information which is relevant to the study. The process for the data collection was through participant observation and personal interviews. The researcher used question guides to collect data from ten categories, constituting the main respondents for

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7 Bernard and Ryan, *Qualitative data analysis*. 

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the study; twelve heads of households, three family heads, four key members of funeral associations, three chiefs, five members from deceased families, three morgue assistants, and four funeral home workers. The other respondents included five clergy (three males and two females), three leaders of other social organisations and ten members of the Komenda Circuit of the Methodist Church Ghana. The researcher similarly elicited responses from the Methodist Church in the Komenda Circuit with regards to the financial burdens and the trauma on bereaved families.

The personal interviews included having a personal interaction, ‘one on one’, with regards to the depth and magnitude of the topic under discussion. The interviews helped the researcher and respondents to develop a personal friendship and rapport which also created a serene environment for the researcher to meet the respondents face to face and so to elicit relevant primary information. Besides this, informal conversations, which in the context of this study took the form of unstructured interview, even though “time consuming” made it convenient to access relevant information.

Apart from the use of interview, the researcher also adopted two types of observational methods to collect data related to the performance of mortuary rites. He adopted ordinary and specific participatory observation at the mortuary rites and participated fully in the ones which happened in his own town, giving the fact that he belongs to both Komenda and Kissi. The researcher attended mortuary celebrations in the communities and highly participated in most of the funeral activities in his own family for a period of six months. He was actually critical in his assessment of issues by bringing objectivity into the study.

8 Tom K. B. Kumekpor, Research Methods and Techniques of Social Research: Section 1-3, 189.
Assessing the focus and scope of the study, the researcher had to consult different secondary sources such as books, journal, and articles in schools which were relevant to the study. These are published materials. Data from the electronic media specifically the internet websites, documents from government departments and the Constitution and Standing orders of the Methodist Church Ghana were also consulted.

1.7 LITERATURE REVIEW

Many books and articles have been reviewed for this study. The literature reviewed delved into the socio-economic and traumatic effects of the changing trends of mortuary rites in Komenda. Looking at the focus of the study, it is worthwhile to discuss the views of writers on the related five thematic areas: Akan traditional belief in God, ancestors and divinities, man, death and the hereafter and the changing trends of mortuary rites.

1.7.1 Akan Belief in God

Sarpong discusses in his book, *Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture*, which Ghanaians, as part of the African community, believe in the existence of one Supreme Being whom they regard as the supreme over all other creation.\(^\text{10}\) He expounds that, different tribes call this Deity by different names, but the qualities attributed to Him are almost identical in every community.\(^\text{11}\) Relatively, Mbiti, in his work, *African Religion and Philosophy*, explains that the origin and sustenance of all things on earth which include death is God. To him, God is no stranger to Africans and, therefore, there are no atheists in traditional life of them.\(^\text{12}\) He emphasises that the historical, geographical, social, and cultural

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environment of each traditional people are determinant factors of African or Akan belief in Supreme Being.\textsuperscript{13}

Mbiti elucidates that Africans’ knowledge about God (Supreme Being) is expressed in proverbs, short statements, songs, prayers, names, myths, stories and religious ceremonies.\textsuperscript{14} In the book, \textit{Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture}, Sarpong discusses the omnipotence of the Supreme Being in the entire life of the Akan indigenous system. He submits that the name of the Supreme Deity is always mentioned in speech and talk, greetings, popular tales, Ghanaian songs, poetry, Ghanaian art (designs and patterns stamped into cloths and on carvings which bears the names or attributes of Supreme Being).\textsuperscript{15} He adds that all these channels are easy and simple to remember, it is therefore, passed on to other generations since there is no sacred documentation in traditional societies.\textsuperscript{16} For example, \textit{Onyame ennkum wo a, wo nnwu}, literally means “If God does not kill you, you will not die” (Proverb),\textsuperscript{17} Kofi \textit{Nyame} (Name of person), and \textit{Onyame ma adze pa kye me a}… “If God gives me a good morning…” (Greetings),\textsuperscript{18} \textit{Gye Nyame}, which means, “except God” depict the power of God\textsuperscript{19} and many others.

In his publication, \textit{Hearing and Keeping Akan Proverbs}, Opoku explains that the Akans believe that God is indispensably a spirit and no pictorial representations of Him.\textsuperscript{20} He observes that the Akan people have three common names for the Supreme Being: \textit{Onyame}, \textit{Ονψανκοπεξ} and \textit{Ξοδμασκομα Boadze}, which means “the Supreme Being or Great Spirit,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{13} Mbiti, \textit{African Religion and Philosophy}, 30.
\item \textsuperscript{14} Mbiti, \textit{African Religion and Philosophy}, 29.
\item \textsuperscript{15} Sarpong, \textit{Ghana in Retrospect}, 10.
\item \textsuperscript{16} Mbiti, \textit{African Religion and Philosophy}, 29.
\item \textsuperscript{18} Sarpong, \textit{Ghana in Retrospect}, 9.
\item \textsuperscript{19} Sarpong, \textit{Ghana in Retrospect}, 10.
\item \textsuperscript{20} Opoku, \textit{Hearing and Keeping}, 1.
\end{itemize}
the Creator and Sustainer of all things”. Similarly in, ‘’West African Traditional Religion,’ Opoku presents some other names of the Supreme Deity such as Τοφερακμπζν (Dependable), Τοτροβονσ (The One who causes the rain to fall abundantly), Τσέτσκοφαμνά (He who is there now as from ancient times), Νάνα (Grand Ancestor) and Μαρμάρα (Excavator, Originator, Carver, and Architect). He postulates that the Akans place no limitations on the power of Supreme Being, and therefore, the entire universe is His temple, because He is spirit and omnipresent.

1.7.2 Akan Belief in Divinities and Ancestors

Opoku submits that the Akan people have the firm belief that the subordinates to the Creator or Absolute (Nyame, Ονγκοκπζν or Ξδόμακκον) are divinities or minor deities (Abosom). He therefore agrees that, minor gods were created by the Creator God to fulfil specific functions. He explains that, as creatures, they have limited powers to perform their ascribed functions and none of them uses the unlimited powers and authority of the Supreme Being. Sarpong adds in Ghana in Retrospect, that divinities range from great tribal gods to little private gods.

Quarcoopome in his writings, West African Traditional Religion, posits that Akan traditionalists perceive the divinities or minor or lesser gods, as intercessors, intermediaries, or messengers to the Supreme Being. Accordingly, the Akan holds the belief that the divinities, or lower deities or spirits (abosom) assist them in many ways on earth. They also

21 Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 1.
23 Opoku, West African Traditional Religion, 15.
24 Opoku, West African Traditional Religion, 54.
26 Sarpong, Ghana in Retrospect, 14.
protect the living against misfortune, and for peace and prosperity.\textsuperscript{27} He further states that divinities are consulted to ensure victory in times of war and epidemic or other national crisis.\textsuperscript{28} Quarcoopome submits in this book that the main traditional religious leaders who are chiefly connected with the divinities are the traditional priests, medicine men and the diviners.\textsuperscript{29} He states that some of the divinities are connected with natural objects like rivers, lakes, streams, lagoons, the sea, mountains and rocks etc.\textsuperscript{30} Among the Akans, there are the earth goddess, Asaase Yaa; the sea god, Nana Bosom Po; the consort of Onyame, Tano, Pra, Densu (Rivers) and Bosomtwe (Lake). Similarly, J. B. Danquah asserts in his work, \textit{The Akan Doctrine of God: A Fragment of Gold Coast Ethics and Religion} that, the gods are treated with respect if they deliver the goods, and with contempt if they fail.\textsuperscript{31}

Regarding the ancestors, Kwame Gyekye in his book, \textit{African Cultural Values}, insists that Africans always have their ancestors present in their consciousness.\textsuperscript{32} Sarpong in \textit{African Cultural Values}, states that the belief in the spirit of dead and their influence over the living is normally found in all people and in every conceivable religion and culture.\textsuperscript{33} Quarcoopome describes ancestors as the souls of the departed heroes and heroines of the various Akan societies.\textsuperscript{34} For him, the Akan belief in ancestors mainly based on the general view that there is life after death and the possibility of communion and communication between the living and the dead is assured.\textsuperscript{35}

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{28} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 73.
\bibitem{29} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 70.
\bibitem{30} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 71-72.
\bibitem{33} Sarpong, \textit{Ghana in Retrospect}, 33.
\bibitem{34} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 128.
\bibitem{35} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 128.
\end{thebibliography}
In *West African Traditional Religion*, Opoku indicates that aside Supreme Being and the ancestors who are always held in high esteem, all other spiritual beings may be spoken ill of or sometimes ridiculed on occasion.\(^{36}\) Again, he opines that the relationship between the living family and their ancestors is mostly based on mutuality of obligation, thus, the living respect, venerate and feed the ancestors and the ancestors also guide and protect the living.\(^{37}\) Mbiti in his study, *African Religion and Philosophy*, postulates that for the living to express respect to the departed soul, bits of food are given, libation is poured out and instructions are carried to them.\(^{38}\) He elucidates that “the act of pouring libation (either of beer, milk or water) or giving portions of food to the living-dead are symbols of communion, fellowship and remembrance. They are the mystical ties that bind the living-dead to the surviving relatives”.\(^{39}\)

In her book, *Long Live the Dead: Changing Funeral Celebrations in Ashanti*, Marleen de Witte posits that the ancestors hold a functional role in the world of the living, especially in the life of their relatives. She further expounds that the ancestors have mystical powers and authority and their influences on the well-being of their living relatives may be positive as well as negative.\(^{40}\) In the Akan context, according to Quarcooopome, family is made up of the living, the dead and the generations yet unborn.\(^{41}\)

Opoku establishes that Akans do respect their ancestors as elders and predecessors, who still remain as the members of the families and live in *asamando*, the spirit world,\(^{42}\) However, Aidoo – Dadzie, in his *The Widowhood Rites of the Fante*, debunks the traditionalists belief

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\(^{41}\) Quarcooopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 128.
\(^{42}\) Opoku, *Hearing and Keeping*, 7.
that ancestors have an active role in the lives of the living by positing that death is a permanent cessation of life and, therefore, a dead person cannot in any way affect the lives of the living. Opoku maintains that the Akans conceive that, ancestors have powers to punish and reward their living relatives for bad and good deeds.\textsuperscript{43} In his work, he states some of the proverbs that depict the Akan belief in ancestors and their relationships. Such proverbs are: \textit{Esaman pa hyira ne ba}, literally means, ‘A good (benevolent) spirit blesses its child’, \textit{Esaman pa na odzi guan nam}, means, ‘A benevolent spirit eats the flesh of sheep’, and \textit{Esaman nnutogye \^tseasefo ansaana oedzidzi}, literally means, ‘A departed spirit does not wait for the living before it eats’.\textsuperscript{44}

Quarcoopome further elucidates that not every person who dies becomes an ancestor. There are rather lay down criteria or conditions one must fulfil to qualify one to become an ancestor. Such criteria, according to him, are adulthood, which is determined by marriage status, die a natural death with the exception of death on the battlefield in defence of the entire community. Good people with high moral and ethical standards, and those who have made a meaningful contribution to the total welfare of the community.\textsuperscript{45} He states that unlike the Supreme Being and the deities who are worshipped, ancestors are honoured and venerated.\textsuperscript{46}

1.7.3 Akan concept of Man

On the concept of man, Quarcoopome in his book, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, asserts that man is both biological (physical or material) and spiritual (immaterial) being\textsuperscript{47}: The biological nature of man as the blood (\textit{bogya}) and the spiritual side of man being

\textsuperscript{43} Opoku, \textit{Hearing and Keeping}, 7.
\textsuperscript{44} Opoku, \textit{Hearing and Keeping}, 7.
\textsuperscript{45} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 128.
\textsuperscript{46} Gyekye, \textit{African Cultural Values}, 161.
\textsuperscript{47} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 98.
represented by three entities - the spirit (sunsum), the father’s spirit (ντξυ) and the soul (ζκα). Accordingly, the blood is transmitted by the mother and it identifies one’s relationship with one’s mother’s family, clan, lineage, tribe and society at large. The spirit is the ego of a person and that accounts for the character (suban), disposition (βζβεο or nyimpasu) and intelligence (nyimdzee) of a person. The ντξυ is identified with the male sperm which is transmitted by the father to his children. Ντξυ, therefore, accounts for the inherited characteristics often displayed by the offspring. The last spiritual element of man is the soul (ζκα) which is given directly by God and vitalises life force in man. So when this soul (ζκα) leaves the body, then it agrees that the person is dead.

The Akan believe that the soul is that part of God in every human that makes him or her a living being and also an element which receives destiny from Onyame, so its departure from the body renders the person dead. Kofi Asare Opoku in his work, Hearing and Keeping, affirms that ζκα is the unique element in man and that animals do not have. He explains that animal and some plants, however, have a kind of spirit which the Akan call sesa which they believe the power of man can control.

Opoku emphasises this distinction between man and animals in the way the Akan count them. In the counting of animals, they say, for example, nguan ebien, two sheep. However, when referring to two people, the Akan do not say nyimpa ebien but nyimpa baanu. Again, he states that every ζκα has kradzin, a name which is given to a child according to the day of the week on which he or she is born. For example, Kwesi and Esi are born on Sunday (Kwesida), Kofi and Efua are for Friday (Fida) and others. It is then clear that animals do

48 Quarcoopome, West African Traditional Religion, 98.
49 Quarcoopome, West African Traditional Religion, 98.
50 Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 59.
51 Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 59.
52 Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 59.
not have *kradzin*, so man cannot be animal. He continues that “death does not end life; it is an extension of life”.

In *The Akan Doctrine of God*, J. B. Danquah conceives that *sunsum* as material element in man based on the assumption that if “the *sunsum* or spirit perishes along with the body, a physical object, then it follows that the *sunsum* also is something physical or material”. However, Quarcoopome contends Danquah’s inability to differentiate between the *honam* (body) and the *sunsum* (body) in his book, *West African Traditional Religion*. Kwame Gyekye’s *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought: The Akan Conceptual Scheme*, debunks Danquah’s conception of the *sunsum* being material in his work. He explains that *sunsum* is both divine (spiritual) and material (physical).

### 1.7.4 Death and the Hereafter

On the concept of death and the hereafter, Opoku in his work, *West African Traditional Religion*, asserts that death, to Akans is an inevitable journey that each one must make in order to reach the life beyond and continue to live as an ancestor. One of the Akan maxims states: “No one climbs the ladder of death and returns” which literally means that those who die never return to narrate their experience of death. The Akans, however, have various beliefs about death and the hereafter which are clearly seen from the mortuary rites and generally from their attitudes towards the dead and how they dispose of the dead. Nkansah-Kyeremanteng, the author of *The Akan of Ghana: Their History and Culture*, asserts that the traditionalist accepts death as a natural phenomenon, while bad conducts may lead to death as a result of punishment from ancestors. Opoku is of the view that “when death occurs

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54 Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 89.
57 Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, 133
the immortal part (the soul) separates itself from the body and survives the experience of death".\footnote{Opoku, West African Traditional Religion, 11.} For him, the various rituals performed for the dead express the unbroken family relationship between the living and the dead.\footnote{Opoku, West African Traditional Religion, 134.} He postulates that death is usually personified as a wicked destroyer that pays no respect for status, age or beauty, and takes away those whose time are due.\footnote{Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 59.}

Opoku further explains that because of the destructive nature of death, certain euphemisms and metaphors are used when talking about the death of a person. For example, \textit{Éaka beebi}, literally means ‘the person has got stuck somewhere’, \textit{Odoŋɛv etutu}, means, ‘A mighty tree has fallen’. This euphemism is often used when a chief dies.\footnote{Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 65.} Sarpong also posits in his writing, \textit{Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspect of Ghanaian Culture}, that death is inescapable and is never welcome. He expounds that apart from sickness, other agents can also cause death, such as poison, lighting or thunder, tree, witchcraft and drowning etc.\footnote{Sarpong, Ghana in Retrospect, 72.}

Furthermore, Quarcooipome, posits that death is the last of the rites of passage that a person has to go through on earth. In view of this, great care should be taken in burying the dead.\footnote{Opoku, West African Traditional Religion, 125.} He also agrees with Opoku that death, to the Akan is an act of God.\footnote{Quarcooipome, West African Traditional Religion, 124.} He avers that death is something inevitable, thus, a kind of debt to be paid by every creature on this earth.\footnote{Quarcooipome, West African Traditional Religion, 125.} To him, death is not the end of human existence, because there is life beyond the grave. This belief is shared by all religions. Quarcooipome further asserts that the idea of life - after - death varies from society to society, but the general traditional belief is that it is a carbon copy of this earthly life.\footnote{Quarcooipome, West African Traditional Religion, 125.}
The Akans believe that the spirit of man lives on after death. This is what they refer to as “ghost” (saman). Rattray affirms in his, *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, that human being ceases to live physically on this earth, but he or she continues to live on in the land of ghosts called asamando. Sarpong, in his, *The Ghanaian and Death*, is of the view that in the Akan tradition, the life one lives after death is a continuation of the same kind of life that is lived on this earth, only a better one for “in the life after death, there is no cheating, there is no physical pain or deformity, and there are no evil intentions or machinations”.

This is the reason why articles like clothes, sponge, towel, combs, pomades, gold trinkets and precious ornaments and money are put in the coffin for use by the dead relatives in the land of ghosts. Opoku submits that when the dead are neglected and they become unhappy, they can become a menace to the living; punish them through serious sickness and death. On the basis of this, the living gives the dead a befitting burial to avoid such ghost haunting.

1.7.5 Changing Trends of Mortuary Rites

In the study of Hagan, “Funeral and Development in Africa”: *Panafrican Association of Anthropologists*, it is established that Ghanaian funerals have changed over the years as a result of technological changes in the preservation of dead bodies, because morgues and embalming of corpses have made it possible to extend the period of preparations for the befitting burial. He concludes that where there are debts at the end of the ceremonies, these are shared among lineage members.

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Discussing the changing trends of mortuary rites in contemporary Ghana, Adjaye in his book, *Boundaries of Self and Other in Ghanaian Popular Culture*, maintains that it is not phenomenal for the funeral to be held a month or longer after deaths. He affirms that much of the lavish and ostentatious displays at contemporary funerals are for the consumption of the living than the dead. Modern scholarly literature on the changing trends of mortuary rites tends to focus on the trends and financial constraints on the bereaved family only. Adjaye, for instance, makes a lengthy contribution on the changing trends of mortuary rites in contemporary Ghana, but there is little commentary on the causes of these changes. However, his contribution is of relevance to this study and also assists the researcher to explore the causative agents and effects of the changes.

The implications of the issues discussed above is that, to better understand and interpret any religious practices of the Akan society, one requires thorough consideration of their thoughts and actions as they perform the rituals for the various rites like mortuary rites. The study of the Akan belief in God (Supreme Being) enhances the knowledge of the researcher on the creator of humankind and death. Again, these beliefs in divinities and ancestors are essential in this study which examines certain practices of the mortuary rites, the life after death and the influence of ancestors on the living. This Akan concept of man explains the part of human being that dies and the essence of interment. This study provides better grounds to understand and appreciate the material and spiritual element of man, belief in God in relation to death, belief in divinities and ancestors, the death and the hereafter, and the entire mortuary rites. Above all, the knowledge acquired from this review facilitated the researcher’s understanding and delineation of the indigenous philosophical and religious

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73 Adjaye, *Boundaries of Self and Others*, 159.
thoughts, which indeed form the basis of the changing trends of the mortuary rites observed among the people of Komenda.

1.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The better understanding of Heidegger’s philosophy or wisdom of death hinges upon the understanding of five key terms, phrases and distinctions. The first important Heideggerian distinction is the difference between being-at-an-end and being-towards-the-end. To Heidegger, death is not conceived of as the ending of us and dying cannot be understood in the sense of an ending. He asserts that death is a way to be, not a way to end. The term being-at-an-end does not mean death, but rather signifies a non-existent human. To Heidegger, being-towards-the-end rather signifies death. This refers to the way in which an existing human can be.

These three key terms, “ownmost, non-relational and not to be outstripped” are also cardinal to the understanding of Heidegger’s wisdom of death and are also the characteristics of death. He explains that ‘ownmost’ means ‘my death is my own’. Thus, I alone will die my death but cannot be shared by anyone. With this concept death has characteristics of being non-relational. The phrase “not to be outstripped” also signifies the inevitable possibility of death. Death, as Heidegger expounds, is something that is impending. Again, these inter-related distinctions also play a vital role in Heidegger’s philosophy of death: they-self/authentic-self, falling/fleeing, anxiety/fear and the potentiality-for-being: authentic and inauthentic.

75 Heidegger, “Being and Time,” 245.
Attempting to discuss the issue of death, Heidegger differentiates between the ‘they-self’ and the ‘authentic self’. He calls the ‘self’ of every ‘dayness das man’, the ‘they’. The ‘they-self’ through temptation, tranquilization and alienation convinces humans to treat death as actuality, an event and not as a possibility. This ‘they-self’ seduces us to convince ourselves that death is not really our own, tranquillises us against death-awareness because it cannot be shared by others, and thus alienates us from our authentic self by concealing death. However, temptation, tranquilization and alienation, according to Heidegger are the distinguishing marks of the kind of ‘being’ called “falling”. As falling, everyday Being-towards death is a “constant fleeing in the face of death”.\(^{77}\) He explains that we flee death by way of falling. The “fallness” of death is the tendency of us to exist in the ‘they-self’.

Heidegger states that every living organism dies. For him, death in its widest sense is a phenomenon of life.\(^{78}\) There is an undeniable fact that death is a daily occurrence. In a metaphysical study, death is an evil and suffering to man and biologically, is conceived as cessation of physiological functions. It is explained that as birth is the beginning of a living organism, death is the end of it.

However, Heidegger views with death from an existential point of view. He asserts that death is always the death of an individual person (Dasein) and may be seen either authentically or inauthentically. Inauthentically, death is described as an event among the world of events. Thus, it is one of the “they” who dies. In an authentic stand-point, death is one’s own and has a special meaning. Heidegger indicates that “Death as the end of Dasein’s own is most possibility-non-relational, certain and as such indefinite, not to the outstripped.”\(^{79}\) He further expounds that the “own most possibility of the self” is the

\(^{77}\) Heidegger, “Being and Time,” 254.
\(^{79}\) Heidegger, “Being and Time,” 280.
possibility of man going out of existence. He says it is time every one must biologically die his own death and one cannot die in the place of another. Therefore, “own most possibility” shows that death which is the future of every individual is his own death exclusively and this is an important characteristic of “the being of man” (Dasein). He further explains that death the “no-yet” needs to be understood in the unique existential sense. According to Heidegger, death is not like the end of a road.\textsuperscript{80} He explicates that a road up to the end point is an arbitrary or artificial end, but death as an end has the characteristics of natural necessity.

Heidegger concludes that death is a phenomenon of life that reveals the way in which a human being exists and what it means to be.\textsuperscript{81} He interprets death as a meaningful possibility by showing that death is an existential awareness of possible not-being.\textsuperscript{82} The above study of Heidegger has also revealed that death as the necessary end of Dasein leads to the understanding of the future. His notion of future as being potentially present along with past and present is a significant contribution to the understanding of time. The phenomenon of death again reveals authentic Dasein.

1.9 TERMINOLOGIES

Situating the keywords or terms within the framework of a given study, Amenga-Etego makes reference to Gerrie ter Harr’s submission that it is an integral part of scholarship.\textsuperscript{83} She argues that, according to Graham Harvey, such an exercise seeks to contextualise and delineate such terms by clarifying their usage for understanding a particular study. In this study, terms such as ‘Mortuary Rites’, particularly, ‘Akan’, ‘funeral’, ‘burial’, ‘clan’,

\begin{itemize}
  \item Heidegger, “Being and Time,” 287.
  \item Heidegger, “Being and Time,” 287.
  \item Heidegger, “Being and Time,” 287.
\end{itemize}
‘lineage’, ‘dirge’, ‘calendrical period’, ‘patrilineal and matrilineal inheritance’ have been employed in this context and not as they are understood in the English language.

The ‘Akan’, from a cultural-linguistic perspective, is a useful term which describes a group of people that share the same language, and many similar characteristics such as naming, puberty, marriage, death rites and royal artefacts and who belong to the same eight ‘matrilineal clan’ and ‘patrilineal sub groups’. The name Akan has since 1950 been used by scholars in Ghana to refer to “…the people whose dialects include Fante, Asante, Akuapem, Bono, Wassa, Agona, Akyem, Kwahu…[and] spoken in the Brong Ahafo, Ashanti, and Central Region and part of the Western and Eastern Regions as a first language…” These dialects are also spoken as a second language by Anyi (Aowin, Sefwi, Nzema and Ahanta, in the West and the Guans of Efutu-Awutu and Anum-Kyerépong-Larteh in the South and East, respectively. The Akan people are, therefore, very large ethnic group living in Ghana, but due to the geographical location in the context of this study, it is limited, generally to the Akan people of Ghana and specifically to the people of Komenda Traditional Area. There are other technical words in this study that need to be explained:

**Mortuary rites:** In this context, “mortuary rites” is also termed as “death rite”. Death rites is any of the ceremonial acts or customs employed at the time of death and burial Death rites also involve the moment of death of a person, preservation of corpse, preparation of the body, pre-burial mourning, interments, post-burial mourning and the calendrical rites or periods (40th day, one year celebration and others).

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86 Dolphyne, *The Akan Language In Sound System and Sound Structure*, xi-xii.
The Hereafter: Grammatically, hereafter, means ‘starting from this moment’ and “the hereafter” is also explained as “a life that some people believe continues after you die”\textsuperscript{87} In the context of death, Quarcoopome states that the idea of the hereafter varies from society to society, but defines it as the carbon copy of this earthly life.\textsuperscript{88}

Changing Trends: ‘Trend’ is defined as “a general direction in which something is developing”\textsuperscript{89} ‘Change’ is also defined “to replace something with a new or different thing”.\textsuperscript{90} Changing trends is, therefore, defined as “a pattern of gradual change in a condition, output, or process, or an average or general tendency of a series of data points to move in a certain direction over time, represented by a line or curve on a graph”.

