

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON
DEPARTMENT FOR THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS**

**THE RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL PERCEPTION OF
COMMUNAL MEAL 'OTOR' AS A STRATEGY FOR CONFLICT
RESOLUTION:
A CASE STUDY OF WORAWORA IN GHANA**

**REV. EMMANUEL KWAME OTU
(10359589)**



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DECLARATION

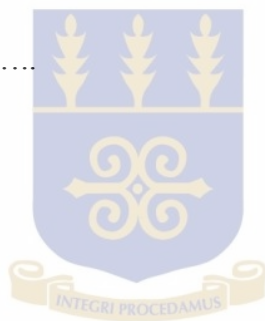
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.....
Rev. Emmanuel Kwame Otu

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Date

.....
Prof. Elizabeth Amoah

.....
Date



.....
Prof. Christ Thomas

.....
Date

ABSTRACT

The content of this study is the communal ritual meal **Otor** of the Worawora's of Ghana as a strategy for alternative conflict resolution and reconciliation. This communal meal is celebrated during the main festivals of the people of Worawora namely the *Akwntutenten*, yam and rice festivals. The *Akwntutenten*, festival has however, become the major festival of the people of Worawora. The symbolic ritual meal is very significant since it is perceived as a means by which conflict resolution and reconciliation is achieved. This perception explains the importance attached to the eating of the **Otor** meal during their festivals which attract a large number of their citizens. The study investigated the religious and philosophical perception of mashed yams **Otor** in order to present to policy makers an alternative strategy for conflict resolution and reconciliation in African communities.

The descriptive sample survey was used in this study. The research instruments used to collect data was a guide for interviews, questionnaires and telephone conversations. Selected Chiefs and Elders, **Abusuapanins**, Traditional Priests and Priestesses, Educated and Uneducated Youth and Elderly people of Worawora.

The key findings of the study showed that a lot of Worawora people think that **Otor** Ritual meal promotes conflict resolution as shown in table twenty four in chapter one. From table twenty four about 95% of the respondent indicated that **Otor** promotes conflict resolution.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wife, Mrs. Charity Yaa Otu and my children: Rose Kersting Otu and David Kwame Otu as well as to my Mother, Mrs. Rose Otu and my siblings Agnes, Elizabeth and Lilian.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Study

In the last decade, issues of conflict resolution continue to be ranked high on the development agenda as many sub-Sahara African countries attempt resolving conflict with little success. It is obvious that without peace and stability no meaningful development can take place in any human endeavour. Conflicts that are not managed properly have many undesirable outcomes like loss of lives, destruction of property, rape, breakdown of law and order, hostility, animosity and violence. Global statistics show that there is a correlation between conflict and the level of socio-economic development any country that ignores strategies for conflict resolution spells disaster for itself.¹ This position gives credence to the fact that the issue of conflict in sub-Saharan African countries has become inseparable from the issue of socio-economic development. One cannot deny the fact that western countries have offered some strategies for conflict resolution in Africa but these suggested solutions have not been suitable for African countries. This is because Western strategies put forward to resolve conflicts in Africa ignore the cultural systems of the people. For instance, marriage conflicts in Africa cannot be managed like a marriage conflict in Europe since the dynamics of their cultural systems are different.

In spite of the various strategies put forward to minimize conflicts in Sub-Sahara Africa, little discussions and research into indigenous methods or strategies for resolving conflicts have been done.² Based on the assumption that indigenous strategies for conflict resolution is crucial to socio-economic development in Africa, efforts are being made to research into

¹ A. Zander, *Motives and goals in groups* (New York: Academic Press, 1971), 149.

² S.G. Williamson (ed.), *Christianity and African Culture* (Accra: Christian Council of the Gold Coast, 1951), v.

the religious and philosophical perception of certain indigenous rituals practised to regulate conflicts in African communities. One of such traditional communities is Worawora, which focuses on communal ritual meal **Otor** as a means of resolving conflicts. The Woraworas are found in the Volta Region of Ghana. Worawora is an Akan community from Kontenase in Asante which settled in the Volta Region in 1732 as a result of war.

The religious and philosophical perceptions of these meals which are meant to promote peace are worth studying since there are well spelt out modalities before and after eating the communal meal **Otor**. It is uncommon for people who have participated in the conflict management process which is climaxed with the **Otor** ritual meal to remain in antagonism. The head of family (**Abusuapanin**) reminds the people of the importance of this ritual and exhorts them to prepare themselves well before participating in the **Otor** communal meal. Matters that are difficult to be resolved in the police stations and law courts are usually resolved amicably during the **Otor** ritual meal. It is important therefore that studies are conducted into the religious and philosophical perceptions of this ceremonial meal in order to develop alternative, relevant and enduring conflict resolution strategy for African countries.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

To what extent can ceremonial communal meals help Africans develop relevant strategies for conflict management? The burden of this study is to unravel conflict management methods embedded in traditional rituals for resolving conflicts in Ghana and perhaps Africa as a whole.

1.3 Literature Review

Much of this work depends on oral tradition since there are no books on the *Otor* celebration in Worawora and its implications for alternative conflict resolution. The literature review is integrated into the work. Nevertheless, the works of Robbert Sutherland Rattray, Kofi Abrefa Busia, Sidney George Williamson, David Johnson and Frank Johnson are reviewed briefly in this chapter. Other literature that are reviewed include the work of R. S. Rattray who was an early student and interpreter of Ashanti cultural system. His books include; *Religion and Art in Ashanti* (1927), *Ashanti Law and Constitution* (1927), *Ashanti Proverbs* (1916) and *Ashantis* (1923). The primary intention of his books is to document the indigenous cultural values of the Ashantis of Ghana in order to avoid their extinction. He believed that the Ashantis indigenous cultural values demand a deeper explanation in order to have a ‘cultured sympathy’³ than early academic writers did. He connected the very future and very survival of the Ashanti people and for that matter the indigenous people of the Gold Coast to the study and preservation of their indigenous knowledge systems. He made the following observation about the cultural systems of the Ashanti people that,

The law and constitution of these people were evolved, and finally, based upon the indigenous beliefs is to suggest something that goes deeper than the exposition of an interesting academic theory. It is to state a fact of considerable significance in the field of practical West Africa politics today. Upon the correct application of this knowledge must I believe depend our satisfactory tutelage of this people, and ultimately, their own success in self-government.⁴

The connection between the study of Akan Indigenous values and self-governance explains the depth and approach he adopted towards the study of the Akan Indigenous knowledge and its people. He saw the survival of the people in the understanding of their cultural practices and sought to study it. In an attempt to point to how the future of Ashanti

³ R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 5.

⁴ R.S. Rattray, *The Law and Constitution* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), v.

involvement in governance should evolve, he suggested a deeper connection with indigenous beliefs.

It is in this direction that the study of **Otor** communal ritual beliefs as a conflict management strategy among the Worawora is relevant. Rattray suggested a deeper study of indigenous cultures, which he believed will sustain and promote the survival of the indigenous people.

This work, however, focused on a specific belief system of the **Woraworas** and its importance for conflict management among Ghanaians. This means that this research has gone beyond a suggestion by Rattray for Scholars to study with deeper understanding of indigenous beliefs by providing information on how these indigenous belief systems can promote peace, tranquillity and progress.

Dr. K.A. Busia's (1951) book *The Position of Chief in Modern Political System of Ashanti* and his viewpoint in S.G. Williamson (ed.) (1955), *Christianity and African Culture* is also captured in this work. In his work Busia attempted to answer questions on how African Christians can remain both Christian and African. 'Can the African be a Christian only by giving up culture, or is there a way by which Christianity can ennoble it?'⁵ His position suggests that the initial Christian encounter with indigenous values did not promote ennoblement.

Busia considers that the attitude of the educated Akan toward indigenous culture was a result of missionary education. Busia complains that by becoming Christians, Akans had put themselves under a new authority. Their disputes were settled by catechists, the leaders of the congregation, and the priests or pastors. Church law and discipline regulated their

⁵K.A. Busia, 'The African Worldview' a viewpoint in S.G. Williamson (ed.), *Christianity and African Culture* (Accra: Christian Council of Gold Coast, 1955), 6.

conduct. They regarded themselves as separate community under the authority of the European missionary who was the head of the Church. Busia notes that,

The new convert is poised between two worlds: the old traditions and customs, he is striving to leave behind, the new beliefs and practices to which he is still a stranger. The church will help him better, if she understands the former, while she spoke with authority about the latter.⁶

Busia argues that the educated African instead of holding on to his cultural values strives to leave them behind and hold on to new western beliefs and practices without giving his actions a deeper thought.

It is for this reason that the **Otor** communal ritual meal is very important. To reconsider enduring indigenous cultural practices that were helpful in promoting the welfare of the people. Busia does not tell his readers how the construction of western cultures with indigenous belief systems would be done but leaves it for further research work. He however, encourages the Church to participate in this exploration by giving consideration to the integration of African cultural systems into the western cultural perspectives. This is exactly what the study of the **Otor** communal ritual meal seeks to do.

The books of S. G. Williamson, a Methodist missionary of Ghana play a very important role in upholding indigenous culture and Akan Religion as well as the Christian faith. In his works he seeks to consider the impact of the Christian faith and the western approaches on Akan culture. The key question that Williamson seeks to answer is how the Church could be rooted in Akan cultural soil. Williamson's work is relevant for this research because he considers the integration of the Christian theology with Akan cultural beliefs with regards to whether the church would become indigenous and relevant to the people it has been called to serve. He observes that,

⁶K.A. Busia, 'The African Worldview a viewpoint' in S.G. Williamson (ed.), *Christianity and African Culture* (Accra: Christian Council of Gold Coast, 1955), iii.

The Christian faith and Akan religion reveal themselves as basically different. They meet without a common viewpoint and with fundamentally different emphasis. They constitute two different levels of religion, able to view each other from afar but find no grounds of fellowship.⁷

On the other hand Williamson considers theological and Christian values to provide “thorough grounding for in Biblical scholarship.”⁸ But what is the place of indigenous cultural systems in his thorough grounding in biblical scholarship? Why does he not make the same demand for Akan tradition? Williamson’s insistence on thorough grounding in biblical scholarship to total disregard of an equally thorough grounding in African (Akan) traditional values is not in line with his earlier views. How does he expect the integration of western perspectives with Akan culture to take place? This is exactly what the *Otor* ritual communal meal seeks to do – to integrate the western perspectives with indigenous systems and most importantly to show that the African cultural values and practices are most effective in solving African problems.

The book of David W. Johnson and Frank P. Johnson⁹ and other American writers used in the work make a significant contribution to conflict management. The book of Johnson and Johnson for instance explains Stages of Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution, Methods of Conflict Resolution, Regular Dispute Resolution, Alternative Disputes Resolution and Mediating in a Conflict. In his work D.W. Johnson contends that “when conflicts are managed constructively, that have many desirable outcomes. On the destructive side conflicts create anger, hostility, lasting animosity and even violence.”¹⁰

The addition to Johnson and Johnson’s view on conflict management by Otor communal ritual meal strategy lies in the Worawora *Otor* methods of mediating conflicts which

⁷S.G. Williamson, *Akan Religion and Christian faith: A comparative Study of the Impact of Two Religions* (Accra: Ghana University Press, 1965), 151.

⁸S.G. Williamson, *Akan Religion and Christian faith*, 73

⁹D.W. Johnson & F.P. Johnson, *The Social Psychology of Education* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970), 51-3.