Calendrical Rites: Catherine Bell defines calendrical rites as the rites celebrated beyond normal ceremonies that mark social stages of life, an equally obvious and important corpus of rituals.\textsuperscript{91} She states that just as rites of passage give order and definition to the biocultural life cycle, so calendrical rites give socially meaningful definitions to the passage of time, creating an ever-renewing cycle of days, months, and years.\textsuperscript{92} Calendrical rites usually establish a fundamental link between the past and present.\textsuperscript{93}

1.10 ORGANISATION OF THE STUDY

The study is divided into five chapters. The general introductory chapter deals with the background to the study, statement of the problem, research questions, aim and objectives

\textsuperscript{88} Quarcoopome, West African Traditional Religion, 127.
\textsuperscript{89} https://een.oxforddictionaries.com.trend
\textsuperscript{91} Bell, Ritual Perspectives and Dimensions (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 102.
\textsuperscript{92} Bell, Ritual Perspectives, 102.
\textsuperscript{93} Bell, Ritual Perspectives, 103.
of the study, significance of the study, and the scope of the research. Also included are discussion of the conceptual framework, methods of data collection and the organization of the study. It also reviews available literature relevant to the study. Chapter Two entitled Komenda worldview and mortuary rites examines historical background of the Komenda economic activities and indigenous occupation of the study area. Discussions are also done on the world view of the people of Komenda on belief in Supreme Being, ancestors, divinities, man, death and the mortuary rites. Chapter Three focuses on the factors that influence the change. Modern practices of mortuary rites were examined. Chapter Four primarily looks at the perceptions of death and the hereafter in African philosophy. Discussions on the views of death and the hereafter are presented in this chapter. Chapter five deals with reflections on mortuary rites by Komenda Circuit of the Methodist Church.

1.11 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
The welfare of individuals and groups is cardinal in any discussion about human beings. The usefulness of this research work lies primarily in the importance it attaches to human welfare and the extent to which cultural beliefs and practices enhance or undermine the welfare and progress of the people. The issues discussed in this research are of great benefit to educationists who may use them as a material to draw people’s attention to the effects of the changing trends of the mortuary rites. Findings from the research may serve as a useful tool for, politicians, policy makers, religious bodies (like Christians) and others who have the welfare of people at heart to formulate policies which may help the people to see the necessity to discard or reduce the cost-oriented practices. Again, the findings from this study may also be relevant for the traditional rulers to formulate rules to redeem the canker.

This material would be useful for the sociologists, economists and anthropologists as a background to their investigations on human behaviour. In particular, the research brings
to light the practice of the mortuary rites of the people of Komenda. It stimulates the interest for more research work on the cultural practices of the people. Literature of this nature is useful also for cross-cultural comparison, findings, recommendations and conclusion were covered.
CHAPTER TWO

PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES OF DEATH AND THE HEREAFTER

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Many people through ages have sought to understand the concept of death and the hereafter. Death, according to Quarcoopome, is a transition from one state of existence to another.94 It is believed that prior to a person’s birth, he or she lived in the other world, so at death, the person returns home. This is a process which is unavoidable by man and is expressed in an Akan maxim: ‘Owu atwer baako mmfo’, literally translated ‘the ladder of death is not climbed by only one person’. In the Akan parlance, this maxim thus emphasised that death is indispensable and that every person in this world would one day have to climb this ladder of death to where he or she came from; thus, hereafter death. Even though, death is described as a separation of the living from the dead, the separation here is life in a physical sense only. The Africans have a belief that life is beyond the grave.95

The issue of death and the hereafter have been widely discussed by both African and Akan philosophers. The philosophers see this belief as having a big scope that contains the universe and beyond and are also a visible and invisible phenomenon. This chapter examines the perception of African philosophy on death and the hereafter and also the practices of these concepts. Again, the Akan philosophical views of death and the hereafter are explored.

95 Quarcoopome, West African Traditional Religion, 125.
2.1 PERCEPTIONS OF DEATH AND THE HEREAFTER IN AFRICAN PHILOSOPHY

Mbiti maintains that the first rhythm of a generation is birth, and the rites of birth are performed in order to make the child a corporate and complete social being.\textsuperscript{96} The child then becomes mature, responsible and active member of the society through the performance of other initiation rituals: puberty, marriage and death.\textsuperscript{97} He elucidates that, death as the final stage of the life rhythm is the inevitable end to human race.\textsuperscript{98} Mbiti asserts that death links between the world of the living and the world of the spirit, the visible and the invisible. He further states that there are various ceremonies connected with death, burials, funerals, inheritance, and the living-dead.\textsuperscript{99}

Africans have a belief that death is for everybody born into this world. For this reason, they perceive death as a monster and a killer that robs people of their loved ones. In African societies, death is always assumed to have been caused by witchcraft or bad hearted people. In African philosophy, death is conceived as a departure, but not entirely extermination of a human life. For them, when someone dies, the person moves to join the ancestors in the other world of existence. This explicates why some societies perform elaborate mortuary rites when one dies. In Abaluyia, for example, the dead are buried naked as a preparatory stage for rebirth in the next world. This is a testimony from Ven Pashi William who witnessed this at the burial of a certain lady, but they could not let the people do the ritual because the lady they were burying was a Christian.\textsuperscript{100} Among the Ndebele, if the sick person is seriously in pain, his relatives kill what in their culture is known as “the beast of the ancestors” which is generally an ox or a goat for a poor man, and its killing is believed

\textsuperscript{96} Mbiti, *African Traditional Religion and Philosophy*, 145.
\textsuperscript{97} Mbiti, *African Traditional Religion and Philosophy*, 145.
\textsuperscript{98} Mbiti, *African Traditional Religion and Philosophy*, 145.
\textsuperscript{99} Mbiti, *African Traditional Religion and Philosophy*, 145.
\textsuperscript{100} Ven Pashi William, Testimony about Traditional Ritual before Burying a Woman among the Madi
to accelerate death. However, in attempt to resuscitate the sick, cold water is poured on him or her and making him or her to inhale smoke from certain herb.\textsuperscript{101} Again, the butcher of the so-called “beast of the ancestors” is also a sign linking both the dead and the living members of the family and a certitude that the dying person will not go into inhospitable country, but will move to a friendly community.\textsuperscript{102}

In the Madi tradition, before burying adult females, they wrap the opening of their genital organs to avoid their menstruation blood run on themselves to the embarrassment of the people in the next world.\textsuperscript{103} For the adult males, they remove the penis out of the sheet for the wrapping of the body and open up the foreskin to aid erection and protection in the world.\textsuperscript{104} Much as the Africans believe in the survival of the dead, when one dies, one does not vanish, because of ones role in the programme of the living one is still there with the people. Thus, the people then revere and consult such living dead in matters related to the family.\textsuperscript{105}

Making reference to Idowu’s study about the belief of the Yoruba, Mbiti submits that all that we do on earth, we shall account for by kneeling in heaven and state our case at the feet of God.\textsuperscript{106} This idea of judgment or reward is also found among other communities like the Lodagaa, Lozi and Songo. For example, Mbiti asserts that the Lodagaa fear that suffering awaits bad people at the cross of the river of death and not arrival in the next world, everyone must endure punishment (a kind of bullying) from the older spirits”.\textsuperscript{107}

\textsuperscript{101} Mbiti, African Traditional Religion and Philosophy, 146.
\textsuperscript{102} Mbiti, African Traditional Religion and Philosophy, 146.
\textsuperscript{103} Ven Pashi William, Testimony about Traditional Ritual before Burying a Woman among the Madi
\textsuperscript{104} A testimony from Andruga James
\textsuperscript{105} A testimony from Andruga James
\textsuperscript{106} Mbiti, African Traditional Religion and Philosophy, 189-199.
\textsuperscript{107} Mbiti, African Traditional Religion and Philosophy, 161.
For one to be received well and have a happy life in the next world, Mbiti purports that: “the Lozi wear tribal marks on the arms and ears so that they may be recognised.”108 The Songo people also have the similar belief in that, for them, “wearing a tribal mark on the shoulders will guarantee them recognition when their national hero returns to save them”.109

The concept of punishment or reward though conventional among the Yoruba, they are in fact not certain about the final destiny of the deceased. They believe some of the dead are put in good place (Orun rere) while others are sent to a bad place (Orun apadi).110 According to the people Yoruba, the first group meets the relatives and lives more or less as people normally do in this life, but the other group goes to the place of eternal suffering.111

Aside from the few examples adduced above and some either isolated cases in seeing the death and the hereafter in terms of reward and punishment, the majority of African societies believe that the hereafter is a continuation of this present life, yet somehow changed. Mbiti postulates that personalities are retained, social and political statues are maintained, sex distinction is continued, human activities are reproduced in the hereafter, the wealth or poverty of a person remains unchanged and in many ways, the hereafter is a carbon copy of the present.112

In the light of the foregone discussions, it is suffice to contend that Africans are not ignorant about what happens after this earthly life because they have a strong belief in the continuation of the present life after death.

108 Mbiti, African Traditional Religion and Philosophy, 161.
110 Quarcoopome, West African Traditional Religion, 127.
111 Quarcoopome, West African Traditional Religion, 127.
112 Mbiti, African Religion and Philosophy, 161.
2.2 VIEWS ABOUT DEATH AND THE HEREAFTER IN AKAN PHILOSOPHY

Death, according to Quarcoopome, is the last of the rites of passage that a person must go through on earth.\textsuperscript{113} Akan societies believe that death is the divine act of Supreme Being, thus, the Creator sanctioned death for humankind, so death becomes an inevitable end to all persons. From Mbiti’s point of view, death is the most significant solemn moment of life partly being that it concerns everybody as it brings loss and sorrow to every family and community at large.\textsuperscript{114} Again, death to the Akans is the departure of the soul from the body into the ancestral world (asamando) where they often assist the living when in need. It is this belief that places death as the pivot of life and also imposes on the living the obligation to treat the dead kindly by giving the dead befitting mortuary rites. Even though death is described as a separation of the living from the dead, the separation here is life in a physical sense only.

Death, among the Akans, is regarded as the physical separation of the living and the dead. At death, the soul is separated from the body to go and assume another life somewhere independent of the body. The physical body decays, but the soul continues to live. The indelible fact that death is universal, unpredictable, inescapable, and ultimately beyond human control is expressed in various forms such as proverbs, myth, dirges, naming, euphemisms and others by the Akan.

The origin of death is not actually certain. Mythologically, the Akans has it that when all three choices of immortality, resurrection and ability to become young again failed, God devised a plan by sending a message through the chameleon to the effect that human beings will live forever .\textsuperscript{115} The myth has it that people grew old without dying, so man tried to

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\textsuperscript{113} Quarcoopome, West African Traditional Religion, 133.
\textsuperscript{114} Mbiti, African Religions & Philosophy, 149.
\textsuperscript{115} Opoku, West African Traditional Religion, 124.
reach God to tell him about the problem of old age which will be created without death. They piled up the mortars in an attempt to reach God. They needed one to reach out to God, but had none, so they decided to remove the first mortar to put on the top. As they did, all the others crumbled down. This made God decide to introduce death to human race. He, therefore, commissioned a quadruped (dog) and reptile (chameleon) to convey the message of immortality and death to man. The quadruped was to pronounce the immortality of man and reptile was to inform man he would die. The quadruped tarried on the way and the reptile arrived first to pronounce death unto man. Other sources mentioned them as dog and the chameleon. According to Mbiti, although this myth speaks about how death came, there are no myths in Africa about how death might be one day overcome or removed from the world.

Opoku maintains that the Akan people have many ways of saying that a person is dead. A cultured Akan would not simply say: “Onyimpa no evu,” the person is dead, but, he or she would use some of the following euphemisms to express it: “Ekra ne kra ekyi,” the person has gone back to where his or her soul came from. He expounds that the Akan have a belief that what makes a person a living human being is the part of God which the Akan call “ekra” (soul). And when the “ekra” leaves the body, it returns to where he or she came from. To the Akans, therefore, death is a return, a going back, to the source of life. Another euphemism is “aka nkyen egu,” the person has spilled the salt. Opoku explains the idea of the Akan that the living people eat salt and those who die stop eating salt and for that reason, the Akan always give saltless food to the departed. Again, the euphemism “Shen

117 Mbiti, African Religion and Philosophy, 117.
118 Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 65.
119 Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 65.
120 Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 65.
121 Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 65.
kɛ ekura,” the chief has gone to the village. In his explanation, he states that Akan have a saying that “ɛhen nnwu na ɛabɛ owu abata ne dzin ho,” the chief does not die and so you do not associate his name with death. The idea he explains is that the office of the chief, as the ruler of the society, always remains even though a ruling chief passes away.

For the Akans, another way of expressing death is through proverbs. For instance, some expressions like “ɛbra twa owu”, life must end in death. This means that the end of life is death, and once life is given, it must necessarily end in death. Opoku expounds that this proverb is a reflection on the inevitability of death.\(^{122}\) “Owu adar vvɔɛɔfaakor”, the cutlass or hoe of death does not weed in one place is another form of proverbs expressing the death of someone. Here, the Akan believe that death is like the hoe, which is an important farm implement that farmers use in weeding their farms. This explains the universality of death.\(^{123}\) Another proverb is “owu kura adze a, nkwa ntum nngye”, when death holds something in its grip, life cannot take it away. This suggests how strong death is.\(^{124}\) The maxim “ɛdomankoma wu sesa nyimpa ne dabew,” the Creator’s death changes person’s sleeping place. With this, the Akan believes that God created life as well as death, a belief which is found in drum texts as well as in oral communication.\(^{125}\) He explains that those who die do not remain in the grave, but leave the world of the living for asamando (ancestral world). Death, therefore, gives humanity a new dwelling place by changing them from citizens of this world into denizens of the spirit world. Quarcoopome expounds this belief with an Akan funeral song: “ɛdomankoma afa osimesi kɛ,” literally means, ‘The Creator

\(^{122}\) Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 59.
\(^{123}\) Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 59.
\(^{124}\) Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 59.
\(^{125}\) Opoku, Hearing and Keeping, 61.
has taken so and so away’. Quarcoopome stresses the fact that death is, however, not the end of human existence, but a transition from one state of existence to another.\textsuperscript{126}

The Akan people also believe that dirge, which is the slow, solemn, and mournful piece of music usually sung at the funeral, is another form of expressing the death of a person. The form and content of dirge vary chiefly to reflect the personal or individual character, importance of his or her peculiar affiliations, and the depth to which the loss is felt.\textsuperscript{127} Nketia quotes a portion of dirge sung by Amba Etsiwaba of Cape Coast for her mother of \textit{Av\textgreek{z}v\textgreek{a} ebusua}. It dwells on the plight of those left behind, and makes reference to the clan and ancestors of the mourner and of her deceased mother. It begins lightly and grows in length and depth as the sorrow of the mourner grows in intensity.

\begin{center}
\begin{tabular}{|l|l|}
\hline
\textbf{Dirge} & \textbf{Literal meaning} \\
\hline
\textit{Me na e! Me na e!} & Mother! Mother! \\
\textit{Aba Yaa ee!} & Aba Yaa! \\
\textit{Wo ara nyim mbr\textgreek{z} \textgreek{v}\textgreek{z}\textgreek{\nu}e.} & You know our plight. \\
\textit{Me na e! Wo ara nyim mbr\textgreek{z} \textgreek{v}\textgreek{z}\textgreek{\nu}e.} & Mother! You know our plight. \\
\textit{Wo ara nyim d\textgreek{z} obiara nyi tsir.} & You know that no one has your wisdom \\
\textit{Me na, k\textgreek{z}p aky\textgreek{z}.} & Mother, you have been away long. \\
\textit{Mbofraa yi ee?} & What of the little ones left behind? \\
\textit{Eeee!} & Alas! \\
\textit{Na woana b\textgreek{z}b\textgreek{a} na \textgreek{v}\textgreek{\eta}m\textgreek{u}} & Who would come and restore our breath \\
\textit{Gye d\textgreek{z} m\textgreek{\'eg}ya Adom ara na \textgreek{z}aba.} & Unless my father \textit{Adom} himself come. \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\end{center}

\textsuperscript{126} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 133.

\textsuperscript{127} Nketia, \textit{Funeral Dirges}, 6.
Eeee! Eeee! Eeee!  
Alas! Alas! Alas!

Na ץעץ’a, na ץעץ’dzen oo!  
Quite often it is a struggle for us!

Yaanom ạkp ạky’oo.  
It is a long time since our people left.

Ekoo odzi ab’nana ofir awiriwa, Amba.  
Amba, descendant of the Parrot that eat palm nuts, hails from the Ancestral chamber.

Minnyi sumabew biara.  
I cannot find refuge anywhere.

Me, Amba Adoma,  
I, Amba Adoma,

Me nana na okee’egudze  
It was my grandfather that weighed gold

Ma ọsịve bubui.  
And the scales broke under its weight.

Nana Kịsẹ Gyaasenyi nye me a:  
I am a member of Grandsire Kịsẹ household

Yennhu bea ọzịmuα oo,  
We are at a loss where to go:

Yaanom mbra,  
Let our people come,

Yaanom ọzịψμβζβζζ dodo!  
For we are deeply distressed!

Na ץעץ’a, obi reba a ọzịmuα ηζν.  
When someone is coming, let them send us something.

Ampa, Ekoo a odzi ab’nana nye ’m.  
Yes, I am the grandchild of the Parrot that eats palm nuts. 128

An Akan legend, Daniel Amponsah (Agya Koo Nimo), also composed the following dirge when his first wife died:

**Dirge**  
**Literally meaning**

Dwamena  buee ee!  
Dwamena wailing!

Yee ee!  
Wailing!

Dwamena  buee ee!  
Wailing!

---

Yee, yee, me wu a
na aṣṣ́μ asa oo

my death
ends all

ψι κέδα αα, ψζναμ Γψαμα ασε
na ψζζβα nso a, ψζναμ Gyama ase

when we are going to sleep, we walk under
“Gyama” tree,
and when we are coming, we walk under
“Gyama” tree,

“Γψαμα” βεβν αβξ με δο.

“Gyama” will fall on me.

Dwamena, buee ee!
Yee, bebue yee, Dwamena, buee ee!
Yee yee, mowu a na asjm asa oo!

Dwamena wailing!
Wailing!
Death ends it all!129

‘Gyama’ in this lyric is a name of a big tree in the forest. “Yee, bue” also means ‘wailing’, thus, when someone is crying. According to him, this song informs the public that what has happened has happened, for my intimate friend and loved one is gone so that is all130.

The verbal aspect of Akan mourning uncovers much expression in the libation prior to the dead, singing very impressive memorial dirges to the personality and successes of the deceased. In Akan communities, mourners to the bereaved, friends and sympathisers can join in the weeping by singing a dirge or any other funeral songs. Singers are, therefore, expected to sing encouraging and motivating songs using appropriate gestures and movement where necessary131.

130 Nketia, Funeral Dirges, 19.
131 Nketia, Funeral Dirges, 21.
Nketia observes that a good funeral singer appeals to people’s emotions and brings the audience into action. He continues that one of the necessities of a performer is to really feel the tragedy of the occasion and the emotional feeling embodied in the dirge. The singer should avoid pretense when singing and mock-sadness should not be entertained, else you would be branded a witch and a callous person. In Akan context, tears must come out from the singer. However, if it is difficult to shed tears, one should find a way to induce it by any means. From the discussions on dirges at the funerals, Sarpong makes it evident that death is regarded as the occasion when a deceased person sets out on a journey to the underworld or spirit world to which his or her ancestors have already gone.

Quaroopome states another belief of the Akans that communion and communication are possible between the living and the dead as evidence of the reality of life after death. The ancestors, to the Akans, are the souls of the departed heroes and heroines of the various Akan tribes. Opoku also explicates that death, though it does not sever his connections with his family, but extends the family relationships into eternity. Hence, the ceremonies and rituals performed by the living for the dead emphasise the unbroken relationship between the living family and the dead. In view of this, a great care is taken in performing these rituals and an elaborate mortuary rite is performed to buttress the belief that death is only a transition and that there is life hereafter. The Akans gorgeously adorn their dead in the same way as the living members. Libations are poured to the ancestors to reward the living with long life and prosperity. Articles such as clothing, sponges, towels, combs,
pomades, gold trinkets and precious ornaments are put into the coffin. Besides the afore-
mentioned, a small of money and certain treasured possessions are put into the casket to
help the dead to cross the river of no return.\textsuperscript{141}

Quarcoopome contends that not every person qualifies to become an ancestor for the simple
reason that there are certain basic conditions to be fulfilled, apart from the fact of death.\textsuperscript{142}
Adulthood is the first criterion and is determined by marriage status. According to
Quarcooopome, such an adult must have died a natural death.\textsuperscript{143} The Akans disqualify deaths
through unclean diseases such as leprosy, epilepsy, sleeping sickness, madness, smallpox
and others. They believe that those afflicted with such diseases are as a punishment for their
sins or crimes.

Again, the good people with higher moral and ethical standards are being rewarded. Lastly,
those who have meaningfully contributed to the total welfare of the community are qualified
for ancestorship.\textsuperscript{144} Moreover, the dead are believed to have an important role in the life of
their families and society at large because of their increase powers. The role of the ancestors,
according to Opoku, is to protect, direct, intervene, and guide their families and also to serve
as elders of the family in the ancestral world.\textsuperscript{145} In effect, ancestors are capable or have
power of influencing the affairs of the living either for good or evil.\textsuperscript{146} The Akan’s belief in
the ancestors is based on the general idea that life continues after death.\textsuperscript{147} Ancestors, in
Akan context, are placed in the category of holy people in the other religions like the saints

\textsuperscript{141} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 127.
\textsuperscript{142} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 128.
\textsuperscript{143} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 128.
\textsuperscript{144} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 128.
\textsuperscript{145} Opoku, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 135.
\textsuperscript{146} Opoku, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 134.
\textsuperscript{147} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 128.
in Christendom. The Akan contest that family is made up of the dead, the living and generation yet to be born.¹⁴⁸

Functionally, the life of the family and the entire community is of great concern to the ancestors because of their increase powers.¹⁴⁹ Ancestors, according to Quarcoopome, are the guardians of their family affairs, property, traditions, ethics and other activities. They are regarded as invisible police force and spiritual superintendents of the families and communities. Again, the Akan believe that ancestors are the best group of intermediaries between God and the divinities on one side and the people on the other side since they have full access to the channels of communicating directly to the divine beings.¹⁵⁰ By their virtue as intermediaries, they have the mandate to reward right conduct and to punish the whole tribe or clan or lineage or family or the individual for crimes against the society with sickness or death.¹⁵¹ The Akan, however, do not worship their ancestors, but are rather venerated.¹⁵²

In Akan philosophy, there is the belief in reincarnation which also testifies to the belief in life beyond the grave.¹⁵³ Quarcoopome explains that some ancestors who seek to return to this life to finish the unfinished work on earth are believed to reincarnate.¹⁵⁴ The names like Ababio (came again) find expression in the belief in reincarnation. The Akan also believe in partial reincarnation or the transmigration of the soul which gives evidence to the belief in the hereafter.¹⁵⁵ Quarcoopome expounds this belief that some immediately after death resume normal life in some places under assumed names. To some extent, some do bear

children and believed to have continued their trade or changed their occupation, which is termed ‘transmigration’.\footnote{Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 127.}

\section*{2.3 CONCLUSION}

From the discussions above, it is evident that life and death are inseparable, and therefore, discussions about them cannot be done solitary. It is generally accepted that death is the last stage of the rhythm of life and it links between the world of the living and the world of the spirit, the visible and the invisible. It was seen that in African philosophy, death is conceived as a departure, but not entirely extermination of a human life. The belief system of some African societies like Abaluyia, Yoruba, Madi, Ndelebe, Lodagaa, Lozi and Songo in death and the hereafter are examined at in the chapter. The idea of judgment and reward is also discussed. It is shown out in the discussions that Akan societies believe that death is the divine act of Supreme Being; thus, the Creator sanctioned death for humankind, so death becomes an inevitable end to all persons. It is also seen from the discussions that the Akan have various means of expressing death. Some of the means are through myths, proverbs, euphemisms, dirges and libation. They also believe that their families comprise the dead, the living and the generations yet unborn. The Akans agree that not all dead persons are qualified to be ancestors for they need to fulfil certain requirements. Ancestors have important roles to play in the lives of the family and the entire community. They are mandated to reward the right with long life and prosperity and to punish the wicked with sickness and death. In the Akan context, ancestors are venerated but not worshipped. The Akans also believe in both reincarnation and partial reincarnation or transmigration.
This philosophical belief of the Akans is not alien to the people of Komenda. The next chapter explores how Komenda Circuit of the Methodist Church Ghana responds to this philosophical world view as far as mortuary rites are concerned.
CHAPTER THREE
KOMENDA WORLD VIEW AND MORTUARY RITES

3.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the main focus is to present the world view of the people of Komenda and their mortuary rites. A brief historical survey of the people of Komenda is offered. The topographical nature and the weather conditions of the area as well as the socio-political structure like the paramount chief, queen mother, linguist, chief priest and other sub-chiefs are discussed. Religious and socio-cultural heritage of the people which include religious life, belief in Supreme Being, lesser gods, ancestors, humankind, taboo, puberty rites, marriage, kinship, hospitality, music and dance, festivals and asafo companies would be highlighted in this chapter. This section would finally look at the impact of this world view on the people of Komenda.

3.1 THE LOCATION AND HISTORY OF THE KOMENDA PEOPLE

The Komenda is located at the south-western part of the Central Region of Ghana along Cape Coast and Takoradi trunk road with an estimated population of 36,836 based on 2010 Population Census.\(^\text{157}\) It occupies the area of more than 2,839 km\(^2\). The Komenda shares boundary with a number of towns and villages: Dutch Komenda and Anyinase at the east and Asjm Asa and part of Wassa Heman in the West. The northern part share boundary with Saman Abotar Park and Kwesi Adum and at the South is shared with the Gulf of Guinea. The physical features and terrain of other towns, motor roads, both tarred and untarred make movement easier during celebration of mortuary rites. The topography of Kissi makes it a natural choice for the erection of television and radio masts. Development of missionary

activities and establishment of College of Education and Sugar Factory have also contributed immensely to the shaping of the town and the celebration of the mortuary rites in the area.

The area consists of dense scrub tangle and grass which grow to an average height of 5.0m. There are pockets of relatively dense forest around British Komenda, Kissi, Aboransa and their sub-communities. These physical characteristics have given good opportunities in agriculture to the people. The proximity of the Gulf of Guinea has made fishing a major activity along the coastal towns and villages such as British Komenda, Kafodzidzi, Abrobian and Kwesikwaa. This vegetation helps the people of Komenda to determine the days and periods appropriate for organising mortuary rites in the area.

In the Komenda ethnohistory, it is evident that the people of British Komenda (Akatakyi) were among the Fante speaking groups that migrated from Tekyiman in the Brong Ahafo for some time and finally settled at Mankessim. A group led by Nana Komeh Panyin and Nana Kwahin left Mankessim and finally settled at the banks of Lake Susu at Kanka, thus, Esuegya, which is their present settlement. Nana Komeh Panyin gained the land by killing Ekyi who was then the killer in the forest. The history indicates that during the period between 1482 and 1900, there were interactions among Akatakyi and various European representatives – Portuguese, Dutch, English, French, etc. The name Komenda came through a caretaker from Eguaso called Akomani. He was supervising then Esuegya people (Akatakyi) on behalf of Nana Abo Takyi. The Portuguese and Dutch had been calling Akomani, “Commany”, and “Commando”, respectively. The English had also been calling him “Commander” and that the place became and called “Komenda”. The town Komenda also qualified ‘British’ because, the English or British became the key European people to
settle and trade in the town. At that time the Dutch people were also in Kanka and so the town became known as ‘Dutch Komenda’.

According to well authenticated traditions, the citizens of Kissi, which originally called ‘Kusi’, migrated from Wamaso Anhwiam in the Denkyira District around Twifu Praso in the Central Region to settle at Eguafo Breman in the same region. After a long stay in Breman, they came to settle at British Komenda, an area called ‘Bɛtsewɔ Anaafo’. The place was named after the eldest woman among the leaders of the migrants from Eguafo Breman. Later, they came to settle at their present settlement, Kissi, which is the farming community.158

The Chief of Aboransa, Nana Kwamena Anobil II, narrated that the people of Aboransa were among the Fantes who came to settle at British Komenda under the leadership of Nana Komeh Panyin in 1448. They decided to be independent and finally came to settle around a ‘well’ called “Afomena”, which is their present place. According to the interviewee, Nana Kwamena Anobil led them to the place and became the first chief of Aboransa.159

3.2 ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES

Economic activities in the area are defined as the production, distribution and consumption of commodities in the area. The people of Komenda have many economic activities (occupations) they undertake. They have two forms of occupations: indigenous and contemporary occupations.

158 Discussions with Oman kyeame Kofi Essoun, of British Komenda, 14th December, 2016.
3.2.1 Indigenous Occupations

Almost all the communities in the Komenda have many things in common such as religion, rites of passage, festivals, sports and games, music and dance, taboos, education, marriage, kinship and occupation. The area has a wide range of occupation of which some are public and private, major and minor, casual and permanent. The major occupations of the people of British Komenda are fishing, farming, fish mongering, and sugar production. The other occupations in the town are civil service, trading and security services.

The ethno-history of Komenda area indicates that the economy before the emergence of the Europeans was characterized by small-scale farming and fishing. Farming is one of the traditional economic activities in the Komenda area. The citizens take interest in farming. The economy is basically subsistence farming while some of the crops grown in the area include cocoa, yam, cassava, plantain, maize, water melon, groundnuts, cocoyam, banana, coconuts, oranges and vegetables. They were their major sources of income in the olden days, but due to a disease that attacked them, the productions have gone down. Because the citizens are predominantly farmers, the food they normally serve during funeral celebrations are *fufu* with either light soup, groundnut soup or palm nut soup, kenkey of all kinds and stew of different types.

Again, the citizens of British Komenda, Abrobiano, Kafodzidzi and Kwesikwaa caught fish from sea, river and lake. Fishing is exclusively the activity of the men. The people do not only fish at own respective seashores but some travel within and outside the country like Shama, Sekondi, Moree and Saltpond (within the country) and Liberia, Sierra Leone and Ivory Coast (outside the country) for their fishing expedition. The salted fish and smoked ones are sent to the market centres within and outside the traditional area for sale and also for the exchange of foodstuffs. Smoking and salting of fish are exclusively undertaken by
the women in the area. In the past, the people in these areas used more of fish in refreshing their sympathisers during the celebration of mortuary rites.

The next important economic activity is trading or “buying and selling”. Items sold range include manufactured products like polythene products, aluminium wares, provisions, cosmetics, clothing, toiletries, and agricultural products both processed and raw. These items are sold in the communities with established market days such as Komenda, Kissi and Ebukrom. Items needed for the burial of corpse are commonly and cheaply sold at the various market centres. There are regular and highly developed markets for certain communities in the area making commercial activities in the traditional area very lucrative.

The table below shows the market days for the various towns in the Komenda traditional area.

Table 1: Market days for various towns in the Komenda traditional area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Market Day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British Komenda</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kissi</td>
<td>Tuesday and Friday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebukrom</td>
<td>Tuesday and Friday</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


3.2.2 Contemporary Occupations and Livelihoods

In Komenda, the building of Teacher Training College of Education attracted a good number of people to the area. Students all over the country attend the Komenda Teacher Training College of Education at British Komenda. This has influenced the lifestyle of many citizens and has also motivated many young men and women in the area to give credence to education and have become teachers, doctors, lawyers, nurses, clergy, engineers and bankers. Consequently, the emergence of Teacher Training College of Education in Komenda is said to have provided them with the necessary skills needed to uplift their image.
and dignity in the society as well as to live an upright life to avoid the anger of gods and ancestors which sometimes lead to death. Not only that, it is also to upgrade their economic activities thereby making them economically viable. This economic viability determines the kind of burial given to the person at his or her death. During mortuary rites certain economic activities like carpentry, masonry, driving, tailoring, seamstress, food vendors, cloth selling, undertakers and photographers become booming.

3.3 THE WORLD VIEW OF THE PEOPLE OF KOMENDA

Religion, to all societies under the universe is difficult to define. It is observed by Asare Opoku that “religion is at the root of African culture and is the determining principle of African life”.\(^{160}\) He posits that religion is life and life is religion and for there is no clear distinction between sacred and secular, the spiritual from the material as religion permeates the total life of the people.\(^{161}\) To Mbiti, Africans are notoriously religious and each people have its own system of religion with a set of beliefs and practices.\(^{162}\) He postulates that every aspect of man’s behaviour has a religious meaning and interpretation. He sees himself as a religious being in a religious environment and seeks religious interpretation to events.\(^{163}\) Mbiti emphasises that religion is the strongest element of traditional background and is the greatest influence upon both the thinking and living of the people concerned.\(^{164}\)

The citizens of Komenda observe three basic religions: Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion. The people of Komenda practise the traditional religion and worship their gods (*abosom*) and Supreme Being called *Ωνηανκονπενυ*. They also have a good relationship with their ancestors and often seek help from them whenever the need arises.

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\(^{160}\) Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, 1

\(^{161}\) Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, 1

\(^{162}\) Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 1


They have special shrines for their gods on which sacrifices are made to these gods to grant them protection against their enemies, long life, good children, good health, and prosperity and bumper harvest. The individual communities have their own gods they worship, and the clans also had their own gods. Some of the families have their own household gods and some of the children born in the area are introduced to the worship of these gods as soon as they start to walk and talk. It is believed that failure to comply with the wishes of gods and ancestors will bring about disastrous consequences.

Komenda traditional stool is seen as the soul of the Komenda while the religious life and thought, and the family are the heart of the individual in the area. The family and the stool of the state form one of the basic sources of authority among the citizens of Komenda. For instance, one is forbidden to kill or eat certain animal which is believed to be one’s clan’s totem. While some people eat tortoise, rats, cats, dogs and parrot, others do not, but rather respect them because these animals are said to be their clan’s totems. For example, it is forbidden for Anona Ebusua (the people of Anona Clan) to kill or eat ‘parrot’ (ekoo) because it is believed to be their totem, and again, Nozvaa Ebusuafo (family members of Nsona) will also not kill or eat crow (akronkoran).

Some crimes and other anti-social acts like stealing from the farm and quarrelling in the bush are culpable in the sight of the gods or goddesses, and the most serious ones such as having sex in the bush and incest are punishable by ex-communication from the family or death. If for any reason, the crimes are not propitiated, death or other consequences continue within the family of the victim. This seems to mean that the entire family is being held accountable for the sin(s) committed by a family member. This therefore calls for the members of the family or community to be one another’s keeper. Ethically, the chiefs, queen mothers and elders in the community, supported by the traditional priests and priestesses
with the approval of the gods or goddesses are obliged to sanction anyone who is found to be leading anti-social or immoral life in the community. The African Traditional Religion has great influence on the community and this influence is largely seen in the numerous traditional religious rites often observed by the inhabitants. This is indeed conspicuous at funerals, festivals and rites of passage. The rituals and ceremonies of rites of passage are performed in connection with the crucial turning points in a person’s life. These major turning points in a person’s life are birth, adulthood and death.

The early missionaries found their work in the Komenda very difficult. The reason is that the citizens were simply adamant to accept and worship the foreign God in West African introduced by these missionaries at the expense of their local gods. However, with the passage of time, some of the traditionalists got converted to the new faith of Christianity and as the years went by more of them became converted and began to spread the gospel to other West African countries. At present, Komenda and its environs are strong base of Christianity. There are churches like Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and para churches ministering in the various towns. The mainstream churches have a common group called ‘Local Council of Churches’ while the Pentecostals also have the Ghana Pentecostal Council. Apart from these councils, there are few independent and para-church organisations in the traditional area.

3.3.1 Akan Belief in the Supreme Being

The people of Komenda, and indeed Africans, believe in the existence of one Supreme Deity whom they regard as greater than any other being (both physical and spiritual). This Deity, according to Peter Sarpong, is known by different names in different tribes, but the qualities attributed to Him are almost identical everywhere.\(^{165}\) Christians call Him God, Muslims call

Him Allah, Akan also call Him Nyame or Ὄνυμανκοπῖς and Mawu among Ewes.\textsuperscript{166} The idea of Supreme Being is fundamental to the religious belief of the people of Komenda. The people also regard God as Overlord of Society and Final Authority in all matters.\textsuperscript{167} Opoku asserts that God has power over life and death, an idea in Akan maxim “If God does not decree your death you do not die”.\textsuperscript{168} The Komenda people also believe that the ancestors, the deities and the spirits are all under God and derive their powers from Him. The people of Komenda also agree with Gyekye that Onyame is the Absolute Reality, the origin of all things (both life and death).\textsuperscript{169}

3.3.2 Akan Belief in Ancestors

Generally, the Akans, specifically the people of Komenda agree with Opoku that, after death, the departed one enter into the spiritual state of existence.\textsuperscript{170} Sarpong expounds that, belief in the spirits of the dead and their role or influence over the living is found among all people and in every conceivable religion and culture.\textsuperscript{171} For instance, Christians believe in saints who are only good Christians lived on earth who are dead and believed to be in heaven enjoying eternal bliss with the Creator. Muslims worshippers believe Mohammed, Issiful and a host of others whose names they impose on themselves as living venerated religious leaders. The Akan traditionalist also believes in ancestors who were once lived among them in the family, but dead. Their veneration, therefore, not peculiar to any religion, culture society or age,\textsuperscript{172} however, the words which are used to describe the dead differ. According to Sarpong, the two (saints and ancestors) express common ideas about people who once

\textsuperscript{166} Sarpong, Ghana in Retrospect, 9.
\textsuperscript{167} Opoku, West African Traditional Religion, 153.
\textsuperscript{168} Opoku, West African Traditional Religion, 153.
\textsuperscript{170} Opoku, West African Traditional Religion, 35.
\textsuperscript{171} Sarpong, Ghana in Retrospect, 33.
\textsuperscript{172} Sarpong, Ghana in Retrospect, 33.
belonged to their religious group are now dead and are supposed to be in a position of influence over living.\textsuperscript{173}

Quarcoopome explains ancestor to be the soul of the departed heroes and heroines of the West African tribe.\textsuperscript{174} The people of Komenda, in agreement with Quarcoopome, believe that the ancestors are believed to have powers to influence the affairs of the whole community lived a high better or worse life,\textsuperscript{175} because the affairs of the family is the concern of the ancestors. In the light of this, the role of the ancestors in the family and the community during mortuary rites cannot be overemphasised. The belief in ancestors by the people of Komenda is based on the general idea that life continues after death and that communion and communication are possible between the living and the dead.\textsuperscript{176}

They believe that ancestors are still not separated from their earthly families by death and, therefore, are still considered as part of their human families. In the Akan context, particularly, Komenda, the family constitutes the dead, the living and the generation yet unborn.\textsuperscript{177} The people thus, have personal memories of the ancestors who are believed to return to their human families from time to time and share meal with them though symbolic. Ancestors from Gyekye are believed to be certain individuals of the past generations of a lineage who are said to have distinguished themselves in many ways and in particular, to have led virtuous and exemplary lives worthy of emulation by succeeding generations of the lineage. Such individuals, according to him, are regarded as moral paragons interpreted as not just any departed member of the lineage qualifies as an ancestor.\textsuperscript{178} The Akan people

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\bibitem{173} Sarpong, \textit{Ghana in Retrospect}, 33.
\bibitem{174} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 128.
\bibitem{175} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion} 128.
\bibitem{176} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion} 128.
\bibitem{177} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion} 128.
\bibitem{178} Gyekye, \textit{African Cultural Values}, 162.
\end{thebibliography}
call their ancestors *nananom nsamanfo* (grandfathers or great grandfathers or grandmothers who have become spirits or ghosts).

The simple reason is that certain conditions should be fulfilled to qualify one to be an ancestor, apart from the fact of death. The criteria are that the person should be of age (adult), married with children, died a natural death (including death on the battlefield in defense of the whole community), live a high moral and ethical standard of life and made meaningful contribution to the total welfare of the community.\(^{179}\) The people of Komenda esteem their ancestors because the affairs of the family are the concern of the ancestors. This is because of the role of the ancestors in the life of the family and community cannot be over emphasized in relation to the mortuary rites. They are the guardians of family affairs, property, traditions ethics and activities. Quarcoopome asserts that offence in these matters of traditions, ethics, property and others is ultimately against the forefathers, the divinities and ultimately God.\(^ {180}\) He maintains that through the ancestors, the spirit world becomes generally real to the living.\(^ {181}\)

The people of Komenda believe that the ancestors seem to be the best group of intermediaries between the divinities and God on one side, and the living on the other hand, since they have full access to the channels of communication directly with the divine Being. Quarcoopome postulates that as intermediaries from above, they have delegated authority from God. In fact, they have the mandate to reward the right conduct and to punish the whole tribe or clan or lineage or the individual from crimes against the society with sickness or death.\(^ {182}\) In the technical or religious sense, the people of Komenda do not place the

\(^ {179}\) Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 128.
\(^ {180}\) Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 128.
\(^ {181}\) Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 130
\(^ {182}\) Quarcoopome, *West African Traditional Religion*, 130.
ancestors on the same level with God or the divinities and thus, do not worship them, but merely venerate them.

3.3.3 Akan Belief in Divinities (Lesser gods)

The earth which serves as a habitation for people and which also supports livelihood is referred to by the Akan as the Earth deity (Asaase Efua/ Yaa). According to them the deity has a sacred day which is Thursday, on which in most communities, no one goes to farm.\footnote{George E. Dickson, 
*Dying, Death and Bereavement* (Dunkin: Mc Graw-Hil Companies, 1988), 59.}

George E. Dickson further explains that there should be no sex on the bare ground. She is believed to frown at this and punishes offenders severely. Farmers beseech her when preparing the land for sowing.\footnote{Dickson, 
*Dying, Death and Bereavement*, 59.}

Before a grave is dug, libation is poured to ask permission to dig a hole so that a child of Asaase Efua may be buried in her womb.\footnote{Kofi Asare Opoku, 

The earth deity is relevant to this research since there are rituals that are performed to seek her approval for burial.

3.3.4 Akan concept of Person

Like all Ghanaians, the Akan people share the belief that man is made of component of elements. These elements include ‘\(\xi kra\)’, soul, which he receives from his Creator; the spirit ‘\(\xi sunsum\)’ and ‘\(\nu \xi \xi v\) which he receives from the father; and blood ‘\(\xi bogya\)’ from the mother.

The \(\xi kra\) is the life giving force without which man is merely ‘\(\xi bogya\)’ and ‘\(\xi sunsum\)’.\footnote{Appiah- Kubi, 
*The Akan Concept of Human Personality*, 250.}

A complete man, therefore, is made up of ‘\(\xi bogya\)’ (physical being), ‘\(\xi sunsum\)’ (individual personality) and ‘\(\xi kra\)’ (soul), the life-giving force. The \(\xi kra\) is immortal, the presence of which gives life to man.
This life force, $\xi kra$, is associated with the heart. So long as the person continues to breath, he is considered alive. He is declared dead only when the heart is sealed of the life force, ‘$\xi kra$’ and life itself ‘nkwa’ is identified with the heart. It is held that the soul may leave the body temporarily when man is asleep, but returns almost immediately. When sick, the soul is thought to be worried and intends leaving the body. Steps are, therefore, taken to restore the soul to the body. In order not to incur the displeasure of the soul, some people offer a fowl or a ram to their souls once every year in what is termed ‘$\xi kra eguar$', ‘washing the soul’ among the Akan people. When the $\xi kra$ leaves the body permanently it severs its link with the heart, man ceases to function and he is said to be dead. Death is, therefore, the permanent separation of the soul from the body.\(^{187}\)

Expressions like n’akoma atsew, ‘his heart is severed’, and w’agu ahom, ‘he has given up breath’, are used to refer to death which further illustrate the relationship between the heart and the soul. When one gives up breath, one is said to have gone into an everlasting rest. Thus, when the heart ceases to function, the soul permanently leaves and the person dies.

### 3.4 SOCIO - POLITICAL STRUCTURES

G. K. Nukunya asserts that in Akan political system, there are series of hierarchical levels of authority which operate from the family units through the lineage until the final authority, the Omanhen (paramount chief), Queen mother (Obaaheemaa), linguist, chief priest and other sub-chiefs.\(^{188}\) Generally, a chief arbitrates and decides political and economic issues and development in his area. He leads his people in prayer during ancestral rites and certain important festivities like mortuary celebrations.\(^{189}\) The chief receives his stool name when


\(^{189}\) Nukunya, *Tradition and Change in Ghana*, 81.
he is installed. The stool name for the paramount chief of Komenda is Nana Kwadwo Klu XV. Each of the towns in Komenda area has a chief. So in all, the paramount chief has seventeen sub-chiefs who rule under him. The sub-chiefs also have clan heads (*Ebusua mpanyimfo*) who rule with them in their towns by constituting the council of elders. However, there are other divisional chiefs who traditionally form the traditional council.

Nukunya clearly explains the functions of some of the following divisional chiefs: *Adontenhen*, he commands the main fighting body, *Twafohen*, who leads the advance guard, *Kyidomhen*, serves as the commander of the rear-guard, while *Gyaasehen*, has control over all the attendants at the palace. During discussions with *Kyeame* Kofi Essoum, he explains *Tufohen* as the “warrior” or head of gunners of the *Asafo* Company. In Akan language “*Tufo*” means ‘adviser’ or ‘counsellor’, but in this context, it does not mean an adviser to the chief but ‘*asafo*’, *Sanaahen* as the treasurer of the council, *Nyimfahen* is the commander of the right hand guard and holds the right flank of the formation of army, *Benkumhen* is the left hand guard and holds the left flank of the formation of army, *Kontihen* is the caretaker of the land and second in command after the *Omanhen*, while *Mβρζντσζην* is the chief of the youth in the community.

**Table 2: Divisional/Sub Chiefs in Komenda Traditional Area**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Divisional Chiefs/Titles</th>
<th>Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adontenhen</td>
<td>Kissi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twafohen</td>
<td>KwaHinkrom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nyimfahen</td>
<td>Aboransa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benkumhen</td>
<td>Dompuaase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyidomhen</td>
<td>Besease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tufohen</td>
<td>Dominase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gyaasehen</td>
<td>Anntseambua</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanaahen</td>
<td>Komenda Sefwi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

190 Nukunya, *Tradition and Change in Ghana*, 80.
In governing Komenda, the paramount chief is assisted by a council of elders which is constituted by the sub-chiefs from the various communities, the stool father, the queen mother, youth leaders and some important people in the community. The paramount chief sees to it that customary laws are obeyed by all the citizens and the foreigners. The council which is the highest law-making body helps the paramount chief to make decisions that will help the traditional area. Besides, the council helps to make customary laws and also assists to try cases at the chief’s palace. The custom is that each chief in the traditional area rules his subjects on behalf of the paramount chief. The council of elders assists the paramount chief in governing his immediate town. All the council in the other towns in the area exercises the functions that are similar to those performed by the council of the paramount chief.

From the discussion with Nana Kwamena Anobil II, it is clear that the paramount chief has a queen and all the seventeen sub-chiefs also have a queen each in their communities. Moreover, the clan chiefs in the various towns have their queens. This depicts the importance of queens and the role they play in Komenda. The queen, in Komenda is the person next in order of importance to the chiefs. She has a strong say in selecting a new chief. By tradition, her choice from the ruling royal family is most of the time final. At all sessions of the council, the queen has the right to advise the chief and elders of the council on matters of necessities to the entire community.

Moreover, the queen makes sure that all traditions and customary practices are followed. She, for example, makes sure that such customs as puberty rites and good moral behaviour of both young girls and women are maintained. Traditionally, the queen of the paramount

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191 A discussion with some council members from Komenda on Monday, 5, December, 2016.
seat is regarded as the mother of the whole Komenda and she sits in state with the chief at all durbar grounds and ceremonial occasions. The various queen mothers in Komenda towns and clans also perform the same functions.

Another important person in Komenda is the linguist or the spokesman. In Komenda tradition, no one speaks to a chief without passing it through a linguist. In the same manner, the chiefs also do not speak to their people or anybody without passing the message through their linguists. Moreover, the linguists in the traditional area give pieces of advice to their chiefs on various matters. It is also the cultural responsibility of the linguist to pour libation at council meetings and at some social functions. However, the libations poured at special functions like festivals are done by traditional chief priests. All the linguists in the various communities have their own staff which represent their traditional authority. Again, there are other attendants of the chiefs in Komenda area which include gong-gong beater, heralds, stool carriers, drummers, palanquin carriers, umbrella carriers, horn blowers, treasurers, sub-treasurers and chief’s herbalist, and many more. The functions of these attendants are very remarkable and so many people in the traditional area accord them a high level of respect. Because of the important role they play, any person who misbehaves towards any of such attendants is heavily or severely punished by the chiefs and elders of the area.

Finally, individual communities in the area have traditional priests who work under the chief priest of the traditional area. The chief priest is the religious leader in the traditional area. He performs many functions such as pouring of libation, offering of prayers for the community and offering sacrifices and prayers during traditional festivals. He also executes all the rituals to mark the beginning of a harvest. In times of mishaps or calamities, the chief priest is consulted and sees to the cleansing of the whole traditional area to prevent further misfortunes. The chief priest also assists the chiefs to ensure that their subjects keep to the
traditions and customs and do not break the taboos of the area. Similarly, the other priests under him perform the same functions in their various communities.

The priests in the Komenda traditional area are naturally called by being possessed by the gods than appointed. Like the king and the medicine man, traditional priest is a mediator between man and the spiritual world. Rowland Olumati explains that a priest, like the king, is a public functionary and can be a diviner or medicine-man. The traditional priests are usually attached to a cultic centre, a shrine or a temple where they perform certain prescribed forms of rituals on behalf of the people whom such centres are supposed to serve. 192 They are being consulted when the cause of certain deaths is doubted.

3.4.1 Kinship

In the Fante tradition, there is recognition of a double descent of every person. That is, the individual person is simultaneously a member of two distinct exogenous lineages. The father, who is the head of the family, has a moral obligation to care for and train a child in a manner that enhances his or her dignity as a father. The child also has the obligation to care for an ageing father. On the death of his or her father, he or she also provides a coffin. In Komenda, kinship system is not taken lightly, for it is the people’s means for political and social organisation.

Kinship has familiar bonds which brings the members closely together, irrespective of where they live or are scattered. They actually feel that each person has a moral responsibility towards the other. The unity of oneness of kinship is noticeable at the death of a member. Regardless of the achievement of the deceased, proper funeral and befitting burial are organised. Traditionally, kinship system has a collective responsibility and

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192 Rowland Olumati, *Impacts of Traditional Religious Functionaries in African Cosmology*. Department of Religious and Cultural Studies, Faculty of Humanities, University of Port Harcourt, Choba.
solidarity in regards to things such as inheritance and debts. In case of funeral debts, the family does make contributions to defray the debts incurred at the death of a kinsman.

3.4.2 Rites of Passage

Rites of Passage are ceremonies that mark an important transitional periods in a person’s life, such as birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Rites of passage usually involve ritual activities and teachings designed to strip individuals of their original roles and prepare them for new roles. Quarcoopome asserts that the life of man runs from the cradle to the grave. He explains further that in the African context the landmarks in this life cycle are birth, puberty, marriage, and death. Mbiti equally posits that there are five stages in the life cycle of a man: birth, puberty, marriage, death, and after-life or regeneration. He expounds that life is characterized by movement, thus, the child, who may be regarded as a passive member of society, moves from that stage into puberty or young adulthood, where the child is ushered into adulthood through the performance of initiation rites. After that comes marriage, procreation, old age, and finally death, by which death ushers the person into the land of the spirit. To ensure that no breaks might occur between the various stages, Mbiti states that the transition might be smooth, elaborate religious rites are performed. Rites of passage generally affirm community solidarity, especially in times of change or crisis like death.

Quarcoopome is of the view that birth is one of the most critical and important situations in life. Birth is the beginning of the life cycle and most of Komenda societies celebrate with

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193 www.dictionary.com//zenith-crusher
appropriate ceremonies to show its significance. Most of the respondents agree with Kofi Asare Opoku that it is the custom of the Akan people, particularly, Komenda people to keep the new-born babies from public view for seven days, and to bring them out to them during the ‘outdooring’ ceremony which is performed on the eighth day.\textsuperscript{200} In his work, Quarcoopome gives explanations for this eighth day waiting period before ‘outdooring’ of the child. The Akan people, particularly, Komenda, who perceive the new-born as ξηζηο (visitor), wait for a week to see whether the visitor will return (die) or stay. If the baby survives the seven days, it is the sure indication that it has come to stay, and is therefore, given a name and becomes a member of a family or society.\textsuperscript{201} The child is normally hailed by its day name, for example, Kwesi for a male born on Sunday and Esi for a female born on the same day. Usually, the ceremony takes place in the hours of the day around 5 to 6 a.m. Relatives, friends and well-wishers are informed and invited to the “naming” and “outdooring” ceremony. According to Quarcoopome, gifts in cash and kind are given to the baby.\textsuperscript{202}

Quarcoopome defines ‘Puberty’ as “the transition from childhood into adulthood” In the West African context, it is an “occasion for considerable ritual and ceremony”. He explains that this stage of life depicts the coming of age for both boys and girls in the society.\textsuperscript{203} Quarcoopome believes that chastity before marriage is very expedient in society like Ghana and therefore these rites prepare the adult-to-be to be socially and psychologically fit to face adult life. Puberty rites also ensure that their sexual lives are protected.\textsuperscript{204} Opoku adds that puberty is the next important stage of a child’s life and it makes the child a social and corporate being. He further affirms Quarcoopome’s position that the rite brings physical,
emotional and psychological development of the initiates. Opoku concludes that puberty rites vary from one society to another.