¹⁰D.W. Johnson, *The Social Psychology of Education* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1970), 51-3.

emphasises the religious understanding of conflicts and the involvement of the unseen members of the community. A concrete example of how conflicts between two brothers were managed through the **Otor** communal meal system is mentioned in the work. In this approach the personal as well as the social dimension of the offence and its effects are considered. Again, whether the individual breaks a taboo or commits a criminal offence or bears grudge with another person the whole community is involved in the search for restoration (of peace or normalcy) through religious and philosophical means between the parties involved. Conflict resolution practised with the involvement of the entire community is founded on Akan religio-cultural worldview and also expresses the meaning of discipline as a means of restoration to community centred life.

Kwame Gyekye, a professor of Philosophy in University of Ghana in his book *African Cultural Values. An introduction* - takes a critical look at African cultural values which can be extracted from their beliefs practices, rituals institutions, myths, folktales, and proverbs. He makes use of maxims (or, proverbs) in particular, most of them drawn from the Akan culture of Ghana, pointing out, extensive analyses, their meanings, implications, and relevance for a system of values. He writes, 'my aim is to go beyond sociological or anthropological account and to highlight the meanings and values embedded in them.'¹¹ He uses the term 'cultural' in a comprehensive sense to encompass the entire life of a people; their morals, religious beliefs, social structures, political and educational systems, forms of music and dance and all other 'products of their creative spirit'¹² The book is intended for anyone interested in gaining knowledge of the cultural values of Africa that goes beyond 'mere description of facts.'¹³ He does not imply by any means that the values

¹¹ Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values :An Introduction*(Philadelphia, Pa/Accra: Ghana(Sankofa Publishing Company, 1996), xiii

¹²Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values :An Introduction*, xiii

¹³ Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values :An Introduction*, 11

presented and discussed in the book are necessarily understood or practiced in the same way in all African cultures and societies; he however believes that there are:

sufficient commonalities in many areas of the culture of the African people to make interminable dispute over the use of the term “African” unnecessary and unrewarding”. He also makes no claim in his book “implicitly or explicitly, that the cultural values discussed here are unique to Africa.¹⁴

The book is appropriate for use as a resource for uncovering the religious and philosophical element of the ‘*Otor*’ communal meal which leads to conflict resolution of the people of Worawora of Ghana. It explains how beliefs and rituals go beyond what we see. There is the need therefore, to understand African rituals like the ‘*Otor*’ communal meal ritual and how the meaning derived from this ritual is made relevant to conflict management. The ‘*Otor*’ communal ritual celebration of the people of Worawora recognizes the dignity and integrity in communal practices and takes cognizance of the view of Gyekye that

The value that traditional African societies place on communalism is expressed in the sharing of a common social or common good of the community, appreciation of mutual obligation, caring for others, interdependence and resolving differences for the good of the individual and the society..... communal life is held as natural to the human being. At the same time, the claims of individuality are recognized – African ethic, however, urges the avoidance of extreme individualism, which is seen as potentially destructive of human values and of the whole meaning and essence of human society.¹⁵

The ‘*Otor*’ communal meal as a strategy for resolving conflicts derive from the African view that peace and tranquillity are intrinsically linked with our common humanity and communal meals are used to express this idea. Gyekye puts it like this:

The recognition of all human beings as brothers in the light of our common membership in one human species is a lofty ideal that is of great importance to the African people. The fact that we human beings within our individual nations do not often succeed in conforming our actions to this ideal does

¹⁴ Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values :An Introduction*, 175

¹⁵ Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values :An Introduction*, 175

not mean that it is a mere utopia and not a realizable ideal or goal.¹⁶

Kwame Gyekye sees a close link between African cultural values like communal ritual meals and conflict management in the light of their common membership in the one human species and their desire to live in peace. This desire to live in peace is embedded in their religion and philosophy which is expressed in their cultural forms. According to the author, traditional African cultures recognize that, 'There is only one (universal) family, to which all human beings belong. This family is fragmented, however, into multiplicity of people and cultures and it is by these cultural values that our societies are regulated'

Another book reviewed in this study is that of B. Idowu, titled *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*. In the work, Idowu defines and interprets African Traditional Religion from the perspective of the African. His book provides a methodological approach for the study of African Traditional Religion. This methodology suggests a study from within in order to gain a true understanding. It finds out how Africans by their beliefs have inspired their world views and culture in general. Idowu observes three dangers that result from misunderstanding of religion. The first is when religion and religiosity are made identical. The second is the difficulty in differentiating between religion and culture and thirdly, the habit of biased comparison. He suggests rightly then that, religion must be studied by selecting the proper tools and the right persons. He asserts consequently,

there are two complementary categories of writers who have always been a menace to the study of religion; the traveler who always takes back, among other things, reports on the religions of the foreign countries of his travels and the stay-at-home investigator who wants eagerly at the other end for the supply of information of which the traveler is always full to overflowing.¹⁷

¹⁶Kwame Gyekye, *African Cultural Values :An Introduction*, 175

¹⁷ B. Idowu, *African Traditional Religion: A Definition*(Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 1975), 6

He points out that this approach by which foreign religions were described, analyzed and interpreted became the underlying factor for which Western writers erroneously interpreted rituals, institutions, myths, folktales, proverbs, beliefs and festivals. This is because the traveler, as Idowu puts it-

...tells his tales from strange land with characteristics exaggerations or distortions simply because his interest is little more than that of a collector curious to boost his own ego as a traveler and for the entertainment of the stay-at-home; he is more often than not very ill-equipped for the study of religion.¹⁸

Thus the report of the traveler about African Traditional Religion is found insufficient and unreliable. The author expects that a sufficient and reliable writer on religion and for that matter African Traditional Religion must as much as possible listen and learn from the 'insider' or the adherent of the religion without biases. Furthermore, participant observation is as much as possible important and must be enhanced by interviews and questionnaires if the work should be meaningful and relevant. The views of the stay-at-home writer are unreachable because he has no means of checking the accuracy of material or the meaning of the information he receives since he has not been to the native land himself. Evans Pritchard brings this observation home forcefully: '...it is a remarkable fact that none of the anthropologists, whose theories about primitive religion have been most influential had ever been near primitive people. It is as though a chemist had never thought it necessary to enter the laboratory.'¹⁹

The works of Idowu are very relevant to this study: The religious and philosophical perception of communal meal 'Otor' as a strategy for conflict resolution: A study of Worawora in Ghana. Firstly, the methodology prescribed is similar to the

¹⁸ B. Idowu, African Traditional Religion: A Definition, 6.

¹⁹ B. Idowu, African Traditional Religion: A Definition, 6.

phenomenological methodology adopted in this study. Secondly the philosophical and Religious insight offered in terms of rituals, myths, songs, folktales, and practices would help to understand the `Otor` communal meal ritual process which promotes conflict resolution among the Woraworas of Ghana and other African countries who may find it relevant. Even though the ritual of *Otor* communal meal for conflict resolution is meant to be a model of how communal ritual could offer a strategy for conflict resolution for other African countries it does not necessarily reflect the traditional beliefs and rituals of Africa as a whole. As such some religious and philosophical perspectives that hold true for the people of Worawora may not necessarily be so for other African countries.

S. John Mbiti book on African Religions and Philosophy also deals almost exclusively with traditional concepts and practices in African societies which were not either Christian or Muslim to a great extent before the colonial period in Africa. The 'African man' Mbiti writes, 'The African lives in a religious universe. Both that world and practically all his activities in it are seen and experienced through religious understanding and meaning.'²⁰ The author's comprehensive study indicates in itself just how extensive religious influences in Africa are. He indicates such wide – ranging subjects as the concepts which define God, death, time and morality, the religious orientation of various rites and social relationships, the influence of foreign religious and the search for new values. His work focuses on the primal philosophy that informs the African Traditional life which is relevant for `Otor` ritual and conflict management. He observes that it is impossible to isolate religion from the African life because 'Religion permeates into all the departments of life so fully that it is not easy or possibly always isolate it... and that some religious injunctions have philosophical explanations while some are just divine injunctions

²⁰ S. Mbiti, African Religions and Philosophy (New York: Anchor Books, 1970), Backcover

inaccessible to the human mind.’ This assertion is reflected in the belief of the Woraworas that religion cannot be isolated from any area of life expressed in Akan as *Onyame nnim a yeye ahiafo mmobro* meaning without God we are nothing

Mbiti observes that in Africa traditional religions, unlike other religious traditions, there are no systematic sets of dogmas that one is expected to accept or creeds to be recited he states that: ‘People simply assimilate whatever religious ideas and practices are held or observed by their families and communities. These traditions have been handed down from forbearers, and each generation takes them up with modifications suitable to its own historical situation and need’ Religion in the African traditional setting therefore, is found within the individual’s life. Mbiti put it,

To be human is to belong to the whole community, and to do so involves participating in the beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and festivals of the community. A person cannot detach himself from the religion of his group, for to do so is to be severed from his roots, his foundation, his context of security his kinship and the entire group of those who make him aware of his own existence.²¹

The religious aspects of the communal meal *Otor* can easily be discerned in terms of beliefs, ceremonies, rituals and religious officiates. On the other hand the philosophical perception of the *Otor* ritual is not so easily distinguishable. This is because there no parallel philosophical systems which can be observed in similarly concrete terms. However, explanation given by adherents can unfold the philosophical utterances and actions As Mbiti puts it, ‘Philosophy of one kind or another is behind the thinking and acting of every people.’ The philosophical and religious meaning of the *Otor* communal meal ritual as a way of conflict resolution would help deepen the understanding of how rituals could be used to resolve conflicts but does not give room for the treatment in depth

²¹ S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 3

of individual religions and philosophical systems of similar rituals of different African people.

Peoples Differ: An approach to inculturation in Evangelism is a book written by Peter K. Sarpong. The author is the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Kumasi who is also a renowned anthropologist and sociologist. Some of his noted publications include. *The sacred stools of the Akan* (1971), *Ghana in Retrospect* (1974), *Ashanti Girls Nubility Rites* (1977), and *Ancestral Stool Veneration on Asante*.²²

In his book *‘People Differ’* He emphasizes the fact that the cultural particularities should be considered in studying any phenomena of a group of people. Without and reservation, he writes that no effective evangelism of the Gospel can take place ‘without taking into consideration the cultural particularities’ This does not mean in any way that he does not observe any common trend or unity in African cultural systems but cautions against any hasty generalization since African cultural practices differ from place to place. This book is relevant to the study of the *Otor* communal meal ritual of the Woraworas because it touches on matters of rituals and how sufficient meaning can be derived when studied with careful understanding of the particularities peculiar to the group of people in question. This is the only way he thinks one can arrive at the depth of individual religions and philosophical systems.

Kofi Asare Opoku’s book titled *West African Traditional Religion* is also reviewed in this study. Kofi Asare Opoku worked as a Research Fellow in Religion and Ethics at the Institute of African Studies. In his book *‘West African Traditional religion’* he attempts to look at West African traditional religion from the point of view of its practitioners. For he

²² K. Peter Sarpong, *Peoples differ: An approach to inculturation in evangelism* (Accra, Legon: Sub Saharan publishers, 2002), 12

thinks in this exercise lies the central reality of West African region. He categorically states that: ‘...it would of course be vain to claim that the central reality of religion in West Africa can be presented in a book such as this; for the reality of this religion’²³ The author attempts not only to provide an observer’s account but also to allow Africans who are involved to tell us their own view of religion. Asare Opoku explains that even though he does not claim that his work presents ‘central reality of the religions of West African.’ He cannot also deny that there are commonalities or essentials that can be extracted from their rituals, beliefs, practices, myths proverbs and folktales. The writer again states that:

...frequent references are made to larger societies such as the Yoruba, Akan, Iba for Mende and Ewe in this book and this leaves out many of the smaller societies whose Regions ideas and practices are no less worthy of consideration and study.