The people of Komenda, according to Kyeame Kofi Essoun, pay much attention to puberty rites and some other rites of passage. Puberty rites, in the olden days, referred to in the local language as “Kyirbra” or “Ano ka” were performed basically for young girls after having their first menstruation. The initiate (‘Brani or Sakyima’) cannot go through the rites until she experiences her first menstruation. Traditionally, it is the queen mother who pronounces the girl qualified for the ceremony. Today, little modifications have been made as far as puberty rites in Komenda are concerned. Women, nowadays, can marry and give birth to children before having the rites performed for them. However, some at the tender age have their rites performed. A woman from Komenda, who has not yet passed through the rite, is hardly considered as a real woman, according to the custom of the area, and is, therefore, not accorded the necessary respect she deserves as a woman. This in effect brings disgrace not only to the victim, but also to the family as well. Such a woman feels shy to interact with her colleagues who have passed through the rites. In the ancient days, this performance was a condition for preparing one for marriage. This is the reason why every Komenda woman fights tooth and nail to have the rites performed during her youthful age. When a woman in the area kicks the bucket without going through the rite, the queen mother(s) make sure that the rites are performed for her while her body is lain in state. The family members of the deceased would be forced to provide everything which is necessary for the performance of the rites. This is very shameful to both the deceased and the family.

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205 Opoku, West African Traditional Religion, 112.
206 Opoku, West African Traditional Religion, 112.
207 Kyeame Kofi Essoun, 14th December, 2016.
208 Kyeame Kofi Essoun, 14th December, 2016.
Another rite performed by the people in the traditional area is called ‘Oko’. This rite is performed for the girls before experiencing their first menstruation. It was noted that the rite is performed only for the girls believed to be the descendants of River Pra. Such girls are camped for a week, well fed and counselled. They are showcased after the week of exercises. On Sunday, they go through the town and express their heartfelt thanks to the people. This rite is performed to sensitise them on the experiences associated with menstruation. Failure of the girls to go through these rites can cause the gods to inflict death on them. This concept of puberty rites enables the researcher to know other causes of death.

Traditionally, marriage is the union between man and woman with the consent of both parents. There are rules and rites governing the marriage system in Komenda. Some of the rules or qualifications are that; both man and woman who think of getting married should be adults with sound mind and having a dependable profession of which the man would be able to take good care of his wife and children and the woman also to support the man. Not only that, but they should also be of good behaviour.

In Komenda tradition, one can have a glorious wedding in the biggest and magnificent church in the world, but without performing the traditional marriage rites, that wedding is meaningless to both spouses and the families and the people in the area would not regard the couple as husband and wife. If the woman dies, the man would be forced to marry her while the body is lain in state. He would be compelled to provide all the items needed for the stages of marriage in the area.

Death, according to Quarcoopome, is the last of the rites of passage that a person has to go through on earth after birth, puberty and marriage. In Komenda tradition, death is the divine act of the Supreme Being so it becomes a ‘mystery’. Quarcoopome opines that death

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is not the end of human existence because there is life beyond the grave, a belief shared by almost all cultures in Ghana and the three basic religions, - African Traditional Religion, Christianity, and Islamic.\textsuperscript{210} The traditional belief of the Komenda is in agreement with Quarcoopome’s submission that when the breath of life leaves the person, he stops breathing and he is declared dead.\textsuperscript{211} The physical body then rots in the ground. The \textit{sunsum} (spirit) of the person perishes, according to Quarcoopome, but the \(\xi kra\) (soul), which is the essential component in the person, survives death and returns to the Creator.\textsuperscript{212} Therefore, death is regarded as a transition from one state of existence to another.\textsuperscript{213} In this view, a proper and great care is taken in burying the dead.

3.4.3 Festivals

Normally, the citizens of Komenda traditional area recognise and celebrate two festivals namely: Yam Festival (\textit{Adwedzi afahye}) and Nyeyi Festival (Remembering ancestors). The first festival is Yam festival and is celebrated to sensitise the people about the coming of the fresh yam (\textit{dwo fofor}). It is observed two weeks after \textit{Eguadoto} (purification or consultation of the stool) ritual is performed. During this celebration, there is always a ban on noise-making, no black dress or footwear is worn to cross the ‘\textit{Posuban}’ (where the great god is) area. This is highly forbidden. After these rituals, the sub-chiefs start celebrating the Yam Festival at their various communities.

Two weeks after celebrating the Yam Festival (\textit{Adwedzi}), all the \textit{Asafo} companies drum through the town to inform the citizens of the approach of the \textit{Nyeyi} Festival. The divisional chiefs and the queen mothers converge on Omanhen’s palace where the \textit{Asafo} companies will end their street processions. There the Omanhen would give the first gun shot to declare

\textsuperscript{210} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 125.
\textsuperscript{211} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 125.
\textsuperscript{212} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 125.
\textsuperscript{213} Quarcoopome, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 125.
the Nyeyi festival duly open. On Thursday, the family members, especially, the elder people gather together at their various “family shrines” (Akor do) to wail and consult their ancestors on certain pertinent issues. Vows are made to the ancestors for protection, child bearing, bumper harvest and good health. On Friday, all those who died accidentally (atofo) are also remembered through wailing and this ritual is called “Atofo nsa”.

On Saturday, the chiefs and the queens are carried in their palanquins and all others follow at the rear amidst Asafo and Fontonfrom drumming which adds colour, pomp and pageantry to the celebration. The occasion is climaxed with thanksgiving service by all the churches in the community converging at a common place on Sunday. The celebration of Adwedzi (Declaration of yam) and Nyeyi (Purification) of Komenda is, therefore, historic, attractive and blissful. The unity and solidarity expressed during festivals are also seen on the occasion of mortuary rites performance.

3.4.4 Asafo Company

The Asafo Company or Division is an institution established in Komenda in historic times. The five companies then were: Ankobeafu, Akyemfo, Enyampafo, Ammfεrfo, and Wombirfo. In times of peace, the Asafo companies assist their communities in socio–cultural, political and economic developments. Again, in times of war, the Asafo Companies were mobilised for offence and defense on behalf of the State. Aside the above functions of Asafo company, the chief normally summons emergency meetings in the communities through them and also searches for any lost person either in the forest or drowned in the sea or river.

3.5 DEATH AND MORTUARY RITES

Although, it is necessary for the completion of the life circle of man, the moment of death is the most unwelcome and dreaded of all crises in life. This is not only due to the loss it
inflicts on the bereaved families and the entire community, but also the obligation it imposes on society, the violation of which may invite calamities on the individual, family, society and the church. These make humans live in constant insecurity and perpetual fear of it.

3.5.1 Death

Nketia avers that death is personified as a bony and ugly looking old man who has no human sympathy. He is regarded as a thief who always snatches what is most treasured. As a greedy thief, he strikes at an unknown hour and when he strikes, he leaves behind the mortal remains of loved relatives, parents, children, uncles, aunts, cousins, nephews, nieces, and in-laws (if married). Often times, pungent and derogatory terms are used to describe death. These negative attributes are heard when a person is grieved, more especially in funeral dirges.\textsuperscript{214}

Death is so much feared that it is considered a taboo to mention it at night. Children are discouraged from seeing a corpse and from entering a place of mourning, especially when the corpse is lain in state.\textsuperscript{215} They are also not permitted to follow funeral processions to the grave yard. Euphemistic expressions are, therefore, used to describe a dead person. Akan maxims are used to depict the destructive nature of death; \textit{Owu sɛɛ́ fie, Owu ne tsir mu yɛ́ dzen}, this explains the wickedness of death, \textit{Owu atwer baako mmfo} this literally means the universality of death.\textsuperscript{216} It is a common practice that after some ones death a person’s name is not mentioned in ordinary conversation without an expression of remorse, often an appellation denoting death is employed. Scientific explanation to death has very little meaning if any at all to the Akan who seeks explanation to almost every cause in the spiritual realm. In accordance with these, therefore, causes of death are immediately investigated for

\textsuperscript{214} Nketiah, \textit{The Funeral Dirges}, 68.
\textsuperscript{215} Kwaku Amoako-Attah Fosu, \textit{Funeral Celebration By Akans} (Kumasi: 2000), 2.
\textsuperscript{216} Nketia, \textit{The Funeral Dirges}, 68.
the purpose of correcting the wrong done if any, and to safeguard against further occurrences.

The idea of the immortality of the soul, according to Adjei Sarkodie, raises the question for the abode of the soul on the occasion of death. There are different opinions about where the soul goes after death. Two worlds are perceived in Akan cosmology. The physical world is the present world on which we live and the invisible (spiritual) world is the place where the spirit of the dead goes after death. The invisible world is also referred to as “asamando”, “land of ghosts” it is the place where the ancestors live.\textsuperscript{217} Two schools of thought exist on the location for the invisible world. One school holds that it is located near the cemetery beneath the earth, and the other that, it is located far away on another part of this earth. In the view of Adjaye, the journey to the place is depicted as a hilly, rough and tiresome and it meanders through strange places. Seven rivers, according to the belief, must be crossed in the journey and one has to be ferried across each of them for a fee.\textsuperscript{218}

Quarcopoome establishes that the idea of the hereafter as though different from one society to another, it is a general belief it is the duplicate of life on earth.\textsuperscript{219} The people of Komenda with this belief put certain articles like sponges, towels, clothing, combs, pomades, handkerchiefs and money into the coffin. In the case of those from the royal family or the wealthy family, precious ornaments and gold trinket are put into the coffin for his or her journey to the spiritual world. The belief is that the money will assist him or her to cross the river of no return. In the past, some people like the slaves in the palace (ahenkwaa) were forcefully killed to accompany some chiefs with the belief that such chiefs and their lineage heads continued to occupy their position of importance after their death. People who die

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{217} Yaw Adjei Sarkodie, Aspect of Traditional Religion in West Africa (Berekum, Ghana: Grefin Printing Press, 1987), 86.  
\textsuperscript{218} Adjaye, Boundaries of Self and Other, 13.  
\textsuperscript{219} Quarcopoome, West African Traditional Religion, 127.}
tragically; - “akwanhyiawu” and “atofowu” - are not permitted entry into the ancestral world. They instead go to live somewhere on another part of this earth to continue the rest of their earthly existence until they die a natural death.\textsuperscript{220}

Evidently, the people of Komenda believe that the dead or ancestors live with their survivors, they see them and they hear whatever they do and that they are only concealed from the living in a mystical realm which makes them remain invisible. Also, a bereaved spouse would not take his or her meals without first putting a morsel of it down for the departed partner.\textsuperscript{221} The idea of the ancestors being nearer to the living is much developed and paramount in the daily life of the people of Komenda. This, according to Adjaye, seems to contradict the belief that the ancestral world is very far away from this physical world.\textsuperscript{222}

Resurrection of the dead does feature in Komenda or Akan eschatology. Komenda people do conceive of judgement in the future. Opoku, affirming his belief in reincarnation postulates that there is a firm belief that through birth, the dead reincarnates from the spiritual world and by death man leaves the material (physical) world for the invisible world.\textsuperscript{223} This notion is so strong that diviners are consulted to find out the particular ancestor who has come back where a child is born. A child is regarded as a reincarnate of a particular ancestor. The maxim, “\textit{obi nnwo obi saman}”, literally means “one does not give birth to another person’s ghost (spirit)” also has a considerable influence on the people.

The maxim which is interpreted to mean that an ancestor who wants to come back to life is always born to a member of his lineage “\textit{ebusua}” also confirms the notion of reincarnation.

\textsuperscript{220} Adjaye, \textit{Boundaries of Self and Other}, 139.
\textsuperscript{221} Adjaye, \textit{Boundaries of Self and Other}, 139.
\textsuperscript{222} Adjaye, \textit{Boundaries of Self and Other}, 140.
\textsuperscript{223} Opoku, \textit{West African Traditional Religion}, 133.
Here, distinction is made between children born to very close relative and those born to distant relatives of the deceased during funeral celebrations. For instance, such distant relatives are referred to a “*kwayie*” to indicate that the person was born at a funeral of a relative. Etymologically, the term is made up of the verb ‘*kξ*’ (go) and a noun ‘*eyi*’ (funeral). So, the term “*kξ eyi*” (kwayie) means “to attend a funeral.” The question of life after death and reincarnation which have been variously expressed appears to be the basis of the idea that, on death, a person does not sever his relationship with the living relatives. To foster the relationship, elaborate funeral rites are performed when a relative dies.

To get to the hereafter, the ancestral world, there is certain preparations and rituals to be performed. Proper performance of it will facilitate the smooth transition of it, if it is not properly done or performed one could not get the ancestral world, and as such people who qualify to be ancestors they do elaborate funerals for them. People who because of their sins or accidental death have special rituals performed for them.

The origin of death was created by the Supreme Being and is explained through stories or myths. The oral tradition narrated by Nana Kwaku Nkrumah cemented the narration of the various traditional myths that depict the divine origin of death by Quarcoopome.224 Various Akan maxims depict the origin of death. Notable among them are: *Edomankoma wu sesa onyimpa ne dabew*, which literally means “The Creator’s death changes person’s sleeping place”. Also, *Edomankoma wu dze ne mpasua besi wo fi a, nunsinyi edur dan nsu* meaning “When the Creator’s death camps in one’s house, one’s medicine turns into water or becomes ineffective”. In these maxims, the Akan belief is that God created life as well as death. These beliefs are found in drum texts as well as in oral communication.225

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The people of Komenda are of the view that prior to death, everyone takes a leave from the Supreme Being and in this pre-departure bid a farewell, and one designates the work one will do on earth, the parents to be born to and more importantly “the time” on which one will go back. This destiny, nkrabea which is known to the Creator alone is thought to be irrevocable. With this belief at the background, the people identify two basic types of death: natural or ‘good death’ (owu pa) and unnatural or ‘bad deaths’ (ατξψφο wu).

This study contends Amoako-Atta’s position that the natural death is the ideal and it occurs at a good and ripe old age. He states that the child or young person can also die through normal sickness and likewise an old person can also be killed through spiritual means. Can this old person’s death be classified as a natural death and the child’s death be an unnatural? For the researcher, the age bracket should not be used to determine the natural or unnatural death. Any death short of this is regarded as unnatural and, therefore, it is contrary to the ideal. Natural death is also one of the conditions for ancestorship.\(^{226}\) Although, there is the belief that depending on one’s destiny, one may die at a younger age, such deaths are rarely regarded as natural and are often associated with external malevolent forces. God is thought of as the ultimate author of natural death; because he is the Creator who knows when one is due to leave this world.\(^{227}\)

Unnatural death has two forms: one is akwanhyia wu (death through accidents) and the other is ατξψφο wu, (when one takes one’s own life). Akwanhyia wu is defined as death which is caused by accidents such as lorry accident, plane clash, and shipwreck, drowning and fire outbreak. Aτξψφο wu is also said to be the death through suicide of all kind such as hanging, drinking poison and stabbing oneself. Such unnatural deaths are believed to be caused by

\(^{226}\) Amoako-Atta, *Funerals Celebration By Akans*, 34.
\(^{227}\) Amoako-Atta, *Funerals Celebration By Akans*, 34.
malevolent spiritual forces, including sorcery, witchcrafts, evil spirits and magic. Mortuary rites of good death are elaborately performed, while those of bad death are summarily handled.

Kwabena N. Bame posits that beliefs about causes of death do not exclude the fact that sickness and accident may cause a person’s death. These are, however, attributed to evil forces or to one’s evil machinations. Therefore, when one suffers from a strange disease, diviners and medicine-men are approached to find out the cause of the ailment and subsequent healing. Bame maintains that when sickness is an underlying factor, its remedy lies in spiritual realms where upon divination, cleansing and expiatory rites have to be performed as indispensable condition for healing and survival. In most cases, the sick is asked to confess any evil; act done and to pacify those he or she has offended if he or she is found guilty of evil machinations.

Again, certain diseases are considered “unclean”, so when a person suffering from any of such diseases dies, his or her death is regarded unnatural. Diseases like tuberculosis, leprosy, cancer, a chronic stomachache are not only regarded as “unclean”, but as punishment from either the ancestors or the gods inflicted upon the victim for a hidden crime against man, nature and God. Such deaths are also a disgrace to one’s family as one is not worthy to be considered as an ancestor. Probably, the effect of neglect of filial duties to the ancestors, breaking the taboo of the family and the community, or doing other acts which affect humanity and misappropriation of family property and wrongfully side stepping orphans to claim the property of the deceased invoke the anger of the gods and the ancestors who may punish the malefactor. However, in spite of the wicked aspects of the practice, it serves a

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229 Bame, Festivals and Funerals, 21.
good purpose and as a check on immorality. Women who do not undergo the puberty rites are considered unclean, hence when such a women die elaborate mortuary rites are not performed.

### 3.5.2 Mortuary Rites

Mortuary rites in Akan societies, particularly Komenda, are characterized by a series of mourning and rituals that mark the demise of a member of a family and community.\(^{230}\) Nketia argues against Opoku’s assertion by saying that the stages of mortuary rites are not less than five: the preparation of the corpse, the pre-burial mourning (includes wake-keeping), the burial, the post-burial activities and subsequent periodic mourning.\(^{231}\) This study agrees with the position of Nketia and Parrinder of the five phases of the celebration of the Akan mortuary rites which Komenda people also hold on to.\(^{232}\) In Komenda tradition, mortuary rites for the adults are different from the infants or children. The rites for both adult and children begin when the person dies.

#### 3.5.2.1 Moment and Occurrence of Death

At the critical point when death becomes imminent, water is always kept beside the sick person. Close relatives, usually the person’s children (if any), sisters, brothers, nephews, nieces always attend to him or her at such critical times. Komenda like other Akan people believe that the presence of the person’s children and close relatives at death is regarded as very important in order to hear his or her last words. It is at such a point that the person is believed to reveal all his or her secrets to the next of kin. They should ensure that he or she is fed and most of all given water when dying in the presence of one’s children is more vital for the belief that on the verge of death, parents hear only voices of their children. When a

\(^{230}\) Nketia, *Funeral Dirges*, 5.

\(^{231}\) Nketia, *Funeral Dirges*, 7.

person falls into coma, his or her children are, therefore, asked to call him or her several times with the belief that the departing soul will hear and return to the body.\textsuperscript{233}

When all attempts to save the person’s life have snarled, one is given water before one gaps out one’s last breath. Nketia explains that the purpose of the water is to enable the person to embark safely on the long bad hilly journey to the invisible world. This is considered a sacred duty\textsuperscript{234} so failure to give water is not only a disgrace to the entire family, but also an act which is vehemently condemned by Komenda society.

When death occurs in the family, close relations and friends are struck with shock and they are thrown into disarray. In the midst of their confusion, a number of questions run in the minds of the bereaved family: who is to be contacted first? Where will the body be kept? What are the things needed at the first instance to preserve the body? What might have killed him or her? Finding solutions to these problems calls for some members of the bereaved family to assemble and exchange ideas.

Unless they act correctly and speedily, the family incurs the displeasure of the community and its reputation is lowered. For this reason, absolute silence is enjoined on the household members so that necessary steps are taken to put things in order before any member of the neighbourhood is made to know of the incident. Senami reports that “as soon as a person breathes his last, absolute silence, especially, near the death bed is enjoined upon everybody in the house”.\textsuperscript{235} G. P. Hagan affirms the Komenda tradition that death is not announced immediately, partly because of the belief that the person might be in coma, and partly to enable the bereaved families to carry on with certain arrangements before sympathisers

\textsuperscript{233} Nabofa,\textit{Erhi and Eschatology}, 304.
\textsuperscript{234} Nketiah, \textit{The Funeral Dirges}, 7.
\textsuperscript{235} C.N. Senami, \textit{A local Study of Keta- Suma Area}, PhD diss., Institute of Education, University of the Gold Coast, Achimota (Unpublished) 1955, 147.
come to mourn with them. At this stage, close relatives are called. According to the respondent, Akotsir Ebiradzi Ebusuapanyin Kofi Papa, the first person to be contacted is the head of the matrilineal family through the linguist (ɛkyeame) who, in reaction, immediately goes to the house where the incident occurs. He offers his advice as to where the body should be kept, where certain personal property of the deceased should be kept safely and which other people should be informed. He later rallies round his close relations and sends message through emissaries to the head of the family of the mother of the deceased on the incident. Both families are informed so that one does not blame the other, afterwards, issues of the death should be made known to the two families or else one may accuse the other of being the cause of the death of the person. From this respondent, after the family meeting the body is embalmed.

In Komenda tradition, salt is mixed with cement and is put in the mouth or nostrils of the corpse as they hit his or her chest for the smooth movement of the medicine into his or her stomach or the mixture can also be used to inject the dead. Ebusuapanyin Kofi Papa explained further that the dead can also be inserted with the mixture of camphor and shea-butter with cotton wool. After this process, according to him, the body is smeared with the mixture of camphor and shea-butter and seated in the corner of the room for the medicine to be well drained in the body. These elements are used to preserve the body from gotten rotten. Embalming in the old tradition did not normally exceed two weeks.

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236 Interview with Ebusuapanyin Kofi Papa, Dompuase, 9, February, 2017.
237 Senami, Keta- Suma Area, 147.
238 Ebusuapanyin Kofi Papa, Dompuase, 9, February, 2017.
239 Ebusuapanyin Kofi Papa, Dompuase, 9, February, 2017.
3.5.2.2 Preparation and Laying in State of the Dead

According to Hagan, mortuary rites begin with the preparation of the body. The researcher contends that mortuary rites do not begin with the preparation of the body of the dead, rather from the moment of death. It is thoroughly washed with sponge, soap, warm water and beautifully dressed in a new cloth and lain in state as quickly as possible. Perhaps, the corpse might have been kept in the morgue for some time to enable the family to make enough preparation. Ḹeyeame Kofi Essoun, however, states that in the olden days when there was no morgue, the corpse was embalmed for a maximum of two weeks and buried.

Apparently, anything touched during the process is regarded contaminated. New toiletries, preferably traditional and indigenous ones are used. For instance, “kora fofo”- a new calabash, “ahensa”-spoon made from a fibrous climber, “αμεξκεε”- locally made soap and “φΞκψε”- a towel made of the core stem of a banana or plantain, have been used in the past and continue to be used at present by some traditional element because of the philosophy and significance of their antiquity and origination. Traditionally, the preparation of the body is basically the exclusive duty of women of the bereaved family. The bathing of the dead, according to Ḹmankyeame Kofi Essoun, is the duty of the mba mbanyimfo (children of the fathers of the deceased). Children have no right to do the washing. Toiletries (eguardze) are required from either the children or the in-laws for the washing. The washers are also given a bottle of schnapp to wash their hands after bathing the corpse, in order to appreciate their work done. A close relative, preferably the eldest child of the deceased, splashes water on the body three times as custom demands. The people who do the washing share the toilet articles, which include tins of powder and cloth. The cloth is torn into stripes and donned as headgears (abotsir). A respondent explained that this is done to ‘tell’ the dead that the things used on him or her are as good as used by the living.
It is the duty of close relatives to perform the mortuary rites except in the case of a traditional ruler or a traditional priest or priestess where specific functionaries who are not relatives are enjoined by custom to take part. Before the body is taken to the bathroom, a word of remorse is expressed by the family head or his representative who informs the spirit of the deceased person that there is the need to prepare him or her towards the journey ahead. From Adjaye, the most experienced mortuary ritualist among the group begins the ritual washing. Custom enjoins all those in the bathroom to take part in the washing. The spirit of the deceased is believed to be present during the mortuary rituals. It is also believed that the deceased sees whatever takes place and could take vengeance on anyone who is not in agreement with such rituals being performed.²⁴⁰ It is then heavily incensed, adorned with rich clothes and ornaments and lain in state on a nicely decorated bed in an open hall. The purpose of such adorning is to give the deceased a worthy appearance in the ancestral world. It is also a display of wealth in honour of the deceased, depending greatly on the social status of the deceased and his or her family.²⁴¹

A woman is provided with waist beads and a loincloth which are considered very necessary for her entry into the spiritual world. The husband is customarily obliged to provide his wife with these items during marriage. When this was not done before her death, he has to provide some for her before she is lain in state. In Komenda tradition, even if the husband did give, he could lovely provide again. Alternatively, if the deceased had her own beads, the husband pays a price to her paternal representative and uses it as a substitute. Failure to perform this sacred duty is not a disgrace to the widower alone but to his entire family. Ideally, three types of beads tsetseeaso, w’ansantr, and tomodie are preferred, but in the absence of these, any other beds are acceptable. These beads are very expensive and durable according to

Amoako-Atta.\textsuperscript{242} It is considered an honour to provide one’s wife with any of these beads partly because of the price and durability and mostly because the ancestors used them.\textsuperscript{243}

The people of Komenda do not stress on the beads in isolation. They believe that there is a gatekeeper who would permit only morally good women entry into the asamando. The waist beads are thought of as an identity for women who lived morally good life on earth. It is believed that women who are provided with beads by their husbands easily pass through the gate. The official who fastens the beads around the deceased’s waist commission it in the following words:

“....wo kun n’ahondze a ŋdze regya wo kwan nyi,” literally means (Your husband bids you farewell with these beads).

\textit{wo kun etua w’ahondze no kaw, ntsi yi wo yem fitaa kɛ wo kwan}\textsuperscript{244} (Your husband has paid for your beads so do not wreak vengeance on anybody, go in peace).

Without explanation, the spirit of the dead wife which is supposed to have been embarrassed by the husband’s behaviour would commit him to suffer for his folly. Traditional priestesses, queen mothers and others whose official duties often exclude them from marriage are exempted from the beads testimony. It is paramount to bury them with beads, but it does not matter who provides them, because their status exempts them from the gateway inquisition. However, a widow whose husband did not provide her the beads before his death is given some during the widowhood rites. The bereaved family is obliged to provide the beads when requested. Women who for one reason or the other cannot remarry after their husband’s death. Quite often the widow would secretly inform her

\textsuperscript{242} Amoako-Attah Fosu, \textit{Funeral Celebration}, 2.
\textsuperscript{243} Amoako-Attah Fosu, \textit{Funeral Celebration}, 2.
\textsuperscript{244} Felix Ben Cudjoe, \textit{The Impact of Funerals on Socio-economic on the people of Agbozume} (Unpublished), 1999, 98.
“ekumaa” (sister-in-law) who would also ensure that it is provided with the knowledge of the general public to arrest disgrace and public ridicule. Mortuary rites are supposed to be the responsibility of matrilineal family and, therefore, when a person dies, he is lain in state in the maternal home. The father, however, plays his fatherly role in accordance with the custom of such community.

There is pre-burial mourning when the body is lain in state. During wake-keeping, the body is laid in state late in the evening either in the family’s house or deceased’s own house or in a public space amidst mourning and wailing. The occasion is characterised by drumming, drinking and singing till the interment. Family members demonstrate their grief by donning their bodies with various items from stripes of red, brown and maroon clothes to clay (krobow) on their arms and foreheads.

The spouse, together with close female relatives sits near the body and wail throughout the period the body is lain in state. While the body is lain in state, relatives or family members, sympathisers, friends and the general public also share their condolences with the bereaved family and pay their last respect to the deceased by filing past the corpse. The arrival of the mourners to the funeral grounds usually comes by wailing. Women in particular, sing a lot of dirges during this period to express their emotions about the death. The funeral goes on throughout the night and gets to a climax by noon the following day till the burial.

The coffin is then requested from either the family of the children or husband or wife by the bereaved family. In the presentation of the coffin, the coffin and pillow with white case on the brass pan (ayewa) are showcased through the principal street. Money is added to the items. A line is formed before the coffin in the following order: great-grandchildren first, followed by grandchildren, children (males first and female behind) and ba banyin (a

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245 Cudjoe, The Impacts of Funerals, 98.
female) who carries the pillow between mba mbanyimfo ebien (two males). The great grandchildren and grandchildren are marked by ‘ntwema’ (red clay) and the children with ‘hyirew’ (white clay). They put their two hands on their heads, wailing and singing till they present the items to the families gathered. During the presentation, those before the casket move straight to the corpse and the family members behind do present the coffin. The presenters are asked to open up the coffin for verification and acceptance. Sometimes, the families do debate on the coffin and either accept or reject it. If the coffin is accepted, the children of the deceased perform a rite called “Tsir dwirew” (shaving of head) and “eguardze” (items for bathing) if the man did not collect them before his demise.

3.5.2.3 Burial Rites

In Komenda, before the body is put into the coffin, both maternal and paternal families express their love for the dead with various items such as cloths, handkerchiefs and ornaments. Friends and social groups to which the deceased belonged also offer gifts to show their love to the deceased. According to Opanyin Apagya, the items are meant for the use of the deceased in his or her journey to the ancestral world.246 It is the belief of the people of Komenda that the dead continues the life they led on earth thus basic necessities such as beads, bowls or plates, cloth and money are given so they would not be in need. The money added is meant for buying food and as a ferry fare since there is the belief that there are rivers to cross on the journey. James Christensen asserts that “the sea and the rivers play a significant role in the Fante pantheon of gods.” 247 Usually, all the gifts are received by Ebaapanyin (the female leader of the family) who, in turn, addresses the deceased on behalf of the donors. The spouse is the last to bid farewell to the deceased. Libation is poured by the Ebaapanyin as she conveys the spouse’s message to the dead. All children (excluding

the very young ones) and close relatives are expected to be present at this stage to witness the corpse being put into the coffin. Non-relatives are not permitted there except with the permission of a family member.

Before the corpse is put in the coffin, close relatives and in-laws are expected to give parting gifts to the deceased. These include pieces of cloth, a mat, pillow and a blanket. The blanket, mat and the pillow are provided by the children and in some cases by the husband to his wife. Preference is always given to the items provided by children, wife and husband. Monies are also put in the coffin. All these emphasize the belief that death is a transition from life on earth to life in the ancestral world. Other living people may send messages and gifts to their dead relatives through the deceased. The funeral reaches its climax when the corpse is put into the coffin.

Finally, the corpse is put in the coffin and covered. The coffin is brought to the court or the funeral ground and a final farewell by the family is hidden amidst libation to the ancestors. The family head is informed, who, in turn, informs the chief or his representative that they are ready for the burial ground. From Ebusuapanyin Kojo Apagya, the ‘ebusua poma’ (family staff) held by ba banyin (male), he always leads the mourners to the middle part of the way and returns and the mourners proceed to the cemetery for the burial. The spouse and children (precisely the young ones) remain at home, apparently to be spared more grief.

From the respondents, the burial takes place in the morning before noon or towards sunset. In the past, burial was done at night, mostly indoors or in public close to houses of relatives. Only children were buried in the day at the children’s cemetery, and very young ones, up to

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248 Christensen, “Double Descent Among The Fanti, 49.
249 Amoako-Attah, Funeral Celebration By Akans, 3.
three months old were also buried on a refuse dump. In the contemporary period, most of the dead are buried in the cemetery. It is noted in some cases that people of high social standing may be buried indoors, while a banana stem is buried at the grave yard as a camouflage. Such burials are always done under cover of darkness. Almost every indoor burial is known to the majority of the village folks, but they consider it a sacred duty to keep silent over it without a comment, especially to the strangers.

Amponsah explains that before a chief is interred which is always done at night, all other chiefs renew their loyalty to their head colleague. They do so by swearing an oath of allegiance before the corpse and promise that even at death they continue to be with him. The dead chief is requested to reciprocate by ensuring peace and harmony among the living. At the burial ground, libation is poured to the earth goddess and the ancestors to receive the dead, and to enable him or her to assist the living in terms of need. If the person is buried outside his or her birth place, the intention to send the soul home is declared. The deceased’s hair from the head, finger and toe nail pairings are sent home for burial. They bury it as burning the normal corpse. After the prayer, the officiant puts a handful of soil into the grave and the grave diggers then fill it. The burial rites are concluded by pouring libation, usually with a drink of the person’s choice asking him or her to bless the living with good harvest, riches, the barren with children and the bachelors and spinsters with partners. He is however, charged to revenge his or her death if he or she died through unnatural cause.

Amponsah points that the dead at this point comes out of the grave to see the mourners off. It is therefore considered contrary to custom to look back for the fear of seeing the apparitions of the dead. The crowd is met at the outskirts of the village by women with water

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and custom enjoins all to wash their hands so as to wash off the evils of death. The hands are left to dry without shaking or wiping them with a napkin. Back at home a report of the burial is formally given to the elders who receive the message with a word of congratulations. Amponsah states that the period of fasting which begins the demise of the family member, comes to an end with the burial and people are advised to find “water to bathe”, a parlance which implies that mourners may break their fast. Mourning may, however, continue for a day or two after burial. The very close relatives stay back for the eighth day rites before departing to their various villages and towns.

It is important to note that greater importance is attached to burial in one’s ancestral home. According to Amponsah, attempts are always made to transport dead bodies back home for burial even at a higher cost. Where it becomes impossible to send the corpse home, the spirit is sent home for a second burial as stated earlier. The people of Komenda believe that if a person’s naval cord is buried at home, that person must not die or be buried in a foreign land, hence the necessity of giving the a second burial as indicated.

a) Burial Rites for a Minor

The death of a minor in Komenda traditional area is solemnly observed without elaborate rites. M.J. Field observes that when parents who have never lost any child before lose their first child, such death is known in Komenda tradition as ‘son’ or ‘feea’ or ‘φξρβα’ and also called in Ashanti ‘sodoξ’. They regard the first child of parents as ‘son’ or ‘sodoξ’, irrespective of age. Burials in such cases are immediate without elaborate mortuary rites. This practice is built on the belief that parents who mourn them may either hinder further

childbearing or encourage the death of their other children. A stillbirth and children who die within one to three months after birth are buried in a broken pot on the refuse dump. Such babies are described as “kukuba” (a child of small pot). Burial on the refuse dump indicates that they are regarded as a material, not a human being. The baby’s body is shrouded in rags or in an old mat and put in a broken pot lined with castor oil leaves and hurriedly buried. The body is sometimes mutilated and thorny bush put on it in the pot. It is seldom washed before it is buried and the parents are prevented from mourning.

Again, when ϕζρβα is old, he or she is buried on the same day, no wake-keeping, no elaborate funeral observance and simple coffin is used. At cemetery, korba fa, which literally means ‘half wooden pan’, is put on the ground for donations. The amount accrued is used to defray the cost of the coffin and also buy a fowl for the parents to eat to pacify their souls. The giving of fowl also expresses the peoples’ condolences to the bereaved parents that this incident should not befall on them again. The parents clad themselves in white clothes, a symbol of joy and are served with food to eat. On this occasion, both parents eat from the same bowl. This practice is contrary to today’s norm in the Komenda traditional area. The contention here is that by giving it a proper burial and mourning, the child’s spirit would be encouraged to come back to be reborn by its mother only to die again to disturb her. From Sarkodie, such ‘born to die’ children are thought of as reincarnates of evil spirits and dead relatives who could not enter the ancestral world. Such spirits, when born, do not live. They soon die to come back to destroy mothers.

Furthermore, mourning may spoil their mother’s womb and consequently cause her to stop childbearing. Also, a child who wishes to come and stay the second time may not come back

257 Sarkodie, Aspect of Traditional Religion, 87.
258 Sarkodie, Aspect of Traditional Religion, 89.
259 Sarkodie, Aspect of Traditional Religion, 89.
when the couple mourns on its death. Ages ago, traditional priests and diviners were consulted when a new baby was born to find out the particular ancestor who had come back. With such belief at the background, a newly baby born is kept indoors for one week after which it is outdoor. Before then, it is not regarded as human being until it is ritually introduced into the society through the naming ceremony.

b) Burial for a Chief

_Ebusuapanyin Apagya_ confirmed the assertion of Gyasi Nimako that death of a chief is not announced immediately after death and even then it is never announced in plain language, but expressions such as: “Nana këekura” (‘Grandfather is gone to village’), _Oðωπεẽvetutu_” (‘a mighty tree has fallen’), “ԑ’aka nkyen egu” (‘he has poured salt away’) and many others are variously used.

The first mark that indicates the death of a chief is that people from the _banmu_ (immediate families) division who are the custodians of the royal mausoleum pounce on domestic animals and poultry in the streets. The animals symbolise the entire community and as the maxim goes, “the animal that has no owner falls prey to enemies”.

When death is officially announced, the custodian of the royal mausoleum is informed who later details his representative to show the bereaved family a place to dig the grave. In some villages, it is the responsibility of the head of the royal family to authorise the grave digging. This is because chiefs are not buried in public cemetery. _Banmu hen_, according to Nana Efua Badu II, sees to the arrangement of the burial of the chief. Graves are rectangular of about eight feet long, four feet wide and four feet deep. After clearing the place, the grave is marked, while libation is poured to invoke the spirit of the earth goddess and ancestors to solicit their help in the task ahead. The first spit of soil is dug by the official and a lump of soil removed from the mapped area thrice. After this, the other grave diggers come in to dig.

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Grave digging used to be the responsibility of one’s children and brothers but is now a communal work undertaken by the youth of the community concerned.

The tradition in Komenda is that digging of the grave is done by ‘mba mbanyimfo’ (the children of the father of the deceased). Wailing, funeral dirges, drumming and dancing continue with intermittent display while the body is lain in state. Often the good side of the dead is highlighted in wailing and funeral dirges which readily reveal the relationship between the mourner and the dead.\textsuperscript{262} In the past, bodies were laid in state for two or more days during which vigil was kept. Burial might be delayed in anticipation of the arrival of certain close relatives whose presence and homage to the deceased would strengthen the kinship bond of unity and solidarity.

A great deal of social intercourse goes on while the funeral lasts. Nketia refers to this as “incidents of funeral celebrations”.\textsuperscript{263} These include customary exchange of greetings, expression of sympathy, the narration of circumstances of the death and later events such as pouring of libation and the firing of guns to announce the event of the deceased.\textsuperscript{264} Whilst the body is lain in state, two to six people are selected from among the maternal lineage to fan the body and to whisk flies away from resting on it. Gifts to the dead are channelled through the head of the bereaved family: Ebusuapanyin and Banmuhen and they reserve the privilege to pick one of the clothes presented to the dead. They also keep vigil over the bed on which the body is laid after burial till the bed is removed. The bed which the corpse is lain was kept for a week in the past but in this contemporary times it is removed either the following morning after burial or kept for three days. The whiskers who are considered

\textsuperscript{262} Nketia, \textit{The Funeral Dirges}, 71.
\textsuperscript{263} Nketia, \textit{The Funeral Dirges}, 73.
\textsuperscript{264} Nketia, \textit{The Funeral Dirges}, 73.
contaminated or defiled are ritually cleansed and purified after burial but not earlier than the removal of the bed.\textsuperscript{265}

c) Burial for Victims of Unnatural Deaths

Unnatural deaths are caused by one of many factors. As noted earlier, unnatural deaths are irregular and victims are often treated with contempt. The most distasteful of all accidental deaths are death by drowning, suicide and at childbirth. Usually, mortuary rituals for a ‘bad death’ (ατζϕο wu) is summarily performed; nevertheless, it may take a long period to complete the rituals. Previously, when a person drowned, the body was retrieved and buried at the banks of the river. It is a taboo to bury it at the cemetery or bury it in a coffin. The corpse is wrapped in the clothes in which the person was drowned or in old cloths and buried. No organised funerals are performed with the belief that the aggrieved river spirit may be offended, which may lead to further hazards. Similarly, a person who commits suicide either by hanging or poisoning is not given proper burial. He or she is denied proper funeral rites and abusive epithets are used on him or her. The spirit of the suicide victim is believed to haunt people, so anybody who calls at the scene where a person has hanged himself is obliged to flog the body to register his or her protest. Such practices are believed to prevent the spirit from haunting people. In the past, they were buried at the very spot of the crime.\textsuperscript{266}

A ritual called “ayewamubζ” (sounding of a brass tray or plate) is performed before the burial is done. The ayewamubζ rite is performed with the intention of invoking the spirit of the dead to reveal or explain the cause of his or her death. This will determine the appropriate ritual to carry out in order to ward off a similar misfortune befalling the family again. At the

\textsuperscript{265} Boadi, Beliefs & Customs, 48.
\textsuperscript{266} Sarkodie, Aspect of Traditional Religion, 89.
observance of the ayewamubξ rite, it is expected that a non-family member will be spiritually possessed and will announce the cause of the death. If no revelation is made (sζ oenssi obiara do a) after the initial ayewamubξ, there will be a repeat of the performance of the ritual a week later. The search for the cause will be abandoned only after a third attempt of the ayewamubξ. Ayewamub ritual is performed only on Fridays and usually at mid-day. There appears to be no spiritual meaning attached to the choice of Friday except that Friday is one of the days considered to be “bad” day (daber). A revelation at the first ayewamubξ rite is most welcome since burial is done immediately after the ritual. Sometimes, it becomes necessary to equip the deceased with a knife or any other weapon with which to take revenge for the “injustice” done to him or her. A further ritual which is performed after ayewamubξ is “inuma”, ritual of warding off a spell or danger.

From the foregoing, ayewamubξ ritual presupposes that every “bad death” is an omen of a curse or ill-luck which has come about and is hanging over the entire family. Pouring of libation is also done on the following days: Mondays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. These days are described as daber that is “bad days”. Zηξφο is not laid in state in the house. The corpse is sent either to the outskirts of the town or an open space outside the house of the deceased. The corpse is seated on a chair or a stool and the back placed against a wall. Mourners will then file past it.

Notwithstanding that, when a Christian dies as Zηξφο, the family usually allows the church to perform a Christian funeral. The family is unable to carry out the detail of the stages described above, particularly the mode of laying-in state. However, after the Christian rites and burial, the family will come in with enough of all the rituals that are performed regarding ατξφψμ, particularly the ayewamubξ and the inuma rituals.
3.5.2.4 Post-Burial Activities

In Akan parlance, all other activities after the interment are generally classified as post-burial activities. These include one-week celebration, final funeral rites and calendrical periods.

a) One-Week Celebration

In Komenda tradition, one-week celebration is the first day observance. Kofi Essoun of Komenda expounds that in the past, billy goat is slaughtered on “edwin ahaban do”, literally means ‘on the grey leaves’ and shared among the other heads of the families. He, however, postulates that today, before the One-Week Celebration, other families are invited by the head of the bereaved family to come together to fix the date for the funeral rites. In this invitation, a bottle of akpeteshie is presented to other family heads to express the seriousness of the invitation. This celebration marks the end of a period of intense mourning by the family where there has been “fasting” or avoidance of normal meals. The typical Akan would break the fast after the ninth day that is one day after the observance. During this celebration, the dates for the burial and funeral rites are announced, items needed are mentioned, for example, chairs, canopies and music. Also, those to be in charge of the entire celebration are selected and announced. They are ‘Eyieh’ (chief mourner) and ‘Pianyi’ (Exhorter). They organize the entire funeral celebration like canopies, chairs, music and others; and ‘Eyie krakye’ (funeral secretary), who takes records of the entire income and expenditure of celebration. Kofi Essoun states that it is the responsibility of the ‘Ebusuapanyin’ of the bereaved family to look for money to be used for notification to those who are supposed to be notified like the chief of the town, spouse (s) if married, children.

267 Okyeame Kofi Essoun, 8th December, 2016.
269 Ebusuapanyin Kofi Papa, Dompuase, 9, February, 2017.
and ‘mba mpanyimfo’ (children of the family of the father of the deceased). These mba mpanyimfo go on errands for the bereaved family till the celebration ends. The rest of the money borrowed is given to the ‘Eyi hen’ for other expenses.

The table below shows some of the customary money given as notification fees by the deceased’s family representative to the deceased’s spouse, children or family representative. This rite is known as nkae nsa. It’s important to note that, they use money not drink.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notification Drink (GHC)</th>
<th>Contribution (GHC)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For the chief</td>
<td>- 1bottle of Schnapp (its equivalent in cash form) -</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>- 2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td>- 5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>- 5.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In – Laws</td>
<td>- 2.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mba mpanyimfo</td>
<td>- 5.00 + Feeding fee (Negotiable) -</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On receiving notification drink, the families concerned immediately send to the deceased’s family the following articles: The children provide coffin, preparing of grave, beddings (mpa do to) and ‘Adaka nsido’ (items that accompany the coffin) which is made of: two crates of minerals and one bottle of schnapp if their father died. The husband provides coffin, preparing of grave, shroud, a half piece of cloth, two crates of minerals, and one bottle of schnapp to his deceased wife’s family. It is the responsibility of the wife to provide coffin when there is no child, shroud, blanket, bedspread, curtains, and ‘eguardze’ (soap, pomade, traditional sponge-σαξζω bufur, κρζβο, florida water, lavender, a piece of cloth, jampa) and a bottle of schnapp for her dead husband’s family. If with children, they will dress the grave. The tradition demands that in-laws provide bathing materials (eguardze) for the burial of their mother or father in-laws.

b) Final Funeral Rites
In Fante land, particularly in Komenda, a mortuary rite is pronounced ended after burial. The family head is expected to see to it that the bedstead and the beddings are removed. The removal of bedstead and the beddings philosophically means that the mourning and wailing has come to an end. The final mortuary rite (family gathering) is held either immediately after the burial on the same day or another convenient day fixed by the head of the family. The family gathering is almost always done at the funeral ground. Usually, the bereaved family meets on Tuesdays to take stock or assess the entire programme.

Another significant feature of mortuary rite in Komenda land is donning of mourning cloths. Mourners are usually donned in black (biisii) and use red for a cover cloth or headgear. This combination, according to Opanyin Kojo Apagya, indicates that they are hardest hit by the loss and are very serious, they say m’enyiwa aber (“my eyes are red”). The community and other sympathisers don dark red (kɛgbɛgbɔ) and dark colours to express their sympathy. In fact, ‘kɛgbɛgbɔ or ‘black’ (biisii) is generally a mark of mourning and can be adopted by all. He further explained that chiefs usually don black-dyed cloth (kuntukuni) which is said to be prescribed funeral regalia for chiefs. White cloth is also donned when the dead is aged (normally seventy years and above). This is supposed to be donned specifically by the bereaved family. The wearing of white cloth symbolises appreciation to God for long life for their departed member of the family. Old age is always considered as a blessing from the Supreme Being.

Significantly, a combination of black and white clothes is worn where the deceased attains a minimum age of seventy to express joy and living a long life. Sympathisers express their

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270 George E. Dickson, Dying, Death and Bereavement (Dunkin: Mc Graw Hill Companies,1988), 66
273 Dickson, Dying, Death and Bereavement, 66.
condolences to the bereaved families and the widow or widower. Food is served to the entire groups of guests to refresh them. Music is played while donations are made to both families to defray their expenses. If the deceased was a Christian or the close relatives are Christians, their church members would attend the mortuary ceremony. After the ceremony, the relatives and some sympathisers of the deceased will wear white clothes to church on Sundays to thank the church members and God for having made the celebration a success.

c) One-Year Anniversary

On occasion of 40th Day Celebration that is seen as a mini funeral (that is a funeral of less intense mourning), the first anniversary celebration becomes optional among the people of Komenda. First Anniversary virtually covers all the rituals carried out during the 40th day celebration. Sometimes, however, first anniversary will involve a church service and unveiling of a tombstone. If there should be a church service, it will be held at the cemetery. After this, the family pours libation to the ancestors at the cemetery and repeats it at home. Drinking and sharing of anniversary meal will conclude the celebration. The concept of first anniversary is to remember the dead relative and thank God for calling him or her home. Moreover, it is the period whereby the bereaved family meets to open his or her property left and share them accordingly.

3.5.3 Widowhood Rites

Another significant element in Komenda traditional mourning is the widowhood rites. They are observed on the death of a spouse as a “separation ritual”. It aims to overcome the shock, fear and the traumatic effects, and to cut the spiritual matrimonial bond that unites man and wife when one dies. The belief in life after death makes separation imperative in order to ward off the spirit of deceased partner from harming the living partner. The rites are more elaborate to the widows than the widowers. A man observes 40 days during which he abstains from sex, observes dietary regulations and does not work. It, however, varies from
40 days to a year for women depending on the political and social status of the deceased. This rite is generally referred to as ‘Kuna’. According to Nana Kwaku Nkrumah, it is derived from the expression “Kun pa yɛ na” (“good husband is scarce”). The term has however come to mean the adjustment, psychological ordeals, mental torture and agonies one undergoes when a spouse dies.274

A woman enters widowhood immediately the husband dies. A widow is expected to feel remorse, sad and should dress in a way to attract public sympathy, and to discourage the spirit of the spouse from haunting her. A widow suspected of having contributed to the husband’s death or having badly treated him whilst alive is often maltreated by the late husband’s relatives. She is pestered, humiliated and often refused care during the widowhood period. The woman enters the second stage of widowhood after the husband’s burial. The rituals performed after the burial and subsequent ones are officiated and directed by women who have themselves observed widowhood rite before. This is to ensure that all necessary steps are followed and strictly complied with. Immediately after burial, a widow is taken to the outskirts of the town and given a ritual bath. Traditional toiletries are used. The first ritual bath is supposed to ward off the spirit of the husband and to prepare her for the ensuing task. After the bath, her clothes are changed. She does not use the clothes again because they are defiled and polluted.275 Instead, she is given black mourning cloth, (biisii) which she wears throughout the widowhood period.

Furthermore, the Komenda woman is given a piece of elephant grass (emi) to hold till she goes to bed and ties some of the emi in a long strip cloth (ɛɛµa) and puts it on her waist. This is to ward off the spirit of her deceased husband. It is believed that the physical

274 Nana Kwaku Nkrumah, February, 10, 2017.
275 Nana Kwaku Nkrumah, February, 10, 2017.
appearance of the widow with elephant grass, a symbol of the presence of the husband, is to enable her to go through the period of tribulations and hardship without any interference from the spirit of the dead husband.

A Komenda widow is not supposed to spend the night anywhere outside the very room in which she observes the rites. Her absence would mean starving and denying the husband bath for the period that she would be away. A widow should not walk alone. She should always be accompanied by the caretaker any time she walks out. The mode of behaviour is quite different from other women. Indeed, the sight of a Komenda widow, no doubt, gives the impression of a seriously depressed person in a completely different world of her own.

Finally, after going through these rites, certain rituals have to be performed for the widow to have her freedom. She is taken to the seashore for cleansing. There is a special person assigned to perform the rituals at the seashore. This cleansing ritual is termed as “kɛ gu no ho ɔzɔσα’” which literally means “she is going to ward off her bad omen”. She is to present a bottle of akpeteshie and money to the ritualist for the rituals. In total nakedness, she is sent to the sea by the ritualist to wash herself thrice in the sea after libation has been poured. She normally goes with a servant who carries the toiletries. After the rituals, the toiletries left are thrown into the sea to signify that her bad omen has been thrown out or away. The widow will hold an emi in her left hand as she greets through the principal street of her hometown. This is done to inform the public that henceforth, the widow is now free from the widowhood state and can therefore can perform her normal activities. She presents herself to both her family and the family of her deceased husband for verification and welcome.²⁷⁶

Nana Kweku Mensah equally mentions that the widow after certain period based on her readiness performs “purification and thanksgiving” sacrifices and may permitted to remarry. Failure to comply with this will attract punishment and she then performs rituals as retribution. They smear ‘emi’ with water in a bucket and pour the blood of billy goat into the mixture and take it to the street as they say “Mbusu a Osimesi ayɛ no ɛnkɛ oo! meaning “the bad omen following this person should go”277

3.6 CONCLUSION

It has been established that death is inevitable and naturally puts fear into every person in the community. It is also submitted that the Komenda people view death as a transition from the world of humans to the world of the spirits (Asamando). At asamando, the person is expected to settle account of his or her stewardship with the ancestors. To ensure a smooth passage of the dead to the underworld, elaborate preparations of the rites are put in place. Anyone who has a part to play in such preparation does it wholeheartedly to prevent the wrath of the deceased and the ancestors. The family under the leadership of the ebusuapanyin ensures that nothing evil happens to any family member. This explains the reason behind the enforcement of such practice as widowhood rites. The origin of death into this earth is elaborately discussed here. Types of death, natural and unnatural are also investigated at in this chapter. Mortuary rites and their importance to the people of Komenda have been discussed. One-week celebration where the arrangements of the funeral activities are announced to the public has been clearly dealt with. This chapter has also examined the five stages of mortuary rites, which are: preparation, pre-burial mourning (including wake keeping), interment, post-burial mourning, and calendrical day celebrations. Finally, the last

significant element in Komenda traditional mourning, widowhood rite, is carefully discussed here. There are some aspects that need to be taken out, modified and preserved. There are others that need to be stopped. In widowhood rites, the aspect that compels the woman to eat at regular intervals and to retire to bed at specific periods, the practice whereby the widow is not allowed to talk too much and others need to be preserved if the widow is to maintain good health. There is the need to give the dead a befitting burial, but the philosophical and theological bases should not be relegated to the background.
CHAPTER FOUR

CHANGING TRENDS OF MORTUARY RITES IN KOMENDA

4.0 INTRODUCTION

Nukunya asserts that over the decades and at the different periods, Ghanaian societies had undergone many influences resulting in changes of traditional practices.\(^{278}\) Mortuary rites in Akan, particularly, Komenda are regarded as a memorable event. The bereaved family is obliged to ensure that a “befitting” burial or farewell is given to their departed member. Nevertheless, no pains are spared in making it a grand and successful celebration.\(^{279}\) Adjaye clearly states: “funerals are meant to honour the living as much as the dead”\(^{280}\). Adjaye further remarks that the cost involved in the mortuary rites include the *nkaensa* (official notification drink and money), *eguardze* (washing items for the corpse), publicity, refreshments, drinks, printing, undertakers, caterers, florists, musicals, professional casket carriers and many more are overwhelming.\(^{281}\) For this reason, the Methodist Church Ghana and Komenda Traditional Council over the decades sought to curb the rising costs of expenditures of the celebration of the mortuary rites, but to no avail. The only success the Methodist Church achieved was the ban of wake-keeping. In this regard, this study seeks to find out the new items that foster the high expensive form of practices of today’s mortuary rites as well as the strains on the bereaved ones. The position of the Methodist Church Ghana is equally be discussed in this section.