His book is resourceful for *Otor* communal ritual and its relevance for conflict resolution in the sense that it gives important information on the meaning of West African rites like Puberty, Marriage and Communal meal rites. The study on the religious and philosophical perception of communal meal *Otor* as a strategy for conflict resolution will however, go beyond general essentials in West African rites to specific ideas and meaning for the communal rites *Otor* in Worawora which, however, may be relevant to other African cultures.

Another book reviewed in this study is that of Samuel N. Woode. The book is titled Values Standards and Practices in Ghanaian Organizational life. Samuel N. Woode had his higher education at the University of Ghana and at the London School of Economics and Political science. He is a Senior Lecture in Public Administration now the school of Business, University of Ghana.

²³ K. Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*(Jurong, Singapore: FEP International Private limited, 1978), i

The author relying on his 'personal experiences, reminiscences, perspectives and anecdotal evidence of practitioners',²⁴ discusses values, standards and practices in Ghanaian communal organizational and institutional life.

His work is beneficial to this study on *Otor* communal meal ritual since it identifies problems that inhibit the growth and success in organizational institutional and communal life. He concludes by offering a view point that in order to reach the 'promised land'²⁵ of whatever communal, institutional or organizational life that we desire we must be committed disciplined and focused on our values. These values are some of the essentials in the ritual of *Otor* communal meal for the people of Worawora which are also important for conflict resolution.

The finally work reviewed in this study is a book written by Chukuma Okoye, *The Eucharist and African Culture*. Professor Okoye is a Nigerian and a professor in Biblical Studies at the Catholic Theological Union in Chicargo. In his book, 'The Eucharist and African Culture' he writes that

A meal is perhaps the most basic and most ancient symbol of friendship, love, and unity; food and drink taken in common are signs that life is shared. In Africa it is rare for people to eat alone, meals are communal activities. Hands are washed before the meal begins, usually by a child who pours water over the cupped hands of the adults in the group. (It signifies the role that children also play in community building) Everyone sits around a common dish of yam, cassava, maize, cocoyam, plantain or food prepared from these items with greens or soup to match. Drink is also, often served from a common bowl or cup, which is passed from one to another. Eating a meal together is the most basic way of sharing common life; it restores what has been lost and gives strength for what lies ahead.²⁶ Special ritual meals are also prepared during festivals and social

²⁴ Samuel Woode, *Values Standards and practices in Ghanaian Organisational life*(Accra: Asempa Publishers, 1997), 85

²⁵Samuel Woode, *Values Standards and practices in Ghanaian Organisational*, 85

functions to signify community centered life which is crucial for community development.²⁷

The above statement expresses the idea of community building among the Worawora of Ghana which is symbolized in the *Otor* communal meal of the people. Their belief is that just as physical food restores what has been lost in the body and gives energy for what lies ahead so does the symbolic communal meal restore what has been lost in the community and gives strength to community building. The communal meal ritual is used to evoke this sense of belonging to the community which comprises of both the living and the dead.

Furthermore, the writer argues that,

While the rich diversity of the African cultural landscape makes it difficult to generalize about particular African cultural and religious practices, participation in a meal to the African is perhaps the most basic and most ancient symbol of friendship, love, and unity; food and drink taken in common are signs that life is shared.²⁸

This feeling of belongingness which is experienced in communal meals in Africa (similar to the Eucharist) according to the writer promotes the following values which are very important for community building. They are as follows:

1. Communal meals promote cultural values.
2. Communal meals promote community building in covenantal terms.
3. Communal meal of mystical power for conflict management.
4. It is a meal of participation for community building.
5. A meal of hope and survival.
6. Communal meal: a means for serving the poor and the oppressed for community building.

²⁷ Chukuma Okoye, The Eucharist and African culture (African Ecclessial Review, 34:1992), 278

²⁸ Chukuma Okoye, The Eucharist and African culture (African Ecclessial Review, 34:1992), 382

These ideas are equally relevant to this study which seeks to find how the values derived from *Otor* ritual meal are made relevant to conflict resolution. This study will go further to demonstrate how a communal meals could be used to manage conflicts in covenantal terms like the Eucharist of the Christians does.

1.4 Objective of the Study

The objective of the study is to find out how the communal meal ritual ***Otor*** can offer a relevant alternative strategy for conflict management in African communities. The work seeks to investigate the religious and philosophical perception of the ***Otor*** communal ritual meal of the people of ***Worawora*** in order to present to policy makers a suitable conflict management strategy for Ghana and African communities who might find it relevant.

1.5 Research Question

How does the religious and philosophical perception of ***Otor*** communal meal ritual among the ***Worawora*** provide strategies for conflict resolution in Ghana?

- What preparations are required for the ***Otor*** communal meal?
- How is the ***Otor*** meal eaten?
- What is the religious and philosophical significance of the ***Otor*** communal meal?
- What expectations are required from participants after the meal?

1.6 Significance of the Study

A central problem for those who provide strategies for conflict resolution in Africa is their capability to offer relevant solutions for conflict management on the continent. However,

most of the theories for conflict management in Ghana and Africa as a whole are Western oriented and incapable of adequately managing conflicts on the continent.

For example marriage conflicts in Africa cannot be managed the same way as marriage conflicts in Europe since they are situated within different cultural systems. It is important therefore, that African scholars who are familiar with indigenous cultural systems come out with alternative strategies for managing conflicts in the continent. This study will therefore, provide knowledge derived from indigenous conflict management institutions like the *Otor* communal ritual as an alternative to Western conflict resolution strategies. The significance of the study is to offer alternative conflict resolution strategy for conflict resolution in Ghana and perhaps Africa as a whole.

1.7 Delimitations

The scope of the study will focus on the Akan speaking people of *Worawora* in the Volta Region. However since the *Worawora* people originally hail from *Kontonase* in the Ashanti Region most of their cultural systems derive from Akan culture. The influence of the surrounding Ewe and Buem culture is insignificant even though they have lived among them for a long time. Furthermore, twelve out of the eighteen *Abusuapanins* were consulted. The others were not due to incapacitation and death.

1.8 Limitations

The use of questionnaires interviews and telephone conversations had its weakness in the study. It appeared that respondents introduced their own views or exaggerated some of the responses. The study should have used a larger sample consisting of all the eighteen *Abusuapanins*. However, a sample of twelve *Abusuapanins* enhanced evidence of reliability and validity for the work.

1.9 Definitions/Terminologies

Akwantutenten: Is a festival celebrated by the people of **Worawora** to commemorate their migration from **Kontenase** in the Asante Region of Ghana to their present settlement in the Volta Region of Ghana.

Otor: It is a traditional food prepared with mashed yam and palm oil.

Abusuapanin: The head of a clan consisting of the same maternal blood relations.

Communal meal: A symbolic traditional meal eaten by a group of people to signify oneness or unity.

Apotowewa: A traditional bowl baked out of clay for grinding and eating.

Abusua: Family: However, the Akan concept of family goes beyond the nuclear family. It includes the external family members. Moreover, the dead, the unborn as well as the living are all considered as part of the family.

Nsamanfo: The spirit of the departed ancestors

Otumfo: The All-powerful or Almighty; title for Asantehene

Akyeamehene: Head of the palace Orators and spokesperson

Akyeampoma: The staff of the spokesperson

1.10 Methodology/Methods

The main approach used in the work was the phenomenological method²⁹ to the study of religion. The philosophical movement associated with phenomenology was begun by the German philosopher, Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938), who between 1908 and 1931 developed a methodology which he believed articulated a logical and fully scientific

²⁹ J. L. Cox, *A guide to the phenomenology of religion*(London: Continuum, 2006), 9

analysis of the way humans obtained knowledge. In recent times the methodology has been popularized by James L. Cox³⁰ and Douglas Allen.³¹ This method employs the practice of objective observation and description of a phenomenon or observable happenings with the emphasis on two principles of *epoche* (suspension of bias) and *eidetic intuition* (establishing meaning) of phenomena. Nevertheless, there have been different approaches and understandings of phenomenology with numerous criticisms and queries concerning its operation as a research methodology. As C.J. Bleeker³² pointed out, ‘some critics went so far as to deny its right of existence.’ They claim that no pure descriptions of the phenomena separable from the subjective observer are attainable. Secondly, no final or universal statement of the essence of the meaning of the world is possible. Despite these initiations, the method offers a frame of thinking that can be utilized in this study.

The researcher used the phenomenological method for the study because the phenomenon under investigation required the researcher to go into people`s experiences in order to give an objective description of the phenomenon. The method prevented the researcher from passing any value judgment regarding the phenomenon under investigation so as to allow each phenomenon to speak for itself rather than the researcher speaking for the phenomenon (*epoche*). Furthermore the researcher was most interested in the religious and philosophical meaning of the processes involved in the ‘*Otor*’ communal meal of the people of Worawara in Ghana. His task was to intuit the essential religious and philosophical meanings of the phenomena from its structures (*Eidetic intuition*) from the adherents’ point of view.

³⁰ J. L. Cox, *Expressing the Sacred: An introduction to the phenomenology of religion*(Harare: University of Zimbabwe Publications, 1992), 26

³¹ Douglas Allen, *Structural Creativity in religion: Hermeneutics in Mircea Eliade’s Phenomenology and New Directives*(The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1978), 105-243

³² J. Bleeker, *The Sacred Bridge: Research into Nature and structure of Religion*(Leiden: Brill, 1971), 11

The researcher used a well thought out interviews guide, questionnaires and telephone conversations. The interview guide helped the researcher to focus the interview on the important issue under investigation in order to derive the religious and philosophical meaning of the ‘*Otor*’ rites which lead to conflict management in Worawora.

The methods include the research design, population, sample, research instrument, overview of interview procedure and data collection procedure. The **Research Design** used was the descriptive sample survey which helped to obtain detailed information on how *Otor* ritual meal is celebrated and its implication for Conflict resolution. The usefulness of this type of research design is supported by Gay³³ who emphasizes that the descriptive sample survey is an attempt to collect data from members of the population in order to determine current status of the population on a given matter.

The sampling procedure used was the convenient sampling technique. This method was used because some of the respondents were incapacitated or dead. The **population**, specifically the target population of study comprised selected *Abusuapanins* of *Worawora* who are the custodians of the *Otor* ritual meal. This was made up of twelve *Abusuapanins* out of eighteen *abusuas* of the town, the chief and five elders, two traditional priests, twenty uneducated adults, twenty educated adults, two old women familiar with the *Otor* ritual, two linguists and a state functionary. The above convenient **sample** produced seventy respondents.

The **research instrument** used to collect the data was a planned set of formal interview guides supported by few questionnaires and telephone conversations. Nevertheless, prior to the administration of the interview guides and questionnaires a pilot-testing was also

³³ L. R. Gay, *Educational Research: Competencies for analysis and application*, 5th ed. (California: Merrill, 1996), 165-8

conducted to expose the researcher to his expectations. The interview guides and questionnaires had open and close ended items to allow for free responses.

Data Collection procedure: According to Merriam³⁴ since a case study research is to provide an evaluation of the programmes and activities under study, it requires careful data collection. Again, Saminen, Harra and Lautamo³⁵ state that the case study research is used to explore real life experiences and situations because the researcher is interested in both the phenomenon and the context in which it occurs. To ensure that the exercise was successful, familiarity was established with the respondents to enable them understand the nature of the study as well as the need for them to cooperate.

A time table was agreed upon and fortunately the entire interview schedule was honored and the questionnaires were retrieved. Issues of remuneration were resolved when I told them that the work was purely for academic purposes.