Again, one’s choice regarding the last rites of passage (death) tells something about one’s attitudes and belief about death. The ceremonies that the family or a community enacts to mark the transitional journey of one of its members express, through their practices and how

\(^{278}\) Nukunya, *Tradition and Change in Ghana*, 128.

\(^{279}\) Weekly Bible Lessons, January – June 2009 (June 21), 138-139.

\(^{280}\) Adjaye, *Boundaries of Self and Others*, 159.

\(^{281}\) Adjaye, *Boundaries of Self and Others*, 159.
death is perceived within a particular social group. The death rituals in Akan society, particularly, Komenda, have recently modernised at a very fast pace. Some of the changing trends of today’s mortuary rites that are examined include preservation of the corpse, publicity, one-week celebration, laying-in state, wake-keeping, expensive and flamboyant caskets, video coverage, professional services, refreshment, memorials, and disposing of the corpse.

4.1 FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHANGING TRENDS

Adjaye asserts that mortuary rites are fundamentally social practices invented by humans and never exist in a vacuum. They are shaped by and respond to human needs and societal conditions and these, therefore, are subject to change.\textsuperscript{282} Akan mortuary rites have undergone serious metamorphosis. In recent decades, Adjaye purports that the changing trends are as the influences or result of westernisation, religious pluralism and convergence of social, political, economic and medical forces. Other factors include western education, technology and social positions, colonialism, rural-urban migration, and social media.\textsuperscript{283} These changing factors, as indicated earlier, have rapidly increased the financial burden and diminished the impact of the social order of mortuary rites in Komenda.

4.1.1 Religious Pluralism

Nukunya rightly links Christianity to colonialism in that Christianity also has informal and formal phases.\textsuperscript{284} He further explicates that informally, Ghanaians have heard and known Christianity long before the churches were formally opened in the 19\textsuperscript{th} Century. Some indigenous Ghanaians had already been ordained into the ministry.\textsuperscript{285} Islam also preceded

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{282} Adjaye, \textit{Boundaries of Self and Others}, 159.
\item \textsuperscript{283} Adjaye, \textit{Boundaries of Self and Others}, 159.
\item \textsuperscript{284} Nukunya, \textit{Tradition and Change in Ghana}, 141.
\item \textsuperscript{285} Nukunya, \textit{Tradition and Change in Ghana}, 141.
\end{itemize}
Christianity in Ghana. Nukunya asserts that the changes Christianity had brought into Ghanaian life were numerous and varied. These foreign religions had both led to the alienation of the Christians from their own traditional beliefs and practices.\footnote{Nukunya, \textit{Tradition and Change in Ghana}, 141.} Another area of negative influence was the authority structure, not only at tribal, town or village levels, but also at the lineage and lower levels. He expounds this assertion that the Christian converts refused to attend traditional festivals, ancestral rites like funerals and puberty, and even family gatherings for ritual purposes and to pay homage to the traditional authorities.\footnote{Nukunya, \textit{Tradition and Change in Ghana}, 141.} These foreign religions have indeed weakened the traditional set-up of Akan societies such as Komenda.

It can be said that the traditional mortuary ritual in Komenda community reveals a rite of passage wherein death symbolises loss. However, the mortuary rites of the communities experience gradual changes in recent decades as facet estranged to customary beliefs and practices that are introduced. Manfred Egbe remarks that more traditionalists who are converting to ‘modern or foreign religions’ (those with better socio-economic status) believed to provide protection from witches and sorcerers.\footnote{Manfred Egbe, \textit{Death, The Deceased And The Dead: Changing Trends in the Funeral Rituals of the Bayang People of Cameroon}. (MSc. Medical Anthropology and International Health) Medical Anthropology Research Center (MARC). University Rovira i Virgili. http://www.researchgate.net/publication/236166455. April, 2013. Assessed, 8, May, 2017.} With their socio-economic power this ‘group is growing in strength and influence; they offer food and drinks to the custodians (elders) of tradition and have the funeral ritual to be “Christian oriented”. With these changing trends (i.e. mixing traditions and Christian oriented burial beliefs and practices), he poses a primordial statement that the fate of the dead remains unsure and it would appear ‘modern religion’ in the funeral landscape focuses more on the living (to make them converts of the religion), while ‘traditional religion’ focuses on the dead (his or her
However, whatever the focus of either religion, what is alarming now is the influence that ‘modern religion’ has on the funeral landscape in Komenda.

Mortuary rituals in Komenda communities appear to be losing their original significance and meaning and are gaining new dimension. After all, rituals are expressions of social experiences, that is communal life and common ideas that connect the past, present, and future. These foreign religions have influenced many people to the extent that they perceive every traditional beliefs and practices in the area as fetish. Most of the members of these foreign religions do not fully participate in traditional ceremonies such as mortuary rites in the community.

4.1.2 Western Education

In its technical sense, Alice Boateng and Anngela-Cole define education as the process by which society, through schools, colleges, universities and other institutions deliberately transmits its cultural heritage, its accumulated knowledge values and skills from one generation to another. Education is indeed an instrument of change. Formal education places emphasis on literacy and its syllabus is full of foreign content. For Nukunya, the emphasis on literacy and the foreign content of education combined to seriously alienate the Akan people from their traditional environment and culture. He expounds further that formal education makes people to adopt Western life-styles, like dressing, food-type, belief systems and practices, music, dance, entertainment and many other aspects of social life. In effect,

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292 Nukunya, *Tradition and Change in Ghana*, 158.
293 Nukunya, *Tradition and Change in Ghana*, 158.
the young of today know much of foreign culture than their own culture, beliefs and practices.

4.1.3 Colonialism

Nukunya, states that colonialism is the introduction of practices and measures within a legal framework, which are quite alien to most Ghanaian ways of life. Colonialism is also defined as the policy of a nation seeking to extend or retain its authority over people or territories, generally with the aim of developing or exploiting them to the benefit of the colonising country and also helping the colonies modernize in terms defined by the colonisers, especially in economies, religion and health.

The impacts of colonization are immense and pervasive, as well as positive or negative. In the positive sense, colonization has brought development to the nation, such as, improvement of infrastructure and technological progress. However, it has indeed affected how traditional practices such as mortuary rites are expressed, and the role and toll they make on modern societies. Many people today have certain perceptions about some of their own traditional beliefs and practices because of the influence of colonialism.

4.1.4 Rural - Urban Migration

Nukunya clearly states that before colonialism, large settlement was not known. He explains that since colonial period and the emergence of other factors, many settlements started to increase in size and complexity. The growth of these settlements (towns and cities) has indeed brought in its wake many changings in social life. It is clearly evident that

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294 Nukunya, Tradition and Change in Ghana, 132.
295 http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki.colon...
296 Omega A. Boateng, Socio-economic Transformation of Akan Funeral Rites in Ghana: the changing process. School of Social Work, University of Nevada, Rena 89557, USA, boateng@unr.edu
297 Boateng, Socio-economic Transformation.
298 Nukunya, Tradition and Change in Ghana, 166
299 Nukunya, Tradition and Change in Ghana, 166
many social problems which are not associated with rural life and transitional social organization and practices erupted in urban areas. Most of the urban dwellers, according to Nukunya, lack an indigenous ethnic core with any degree of homogeneity.\textsuperscript{300}

The Rural-Urban migration of young people in search of better condition of living; in order to better their education results to a breakdown in customary ways through which traditions (customs, beliefs and practices) were passed from one generation (the older generation) to the other (younger generation). Most of the young people today are ignorant of the customs, culture and traditions of their own lineage, family and society; thus they are vulnerable to foreign beliefs and practices. In other words, the absence of young people in the villages (where culture, traditions and beliefs are alive) as remarked by Egbe implies a rupture in traditional methods (i.e. oral) of passing on knowledge of ‘traditions and culture’.\textsuperscript{301} The desire for advanced levels of studies and eventual exodus of young people to the cities and overseas further estrange young people from knowledge of traditional beliefs, customs and practices. They consider them to be archaic and primitive. Consequently, there are many young people in Ghana who are “ignorant” or “illiterate” of traditional practices and beliefs such as mortuary rites in their community.

4.1.5 Technology and Social Media

Technology and Social Media have also played a role in shifting the cultural norms around funerals. The contemporary younger generation uses more of social media and online for the publication of dead of their loved ones. Today, there is a mechanism for putting the casket in the grave. Besides, there is also a rotating bed for laying the corpse on. Even though, some technologies have made some mortuary rites easier and safer, they are very costly. For instance, the social media has a very wide range in terms of publicity, but the

\textsuperscript{300} Nukunya, \textit{Tradition and Change in Ghana}, 166
\textsuperscript{301} Egbe, \textit{Death, The Deceased And The Dead}, 68.
expensive nature gives financial constraints to the affected. Again, the mechanisms for putting the casket prevent falling of the casket in grave exposing the dead to bring disgrace to the family. However, in the opinion of this study, the rotating bed does not add any meaning to the activities, it is just a waste of money.

Hagan observes over the years that as a result of the technological changes in the preservation of dead bodies, mortuaries embalming of corpses have made it possible to extend the period of preparations to suit the bereaved families. The unfortunate aspect of modification of mortuary rites is the video coverage. This trend is also taking root in this ceremony. Many people do this simply because someone else did it without considering the cost elements. Discussing the changing trends with Opanyin Apagya, he passionately contested that it actually makes no sense for a huge amount to be spent on video coverage of the funeral of a person who might actually have lived longer or whose standard of living would have been improved considerably if the amount had been spent on him or her during his or her last days. He lamented that after alone does not gain any satisfaction from watching a video of a funeral of one’s loved one as compared to showing the video of one’s wedding day or life video to their grandchildren long after they had gone”. Usually, the most painful side is that these expensive funeral videos may be watched once and hardly ever again. They bring back to memory the sad departure of their loved ones when watching the videos.

Picture decoration has also become the order of the day. In Komenda, the bereaved families gather together for the final funeral rites (i.e. post-burial activities) at the public or community funeral ground, usually between the hours of 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. During this

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period, sympathisers share their condolences with the bereaved families through greetings and donations to defray some of their expenses. At this point, the picture of the deceased is normally displayed on the chair at the centre of the gathering for those who do not know or might have forgot him or her to recognize him or her. The trend has now changed. The display of this picture is now decorated with flowers and other decorating items. Banner of pictures of the deceased is today hung over at where the bereaved families are gathered. Another high-tech innovation resulting in a new style of electronic display of photographs of the deceased’s old days is the electronic picture rolling mechanism. Pictures of his or her travelling, awards received, with families and friends are rolled over. They normally display them at the centre of the gathering.

4.2 MODERN PRACTICE OF MORTUARY RITES

Adjaye postulates that there is increase modernization of the Akan mortuary rites. He states that the elements of such modernisation can be seen everywhere in Akan societies, especially, Komenda. Such modernisation is felt more on death notification, documentation of the mortuary rites, dressing of the corpse, the laying in state and memorialisation.

4.2.1 Professional Services

One aspect of modernisation of mortuary rites is the advent of professional services. In agreement with Adjaye, today, there are professional morticians, florists, and caterers while those who play highlife music are hired to assist with the funeral preparations and proceedings. Not only that, the undertakers and special casket carriers are also contacted to render their services. Adjaye asks that, “Is the Ghanaian funerals becoming too

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305 Adjaye, Boundaries of Self and Others, 154.
306 Adjaye, Boundaries of Self and Others, 154.
307 Adjaye, Boundaries of Self and Others, 155.
commercialised to the point that it is losing its original character as a kin celebration? Kwame Arhin concurs that “funeral rites have become opportunities for money-making.”

Some of my informants: the widows and widowers, children of the deceased, heads of the bereaved families, and parents of the deceased, confirm that all the costs involved in the professional services are borne by either the spouse or the children of the deceased with the exception of the cost of the undertakers. The bereaved family has only small percentage of amount to pay for the coffin and the undertaker. The cost involved is so high that the bereaved spouse, children, siblings and parents usually become distressed on how to settle these huge debts. The employment of the services of “Special Coffin Carriers” to carry the coffin only from the chapel into the car (hearse) for a fee is gradually taking seat in the celebration of the mortuary rites. This has been the work of mba mbanyin or the church members which does not cost either the bereaved family or the church anything. However, these professionals charge exorbitantly. For example, the areas that the undertakers charge are body decoration – toiletries (soap, sponge, towel, powder, perfume, comb, blade, and anti-sceptics); clothing - underwear or loincloths; drinks (akpeteshie) for libation and shroud or suit. In today’s morgue men who are not close relatives of the dead do wash the dead (both males and females) instead of the close relatives of the dead.

4.2.2 Pre-Burial Service

At this stage, official announcement is made of the burial rites. Here, customs demands that drinks are sent to the chief in the name of the chief mourner and his council of elders to inform him formally about the death. In the past, palm-wine was used. Today, schnapps, locally distilled gin, akpeteshie, or beer may be used as a substitute. Musketry are fired thrice and the drummer chants or the talking drums to announce the death to the people

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(ξabξ kyen do). The drummer chants the day named (kradzín) of the deceased and announces the calamity that has befallen the society and concludes with a word of condolence. In fact, the drum chant and the musketry are not employed in all cases except in the case of a person of high social standing in the society. A typical drum chant is interpreted as follows:

\[
\text{Ampong Kofi Mensono; Kurotwiramansa Kwadwo;}
\]

\[
\text{Damirifa Due, Damirifa Due, Damirifa Due;}
\]

\[
\text{Due, Due, Due, Due, Due ne amandzehun;}
\]

\[
\text{Wokξ sa a bra, wokξ Kong a bra,}
\]

\[
\text{Bra, bra, mpren, mpren, mpren;}
\]

\[
\text{Damirifa Due, Due, Due, Due,}
\]

This may be translated as follows:

“The great Kofi, (he who swallows elephants);

Kodwo the leopard, (hero of the forest whose presence at the outskirts creates fear and panic in the village);

Condolence, condolence, condolence for thy calamity;

Do come back, if you are at a battle front,

Come, even if you are at Kong; come, come now”;

Condolence, condolence, condolence”

The above drum chants extol the deceased as a hero and also announce the death far and wide. Nketia further explains that apart from announcing death, it also carries historical narratives of an event which is a taboo to mention under normal circumstances. References

\[309\] Cudjoe, *The Impacts of Funerals*, 98.

are also made to the Ashanti-Gyaman war during which King Gyaman, Abo Kofi, committed suicide and subsequent adoption of Tainano ne Kong as an oath. The drum chant further dwells on the inevitability of death, that invisible incidence that can even put leopards and elephants to silence.\textsuperscript{311} This wonderful traditional way of announcing the death of prestigious personalities such as a chief or ebusua panyin is losing its significance in the light of modern technology in disseminating information discussed under publicity and technology.

4.2.2.1 Preservation of Corpse

Usually in Akan tradition, when a person dies, his or her immediate relatives in the town or village are summoned by the Ebusuapanyin (head of the family) to a meeting where they are informed of the death. Lynne and Albert are of the view that if the body is to be viewed during a wake or present at the funeral, embalming is generally done.\textsuperscript{312} In Komenda tradition, a body is preserved or embalmed at home for a period of two weeks, while the final funeral rites are observed later. Articles used for the preservation of corpse at home are drinks (usually \textit{akpeteshie}) for libation; formalin, gasoline, kerosene, lemon, milk, cement for embalming; toiletries – sponge, soap, towel, and anti-sceptics for bathing and money for the payment of labour charges. However, the emergence of morgue for preservation has brought financial headache to the people of Komenda traditional area. The areas of expenses at the morgue are as follows: transportation cost to and from mortuary, embalmment – chemicals, labour, and tips for mortuary assistants and payment for mortuary charges.

\textsuperscript{311} Nketia, \textit{The Funeral Dirges}, 70.

\textsuperscript{312} DeSpelder and Strickland, \textit{Encountering Death and Dying}, 13.
4.2.2.2 Publicity of Funeral Arrangements

It appears that with every moment, new ways of increasing the expenses on mortuary rites are emerging. In Ghanaian society, particularly in Akan set-up, funeral announcements were in the past made through gong-gong beating. Today, publicity has taken different forms. Adjaye states that technology has now made it possible for funerals to be heard from different media, - including radio, television, newspapers and posters.313 The newest tradition is that the spouse or children or some family members of the deceased may mount a giant billboard at van. The areas that attract cost for publicity expenses include fee for funeral announcement (either by gong-gong or loudspeaker or community FM, radio, or any other means), funeral advertisement in newspapers and on radio, printing of obituaries for distribution and one-week celebration, transport for lineage and family members, if taking place outside the town, special coffin carriers, souvenirs for donors, tags point usually on the road side to inform the public about the death of their relatives. Posters for the one week celebrations constitute a headache. Recently, these one week posters are done in a banner form.

4.2.2.3 One-Week Celebration

Traditionally, eighth-day celebration is the first funeral day observance, according to Ebusuapanyin Kofi Papa.314 He explained that the celebration marks the end of a period of intense mourning by the family where there has been “fasting” or avoidance of normal meals. The typical Akan would break the fast after the ninth day, which is one day after the observance. Nana Kwoku Nkrumah also revealed that in the olden days, the seventh day after the death was to make preparations and arrangements for the mortuary rites by the bereaved families.315 Unfortunately, this has degenerated into huge, fashionable, grandiose

313 Adjaye, Boundaries of Self and Others, 154.
314 Ebusuapanyin Kofi Papa, 18, April, 2017.
and flamboyant funeral celebrations where drinks and food are served. Posters and banners for this celebration have become the order of the day. It has eventually turned into merry-making.

4.2.3 Burial Rites

In Komenda tradition, the burial rites start from the wake-keeping, laying in state, encasement and the interment. These activities together are described as burial rites.

4.2.3.1 Wake-Keeping

Another practice which leads to high mortuary costs and also traumatic condition is wake-keeping or vigil. Ebusuapanyin Kofi Papa explains that during wake-keeping, musical instruments (sound system) and chairs are hired, food for the relatives and other friends, who come and lodge, coffee drinks prepared and served for the sympathisers. Other areas of expenses include lighting, hiring of choral group or life band, drinks - (hard and soft), sweets, biscuits, toffees, coffee tea and hiring of traditional drums if not a Christian. There is also a distribution of items such as chewing gum, ginger toffees to keep people awake during the vigil. Miscreants find their ways during such wake-keepings to steal from unsuspecting sympathisers.

4.2.3.2 Laying-in State

Another disturbing issue is the new phenomenon in the rite which is laying-in state. To Adjaye, instead of traditional practice of laying the corpses flat on their back on a bed, there is an emerging trend of posture whereby the dead are positioned such that their professions can be easily seen.316 He makes reference to a local Accra Newspaper, Graphic Show Biz, on the funeral of the late national comedian, Santo, in August, 2002, “Santo’s Last Stand” showed a scene from his laying in state in which he was standing up-right with a microphone

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316 Adjaye, Boundaries of Self and Others, 155.
in hand. The caption, according to Adjaye, reads, “Even in death, Santo stands tall”, and the scene looked as real as he had appeared in life during performances. In Komenda, this type of laying-in state is getting the root at the faster rate which needs to be addressed. Some corpses have been laid seated behind the organs, sewing machines, car steer and others are portrayed as teaching, selling and many others. All these attract much cost. Items being charged for laying the body in state include decoration of house and room for the corpse (major or minor construction work, painting); hiring or purchasing of door and window curtains; bedding – bed sheets and pillows; dressing of bed for laying of corpse – services of specialists; electric fan to fan the corpse; artificial or natural flowers and coffin.

4.2.3.3 Encasement

Recently, a very disturbing trend which has developed is the introduction of fantastic and customised coffins as a sign of modernisation of mortuary rites. Kwame Twumasi–Fofie reveals his expectation that the funeral of Pope John Paul II would have taught Ghanaians a few lessons about coffins and funerals devoid of pomp and pageantry. Twumasi-Fofie expresses that people intentionally destroy these expensive coffins after putting it in the grave so as not to be stolen. In demonstrating an example of humility and modesty, they however, buried him with a simple coffin which could even be made by an ordinary village Ghanaian carpenter. Unfortunately, instead of Ghanaians, particularly the people of Komenda to emulate this gesture of humility and modesty in the face of poverty, they rather complained about, rather they go extra mile to spend more on the most expensive and fantastic coffins. In Komenda area, casket is showcased through the principal street when

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317 Adjaye, Boundaries of Self and Others, 156.
318 Kwame Twumasi-Fofie, Mourning in Modern Day Ghana – A Review, pdf – Adobe Acrobat Reader D.C
319 Twumasi-Fofie, Mourning in Modern Day Ghana, 72.
320 Twumasi-Fofie, Mourning in Modern Day Ghana, 72.
321 Twumasi-Fofie, Mourning in Modern Day Ghana, 72.
presenting to the family for burial. This has compelled many to go in for such flamboyant and expensive coffin.

4.2.3.4 Interment

The term ‘disposition’, in this context is described as the final handling of the deceased’s remains. Lynne and Albert agree that corpse should be disposed off for hygienic purposes. The socio-economic, religio-cultural, political, psychological and personal considerations are likely to influence the method chosen for the disposition. Of all these considerations, Komenda citizens also agree with Lynne and Albert that religious beliefs often influence the method of body disposition. They set examples that Judaism, Christianity and Islam practise ground burial, whereas Hindus and Buddhists prefer cremation. Cremation was indeed not the practice of Akan in general and Komenda in particular. Each method of disposing of the corpse, according to Lynne and Albert, has symbolic meanings that are very important to the followers of the respective religions.

Today, the decision for the disposition of the body in Komenda is between burial and cremation. Though, the majority of Ghanaians: African traditionalists, Christians and Muslims, still choose to bury their dead bodies and even bury them by themselves, the trend is moving toward cremation. Ground burial is traditional and religious within one’s family, community, religious group, and geographical area. In Komenda, burning human being is a serious taboo and therefore, cremation in Komenda tradition is viewed as a taboo and barbaric. The tradition of Komenda as well as Methodist Church in Komenda Circuit believe in calendrical day celebration of the deceased or perhaps visit the grave in the years to come to remember their lost loved ones so they may want to erect a monument on the grave. The Methodist Church in Komenda area strongly believes in and practises ground burial. During

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church service for burial certain items are provided some of which cost much money. Such items are brochure for order of service, biography and tributes, wreaths, special cloth for the wife, children, lineage members and hiring of hearse. In Memorial and Thanksgiving Service, these costs are also incurred: benches, seats, biscuits, sweets, drinks (soft), sound system, and music band.

4.2.4 Post-Burial Rites

In the Akan land perspective, particularly Komenda, all other activities after the burial are generally regarded as post-burial activities. The activities below are performed after the burial.

4.2.4.1 Picture Decoration

In the Komenda traditional area, the bereaved families gather together for the final funeral rite (i.e post-burial activities) at the public or community funeral ground. During this period, sympathisers share their condolences with the bereaved families through greetings and donations to defray some of their expenses. At this point, the picture of the deceased is normally displayed on the chair at the centre of the gathering for those who do not know or might have forgot him or her to recognize him or her. The trend has now changed because the display of this picture is now decorated with flowers and other decorating items. This also adds additional cost which becomes a burden to the bereaved families. In other Akan communities, banner of the picture of the deceased is hung over at where the bereaved families are gathered at the funeral ground.

4.2.4.2 Refreshment

Joe Simfukwe, in his contributions to the article “Funeral and Burial Rites states that, “support comes from neighbours, workmates and church associates, as well as relatives”.  

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He continues that “funerals are becoming a painful economic burden for many as deaths “increase”. In the old tradition, food like Fante Kenkey (Mfantse ṯɛxɔn) and stew, and fufu and soup of all kinds were provided for the relatives and sympathizers from afar. Sometimes, akpeteshie and ‘nsa fufuw’ (palm wine) were being added. Today, after being served with fufu and kenkey, “take-away” is also given out. Some women even collect more food for their households. “Buffer” (serve yourself) style of refreshment is now a problem in contemporary mortuary rites. Assorted foods are now served for sympathisers. There are reports of special “Thanksgiving” parties being held after thanksgiving service on Sunday. All of these add to the cost of burial rituals. In some cases, the provision of food and drinks is unavoidable.

4.2.4.3 Memorials

Another phenomenon causing havoc to the bereaved spouse, family members, community and the church is the various memorials given to deceased including special funeral clothes, T-shirts with the pictures of the dead, funeral programmes, graves and tombstones. There are special clothes for one week celebration, burial or funeral rites and Sunday thanksgiving. The living spouse who is bereaved now thinks of getting these special funeral clothes for his or her children (if any). Today, many Christian women are burdened of getting these special clothes for the funeral even than getting dresses for the church and at the expense of their children’s well-being. Other serious memorable are T-shirt with images of the deceased and colourful funeral programmes with many pictures of the deceased lifetime are today becoming a public concern.

The Komenda people believe that man is made up of the elements of soul, spirit and blood, therefore, if man dies, all these elements go back to their root. The soul goes to the Creator; sunsum to the ancestral world and the blood (constitute the body) goes into the dust. In the old funeral rites, the grave or tomb where the body would be buried was simply prepared.
Adjaye is of the view that the most common form of commemoration of the dead is perhaps the tombstones.\textsuperscript{325} The type and modes of tombstones as a mortuary edifice to the writer, amplify social status of the deceased and the bereaved family.\textsuperscript{326} Adjaye remarks that all these mortuary edifices facilitate the mourning expressions.\textsuperscript{327} In this era, the grave is now advanced such that the inside of the grave is sometimes tiled and the top is structured in a house-like type. In the construction of grave, certain items attract cost such as cement blocks, cements, tile cements and tiles; payment for service of bricklayers and tiles and drinks (akpeteshie) for workers. This is, undoubtedly, a heavy financial burden for the family members who are not-well-to-do and also waste of land for future usage.\textsuperscript{328}

4.3 CONCLUSION

In conclusion the study agrees with the conclusion of Adjaye that Akan funerals are rituals of highly complex and multidimensional celebrations.\textsuperscript{329} Actually in Ghanaian societies, particularly Komenda, it is essential that with time there should be unavoidable changes in some of the cultural practices.\textsuperscript{330} In agreement with Twumasi-Fofie, changes are good, and they should be welcome whenever positive and reject them when negative. \textsuperscript{331} Over the past decades, Komenda mortuary rites had undergone tremendous changes as a result of several factors which include; rural-urban migration, poverty, formal education, technology and media, economic environment, and socio-political life of the people.