1.11 Overview of Findings / Summary

The questions which constituted the guide for interviews, questionnaires and telephone conversation contained in appendix 1 of the work is as follows:

- How is the Otor communal meal eaten?
- What are the religious and philosophical significance of the Otor meal?
- How does the Otor meal promotes conflict resolution?

The sub-question were prepared to meet the grand tour question (Research Question) -

‘How does the religious and philosophical perception of Otor communal meal among the

³⁴ S. Merriam, *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education*(San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers), 18

³⁵ A. Salminen, T. Harra, and T. Lautamo, ‘Conducting Case Study Research in occupational Therapy.’ *Australian Occupational Therapy journal*, (2006): 53: 3-8

Woraworas of Ghana offer alternative strategy for conflict resolution in Ghanaian communities? The findings are summarised in the tables below. Three of these tables are contained in this page while the rest are captured in appendix

Table 1:

What is the *Otor* Communal Meal?

RESPONDENT	NO.	PERCENTAGE
A Ceremonial meal	55	85.9375
Fun Meal	6	9.375
Breakfast meal	3	4.6875

From Table 1, the results indicated that ceremonial meal constitutes a greater percentage of what people think the ***Otor*** communal meal is. It also means that the ***Otor*** communal meal is not just for breakfast or for fun.

Table 2:**Have you ever participated in the *Otor* Communal Meal?**

RESPONDENT	NO.	PERCENTAGE
Yes	47	73.4375
No	17	26.5625

From indications, the percentage level of those who have ever participated in the communal meal is high. Those who have never participated in the communal meal are also quite significant. It means that some people don't participate in the communal meal.

Table 3:**What preparation do you need before participating in the *Otor* communal meal?**

REASONS	RESPONDENTS
Making Peace with Enemies	44
Paying a Specified Amount	9
Compensating them in kind	4
Giving a Notice of Participation	3
Writing a letter of Participation	4

From the table, the most important preparation one needs to make in other to celebrate the *Otor* meal is to make peace with your opponent before the public hearings begin.

1.12 Structure of the Research

This study has been divided into five chapters. The first chapter includes the introduction, statement of the problem, literature review, purpose of the study, significance of the study, delimitation, limitation, definitions and methodology. The second Chapter looked at the historical, religious and cultural contexts of *Worawora*. It also gives information on the

traditional leaders, the family system and communal life, nature of the **Otor** communal meal, the role of women in the **Otor** communal ritual meal, preparations before the communal meal and benefits derived from participating in the communal meal. The third chapter focuses on the definition of religion, philosophy and what philosophy of religion is. It also investigated the relationship between religion and philosophy, the religious and philosophical perception of the **Otor** meal, songs and proverbs about the communal ritual meal as well as looking at the **Otor** communal meal as a tool for conflict resolution in indigenous African communities. The fourth chapter verified the **Otor** communal meal and its relevance for conflict resolution by looking at types of conflict, the constructive and destructive nature of conflicts, the constitution of Ghana and conflict resolution, meaning of conflict among the **Worawora**, historical changes associated with conflict in **Worawora**, effects of conflict on the people of **Worawora** and how the **Otor** communal meal serves as a tool for conflict resolution. The last chapter deals with recommendations of the **Otor** communal meal as an alternative strategy for conflict resolution: to governments, churches, educationists, parents in families and households.

CHAPTER TWO

THE *OTOR* COMMUNAL MEAL WITHIN THE HISTORICAL, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS CONTEXT OF WORAWORA

2.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to locate the Historical, Religious and cultural context of the people of *Worawora*, who celebrate the *Otor* communal meal ritual. Furthermore, the roles of traditional leaders and women would be examined in relation to the *Otor* communal meal. Again, the preparations before the *Otor* communal meal, the significance of the meal and the benefits of the meal would be discussed. The main literature integrated into the work especially when it comes to traditional systems is Robert Rattray³⁶ an anthropologist. Robert Sutherland Rattray was an early student and scholar in Akan traditional leadership institution. As a military captain with the royal army and a legal officer, he initially came to work with the colonial administration of the then Gold Coast. However when the colonial administration set up the Anthropological Department he was seconded and appointed as the first head of the Anthropology department. His task was to document the indigenous institution of the Ashanti people in order to prevent its extinction. In conflict management the Akan believe that thorough knowledge of one's history, culture and religion is required since it promotes the understanding of issues involved in the conflict in relation to one's culture.³⁷

A successful conflict management is achieved when all stakeholders understand thoroughly the dynamics of one's history, religion and culture which is the yardstick in measuring what is good or bad.

³⁶R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti law and Constitution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), viii.

³⁷Rattray, *Ashanti law and Constitution*, viii.

2.2 Historical Context of Worawora

Woraworas are a group of Ashantis who settled in their present site in the Volta Region in the early eighteenth century. The Asante kingdom was founded by the great Osei Tutu in the eighteenth century. His fetish priest was Okomfo Anokye from Awukugua in Akuapem. Osei Tutu unified the Asante states through allegiance to the Golden stool. History has it that Okomfo Anokye planted two trees in different places in the forest and predicted that one tree would live and become the capital of Ashanti. The place of the tree that lived was named Kumasi meaning the **Kum** tree that survived. The place where the other tree was planted was called **Kumawu** which also means the **Kum** tree that died. Kumasi is now the capital of the present Ashanti region and **Kumawu** is a town in the Ashanti region.

Although located in the heart of the forest, Asante's dominion was extended by military action and political skill towards the coast and also into the savannah lands to the north. According to **Ashantis** the **Adinkra** was the name of a king of the **Gyaman** who used symbols to relate history. The **Adinkra** symbol expresses various themes that relate to the History of **Ashantis**. They originally migrated from the north western part of the Niger River in West Africa after the fall of the old Ghana Empire in the fourteenth century.(A.D.) The immigrants settled in the central part of modern day Ghana.

According to which, Ashanti is a derivation from '**Osa- nti**' (warlike or because of war). Even though History gives all the credit for the founding of the Ashante nation to King Osei Tutu I, the real nation builder was Katakyyie Opoku Ware (1731–1740). As the successor of Nana Osei Tutu, Otumfuo Opoku Ware I, among his many accomplishments, was his institution of the great Oath (**Ntanksie Miensa, Kormantse ne Memeneda**) into Ashante jurisprudence. He was also responsible for the introduction of the famous Asante traditional ballet like Adowa Dance and music and the extension of the Asante Kingdom

to *Fante, Akyem, Akuapem, Aowin, Dekyira, Sefwi, Wassa, Assin, Gonja, Ga-Adangme, Kwawu, Bono Ahafo* and parts of Togo now the Volta Region.

It was during the reign of Katakyyie Opoku Ware, who embarked on massive territorial expansion in order to control trade from the North to the Coast and establish the Asante Kingdom, that the *Woraworas*, a group of mighty warriors, migrated from *Kuntanase* toward parts of Togo now the Volta Region. This was part of the extension programme of the Ashanti Nana Katakyyie Opoku Ware (1731-1740). They left in 1732 and finally settled at their present site around 1774. It took them almost forty-two years to get to their present destination which they named *Worawora*, derived from the phrase '*Wareaware*' which literally means 'it is more than far away'.

They met countless opposition on their way. The most devastating of their campaigns was against the *Nkonya* a mighty group of Guan warriors who had settled in the north-eastern part of the present Volta Region. In a fierce battle to conquer the *Nkonyas* their leader or chief '*Tiprekese*' was killed. The defeat was severe, forcing them to retreat into the mountains in the neighbourhood and settled on a plateau named '*Oboguan*'.

They moved further to another plateau called the '*Ofiepow*' meaning 'Home Mountains' (probably reminding them of their previous settlements in *Kontanase*). It was at their site on the *Ofiepowso* that the Basel Missionary Owura Nicholas Clerk visited them and convinced them to move downland and settle in the vast land beneath the plateau which they headed.

Among the cherished customs and traditions that they maintained is the '*Otor*' ritual celebration which they practised during every special gathering (especially during festivals) to remind them of the need to eschew bitterness and resentment from the society in order to keep them united and strong. Everyone who partakes of the *Otor* meal is under the ancestral oath to 'let go' whatever differences that exist among them. In fact conflict

management is important in Akan thought and finds full expression in communal meals designed to climax the process.

The *Abusuapanins* are expected to educate their *Abusuas* not only about customs of the particular *Abusua* but also about the values and prohibitions of the town. Conflicts are easily resolved when members know what is right or wrong in a given community. The most revered festival among the *Woraworas* is the *Akwantutenten* festival. During this festival all of them are expected to participate in the *Otor* ritual celebrations before the main function is celebrated.³⁸

2.3 The Culture of Worawora

The basic unit of social and cultural organization, according to Obaapanin Abena Ofosua,³⁹ was the family (*Abusua*), which is derived from the matrilineal blood group. Membership of the *Abusua* was the basis of title and family property. The *Abusua* was also a unit of political organization and the lineage head (*Abusuanyin*) represented his lineage as an elder on the chief's council. Nevertheless as the years rolled by after their settlement in the present site among people of patrilineal inheritance, notably the *Buems*, *Nkonyas Amanyas*, the *Woraworas* culture of social organisation was corrupted owing to their neighbours' patrilineal inheritance in terms of office and family membership and property inheritance. This unceremonious change brought with it lots of chieftaincy problems, the most recent and most prolonged being the chieftaincy dispute between the present chief Nana Asare Baa (Patrilineal descent) and Nana Opoku (Matrilineal descent). These inevitable changes in terms of matrilineal and patrilineal inheritance have brought

³⁸ An interview with Opanin Peasah son of the late chief linguist of Worawora on February 17, 2013 at Worawora.

³⁹ Was the chief priestess of Worawora (An interview)

with it a unique evolving cultural organization for the **Woraworas**. Sometimes they are compelled to choose leaders based on merit rather than on tradition.

Generally, however, their basic social organizations still remain matrilineal. The society is usually stratified. The paramount chief (**Omanhene**) occupied the highest position in the town and ruled through sub-chiefs such as **Gyaasehene, Ankobeahene, Kyidomhene and Abontendomhene**. Down the scale were common people who formed the bulk of the population. At the bottom were slaves who were captured in war sold or mortgaged by relations or served in payment of a debt.

As elsewhere in Akan communities, polygamy was a common practice. A wife usually resided with her husband but maintained her membership of her **Abusua**. A child belongs to the mother's **Abusua**, however, every member of the extended family is encouraged to get involved in the nurturing of the child. Brothers, sisters, uncles, aunties, grandmothers, grandfathers, in-laws are expected to contribute towards the formation of children and young people. In **Worawora**, the formation of the child is the responsibility of the community. Every member of the village is allowed to discipline a child and later the father or mother is informed about the child's wrong behavior.

Addo Fening⁴⁰ who is a family head (**Abusuapanin**) and a former head of the history department of University of Ghana, Legon, who has done much work on the Akyem **Abuakwa**, indicated that Akan education among others, is focused on the formation of an Akan person for community living and participation. He admits the lack of book culture in Akan indigenous formation but states that the interaction between teaching and learning is done through listening, observation, participation, interaction and engagement in an informal manner. He observes that Akan culture is not a literate culture and so there is

⁴⁰ R. Addo-Fenning, *Akyem Abuakwa, 1700-1943* (Norway: Norwegian University, 1997), 111.

nothing like a book. The son follows the father into the place where the resources are. For example if one wants to be a goldsmith, one is sent to be an apprentice of a goldsmith. One becomes a drummer by observing, serving and direct participation. Character and career formation has seen a lot of changes throughout the years in **Worawora** with the inception of Western education, which exists side by side with the indigenous system of education.

Festivals, rites of passage and the **Otor** rites also serve as educational moments in **Worawora** Traditional Education. During such occasions children and the young ones hear and learn desirable values and avoid the undesirable ones. **Worawora** culture has gone through a lot of refinement since it has gone through a lot of corruption as a result of encountering different ethnic groups and Western Christian Education. The influence of these cultures on the **Worawora** people is both positive and negative. The Western Christian culture for example condemned almost every aspect of the **Worawora** culture including the festivals, the **Otor** communal rites, drumming and dancing, tagging all as devilish. At **Worawora**, Christians who have involved themselves in traditional rites and festivals have received various levels of sanctions. In his call for dialogue between the Christian faith and Akan culture, **Okyeame Ampratwum**⁴¹ Senior linguist (**Okyeame Panin**) in Ashanti **Mampong** Traditional area observed the need for the preservation and if necessary transforming of enduring values in Akan culture to serve their communities. He admits that some changes are necessary but must be done with the mind of transforming not substituting and calls for a meaningful dialogue between Traditional leaders and Missionaries. He states;

Nananon and our Pastors need to meet on this subject. Somewhere in the 1920's, when Rattray was here to study our cultural practices, when he died, our elders cooked food and placed it before the copse as a way of parting with that beloved

⁴¹*Okyeame Panin* (Senior Linguist) of Ashanti Mampong

person - father, mother, etc. Today such practices have stopped; some of those practices are not...⁴²

Andrew Walls confirms this view when he stated:

Conversion implies the use of existing structures, the ‘turning’ of those structures to new directions, the application of new material and standards to a system of thought and conduct already in a place and functioning. It is not about substitution, the replacement of something old by something new, but about transformation, the turning of the already existing to new accounts.⁴³

A lot of Christians have gone through conflicts with the church as a result of being accused of indulging in devilish practices while just playing their cultural roles.

Sharing her challenges in the cultural tension which **Worawora** Christians who are involved in traditional practices go through, Afua Fosua⁴⁴ narrated her own personal experience and conflict with the church.

My traditional duty as the daughter of an **Okyeame** is to join some elderly women to prepare and serve **Otor** during the **Akwantutenten** festival. I was accused by presbyters of the Evangelical Presbyterian church for preparing and serving **Otor** (which they consider devilish) during the festival. I asked my accusers to educate me on what is anti – Christian about the **Otor** communal meal. They said it was paganism which I challenged and sought to educate them. The Session met afterwards and ex-communicated me from the Church.⁴⁵

Afua Fosua represents the cultural tension that the lack of understanding another’s culture creates. She also points to the suspicion associated with cultural practices that are branded paganistic without trying to understand why these practices were instituted. Okyeame Amparawun had this to say on cultural practices which are branded Obosom worship:

As soon as you take traditional leadership position, you are suspended from communion and all that I know deeply in my heart is that I do not worship any deity (Obosom) my faith is in the Almighty, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. But what do we do with our traditions and Ancestors? Do we allow traditions to die? Some of us must serve God in this way, but our Pastor says we have betrayed our faith and Lord. Anytime there is any big gathering in Mampong, including the visit of Presidents of Ghana, I am the one to say the traditional prayers or pour libation. We have a cultural practice that must be fulfilled. I always begin any

⁴² Palace Archives, Okyeame Amparawun, 2004

⁴³ Andrew Walls, *The Missionary Movement in Christian History: Studies in the transmission of faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), 28.

⁴⁴ Former fetish priestess of Worawora who happens to be the daughter of the late Okyeame Peasah

⁴⁵ Session – The highest decision making body in the Presbyterian Church

prayer with **Onyankopong** (God) as the one who receives all prayers and petition.⁴⁶

The understanding of cultural practices is quite different from what it is according to Okyeame Ampratwum. He believes God has called the indigenous people to serve Him through their cultural practices. However, the church has considered cultural practices as **Obosom** worship. The truth is that understanding cultural practice like the **Otor** communal meal unravels indigenous wisdom or philosophy embedded in Africans way of life. **Worawora** has a tested culture that knits the society together for posterity.

2.4 Religious Context of Worawora

Ancestors featured prominently in the religious life and thought of the people of **Worawora**. The **Abusua** was believed to consist of the living as well as the dead. The world of the dead was believed to be organized on the same lines as the living with chiefs, elders and common people and took interest in the affairs of the living. The dead are considered part of the community and the dead who lived their lives well were classified as ancestors. In fact a chief who is de-stooled is not regarded as an ancestor because it is believed that he did not live his life well as a chief.

The stool, the symbol of authority of the chief, was a focus of ancestors' veneration. The sentiments of ancestors' veneration were regularly expressed in the **Otor** communal meal during festivals and special gatherings of the people. The most important festival of the people of **Worawora** is the **Akwantutenten** festival. It is celebrated every year in November to commemorate the long and important event from the time they migrated from **Kuntanase** in the Ashanti Region in 1732 to when they settled in the Volta Region 1774.

⁴⁶ Okyeame Ampratwum: 2004

The chief entered the stool house to invoke the blessing of the ancestors during special occasions and periods of the year. The stool, as a religious symbol, is the most important object in the palace of the *Omanhene* of *Worawora* and is rarely displayed in public. In addition to it being a religious symbol, it is also used for the documentation of traditional leaders and their performance; it also represents the values that are associated with Akan leadership and the community. He says that the wooden stools that traditional leaders keep assume sacred political and educational importance as well as being a unifying power of the people of *Worawora*. The sacred stool of chiefs, according to Okyeame Kwabena Apeasah, assumes significance and power through the following processes: It attracts significance and power when it is used and kept in the bathroom before it is ‘blackened’.⁴⁷ The Akan people keep wooden stools in their homes as their traditional leaders do. The difference, however, between the stool of an ordinary citizen and the stool of a traditional leader is that the stool that is used and kept in the bathroom by a traditional leader attracts significance in the blackening process.

Okyeame Kwabena Apeasah indicated that, at the death of a leader, the stool in his bathroom is removed and hidden in the forest in the *Werempe*⁴⁸ division. According to Okyeame Kwabena Apeasah, those who know the tradition may keep a stool in their bathroom, else when they die, one is purchased for them because the chief’s corpse must be put on it when it is being bathed. For example he says that when great Ashanti leaders go to the village (when they die) their stools are kept in the places called *Werempe*, for the stool carriers to guard in the forest for seven days. After that the darkening process starts and then it is added to the sacred stools in the stool room. He says that the materials used in the blackening process are soot, yolk of eggs and blood. These materials are mixed and

⁴⁷ Blackened stools in Akan are sacred stools treated with the yolk of an egg, soot and blood.

⁴⁸ Werempe is a place where stools are kept before darkening

smear on the wooden stool for it to assume its black colour; hence the name black stool. He further states that the materials used in the blackening of the stools are for the preservation of the wood. Obviously, the long contact with water in the bathroom, the wooden stool decay, therefore, indigenous preservation methods are applied to avoid disintegration. Again, the things used on the preparation of the black stool are the soot on the walls of the kitchen, eggs and blood of an animal. The blackness of the stool is attained because of the soot included in the materials used. The three things use in the blackening process also has some spiritual significance of empowerment.

Furthermore, since they did not have a means of recording history until recently, their ancestors used all sorts of things to represent historical events, among them are, stools, wooden dolls and special stones. Special palace functionaries, and also close relatives of traditional leaders are made to master the events or History connected to the things and symbols they represent. It is important that these palace historians also transfer the knowledge to appropriate people in the successive generations.

In **Worawora** the basic means of educating their people especially the young ones are through the symbols like the stools and special rites like puberty rites and the **Otor** communal meal as well as festivals. The symbols and rites also represent the History and the beliefs of the people. Okyeame Kwame Apeasah also explained the facts about the kind of blood used in the consecration of sacred stools. He recalled the History of King Prempeh I who was taken captive and sent to Seychelles Islands. According to him before the return of King Prempeh I from the Seychelles Islands, stools of prominent leaders like the Asantehene (King of Ashantis) were blackened with human blood but upon his return he introduced lots of reforms including blackening of stools with animal blood.

The consecration and preservation of the stool is a function of the stool bearers, **Nkonnwasofo**. The blackened wooden stool is made to dry well and later added to other

stools in the Black stool room which becomes a symbol of authority and ancestor for veneration as well as facilitating traditional education. It is for these reasons that the black stools are kept under strict security and shrouded in secrecy just as the Golden Stool. According to Nana Addo Dankwa III⁴⁹ the Black Stool represents memories of past traditional leaders. The black stool is, therefore, used to narrate good deeds of past leaders in anticipation that leaders who are in service will learn from them. Nana Addo Dankwa III observed that,

Since the black stool constitutes the History books of the periods of reign of chiefs whose memories the stool represents, when a chief goes to the stool house during the *Adae* festival period, the court historians take the opportunity to narrate to the chief the good deeds of the past chiefs whose memories have been preserved with the Black Stools. The idea is to enable the living chief to learn about and emulate the good deeds of the noble ancestor.⁵⁰

It is clear from Nana Addo Dankwa III observation that apart from the Akan Stool being a religious symbol to connect ancestors who they venerate and sometimes treat as ends in themselves as far as worship is concerned. It is also a traditional symbol which facilitates public education on a community's past life including the performance of their leaders. The preservation of knowledge about a particular traditional leader: his beginnings, qualities, achievements, resources, challenges and other important events that happened during his reign until his death are enshrined in the black stool. The periods of history or the chapters of history in a community is directly related to the number of black stools that they have. It is, however, very important to note that black stools are preserved for those whose leadership and values are considered desirable. The values that the society considers desirable are intended to be portrayed in the narration of the histories and stories that the black stool represents.

⁴⁹ Nana Addo Dankwa III, *Chieftancy Institution in Ghana: The Future* (Accra: Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2004), 68.

⁵⁰ Nana Addo Dankwa III, *Chieftancy Institution in Ghana*, 73

The stool represents the religious authority and power of the **Worawora** community. The religious power and authority of the **Omanhene** is related to the stool. The handing over of the **Omanhene**' stool to an individual royal is the Akan way of authenticating the office of that leader. A leader is not recognized if he is not in possession of the black stool connected to that office. **Worawora's** traditional religious power and authority is identified by the possession of the black stool. Busia⁵¹ however, has argued that the black stool is more than a religious symbol of religious power and authority (**Ote Nananom Akondwa so**) Discussing the nature of the black stool during the 'Conference on Christianity and Culture', organized by the Christian Council of Ghana, in 1955, K. A. Busia indicated that the black stool represents the very identity of the Akan people. Reflecting on **Okomfo Anokye's**⁵² understanding of the black stool, Busia said:

[They] are not only symbols of political power, but also what Anokye described as 'the soul of the nation.' They symbolize a people's identity, unity and continuity, and it is this sentiment that is kept alive by the festivals and rites associated with them. This is the reason why they are dear to the Akan.⁵³

The above shows that black stools are not only symbols of religious or political power but also the Akan identity, unity and continuity. By connecting to Akan identity Busia suggests that the values, morality and knowledge of the Akan can be considered by a reflection on the black stool. Identity of a group of people seeks to answer questions related to who they are as a distinct people and what they represent. Their uniqueness and what they have to offer the wider world. Anokye had earlier considered the black stool as the 'soul of the nation. The black stool as the soul of the nation means that it represents the very life and values of the Akan people.