More importantly, modern religions have strengthened these changes in recent decades and have greatly contributed in taking the mortuary rituals of Komenda of its original context

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Adjaye, \textit{Boundaries of Self and Others}, 155.
\item Adjaye, \textit{Boundaries of Self and Others}, 155.
\item Adjaye, \textit{Boundaries of Self and Others}, 155.
\item Adjaye, \textit{Boundaries of Self and Others}, 155.
\item Adjaye, \textit{Boundaries of Self and Others}, 155.
\item Adjaye, \textit{Boundaries of Self and Others}, 142.
\item Twumasi-Fofie, \textit{Mourning in Modern Day Ghana}, 72.
\item Twumasi-Fofie, \textit{Mourning in Modern Day Ghana}, 72.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
and content into contexts that are estranged, antagonistic, expensive, traumatic and alien to customary context and content. In these ‘new contexts’, the mortuary rites of the Komenda societies seem to be losing their original meaning and significances and are continuously being redefined and ascribed new meanings and significance from ‘foreign religious beliefs and practices (doctrines). Thus, it is easier for ‘foreign religions’ in this ‘new context’ to redefine and ascribe meaning and significance to traditional beliefs and practices and construct a legacy and establish their hegemony. However, the resurgence of traditional beliefs and practices (i.e. mortuary rites) is vital for social cohesion and group solidarity and entails addressing the challenges or obstacles (among which is poverty).

Addressing poverty seems an illusion, taking into consideration that it is inherent in the Komenda societies as in the Ghanaian community. Mortuary rites are all about mourning rather than merry making and judging from what goes on today in Ghana, their meaning and significance have been lost.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE KOMENDA CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH GHANA

5.0 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the focus is to present a brief historical survey of the Methodist Church in Komenda. The Methodist Church Ghana and the changing trends of mortuary rites would be discussed. This section would finally look at the reflections of mortuary rites by Komenda Circuit of the Methodist Church.

5.1 BRIEF HISTORY AND STRUCTURE OF THE METHODIST CHURCH GHANA

The history of Methodism in Ghana goes as far back as 1835. The initiative for the establishment of the Church was a coincidence. It all started after the death of Philip Quaque in 1816. The school he established at Cape Coast faced a number of problems, primary among which was that of frequent changes in the headship. This continued till a Ghanaian, named Mr. Joseph Smith, became the head teacher of the school at Cape Coast. Being a sincere Christian, Mr. Smith, on his own initiative, introduced Bible reading as part of the school curriculum. This was aimed at introducing the pupils to accurate knowledge of the Bible; as a result, he insisted that the reading of the Bible should be made without comment. This notion of Mr. Smith was opposed by one of his pupils, William de Graft, who thought that it would be difficult to understand the Bible passages read without commenting on them. This disagreement between teacher and pupil divided the pupils into two - supporters of the head teacher, on the one side, and the supporters of William de Graft, on the other hand. William de Graft, called his group “A Meeting or Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK)”.
William de Graft, a Fante from Anomabo, settled at Dixcove. He did not abandon the Bible Band, but maintained communication with the members at Cape Coast. The Bible Band or the “Meeting” grew in membership and with that, there was the need for more copies of the Bible. The Cape Coast SPCK, therefore, asked William de Graft to find more Bibles for them. This Bible Band provided the foundation members for the Methodist Church Ghana. William de Graft made a request to Captain Potter, a British Sea Captain at the Dixcove harbor, for the supply of copies of the Bible for the Bible Band. Captain Potter was so impressed by the request that he resolved not only to bring back the Bibles, but also, a missionary to help the “Meeting” in her religious endeavours. Captain Potter sent the request to the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (WMMS) in London. He also offered to send any missionary the WMMS might appoint to Cape Coast at his own expense.

This request led to the sending of Rev. Joseph Rhodes Dunwell, who was twenty-seven years (27 years) and a tea-dealer be arrived in the Gold Coast on 1st January, 1835 to begin his missionary work in the Gold Coast. In Joseph M. Y. Edusa-Eyison’s writing, F. L. Bartels asserts that before Dunwell, a number of missionaries of other denominations – Anglican, Dutch Reformed Church, French and Portuguese Catholic priests, and Presbyterians had worked in the Gold Coast with similar intentions of propagating the Gospel resulting in the creation of pockets of Christian communities prior to 1835. The Methodist Church expanded on the foundation laid by these denominations. This notwithstanding, the missionary outreach in the Gold Coast was in many ways the success story of indigenous African zeal. Agbeti emphasised this when he states:

…as far as missionary enterprise in Africa was concerned,
that perspective of the circumstances which led the Wesleyan
Missionary Society to send their missionary there (Ghana) were

a demonstration of the role which African initiative played in the establishment of Methodist work in Ghana. 333

Unfortunately, Dunwell could only live for six months as he died of malaria fever transmitted by mosquito334 on Wednesday, 24th June, 1835. This was the sad moment for the “Meeting”. Dunwell entrusted the care and nurture of the infant Church to Joseph Smith, bidding him to “watch over the flock, and strengthen them in the Lord”. Although, Dunwell’s stay was brief, he achieved much.

On 15th September, 1836, Rev. George Wrigley and his wife Harriet arrived to augment Dunwell’s effort in Gold Coast, only to be told that Dunwell had died, and had been buried. Rev. George and Harriet, his wife plunged themselves into the work at Cape Coast. Mrs. Harriet Wrigley opened a school for native girls, which today is known as the Wesley Girls High School in Cape Coast. George Wrigley needed help and so be wrote to London for help. The WMMS in London sent Rev. Peter Harrop and wife to come and assist George in January, 15, 1837. Unfortunately, three weeks after landing at Cape Coast, Mrs. Harrop died and Peter followed her to the grave three days later on February, 8, 1837.

Rev. George Wrigley appealed to the WMMS to bring more missionaries to Gold Coast. The WMMS did not lose heart, and her plan was to recruit and send her missionary of African descent who would hopefully be able to withstand the tropical diseases. Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman, a man with African father from Anomabo and English mother, was recruited and sent to Gold Coast. On January 3, 1838, Rev. and Mrs. Freeman arrived at Cape Coast and the news that greeted them was that the Church had lost Wrigley two months

334 Bartels, The Roots of Ghana Methodism, 1-6
earlier (November 16, 1837). In just a matter of six weeks, tragedy struck the Church again. While Mrs. Freeman was nursing her husband back to health from a bout of fever, she fell ill and passed away on February 8, 1838. Freeman recovered from the bout of malaria after the death of his wife and settled down for the work before him. He indeed devoted himself to his work, rendering untiring service to the building up of the Methodist Church Ghana.

From that time onwards, the Methodist Church grew in strength, not only on Fante land, but also, throughout the whole of Ghana, Dahomey, Togo and Nigeria, until 1961 when it gained its autonomy from British Methodism. Prior to that time Rev. Gaddiel R. Acquaah became the first Superintendent of the Gold Coast District. The inaugural Conference of the Methodist Church was held at the Wesley Chapel, Cape Coast on 28th - 31st July, 1961. The Rev. Francis Chapman Ferguson Grant was inducted into office as the First African President on 2nd August, 1961. The Foundation Deed was signed before the Rev. Maldwyn Edwards and Marjorie Lansdale on Friday, July 28, 1961.

The chairmen of the five (5) new districts of the Methodist Church Ghana were inducted:


The Structure of the Methodist Church Ghana

During the tenure of the Most Rev. Dr. Jacob Adama Stephens, the Methodist Church Ghana underwent some significant structural changes and shifted from the British way of administration to the American with the use of Boards run by General Directors and
Directors. With the introduction of the Boards, the Church operated on five (5) Boards, namely Boards of Ministry, Education and Youth, Administration, Finance, and Social Responsibility and Rural Development.

With the administration of the Most Rev. Prof. Emmanuel K. Asante, the Boards system changed to Coordinating Offices system. The five (5) Boards have been infused to four (4) Coordinating Offices. The following are the four Coordinating Offices: Coordinating Office on Ministry, Education and Youth Development, Finance and Development, and Social Services and Gender and Family Issues, respectively.

**Episcopal System of Church Administration**

In August, 1999, at the 38th Annual Church Conference held in Koforidua, the Methodist Church Ghana adopted the biblical pattern of episcopacy for its administration. A service of Proclamation was held in the year 2000 at the Wesley Cathedral, Accra. With the adoption of the Episcopal System of Church governance in 1999, certain significant changes were made in the Church’s structure. Districts are now known as Methodist Dioceses and the leading chapels of the various Dioceses are known and called Methodist Cathedrals.

The President of Conference is now the Presiding Bishop of Conference and takes the title *The Most Rev.* The Secretary of Conference now called the Administrative Bishop, and takes the title *The Right Rev.* The Chairman and General Superintendent of the District now becomes Diocesan Bishop, and also takes the title *The Right Rev.*. The Superintendent has not changed, but takes the title *The Very Rev.*. All Ordained Ministers are now considered as *Elders*, and maintain the title *The Rev.*. Finally, all Probationers or Ministers – On – Trial are also considered as Deacons and maintains the title *The Rev.*.

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Again, the Methodist Church has the Governance Structure as the Conference, General Purposes Council (GPC), Council of Bishops, Registered Trustees, Lay Movement, and the Executive of the Church. The Administrative Structure includes the General Directors and the Directors under the Executives.\textsuperscript{336} The Methodist Church Ghana has the following structures in place: Society, Circuit, Diocese and Connexion. The Society is the basic of the structure of the Church in the Methodist system. One or more societies form a Circuit and more Circuit coming together to form a Diocese. The Connexion which is the National in the political language comprises all the Dioceses in the country.

The Presiding Bishop takes charge of the Connexion, the Diocesan Bishop takes pastoral oversight of a given Diocese, while the Superintendent Minister also takes the pastoral responsibility of a Circuit. The Society is managed by one or more Reverend Ministers. The following are the decision making body at the various levels: Leaders’ Meeting is for the Society, Quarterly Meeting for the Circuit, and Synod for the Diocese while the Conference is for the Connexion. The Methodist Church Ghana is governed by the Scripture, the Constitution and Standing Orders.

\textbf{5.2 \ THE HISTORY OF THE METHODIST CHURCH IN KOMENDA CIRCUIT}

The Methodist Church in Komenda Circuit was established on 27\textsuperscript{th} July 1837, by a British Missionary, Rev. George Wrigley. Having succeeded Rev. J. B. Amell, he held the first Methodist service under a shady tree in the centre of the British Komenda town. Notably among the numerous dedicated founding members who toiled to sustain the fire of Methodism to date include: Papa Robert Arku, Papa Bisiw, Papa Kwamena Entsua–Mensah, Papa J. B. Ogoe, Papa Nyame, Maame Ama Akomaba, Maame Aba Tawiah,

\textsuperscript{336} \textit{The Constitution and Standing Orders}, 18-19.
Maame Mary Awotwe, Madam Duku (Kanka) and Maame Dorcas Ogoe. The activities of these founding members stood the test of time, especially in the periods from 1890 to 1900 when African indigenous churches abound.

The leader of the founding members, Paa Robert Arku, and his brethren with love and understanding guarded by the Holy Spirit, stood firm against the oppositions from Kubesin and Abakam, well known gods of the community. Specifically, Papa Robert Arku and the church members chose to stay in the community, a site called “Israel”. In this new place, Israel, they studied the word of God, prayed for power, inspiration and guidance. They took the good news to the neighbouring villages and won souls at Kissi, Dominase, Aburansa, Dompuase, Kokowaado, Se,kyere Hemang and Kodwo Krobo. As the congregation grew numerically, a chapel was built and dedicated in 1905 by Rev. R. M. Acquaah, the then Superintendent Minister in Elmina. Under his leadership, Rev. R. M. Acquaah played a memorable role in the establishment of the Komenda Teacher Training College. Significantly, a very cordial and supportive relationship between the Church and the College was established. Among other personalities who played vital roles were Paa A. B. Sam and Nana Dr. J. S. Annan. These men were very philanthropic.

The Komenda Section under the supervision of the Elmina Circuit was elevated to a Circuit status during the 16th Annual Conference of the Methodist Church Ghana held at Cape Coast in August, 1976. The preparations for a Circuit Status were started by the early ministers who were stationed in British Komenda and some prominent Lay Members. This became a reality during the selfless and devoted service of Rev. J. K. Andoh, the then Komenda Sectional Minister. The Circuit was inaugurated by the Rev. J. Emmanuel Yarquah, who was then the chairman of the Cape Coast District. In 1977, the Rev. Thomas Efa-Quayson was also inducted into office as the first Superintendent Minister. The Circuit has been
divided into three Sections namely Komenda Section, Kissi Section and Dominase Section.337

The Methodist Church in its existence adopted the traditional mortuary rites of the people of Komenda without any serious modifications. The Church as a religio-social organization or, religion had shown concern about the changing trends of mortuary rites in Komenda. The Methodist Church had made an attempt to alleviate some of the financial constraints and traumatic conditions of the bereaved families during mortuary rites in the area by successfully banning the practice of ‘Wake-keeping’ as part of the pre-burial mourning in Komenda.338

5.3 THE METHODIST CHURCH GHANA AND THE CHANGING TRENDS OF MORTUARY RITES

The Methodist Church believes that society is dynamic and every moment in man’s life also undergoes changes. Therefore, the modern trends of mortuary rites are inevitable. The study does not critique change of the mortuary rites, but examines the excesses of the change. In Ghanaian society, one of the memorable events is the mortuary rites. The dead is given a “befitting” burial or farewell because of the relationship with the living family. For that reason, no pains are spared in making it a grand and successful celebration.339 New ways of increasing the expenses on mortuary rites are emerging. However, the effects of the new trends now become a concern for the Methodist Church Ghana. The Church over the decades sought to curb the rising costs of expenditures of the celebration of the modern trends of the mortuary rites, but to no avail. The only achievement the Methodist Church

339 Weekly Bible Lessons, January – June 2009 (June 21), 138-139.
Ghana has gained is the banning of wake-keeping. In regard to this, the study explores some of the new trends that attract the high expensive form of practices of today’s mortuary rites as well as the strains on the bereaved ones. The position of the Methodist Church Ghana is equally be discussed in this section.

In Komenda tradition, when one dies, one’s immediate relatives in the town or village are summoned by the Ebusuapanyin (head of the family) to a meeting where they are informed of the death. The body is then preserved or embalmed at home for a period of two weeks, buried and the final funeral rites are observed later. Recently, the emergence of morgue for preservation has brought financial headache to the people of Komenda and the Methodist Church as well. In this changing trend, the dead is sometimes preserved or embalmed for many months and even for one or two years which compounds the financial problems of the family.

Again, the Methodist Church Ghana, particularly, Komenda Circuit, observes that funeral announcements today has become worrisome. Funeral announcement in the past was made through gong-gong beating. Today, publicity has taken different forms which is causing financial headache to the immediate bereaved family. The newest tradition is that the spouse or children or some family members of the deceased may mount a giant billboard at vantage point of the township. The areas that attract much cost for publicity expenses include fee for funeral announcements, the advertisement in newspapers, on radio and televisions, printing of posters for one-week celebration. Transport for lineage and family members if the burial taking place outside the town; special coffin carriers; souvenirs for sympathizers; one-week celebration posters done in banner forms at high cost are also other cost burdens of mortuary rites.
When the Methodist Church emerged in Komenda Circuit in 1837, there was no wearing of one special cloth for funerals. Today, this trend has become the norm in Ghana and particularly, Komenda. It has now taken a different dimension. Different cloths are now used for the funeral: some even use three different cloths – one for one week celebration, one for the burial and another one for the thanksgiving on Sunday. Mourners, especially the women display their new clothes and accessories. Some of those who do not have money tend to borrow money to buy or buy on credit and if they cannot pay, it becomes a debt to the bereaved family. Now, with the high cost of cloth, one could imagine the amount of money that is spent on funeral cloths alone. Monies that could be used for something more beneficial are used for buying funeral clothes.

Another issue of concern with the Church are the flamboyant and expensive coffins, the periodic changing of shroud when laying in state and decorations of where the body is lain. The unhealthy competition today is with the style of coffin which depict the profession or vocation of the dead. This type of coffin is very expensive and the worst is that some parts need to be destroyed before it is lowered into the grave. The changing of shroud has also become a worry to the Church. This practice is causing financial constraint to the immediate bereaved family. Some decorations where the body is lain seem to overshadow that at wedding ground. In the past, the family members did decorate the room and the bed themselves.

The employment of professionals for the services of “Special Coffin Carriers” to carry the coffin only from the chapel into the car (hearse) for a fee is gradually gaining ground in the celebration of the mortuary rites. The Methodist Church sees this practice as a great challenge to her because this practice has been the work of *mba mbanyin* or the church
members which does not cost either the bereaved family or the church anything. These professionals charge exorbitantly.

The Methodist Church sees today’s funeral as a merry-making in the area of refreshment at the funerals. Funerals are indeed becoming a painful economic burden for many as deaths “increase”. Traditionally, Komenda people used to serve food like Fante Kenkey (Mfantse ḃɛɛkɔ) and stew, while fufu and soup of all kinds were provided for the relatives and sympathizers from afar. The trend has now changed. Today, after being served with fufu and kenkey, “take-away” and drinks are also given out. “Buffet” (serve yourself) style of refreshment is now a problem in contemporary mortuary rites. There are instances of special “Thanksgiving” parties being held after thanksgiving service on Sunday. All of these add to the cost of rituals.

5.4 KOMENDA CIRCUIT OF THE METHODIST CHURCH AND THE CHANGING TRENDS OF MORTUARY RITES

The Methodist Church in Komenda Circuit upon its reflections on the mortuary rites in the area came out with certain concerns. Few of them are discussed in this study.

First, the concern is about the flamboyant caskets people use today. The cost is very expensive and getting it is also burdensome. This is because not all carpenters in the area can mould such caskets, so the people have to travel far to get it and the transport cost becomes a problem. These kinds of caskets are based on how caskets are being showcased during the presentation of casket to the family.

Second, the long period of preservation of the dead in the morgue is a worry. Some corpses such as those of the chiefs are sometimes kept in the morgue for over a year. Some reasons might be the chieftaincy dispute, renovation of the palace and cleaning up of the community.
Unfortunately, some people tend to forget about the body which results in low attendance in the celebration. So, the Church thinks something ought to be done to avoid this and suggests that corpses should not be kept in the morgue for more than three months, unless for some reasons beyond control.

Again, the Church also observes that funeral publicity these days is highly expensive and waste of resources. For example, programmes for the burial service is usually printed in colours with many pictures. These programmes would only be useful for the few bereaved family members after the burial. Some also print one or more banners with the picture of the dead. These banners would not effectively serve its purpose. The few who per chance may pass where the banners are will look at them. The Church, therefore suggests that families should take steps to avoid unnecessary expenses in this regard. Not only these, but the billboards with the pictures of the dead place alongside of the road. These billboards sometimes obstruct road users; aggravate the pains and grief of the immediate bereaved family members as well as close friends of the dead.

Moreover, the Church upon reflection realised another phenomenon causing havoc to the bereaved spouse, family members, community and the church which is the various memorials given to deceased, including special funeral clothes, T-shirts with the pictures of the dead, funeral programmes, graves and tombstones. There are special clothes for one week celebration, burial or funeral rites and Sunday thanksgiving. The living spouse who is bereaved now thinks of getting these special funeral clothes for his or her children (if any).

Today, many Christian women are burdened with getting these special clothing for the funeral even than getting dresses for the church services and they also buy them at the expense of their children’s well-being. These T-shirt with images of the deceased and colourful funeral programmes with many pictures of the deceased lifetime are today
becoming a public concern. Instead of the immediate bereaved ones wiping out their sorrow, they revisit their sorrow whenever they see such T-shirts, videos and the colourful programmes.

Finally, another aspect of worry of mortuary rites is the advent of professional services. Today, there are professional morticians, caterers, special casket carriers as well as those who play highlife music who are hired to assist with the funeral preparations and proceedings. Ghanaian funerals are now becoming too commercialised to the point that it is losing its original essence as a kin celebration.

The Methodist Church Ghana, particularly, the Komenda Circuit suggests that corpse may not be kept at the morgue for more than three months to reduce the financial burden and traumatic problems on the bereaved families. The Methodist Church, though, banned the wake-keeping for his members, the Church still recommend to the traditional authorities for its implementation and enforcement. The Church encourages her ministers to ensure the adherence of this vision.

From the discussions, the Methodist Church recommend that the practice of Christian modesty (if Christian), should be adhered to. The provider of the coffin may be done within his or her means; this should depend on their financial status, but not the expectation or decision of the family. The bereaved family may desist from rejecting coffin presented by whosoever is supposed to, so to avoid unhealthy competition. Hence, the use of flamboyant and expensive caskets may be discouraged. Various Circuit and Dioceses are encouraged to embark on a project to assist in this area. Alternatively, Church members in the area of coffin making and seamstresses and tailors could be identified for use by the Church. Chiefs may enact rules to abolish the practice of showcasing casket through the principal street so to
avoid such competition. However, the casket can still be opened for inspection if there should be something left in such like tool(s).

The Church from its observations suggests that expensive dishes may not be served at the funerals, rather local and less expensive dishes should be encouraged. Again, the Methodist Church in Komenda Circuit. Considering the financial constraints and the traumatic challenges on the bereaved family, the Church and the entire community suggests that funeral cloths should be discouraged and the leadership of the Church, both lay and clergy, should set good examples.

Attempt by the Methodist Church Ghana to discourage the elaborate one-week celebration has not been successful. To help reduce the traumatic effects and the financial burden during the One-Week celebration, the Methodist Church has come out with a well-designed order of service for the One-Week celebration. The Methodist Church Ghana recommends based on his observation that printing of T-Shirt of the deceased and the use of special clothing on one-week celebrations, burial day and thanksgiving services should be abolished to reduce the future grief of the bereaved families.

The researcher from the interview conducted recommends that members of the Methodist Church should stick to the Scripture and the Church’s tradition concerning the burial of dead member as enshrined in the Constitution and the Standing Orders as well as the Order of Service Book.

Traditionally, the caskets are either carried out by the family members or friends or a Church group. The services of the “special casket carriers” is indeed causing problem between the family concerned and the Church as to who carries the casket out if the deceased was a member of any particular Church group. Therefore, the Methodist Church recommends that the bereaved family should reconsider the services of these people. Of late, it has been the
fashion to place large billboards which are very costly on the highways and towns to make
funeral announcements. The Methodist Church suggests that if they want to use it. It should
be removed just after the final funeral rites.

The Methodist Church Ghana have assimilated certain biblical and indigenous practices of
mortuary rites. However, she believes that all the huge sums of monies spent on the
mortuary rites could be invested in the life of the poor, the sick, the vulnerable, the widow
and the orphans in the family, church and the community.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The Methodist Church in Komenda Circuit upon her sober reflections on today’s mortuary
rites realised that flamboyant caskets, long period of preserving the corpse in the morgue or
embalming and publicity for one week celebration (banners and media) needs to be looked
at with the aim of reducing cost and avoiding unnecessary traumatic effects on bereaved
family members. Not only that, but certain memorials like special funeral clothes, embossed
T-shirts with the pictures of the dead, funeral programmes, graves and tombstones should
not be encouraged. The advent of professional services such as professional morticians,
caterers, and special casket carriers as well as those who play highlife music hired to assist
with the funeral preparations and proceedings are worrisome features of mortuary rites
nowadays. The Church thinks it should be the effort of the clergy, chiefs, opinion leaders,
all and sundry to see to the reverse of this negative, time consuming and economic drain on
society.
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, MAIN FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This concluding chapter summarises the entire work. The main purpose of this study is to identify and discuss the changing trends of mortuary rites in Komenda. This chapter presents the conclusions of this study. Finally, this chapter makes recommendations for the purposes of further academic discourses, Komenda Traditional Council for future formulation of policies to control mortuary rites in the communities, and the Methodist Church Ghana for pastoral care.

6.2 SUMMARY

This study, has attempted to draw attention to the fact that the performance of mortuary rites shows the relationship between the living and the dead. It is an important ceremony among the people of Komenda. It is a common belief among the people that, a deceased person should be honoured and given a befitting burial so that the soul of the deceased rests in peace. The study dwells mainly on qualitative methods with analytical and ethnographic approaches.

Chapter One offers general introduction to the study. Chapter Two, highlights the history of Komenda and their worldview on the mortuary rites are critically examined. The chapter explores the African belief in Supreme Being, divinities and ancestors, concepts of man, and death and the hereafter. Factors influencing the changing trends and the modern practices of mortuary rites are also discussed in the chapter.
Chapter Four looks at the philosophical perspective of death and the hereafter in both African and Akan philosophies. The discussion brings to the fore some ways in which views of death are expressed. Chapter Five presents a brief history and the structure of the Methodist Church Ghana. The chapter also highlights the establishment of the Komenda Circuit of the Methodist Church Ghana and its reflection on the changing trends of mortuary rites in Komenda.

The findings reveal that, contemporary mortuary rites are more capital intensive than the previous. For instance, corpses being kept in morgues for weeks, months and years, giant billboards mounted for public announcement of the final funeral rites of the deceased and the changing of deceased shrouds or dresses periodically as it is lain in state are all expensive. Similarly, expensive coffins are showcased publically by previous funeral celebrations to inform the selection and choice of coffin to be purchased by future bereaved families. Prescribed funeral uniforms and customised clothes by bereaved family members constitute an equally socio-economic burden on the family, especially when it is agreed that different attires would be displayed on the different days of the celebration as scheduled.

In this regard, bereaved families go to the extent of applying for loans to give befitting burials to the deceased. In the long run, there are socio-economic traumas which become imminent when the bereaved family is not able to repay such huge loans. In the end, the cultural practices which are being preserved have equally lost their indigenous significance since the traditional ways of performances have now been replaced with modern technology; one seldom hears natural voices singing dirges during wake-keeping ceremonies, but loud sound systems.

The foregoing indicates that contemporary mortuary rites have an expensive socio-economic impact and its accompanying traumatic effect and philosophical nuisance on the
bereaved family. Consequently, it supports of the Methodists Church in the Circuit to reduce the heavy financial burdens on its loving bereaved members in Komenda, are sought.

6.3 FINDINGS

According to Heidegger, as the individual man is born in the world, he finally dies. So, death becomes inescapable for man.\textsuperscript{340} Comparatively, the findings of this study reveals that, contemporary mortuary rites are more capital intensive than the previous. Though, Christianity has infiltrated the community, the people of Komenda still do what they do to make it expensive.