⁵¹ K.A. Busia, 'Ancestor Worship, libation, stools, festivals': A viewpoint in S.G. Williamson (ed.), *Christianity and African Culture*(Accra: Christian Council of the Gold Coast, 1955), 22

⁵² S.G. Williamson (ed.), (*Christianity and African Culture*), 22

⁵³ A fetish priest who helped King Osei Tutu to found the Ashanti nation

The *Omanhene's* stool of *Woraworaa* represents religious, political, moral, economic, social, historical and intellectual values of the people of *Worawora*. Whoever possesses the 'soul' of the people becomes the obvious leader of the people. For example Osei Tutu I, the first occupant of the Golden Stool, became the *Asantehene* due to the fact that he was handed the Golden Stool, the 'soul' of the nation. This means that the stool does not only have religious implications, but identity, unity and continuity. Busia suggests that the values of religion, history, philosophy and morality are derived by a reflection on festivals, symbols and rites of the *Akans*. Again, symbols, festivals and rites according to Busia are also considered as the essence of Akan unity and the connection between their past, present and future.

The understanding for the present generation as to where they have come from is acquired through an encounter with the past. The symbols, festivals and rites determine the legacy that the present intends to hand over to future generations. For example the *Omanhene's* black stool remains the rallying object for the *Worawora* people and they will fight 'tooth and nail' to protect it from their enemies. Their history, philosophy, morality and religion are embedded in it. The values passed on by their ancestors are expected to be observed even by the unborn generations because they believe the disconnection of the present from the past becomes the extinction for the future. The only way to ensure continuity is through the symbols, festivals and rites that hold their identity as a group of people. There is also the educational dimension of the religion of the peoples of *Worawora*.

The *Worawora* believe their religion include their history, governance, spirituality, diplomacy and healthy relationship. It is through their religion that indigenous philosophy and morality as well as other values is imparted. They believe that the gods will punish those who violate the intentionally sanctioned code of the ancestors, and reward those who keep it. This is confirmed by Busia when he writes 'The Asante have concepts of

right and wrong of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, culturally defined in terms of their own life and belief and as has been apparent in the belief accounts given; ancestors and Gods punish those who violate the intentionally sanctioned code, and reward those who keep it'.⁵⁴

Busia was speaking on the topic 'Ancestor Worship' at the conference on Christianity and African culture organized in 1955 by the Christian Council of Gold Coast. He called for the study of the religion of the Akan and its contribution to the Christian faith. He indicated the Asante have the concept of right and capable of educating their people to regulate for the conduct of society. Busia argued in his paper that ancestor, like the gods have a very important role to play in the determination and enforcement of acceptable behavior. Knowledge of acceptable behavior is very important in conflict resolution in the *Worawora* and their moral are circumscribed in their religion. The individual's significance in his lineage, clan, and life of community is largely related to the performance of his religious duties. The conduct of the individual in the community is regulated by the ancestors who see to it that those who defy the codes of conduct are sanctioned. The symbols, (like the stools), festivals and rites of the people of *Worawora* have religious significance which contributes to their education which is the bedrock of political and socio-economic development.

2.5 The Traditional leaders of Worawora, with viewpoints from Robert Rattray

Robert Sutherland Rattray was an early student and scholar in Akan traditional leadership. He provides grounds for an intellectual justification and indigenous perspectives for African Traditional Leadership institutions. He was a military captain in the colonial

⁵⁴ S.G. Williamson (ed.) Christianity and African culture, 22

Administration of the then Gold Coast and he was also in charge of the newly established Anthropological Department of the colonial administration. The task of the department was to document indigenous chieftaincy institutions of the Asante people in order to prevent its corruption.

As he started his work he became convinced that the very future of the Asante society was connected to the integration of their chieftaincy institutions and cultural life into their development programmes. The colonial administration had earlier on identified the fact that to establish colonial control there was the need to work through existing traditional leadership institutions in order to understand the culture of the people. The colonial government observed that,

...the law and constitution of these people were evolved, and finally based upon indigenous beliefs is to suggest something that goes deeper than the exposition of interesting academic theory. It is to state a fact of considerable significance in the field of practical West African politics today. Upon the correct application of this knowledge must, I believe, depend on satisfactory tutelage of this people and ultimately, their own success in self-government.⁵⁵

Furthermore, he observed that knowledge in Akan leadership institution was built around the **Ohene** (chief) and his traditional leaders. To him it is very important that the educated man goes back to his cultural identity or context in order to feel very confident to make relevant contribution to their society. He thinks that the educated African leader is more informed by the British culture than his indigenous culture. Rattray summed up his thoughts in the following words:

The educated African, however has been cut off from, and is out of sympathy with, the life of his own people. He has learned in nine cases out of ten, if he has not actually been taught, to despise his own illiterate brethren and the unlettered past of his race. Concerning that past, he really knows little or nothing and generally cares less... If, as it is probable, he has been educated in one of the mission schools, then his whole training, until quite recently, had been one in which it has not appeared orthodox or even conceivable to his teachers that there might be something in African's own culture and religious beliefs worthy of retention side by side (for a time at least) with the ethical teaching of Christian

⁵⁵ R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti law and Constitution* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), v

theology. Such being the case, can one wonder that African pupils and converts alike have been quick to see and very ready to follow a trend of thought which deemed or ignored the possibility anything useful or good or ethical existing in the African's own religion. The result has been that the cultured and semi-educated Africans alike (with a few exceptions) when asked about the beliefs of their own people, unconsciously paint them in all the unreal and exotic colours with which their new training and their new environment have taught them to regard them. They feel, and have been trained to believe, that they are brands plucked from the burning. It is almost impossible that such persons can be sympathetic with their past, a past which, after all, few of them have ever really known, seen or clearly understood.⁵⁶

Rattray clearly describes how our leaders who had received western education have been made to believe that everything about their past was not good. He considered some aspects of Akan cultural practices worthy of maintaining and which could live side by side with Christian understanding and practices. He is of the view that missionary education for example could have adopted an integrated approach but chose to develop a hostile attitude to every cultural belief and practice of the African. Rattray would want his readers to believe that the tension between the Christian faith and Akan worldview was an outcome of the wrong attitude of missionary education. This attitude has affected leaders who have gone through western education and contributed to the contempt and corruption of the African culture.

The traditional leaders in **Worawora** are no exception to the above observation and criticism. The traditional leaders of **Worawora** especially the chief and the sub-chiefs are supposed to be the custodians of the rich culture of the **Worawaras** including their symbols, festivals and rituals but some abandon them in the name of Christianity and civilization. The quality of a traditional Chief is directly related to how knowledgeable they are in their cultural beliefs and practices. Some cultural practices admittedly had known some corruption, but that does not mean that they have lost their religious and philosophical significance and relevance. Rattray warned that the Akan cultural practices

⁵⁶ R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 87-8

are as relevant as they were when they encountered the Christian faith. He said just as European culture is as relevant as when they encountered the Christian faith so is the African culture. According to him

Foolish and childish in the extreme as many beliefs may seem to us, we must realize how terribly real they still are over vast areas of African continent, where they persist in spite of the restraint of paternal administration and the steady advance of civilization. We should be careful to read the history of our not very remote past, before, in a spirit of pious indignation; we sit in judgement upon the African.⁵⁷

Worawora traditional leadership is officially rested in the family head (**Abusuapanin**), Community head (**Odikro**) and Paramount Chief (**Omanhene**). **Worawora** traditional leaders, who lead the people and seek their welfare, have well defined functions. The paramount chief (**Omanhene**) is the chief executive and administrative officer for the whole territorial division. He is also the spiritual head as far as the living are concerned. Akan traditional leadership is the rallying point of the people and so the traditional leadership in **Worawora** is the pivot around which all aspects of life revolve. The family heads were responsible for the provision of leadership at the family level. They ensure that spirituality, peace, justice, unity, welfare and discipline of family members are not compromised. They officiate at ceremonies during festivals, rites of passage (naming, puberty, marriage and funeral ceremonies). The family heads ensure quality and fairness among family members if a member of the family is aggrieved or there is conflict between or among members the first port of call is the family head. Procedures for conflict management are resorted to whenever there is conflict in the family and resources are mobilized in times of need to support members if necessary. The community heads are in charge of smaller suburbs of the town. They provide leadership on behalf of the paramount chief (**Omanhene**) who is responsible for the territory. They ensure peace and

⁵⁷ R.S. Rattray, *Religion and art in Ashanti*(Oxford: University Press, 1927), 34

development in the smaller communities and provide regular support to the paramount chief who they represent.

They handle the spiritual, legal and general matters of the community. In times of war; they are required to mobilize military support from their communities for the **Omanhene**. The **Omanhene** is the traditional leader who is in charge of land tradition and culture. He is the spiritual and military commander of the **Worawora** people. The **Omanhene** calls the whole community to order during community celebration and worship. He ensures fairness and good governance among the smaller communities. In fact, he has the right to de-stool, and install community heads under his jurisdiction. He ensures that religious ceremonies are performed and is mandated to call the **Worawora** people to war whenever a common enemy was identified. He is seen as the main intermediary between the living and the ancestors. They keep the living community and the ancestors in constant union.

Worawora traditional leadership derives from Akan leadership system. They therefore strongly believe that their chiefs assume a sacred status immediately they are installed. They sit on the stool of the ancestors which means they derive their authority from the ancestors. Rattray was right when he wrote about the **Akans** thus;

In this and almost every other respect, the position of the modern ruler has altered but little. The leader is still intermediary between **nsamanfo** (ancestral spirits) and his subjects and performs the ceremonies of the **Adae** festivals. His person, just so long as he is on the stool, is sacred.⁵⁸

The ancestors are elders who had successfully completed their work and are acknowledged as such. Their presence is recognized by the regular observance of the **Adae**⁵⁹ festivals and rites like **Otor** communal meal. The **Adae** festival particularly refers to the ceremonies in which the achievements and values of the departed leaders are acknowledged. In **Worawora**, assumption of traditional leadership and political power

⁵⁸ R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti law and Constitution*, 405.

⁵⁹ Ceremony in which the ancestors are acknowledged

depends on consensus between the living and the ancestors. The stool serves as the social and religious contract in **Worawora** traditional leadership institution. The stool is symbol of authority. Nobody of the community is required to make any resemblance of the **Omanhene's** stool either for himself or their communities.

2.5.1 Installation of Worawora traditional leader

Traditional leaders in Akan, for that matter in **Worawora**, were selected through considered structures. Leaders were nominated from royal families who generally were chosen from particular branch of the clan to which the original stool belonged. The **Ohemaa** (a queen mother) nominated a member of the royal family for the kingmakers when they made a request. The **Ohemaa** made her nomination after consulting the kingmakers who ensured that the nominated royal satisfied the expectations of the community. When the candidate was accepted then the installation process begun. However, when a candidate was rejected, the **Ohemaa** had two more chances to nominate from the royal families, if all the three candidates were rejected, then the kingmakers were made to select any suitable member from the royal family for installation.

Swearing of oath began after the selection process was completed. Oath swearing is a key element in the installation process of the chiefs of **Worawora**. The new leader (**Omanhene**) first swore to the kingmakers his willingness to serve the community and his readiness to lead them. The kingmakers in turn swore to the new leader, assuring him of their full support, if he provided good leadership. Rattray states that 'the chiefs' **mpanyinfo** (elders) take an oath of allegiance to serve him but the chief also makes an oath to his councillors to observe the unwritten laws of the constitution.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti law and Constitution*, 86

When a sub-chief is being installed he also goes through the above processes of selection and oath swearing but most importantly must swear to the ***Omanhene*** his allegiance to him. The values were clearly spelt out for the new leader. Those who installed him and who set the unwritten constitution had the right also of removing him from office when he was found contravening values of traditional leadership. But what kinds of values were associated with ***Worawora*** traditional leadership?