The study found out that despite social change as a result of modernisation, globalisation and urbanisation, particularly in the African context, the continual observance of the rite shows ways in which traditional religion has adapted to the pressures of modernity, globalisation and urbanisation. It could be established that indigenous religion, or its functional equivalent may never wholly disappear from the Komenda society regardless of the contemporary religious and social changes. Thus, as far as the issues of rites of passage such as burial rites are concerned, indigenous religious beliefs and practices would continue to manifest its resilience over the other religious traditions. Besides, they normally do those things outside the Church and quote “give to Caeser what is Caeser’s, and to God what is God’s” to buttress what they do. All these are done because the Church has no control over traditional systems.

In this regard bereaved families go to the extent of contracting loans to give a befitting burial to the deceased. In the long run, the trauma of the socio-economic impact becomes cumbersome when the bereaved family is not able to recover such contracted loans.

\textsuperscript{340} Heidegger, “Being and Time,” 294.
Consequently, the findings indicated that, sometimes, corpses are kept in morgues for weeks, months or years, accruing huge amounts of morgue fees. Equally, billboards are mounted for public information on the final funeral rites of the deceased alongside posters. Similarly, the deceased shrouds or dresses are changed periodically as the corpse is lain in state. Coffins are showcased publicly by children or husband or wife to the deceased families. This act entices other people to go in for an expensive coffins when bereaved. Prescribed funeral attires and customised clothes by the bereaved family members constitute an equally socio-economic burden on the family, especially when it is agreed that different attires would be displayed on the different days of the celebration as scheduled. Corpses are also laid in positions according to the profession of the deceased. This is also at a cost since undertakers are employed to do the class of the bereaved family.

The studies, however, show that people use modern technology today to promote cultural practices, which eventually reflect the social change, but the extent to which it is used has adverse repercussion on the society. The use of sound systems disturbs peace when especially there are wake-keepings for more than one funeral. Children who are supposed to sleep early or learn at home are kept wake till mid-night. It is a general practice to lay the dead in state in the evening and to keep wake for several hours or till day break. The most dangerous aspect of this practice today is the invading of robbers or thieves in the various homes during vigil. In the cause of the vigil, robbers attack houses whose adults have gone for wake-keeping. Another dangerous aspect is that of the health crises attached to it. In one of the mortuary rites the researcher participated in, it was observed that the corpse was decaying and terrible odour was coming from the body. There is, therefore, a risk of communicable diseases like Ebola, cholera, influenza, measles, and others.
Findings from the billboards with the pictures of the dead depict that besides their expensive nature, the giant billboards have traumatic effects on the immediate bereaved family members such as the widow or widower, children, parents and siblings who may not be around during the burial. They are disturbed and even resort into crying whenever they see such billboards. Even those who were around during the incident are also reminded of the nature of death. The research also shows that most elaborate funerals tend to be the grounds of promiscuity and other social vices, general morality of church members breakdown. Consequences like broken homes, unwanted pregnancies, abortion, STI/HIV/AIDS will be common and lower people’s belief system. All these factors compound the traumatic effects of the bereaved families, particularly, the immediate ones, the Methodist Church and the entire communities.

All these contribute to the socio-economic impact and its accompanying traumatic effect on the bereaved family. Consequently, the supports of the Methodists Church in the circuit to reduce the heavy financial burdens on its bereaved members in Komenda are solicited.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

In agreement with the position of Methodist Church Ghana, this study makes recommendations based on academic, socio-economic and traumatic burdens, as well as health and pastoral concerns. From the issues emanating from the discussions on the study, it is realised that the topic: “Changing trends of the mortuary rites” is not exhausted,

341 Alex Mensah-Kane, Circuit Steward of Komenda Circuit of the Methodist Church, 15th March, 2017.
therefore, there is the need for further studies. It is recommended that further studies could be conducted on the subject under study by other researchers in future.

Again, there is an urgent need for the Komenda Traditional Council to formulate policies that would curtail unnecessary costs on mortuary rites in the area. This in effect would reduce the socio-economic and traumatic burdens on the bereaved families. From the discussions, it is recommended that the practice of Christian modesty (if Christian), should be adhered to. The bereaved family should desist from rejecting coffin presented by whosoever is supposed to, so as to avoid unhealthy competition, the use of flamboyant and expensive caskets should be discouraged. Chiefs could enact rules to abolish the practice of showcasing casket through the principal street, erecting of giant billboards along the streets, periodical change of dress or shroud of the dead as it is lain in state in order to avoid unhealthy competition.

Furthermore, the study recommends that the traditional authorities should give a second look to the rites of wake-keeping based on the health reasons. There are high incidence of communicable diseases like Ebola, cholera, and tuberculosis etc. A deceased that is infected with such diseases can transmit to other people easily during the wake-keeping. It is recommended that the traditional authorities could support the Methodist Church on the crusade of banning the wake-keeping.

Moreover, it is believed that the study has added knowledge to the philosophical underpinnings of mortuary rites in Komenda. It is hoped that the traditional authorities and the Methodist Church in Komenda would team up to fight this menace. Most of the opinions expressed by the respondents *viz a viz* the solution to curb this menace centre on moderate form of celebrating mortuary rites, not only in Komenda Traditional Area, but also Ghana as a whole. Some modern practices of celebration may be discouraged or reduced.
Finally, the Methodist Church Ghana recommends that individuals in the Komenda communities should concentrate much more on the living than the dead. They may consider the survival of the living than over speeding on the dead who at that point need no flamboyant and expensive mortuary rites. In short, they should be concerned about the survival of the widow/widower, children of the deceased, the sick, the poor and the other vulnerable people in the Church and the community at large.

6.5 CONCLUSION

The rites associated with dead help bereaved families to have a sense of closure. That apart, these rites bring honour to the deceased person. It is also believed that they facilitate a smooth transition of the dead from the physical world to the spiritual world. They preserve the social system and construct the identity of the people of Komenda. Thus, generally, this study has explored and discussed the practice of changing trends of mortuary rites, and their philosophical underpinnings. The study, provides a detailed description and discussion of the changing trends of mortuary rites in the Komenda traditional context.

Generally, religion pervades the whole life of the people of Komenda; the people venerate the ancestors, but give reverence to God. The economic lives of the people are sometimes affected depending on the choice of the days funerals are organised. The entire organisation of funerals attracts high expenses; the type of coffin, the cost of video coverage on the different ceremonial days, laying in state and its related positioning of the corpse. Again, publicity, decoration of funeral grounds, construction of tombstones and the fee for the professional coffin careers similarly attract heavy costs. The implication is the socio-economic and traumatic effects on the bereaved family. In spite of the benefits some individuals derive from the mortuary rites, it is clear that the negative effects of the practices are very substantial. The indication is that socio-economic and traumatic implications of the
practices of these changing trends of the mortuary rites have heavy tolls on the people of Komenda.

Finally, it is submitted that all these expensive and flamboyant celebrations of today’s mortuary rites do not give salvation to the people of Komenda, more particularly, the members of the Methodist Church Ghana. Indeed, the Methodist Church Ghana has assimilated certain biblical and indigenous practices of mortuary rites. However, the huge sums of monies spent on the mortuary rites could be invested in the lives of the poor in the family, church and the community. The Methodist Church Ghana has made a move to curtail some of the expensive practices of these new trends of the mortuary rite by placing a ban on the wake-keeping. Again, the Church has suggested an order of service for One-week celebration.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Guided Questions for the Interview

**OBJECTIVE 1:**

Critically examine the ingenious mortuary rite celebrations among the people of British Komenda.

**APPENDIX 1: THE FAMILY OF THE DECEASED / TRADITIONAL AUTHORITES**

**Background of Respondent**

- Place of birth
- Age
- Marital Status
- Nationality
- Town
- Clan
- Religion
- Major Occupation
- Minor Occupation
- Where do you live?
- Status (a) In the family
- (b) In the church
- Education level (tick)

(a) Middle School (JHS)
(b) ‘O’ Level
(c) ‘A’ Level
(d) No School
(e) Other
Funeral Organization

ORGANIZATION OF A FUNERAL

- Who is/are actually responsible for organizing the funeral?
- List, in order of importance, the persons and their social positions and their relationships to the dead.
- Enumerate the specific process and things done, immediately after death (in sequence of stages).
- Mention the items used on his body as it lays in state?
- What categories of relatives are in charge of immediately sitting by the body as it lies in state?
- Will a body of a Christian member of the family undergo the same treatment as anybody else?
- Will the family honour a WILL which states specifically that traditional rituals should not be performed? Give reasons.
- Why is it necessary to ascertain the cause of the dead spiritually?
- In your view, what could be the causes of death?

OBLIGATION

- What are some of the obligations that are imposed upon close relatives as a result of the bereavement? Explain.
  i. Wife (wives)
  ii. Husband
  iii. Children
  iv. Brothers/Sisters
  v. Parents

Key – informants

- Give reasons why funerals are not held on market days in British Komenda.
- What are the economic costs of the mortuary rite celebrations?
- How are costs incurred?
- Who bears the costs of the mortuary rite celebrations and how are debts defrayed?
- Mention items used for washing and preserving a corpse in the house.
- What roles do spouses play upon the death of their partners?
What rituals do you perform on the dead person? Example, shaving of hair.

Give reasons for doing that.

Do you belong to a Funeral Association?

How is widowhood rites carried out?

What rituals does the widow/widower perform before getting out of the widowhood situation?

Are Christians obliged the same process?

Are widowhood rites necessary?

If Yes or No, give reasons.

Any other issues.

Publicity

By what means are relatives informed when death occurs in the family?

Which prominent people in the community are also informed?

Mention types of public funeral announcements made?

Which type is very costly?

Preservation of Corpse

When a person dies, for how long do people allow the body to be preserved:
   a) Locally        b) Morgue

What are some of the reasons for preservation?

How is the body locally and at the morgue preserved?

Income

How do bereaved families get money to spend on mortuary rite celebrations?

Coffin

Mention types of coffins you know.

What materials and paints were they using?

Why were they using such materials and paints?

What is the cost of coffin today?
Food

❖ Who should cook the food during the funerals?
❖ Should the family members always cook the food?
❖ What kinds of food and drink do they serve?
❖ If Yes or No, why?
❖ Is it necessary to feed all sympathizers at funerals?
❖ If Yes or No, why?

Attendance

❖ What attracts high attendance at funerals?
❖ Can you tell me the total income and expenditure at a funeral you attended?

Labour

❖ Mention areas where much labour is used during funerals.
❖ How this labour is rewarded?

Occupation

❖ How do funerals affect your occupation?
❖ How do the performances of funerals affect the occupation of bereaved families and the community?

Market / Trade

❖ Mention occupational groups who benefit most during funerals.
❖ How do they benefit? Example, inflating prices.
❖ What extra expenses do you incur or make at funerals?

Transportation and Communication

❖ How do funerals affect transportation and communication?
❖ What type of transport they use to convey the dead bodies from the morgue to the house?
❖ How is the dead body conveyed to the grave side?
❖ State how bereaved families benefit during funerals.
Inheritance/Sharing of Property

- Mention some problems connected with sharing deceased’s property.
- State adverse effects of death and funerals on families.

Housing

- What constructional changes sometimes take place in a deceased person’s or family’s house during funerals?
- What benefit do you get from these constructional changes?

Religion

8. How do churches benefit if the deceased happened to be a church member?
9. How does the death of a person affect the church?
10. How do people in the community benefit from funerals?
11. What things happen at funerals that you do not like? Example, quarreling etc.

Welfare and Security

- Do you belong to any Drumming Group, Funeral Association or any other group?
- What are some of the obligations of the Association?
- What educational benefit do the people get from funerals?

Widow/Widower

- Mention hardships which you face as a widow/widower.
- How do you fend for yourself and your children?
- Is the income from your work enough to look after your children?
- Do your family members help you look after your children?
- Which items were required for use during your time of widowhood?
- Mention some of the items required for use in coming out of the widowhood?
- What was the total cost of the items? GHC……
- Who provided these items for you?
- Are widowhood rites necessary?
- What is your comment about the rite of widowhood?
- What suggestions can you give about the rite of widowhood?
OBJECTIVE 2:

Analyzing the Changing Trends of Mortuary Rites among the people of British Komenda and its associated implications.

APPENDIX II: The entire Key – Informants

The Changing Trends

- Mention some of the changing trends of mortuary rites.
- Which one (s) do you appreciate? Give reasons.
- Mention the one (s) you don’t appreciate and give reasons.
- Mention some factors attribute to the changes.
- Are there any economic and social effects of the changing trends of mortuary rite celebrations (both positive and negative)?
- Is there any possibility of minimizing the economic and social problems of the changing trends of mortuary rite celebrations?
- Suggest some remedies to the undeserved one(s).

Morgue assistants / Funeral Homes

- What items do you use for washing and preserving a corpse in the morgue?
- What rituals do you perform before and after preserving a corpse?
- What do you do before washing the corpse?
- Is there any cost difference?

Publicity

- What are recent forms of publicity do we have?
- Mention some of the effects of these forms of publicity.

Coffin/Casket

- Mention some types of coffin.
- What are the reasons for the use of expensive and beautiful coffins by most people in the community?
- Mention some reasons for the use of simple and beautiful coffins by some people.
- Do you encourage the use of beautiful and expensive coffins?
If Yes or No, why?
How is the casket conveyed to the cemetery?
What would be the cost of the conveyance?

**Attendance**

- What attracts high attendance at funerals?
- Can you tell me the recent total income and expenditure at a funeral you attended?

**Food**

- Who are to cook and serve at the funeral?
- What kind of food and drinks to be served?
- Can we estimate the cost of the refreshment?
- What will be the implications of this changes?

**OBJECTIVE 3:**

Identify the Responses of the Methodist Church in Komenda Circuit of Cape Coast Diocese to the negative effects associated with the changing trends of the Mortuary Rites on the social institutions.

**APPENDIX III: THE CLERGY AND LAITY OF THE CHURCH**

1. Where do you live?
2. How do churches benefit if the deceased happened to be a church member?
3. How does the death of a person affect the church?
4. How do people in the community benefit from funerals?
5. What things happen at funerals that you do not like? Example, quarrelling etc.
6. How does the church organize a funeral?
7. How should a Christian handle a funeral at which he is expected to play a role?
8. Should the church control any aspect of a funeral, example, of a church member of
9. What topics regarding death are given?

10. How intensive it is?

11. Are there other teachers helping in the teaching ministry of your church?

12. How do you rank the level of the biblical knowledge of the teacher in No. 6
   High…..Average……..Below Average?

13. Converts have too little knowledge regarding what the Christian faith has to say
    about life as whole here and hereafter? Yes and No.

14. The church’s teaching is not able to penetrate traditional beliefs and practices.
    Yes and No. Explain.

15. Has the church any problems in carrying out ‘intensive’ teaching ministry?

16. Does the church need to change its present methods for Bible study?
    Yes / No. Why?

17. Has the trend of traditional mortuary rite changed these days?

18. Mention some of the changes.

19. What are some of the effects (both positive and negative) on social institutions?

20. Can you suggest some solutions by the Methodist Church to these negative effects
    of these changes?
Appendix 2: History of British Komenda

PLATE 1: The statue of Nana Komeh Panyin with the head of Ekyi, the chief kidnapper. Taken on Monday, 7, December, 2016

Appendix 3: Presentation of Coffin

Plate 1: Inspection of Coffin  Plate 2: Showcasing the Coffin
Appendix 4: Regalia for Funerals

Plate 3: Deceased (Chief)  Plate 4: Thanksgiving Service
Appendix 5: Publicity

Plate 1: Billboard with the picture of the dead

Plate 2: Banner for One-Week Celebration

Plate 3: Funeral Announcement in Newspapers
Appendix 6: Laying-in State

Plate 1: Deceased laid-in a coffin (Clergy)

Plate 2: Deceased laid on a bed

(Old woman)

Plate 3: Deceased laid seated (young man)

Plate 4: Deceased Chief laid-in state
Appendix 7: Expensive and Flamboyant Coffins

Plate 1: Special Caskets
Appendix 8: Professional Services

Plate 1: Special Coffin Carriers

Plate 2: Entrance to where the dead is laid
Plate 3: Picture Decoration
Appendix 9: Refreshment

Plate 1: Buffet

Appendix 10: Memorials

Plate 1: Tombstone

Plate 2: At Burial Service

Plate 3: T – Shirts with dead pictures

Plate 4: Tiled grave with lowering mechanism
Appendix 11: Disposal of Corpse

Plate 1: Close Cremation
Plate 2: Open Cremation at Osu Cemetery
Plate 3: Ground Burial for the Ordinary
Plate 4: Ground Burial for Clergy
Appendix 12:

Extract from the Order for One Week Celebration of the Dead (pages 230 - 231)

Introduction

The Traditional One Week Celebration of the Dead is a cultural practice among most tribes in Ghana, and it is celebrated purposely to receive mourners and officially announce the date and day for the final funeral rites of the deceased member of the family. It used to be purely secular practice, but of late, our Church members have shown interest in having it celebrated in a Christian way. As a result, some Christian families either request for its celebration in the Church, or invite Pastors/Ministers to assist with the celebration in the family house.

Due to this interest, and the rapidity with which it is being celebrated in the Church in the Christian way, the Reconstituted Liturgy Committee finds it appropriate to give it an official recognition by providing an Order to guide its celebration.

It may be celebrated in the Church with due information to, and consent of the Minister if the deceased was a full member of the Church. If circumstances would not permit its celebration in the Chapel, at the discretion of the Minister and in consultation with the family members, it may be celebrated at the family house or any suitable place.

The family members, the children of the deceased and all stakeholders must first consult the Church and the Minister, and agree on a suitable date and day for the celebration of the final funeral rites before its announcement at the One Week Celebration.

HYMN

Minister: Let us pray,

Almighty GOD, giver of life, conqueror of death, our help in time of trouble, who does not willingly grieve or afflict the children of men; comfort us who mourn the passing of our brother/sister whom you have called to yourself. We have gathered in grief, yet we have
sure hope that our brother/sister is not lost. He/she is resting peacefully with the Lord who counted him/her among His flock and redeemed him/her with His own Blood. Give us grace in the presence of death so we may continue to put our whole trust in your goodness and mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord, Amen.

1. WELCOME AND PURPOSE OF GATHERING

Christian friends, we are gathered together here this morning to celebrate the traditional One Week of the death of our Church member, ‘N/N’ who was also a member of the …………………… family. We, therefore welcome all of you to the celebration, praying that God’s grace and mercy will be upon us as we celebrate this occasion in memory of our deceased brother/sister to the glory of God.

Choruses

Bible Reading

Brief Exhortation

Offering: The offering taken at this celebration must be given to the family in support of their preparation towards the Final Funeral Rites and expenses.

Announcement: The family head to announce the date and day for the funeral rites; and the Society steward to announce any necessary information to the gathering.

HYMN OR CHORUSES
Appendix 13: Omanhen and Elders in State – Komenda

RULES AND REGULATIONS ON BURIAL/FUNERAL RITES –KOMENDA

PREAMBLE: Of recent times, the organization of burial and funeral of the dead in the community has become cumbersome, disturbing, noisy and rather expensive. In fact, the level of noise making associated with our funerals has become a nuisance to the whole community.

It is to forestall this unwholesome practice that the Omanhen of Komenda Traditional Area, Nana Kodwo Kru II charged his Elders and the leadership of clan heads to evolve a common and moderate acceptable system for our assignment given us by Omanhen in this regard. We strongly believe that the various provisions of this document will tenaciously be adhered to by all and sundry in order to bring sanity into our funeral system.

1. EGUARDZE BY WIFE/WIVES:

a. The provision of eguardze for the burial of a deceased husband shall be offered by the surviving wife or wives.

b. When there are two or more wives, all the wives shall come together and provide one common and appreciable eguardze.

ITEMS:

1. 2 Single blades
2. 1 Pair of scissors
3. 8 yards of cloth (Shroud or any decent cloth for the dressing of the dead body)
4. 2 Bottles of lavender or a spray
5. 2 Cakes of toilet soap and 1 key bar soap
6. 2 Tins of Powder L/S
7. 2 Tins of Pomade L/S
8. 2 Towels
9. 2 Brodzeba (Sawee bofun and Edur huam)

10. 2 Shaving stick

11. 1 Combs

12. 1 Pant

13. 1 Singlet

14. 1 Pair of Knickers

15. 1 Jumper

16. 1 Bucket

c. Any breach of this provision shall attract a fine of GH¢ 200.00, a sheep and 3 bottle of schnapps

**2. EGUARDZE BY CHILDREN**

When a father does not receive eguardze from children during his lifetime, the family of the deceased father shall demand the following rites. Two bottles of schnapps plus GH¢ 500.00 from each wife or matrilineal family.

**3. PRESENTATION**

Of eguardze: Death is a sad event; therefore presentation of eguardze for the burial of the dead should be done in a solemn manner. Under no circumstances should the presentation of eguardze be accompanied by noise making in the form of brass band or any other musical instrument.

**4. TSIRBO**

The bereaved children shall pay the following sums of money as TSIRBO to the family of the deceased.

a. Literate Child: GH¢ 30.00

b. Artisan: GH¢ 30.00

C. Illiterate Child: GH¢ 20.00
5. BURIAL

a. Before any burial takes place at the public cemetery, the Ebusupanyin shall obtain a burial permit from the Omanhen’s palace at the cost of GH₵ 50.00. In default, the Ebusuapanyin shall pay a penalty of GH₵ 200.00 and two bottles of Kasapreko dry gin.
b. No brass band and/or any other musical instrument shall accompany the coffin by way of procession through the street to the cemetery.
c. Any person, or clan or a group of persons who contravene this provision shall be liable to a fine of GH₵ 200.00 and 4 bottled of Kasapreko dry gin.

6. BURIAL OF NON RESIDENT

Any Ebusuapanyin who intends to bury non-resident and dormant member of his family shall pay a penalty of GH₵ 500.00 before permission is granted for the burial and funeral of his subject.

7. DATE FIXING FOR BURIAL/FUNERAL

This should be done in close doors by the family of the deceased and his children’s family. This should not involve any refreshment and supply of takeaway, this practice is hence forth prohibited.
Any breach of this rule shall attract a fine of GH₵ 500.00, a sheep and 2 bottles of schnapps.

8. NKAE-NSA

Apart from providers of coffin, whose Nkae Nsa shall be GH₵ 10.00; while that of in-laws shall be GH₵ 50.00, all others shall not be more than GH₵ 2.00.
Any Nkae Nsa received should be responded to in any appreciable way.
9. **WAKE-KEEPING**
   
a. All musical engagement for the wake on Friday or any other day shall end at 12:00 midnight.

b. Any band or musical instrument engaged for the funeral on Saturday and Sunday shall end at 6:00 pm prompt.

c. Anybody who break this rule shall be liable to a fine of GH¢ 500.00, a sheep and 4 bottles of schnapps and any other sanctions the community may deem fit.

10. **FUNERAL ACTIVITIES ON THURSDAY**
   
a. The emerging practice of funeral activities commencing on Thursday amid noise-making and music constitutes an offence and therefore abolished forth with.

b. Offenders of these rules shall pay a penalty of GH¢ 500.00, one sheep and 4 bottles of schnapps.

11. **WIDOWHOOD RITES**
    
a. The performance of widowhood rites and rituals should be completed and concluded within one month after the funeral rites of the deceased husband.

b. Where this falls within the period of the confinement of Dadzeban, it shall be performed a week prior to Dandzeban confinement.

12. **FUNERAL DUES**
    
The practice whereby normal funeral dues of between GH¢ 1.00 and GH¢ 5.00 from the public is receipted with match sticks, cups and some other materials is prohibited forth with.

13. **DECLARATION OF A SUCCESSOR**
    
a. This is the most solemn, sorrowful and the saddest event of our funeral celebration and should be observed as such. This should be done on Saturday.
b. The practice where the announcer of the successor embarks on an imaginary journey to various places and locations in search of the successor and demanding and /or extorting monies from some personalities present is time-wasting and shall cease forth with.

14. DONATIONS

a. These are gifts of money and goods that someone gives to friends to cushion and /or alleviate the coast incurred during the loss of a dear one.

b. Normally, such donations are acknowledged with a reception by the beneficiary for the donors at a chosen place.

c. The practice by beneficiaries acknowledging and reciprocating this donations with gifts of rubber buckets and basins is out of place and should be discontinued immediately.

d. Any breach of this provision shall be met with ruthless sanctions from the palace or the leadership of the community.

This document becomes operational with effect from 1st September, 2015.

Approved and Endorsed by Omanhen and his Elders:
Appendix 14: EXPENSIVE FUNERALS AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE INDIVIDUAL,
FAMILIES, COMMUNITY AND CHURCH

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN REDUCING HIGH COST OF FUNERALS

The Accra District (now Diocese) of the Methodist Church Ghana concerned about expensive funerals, has one time or the other came out with various policies to help bring down funeral costs, some of which are as follows:-

1. **Funeral Cloth**

   The church discouraged the wearing of one special cloth for a funeral. This item has however taken a different dimension. Different cloths are now used for the funeral; some use 3 different cloths – one on the day the body is to be taken from the morgue; another one for wake-keeping and another one for the funeral. Mourners, especially the women display their new clothes and accessories. Some of those who do not have money tend to borrow money to buy or buy on credit and invariably do not pay and that becomes a debt to the bereaved family. Now, with the high cost of cloth, one could imagine the amount of money that is spent on funeral cloths alone. Monies that could be used for something more beneficial is rather used for things which are not all that necessary.

1. **Coffins and Shroud/Cloth/Dress**

   The Church was, at a point in time, considering having a Carpentry Workshop and Seamstresses in the church to make coffins, shroud/cloth/dress at moderate prices. But these did not materialize. This is a good venture and the church could reconsider
it to avoid people going in for elaborate coffins and professional undertakers/ waiters at exorbitant costs.

3. Food and Drinks served at funeral

The Church directed that food should be served only to those who have travelled to the funeral. Alcoholic drinks should not be served. Instead, water and corn drink could be served to all the mourners. But now all sorts of drinks and food are served starting from the day and the body is taken from the morgue, the wake-keeping and the Burial day and the three Sundays following the burial day. Token donations are given by mourners relative to the amount spent on drinks and food served.

4. Burial, Thanksgiving and Memorial Services

The Church directed that Burial, Thanksgiving and Memorial Services should be held once on the same day, instead of having the Burial Service separate from the Thanksgiving and Memorial Services on two different days since the Thanksgiving and Memorial Services most of the time become occasions for drinking alcoholic beverages and merry-making. The funeral expenses then continue to mount higher.

5. Venue for the Funeral

It was decided that the body should be laid in state in the Church early morning enough for mourners to file past, thereafter the burial, thanksgiving and memorial services will follow. Mourners will come back to the Church hall/yard for the final funeral rites. In this case, cost of hiring of canopies and chairs will be minimized. Many people, especially those who rather are not financially strong, do not take advantage of this.

6. Large Bill Boards for photographs of dead persons placed on Highway and towns

Of the late, it has been the fashion to place large bill boards which are very costly on the highways and towns to make funeral announcements.