2.5.2 The ***Worawora*** traditional leadership values

The leadership expected of ***Worawora*** traditional leaders is imparted by the stool makers during the period of confinement, a period in which the new Chief is taught the dos and don'ts as well as the secrets of his community. Furthermore, during the oath swearing period the King makers, through the ***okyeame*** (spokesperson of traditional leaders), spelt out all the values and expectations of the king makers and ordinary people. The duties of a new leader and limitations were publicly recited before him on the occasion of his enstoolment. The following were some of the key values that Rattray captured through an ***Okyeame*** during an Akan chief oath swearing.

Tell him we do not want him to disclose the origin of his subjects: tell him we don't want a greedy person; tell him we do not want someone hard of hearing; '...There are several other candidates we might have chosen, but we have selected you. Rule us kindly and we shall serve you kindly. We do not want extortions; we do not wish floggings. The new chief responded from time to time '*mate*' (which literally means I have heard).⁶¹

When a leader was considered to have failed to abide by expected leadership values, he was de-stooled. When a traditional leader was, thus, de-stooled he was not allowed to be considered as one of the ancestors and therefore, his stool was not blackened for consecration and preservation. Rattray noted, a stool of a chief who has been de-stooled is

⁶¹ R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti law and Constitution*, 253

not blackened nor is his name mentioned with other chiefs at **Adae** ceremonies.⁶² A leader might be de-stooled for neglecting to follow any of the admonitions that were publicly recited to him on the day of his enstoolment. The objective of any **Worawora** traditional ruler is to ensure good governance and welfare of the people.

Worawora Omanhene even though has been entrusted with absolute power shares this power with the other sub-chiefs and the people. It is generally alleged that Akan traditional rulers were autocrats and, therefore, undesirable. A close observation revealed that **Worawora** traditional leadership system held checks and balances in political power and that leaders were responsible to their sub-chiefs and the people.

In support of this Rattray observed that;

To all outward appearance and to superficial observers, who included the populace, the chief was an autocrat. In reality, every move and command which appeared to emanate from his mouth has been discussed in private and been previously agreed upon by his councilors, to whom everyone in the tribe had access and to whom popular opinion on any subject was, thus, made known. Such, at any rate, was the ideal; serious departure from this custom would, eventually, lead to destoolment. Although nominally, the Ashanti constitution was intended to appear to be autocratic, in correct practice, it was democratic to a degree.⁶³

Worawora traditional leadership derives from the Asante system and, therefore has its own democratic elements, which demanded consultations, popular participation and accountability. A good chief was scrupulously careful to rule through his elders and allow all lower chiefs to manage their own affairs, and was equally careful not to weaken their power, and eventually his own authority. Decentralization made good governance possible; everybody knew his task, which in many cases, he has learned by precept and example, almost from infancy. In **Worawora** traditional leadership there is popular participation and power sharing even though there no written constitution. **Worawora** community was built on traditional military structures. These structures have been in

⁶² R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti law and Constitution*, 146

⁶³ R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti law and Constitution*, 82-3, see also 146

operation since they left **Kontonase** in the Ashanti region. The chain of command originated from the **Omanhene** and every sub chief had to swear to the **Omanhene** their loyalty to fight the common enemy. The sub-chiefs led their people according to the values directed by the **Omanhene**

2.6 The Akwantutenten Festival

For nearly 300 years that the **Woraworas** sojourned, they did not lose track of where they came from. They did not forget their mother tongue, which is Asante. Their appellations and drum language are similar to that of the **Ashantis**, that is, “**Worawora Kotoko, Wokum Apem a Apem be ba**” and “**Tiprekese Baah a owe akrabuo**”. This appellations literally mean **great Worawora, if you kill a thousand a thousand will come and King Tiprekese Baah who chews stones**.

This meant that Tiprekese had some supernatural powers, which a lot of people did not have. Whenever anyone shot at him, he would collect the bullets from his body and chew them. The **Worawora** people observe the **Akwasidae**, including **Akwasidaekese, Awukudae, Memenada-Dapaa, Dwoada Fordwuor** and **Fiada Fofie**. (These would remain nothing to a foreign reader so it is important you explain what they mean)

To ascertain what their fathers told them, and the similarities they have with the Ashanti's Nana Opoku Frefre II, in 1994, sent two of his elders, led by Nana Gyamera and Nana Boakye-Mensa with three others to **Kuntanase** their ancestral home, as representatives during the final funeral rites of the then **Kuntanase** Chief, Nana Kofi Boateng. The reception, which was accorded them, was so great, that they followed up the following year.

On March 6th, 1995, a large contingent of **Worawora** citizens (in 3 buses and 19 private cars) led by **Omanhene** Daasebre Asare Baah III, officially visited their ancestral home of

Kuntanase in the Ashanti Region. Four years later, their brothers and sisters from **Kuntanase**, reciprocated their visit. The joy and celebrations culminated in a grand Durbar at **Worawora**. The two visits re-inforced the idea that an annual event should be instituted, so that all the **Kuntanase** sons and daughters, including those in the diaspora can meet once a year to renew their common bond of blood origin, and map out strategies for the development of their various towns. The re-union gave birth to the institution of ‘**Akwantutenten**’ Festival – long, long journey. The 2001 festival was unique in the sense that in February that year, the Omanhene of **Worawora**, Daasebre Asare-Baah III and his sub-chiefs went to swear the oath of allegiance to the Asantehene, Otumfuo Osei Tutu II, thus, finalizing the re-union with their ancient roots in Ashanti and **Manhyia**, thereby fulfilling the promise of the ancestors made nearly 300 years ago, that **Worawora** people would never abandon the golden stool.

2.7 The **Worawora** Family System and Community Life

The **Worawora** family system is matrilineal. It means a child belongs to the clan, not of the father, but of the mother. Family authority lies in the hands of one’s mother’s brothers and maternal uncles’. Generally the Akan system of tracing descent is matrilineal, that is clan descent is traced through the female, and authority in the family lies mainly in the hands of the mother’s brother or the maternal uncle.

The principle behind Akan physiological conception is the understanding of the relationship between father’s **ntoro** (spirit) and the **mogya** (blood) of mothers. In explaining Akan matrilineal system, Rattray observed that, it is the **ntoro** of a man mingling with the **mogya** of the woman that, the Asante believes, forms a child, and just as the woman transmits her **mogya** or blood, so the man transmits his **ntoro**. Thus each man and woman have in them two distinct elements **mogya** (or blood) and spirit; the

former inherited from the mother and transmitted by her alone and the latter received from the father and transmitted by him alone, and the latter received from the father and transmitted to his offspring . This then is the physiological aspect of conception as understood by the Asante.

Every Akan person is thus, supposed to have within them two elements, the male transmitted and inherited **ntoro**, and the blood (**mogya**) transmitted by the mother. Members of a family identify themselves by the fact of possessing common blood transmitted through their mothers, grandmothers and great grandmothers.

Due to the bond of common blood, they share inheritance of their ancestors and provide support to their members of the family. They are also obliged to preserve the heritage for the unborn family. Akan and for that matter **Worawora** family system, therefore, is perceived as the blood relations among members currently living, those who have gone into the world of the dead and those who are yet to born. The relationship among the living, the dead and the unborn is upheld with much diligence. Heads of families are obliged to preserve family properties for unborn generation, with the intention of avoiding poverty. Rattray described the role of family heads in the preservation of family properties, he stated.

The alienation of such property outside the limit of the blood group is impossible and unthinkable at this stage. It is the business of the head of the family to see that nothing alters this law, which constitutes a perpetual safeguard that living clansmen and as yet unborn generations of 'the blood' will never be reduced to poverty. The ancestors are the symbol of unity among the dead, living and the unborn, and they determine the pattern of lifestyle the living community adopts. Ancestors are recognized as essential part of the whole system, and the foundation of unity, respect and obedience to those in authority in the family group, which is the basis of all Akan community life.⁶⁴

Due to the bond of common blood, Akan families give particular attention to economic as well as the moral life of all members of the family. Marriage is not a private affair

⁶⁴ R.S. Rattray, Ashanti Law and Constitution, 18

between two young lovers. Marriage is a relationship among the families of the couple. Rattray noted, 'it is, perhaps almost platitude to state that marriage in Akan is not so much a contract between the individuals directly concerned, as one between the two groups of individuals whom they present.'⁶⁵

Family members of **Worawora** and the larger Akan community expect married couples to nurture their children properly. If a father fails to reprove naughty children, the neighbours would upbraid him and tell him he did not know how to bring up children. The training of a boy is done by the fathers, while that of the girl is by mothers. Parents educate their children to uphold the integrity of the family. Lack of proper nurturing of children is therefore, considered as failure of the couples and a disgrace to the family. Formation of indigenous leaders begins at home. Formation and nurturing of children in **Worawora** traditional values is very important.

There were no schools in the modern sense in olden times, but almost every hour of the daily life, young children were undergoing unconscious instructions, mostly, perhaps, by a process of imitating their elders. The upbringing of a boy seemed naturally to have fallen on the father as in most Akan communities. Akan indigenous grooming sought to nurture young people for proper community participation. Children were trained to avoid whatever would render them unacceptable and undesirable to the society. Rattray observed that the Akan children were trained to avoid pitfalls which, in later life, constituted the danger of coming within the arm of the law. They are admonished to avoid sexual offences; to be careful to guard his tongue; to respect other people's property; he is also at an early age instructed in the taboos.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, 18

⁶⁶ R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti Law and Constitution*, 11.

Children, moreover, pursued various apprenticeship and professions for their personal achievements. There were specific learning patterns for girls. Girls' formation was mainly under the supervision of mothers. Girls were taught cooking, hygiene, home management and respect. The rites of passage associated with birth, naming, puberty, marriage and death provided the main formation moments with parents, family members, traditional leaders and the larger community, all these serve as traditional child-training and leadership formation. Festivals, storytelling, proverbs, symbols and music provided **Worawora** formation values. Rattray also identified drum language as a means of communicating traditional values in the Akan community. He stated,

I first became interested in this difficult subject many years ago. At that time it was generally known that the Ashanti, in common with certain other West coast people were able to convey messages over great distance and in an incredibly short space of time by means of drums and it was thought that their system was based upon some such method as that with which Europeans are familiar in the morse code.⁶⁷

Akan young people were provided with specific professional and vocational skills through apprenticeship and service. Akan specialize in indigenous technology. Rattray noted that

There were wood carvers who made nothing but stools others who fashion umbrella frames for the great state umbrellas, others who made **suman** (fetishes), while some are makers of drums. Young people are introduced to the weaving profession at a very early stage in their lives little boys who are to become weavers, begin to learn at a very early age⁶⁸.

Traditional cloths, he observed, were artistically designed to communicate Akan values. He discovered that they were artistically designed to convey Akan values and realized that, not only were Akan textile designs artistically beautiful but that each design was standardized and that they were not flights of color just for fancy but each pattern had its name and in many cases represented the clan, social status or even gender of the wearer,

⁶⁷ R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti*, 242.

⁶⁸ R.S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, 233

or may refer to some proverbial saying.⁶⁹ Apart from **Kente** weaving, he said there were other textile professions which were very well noted. They were woven in the same manner and on the same looms, with designs which, instead of being woven into the same fabric, were stamped upon such cloths he said are known as **Adinkra**⁷⁰ cloths. In **Worawora** some of the crafts were lost as a result of long wandering in the wilderness until they got to the present destination. Nevertheless stool carving, preparing of umbrella frames and drum language remain some notable marks of their Ashanti origin and roots. Akan leadership formation patterns included traditional medicine and healing. Traditional healers were mainly hunters. According to Rattray,

...medicine men are often hunters and hunters, medicine men. Wonderful folk they are; botanists knowing every tree and plant and fern by name, and the spiritual properties of each; zoologists, intimately acquainted with the haunts and habits of animals, birds and insects. The forests, with their sights and sounds are books which they can read with unwavering skill.⁷¹

Young practitioners were attached to experienced ones to learn the trade. During the period, the learners of traditional medicine and healing acquired the trade through observation, participation and mentoring. The apprentice lived with the priest, helped them in their farms and at night slept in the temple beside the shrine whose service they had entered. During the first year, the trainee might not use any but cold water for his ablutions, nor may they use soap or sponge. On holy days they would return to their own villages and give their own shrine offerings. The old priest, who was training the novices kept the later under constant supervision during the whole year. The apprentice was not told anything very secret; should they prove disobedient and incapable of instruction; the families were informed that the novice was not likely to make a good priest, and their

⁶⁹ R.S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, 235

⁷⁰ Adinkra was the famous King of Gyaman (now Ivory Coast) who, having angered the Asante King, Bonso Panin by copying the golden stool of Asante, was defeated and slain about the beginning of the nineteenth century (R.S. Rattray, *Religion and Art of Asante*, 264).

⁷¹ R.S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, 235.

training would cease. Those who were able to undergo the discipline graduated as full traditional priest and healers as part of their training.⁷² **Worawora** priests were made to study the various rites to be performed during special social functions like festivals. They had special functions to perform during the **Otor** communal meal celebrations which signify reconciliation and unity. They join the chief and elders to offer prayers to the gods and ancestors and ask for their blessings and guidance during the arbitration process. The agents of socialization and nurturing of children and the young ones in the **Worowara** community are parents, family members, artists and traditional priests, Rattray identified the **Okyeame** as a key agent in the traditional patterns of learning.

2.7.1 Office of Okyeame

The **Okyeame** played key leadership roles in Akan indigenous social functions and rites. The **Okyeame** was the spokesperson of the traditional leaders. They kept the **Akyeamepoma** (linguist staff) as the symbol of office and authority.⁷³ The **Okyeame** was not only a spokesperson; he was also an educator of Akan History, diplomacy, governance, public speaking, rites and spirituality. They were therefore very knowledgeable persons. Rattray's description of the **Okyeame** as a 'walking store-house of proverbs' might be explained by their knowledge impartation roles in the palace. In his effort to identify the functions of the **Okyeame**, Rattray argued that the **Okyeame** must be deeply versed in the History of the clan which he represented. He must be a walking storehouse of knowledge and wisdom. He should adequately use proverbs in his communication to express the views, beliefs and understanding of his people.⁷⁴ The **Okyeame** of **Worawora** Nana Apeasah⁷⁵ is the Chief linguist of the **Omanhene**,

⁷² R.S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, 47

⁷³ R.S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, 277

⁷⁴ R.S. Rattray, *Religion and Art in Ashanti*, 278

⁷⁵ The chief Linguist of the Omanhene.

subsequent *Okyeame's* are also picked from the same family. He is the epitome of *Worawora* indigenous knowledge and wisdom as well as a spokesman in all diplomatic relations. (*Okyeame Peasah* is the provider of about seventy percent of information in this thesis).

2.8 Preparation before the *Otor* Communal meal in *Worawora*

The *Otor* ritual meal is basically celebrated to promote peace and Unity in the community. The issue of conflict management among the people of *Worawora* is vital and necessary since they know that conflicts are inevitable. The *Worawora* people say two calabashes definitely will knock against each other on the surface of the river but they do not break each other.

The process of *Otor* conflict resolution starts with a religious ceremony; an oath swearing which is followed by community participation and collective decision making based on the cultural systems of the people. The oath which is referred to as the 'oath of the ancestors' is an undertaking that one will earnestly cooperate with the elders for the sake of unity and peace of the community and that one will accept the adjudication of the living elders and ancestors after the necessary processes have been followed.

It is the responsibility of the *Abusuapanin* to preside over any conflict management process or to delegate his powers to an experienced but responsible member of the *abusua*. If the matter still persists then it is forwarded to the *Omanhene* who uses almost the same process used by the *abusua* to bring peace. The method of conflict management among individuals or groups goes through the *Otor* ritual process. The oath also requires that one will speak the truth and also submit to basic ground rules (cultural systems) of the community and develop a sense of mutual trust and cooperation. The following is the manner of the community participation in managing a conflict;

- As an individual or members of the group talk; the leader explains, compares, distinguishes and summaries. He discusses the possible solutions and rationale for each proposed alternative according to the basic ground rules or customs of the community, with the gathering, especially the elders. In the process of education, persons exhibit the desire to modify their life style because they feel convinced and compelled to take certain actions.
- Individuals or groups involved in the conflicts are made to be goal oriented instead of being impulsive. Instead of acting out of immediate self-interest they are made to appreciate interdependence. Instead of being insulated or defensive they are made to be empathic.
- The leader deals with expectations of those involved in the conflict by dispelling the ignorance, distortions' and confusions based on the customs of the community. His objective is to make them reform and not conform to the personal ideals. The misconceptions are dealt with one at a time and cleared to make individual participation free and open.
- Those involved in the conflict are made to accept disappointment as part of everyday living without being plagued with feelings of guilt. The sole objective is to learn that there is always a choice to be made which may mean denying one's self, for the ultimate good of others and the community. ⁷⁶This conflict management process is mostly educative with the interest of the community (comprising both the living & the dead) being paramount. Finally the '*Otor*' communal meal is celebrated to mark the end of hostilities. It is a form of covenant that must not be toyed with since contempt for the '*Otor*' ritual can result in serious consequences both for the individual and the

⁷⁶ An interview with the Queen mother of Worawora, Nana Safoa Awerewah, 11

community. The above process show that inherent in any conflict is **constructive outcomes** like educating oneself, dispelling ignorance and destructive outcomes like anger hostility, animosity and even violence. To confirm this Johnson & Johnson⁷⁷ write that,

When conflicts are managed constructively they have many desirable outcomes. The Chinese character for crises represents a combination of the symbol for danger and the symbol for opportunity. Inherent in any conflict is the potential for destructive constructive outcomes. On the destruction side, conflicts can create anger, hostility lasting animosity and even violence. Conflict can also result in pain and sadness. Conflicts can end in lawsuits divorce and war. Destructively managed conflicts are highly costly to a group, destroying the group's effectiveness, ripping apart relationships, sabotaging work, delaying and decreasing teaching and learning efforts, and devastating individuals' commitment to group's goals, sense of security and personal feelings. Poorly managed conflicts result in group members spending time brooding and fighting rather than teaching and learning to develop the community.⁷⁸

In view of the above preparations towards the '**Otor**' communal meal meant to bring peace into the community are carefully followed knowing that it has both positive and negative repercussions depending on how it is managed.

2.9 The role of Women in the **Otor** ritual meal in *Worawora*

Women played a significant role in Akan traditional leadership's institution. They are key functionaries in the '**Otor**' communal meal celebrations. They actually determined the beginning and the end of tradition rulers. One could ascend to indigenous leadership positions through the initiative of the **Ohemaa**. The Woman, in general, was considered as the transmitters of ritual blood and kinship. Ama Serwaa, of Akoto, the Ohemaa of Ashanti Mampong, was reported to have expressed the power of Asante woman in traditional leadership and rites in the following words. 'We, in Ashanti here, have a law which decrees that it is the daughters of a queen who alone can transmit royal blood, and

⁷⁷ David W. Johnson Frank P. Johnson, *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*, 6th ed. (U.S.A.: Allyn and Bacon, 1975), 336.

⁷⁸ Johnson, *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*, 6th ed.

that the children of a king cannot be heirs to that stool. This law has given us women power in this land.’⁷⁹

The fact that royal Akan women were the transmitters of royal blood explains the Akan matrilineal inheritance system. Whoever occupied the stool at any point in time was considered to be the sons of the **Ohemaa** who was a sister to the king. In the day to day administration of the state the **Ohemaa** was seen as the next in power in the indigenous leadership institution. Rattray concluded, ‘the person next in order of importance in the native state is the queen mother’.⁸⁰ The **Ohemaa** was the key agent in providing continues leadership formation and nurturing to the Akan traditional leaders and she conducts most of the education and advice in private. She is the only agent in the traditional setup in Akan leadership system entrusted with power to rebuke the leaders in public when she feels they are not functioning within traditional practices. None of the suburb leaders are allowed to correct the **Omanhene** in public. The **Ohemaa** is, however traditionally mandated to do so for the preservation of national identity and dignity. Rattray described the political power of the **Ohemaa** in Akan leadership institution in the following words;

Whenever the chief travels abroad, except to war, she must accompany him, and when the chief sits in court, her place is besides him she alone has the privilege of rebuking him, his spokesman (**Okyeame**), or his councilors in open court, and addressing the court and questioning litigants. To her, too, petitions are addressed for pardon or mitigation of a sentence.⁴¹

Her influence stretched to all the women in the community. In **Worawora** the **Ohemaa** had great influence over all the women. She attends ceremonies connected with rites of passage and the **Otor** communal rites celebration. She delegates her duties to other elderly women and is greatly concerned with the morals of the young generation. Women delegated by the **Ohemaa** are the main functionaries of the **Otor** communal meal

⁷⁹ R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti law and constitution*, 78

⁸⁰ R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti law and constitution*, 88

celebrations. In the preparation of the **Otor** communal meal, the women must observe hygienic laws. The dishes for the preparation of the meal, the figure nails of women involved, the dressing and footwear's , hairdos and beads to be worn, the yams to be marched, the quality of the red oil, are all thoroughly inspected before the preparation of the meal begins. Furthermore, it is the responsibility of an elderly woman to join the priest to offer the **Otor** to the ancestors and lead litigants to swear an oath before the arbitration process begins. The oath goes like this 'I swear the oath of the ancestors that I promise to respect and take in good faith the outcome of any adjudication by the elders after the **Otor** communal meal'. Selected women are given bowls of the **Otor** to serve the community and.

2.10 Benefits of Participation in *Otor* Communal Meal in Respect of Conflict Management

Johnson and Johnson state that:

Conflicts and methods of conflict management carry the potential for many important positive outcomes. Conflicts can focus attention on problems that have to be solved which will energize and motivate you to solve them. Conflicts can clarify how you need to change. Patterns of behavior that are dysfunctional are highlighted and clarified by conflicts. Conflicts can clarify what you care about and are committed to. You only fight over wants and goals he values and fight much more frequently and intensely with people you value and cares about. The more committed you are to your goals and the more committed you are to the other person, the more frequent and intense the conflicts. Conflicts can clarify who you are and what your values are. It is through conflicts that your identity is developed.⁸¹

Conflicts and methods of conflict management according to Johnson and Johnson help one to understand what the other person is and what his or her values are since people fight more frequently and intensely with people they value and care about. The communities one belongs to and the people who belong to that community are people who

⁸¹ Johnson, *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*, 6th ed. 338

one is likely to develop conflicts with. When the conflicts are managed well one's identity and the identity of others in the community are clarified and it will result in peace of the society. It is through the constructive preparations towards the **Otor** communal meal and its consummation that desirable outcomes are achieved.

The ancestors who are part of the community watch closely people who take oaths and go through the traditional conflict management processes which culminate in the **Otor** communal meal. This is to ensure that the following desirable outcomes for the community and for the people involved are attained after the **Otor** communal meal.

- Members of the community experience good relationship devoid of irritations, bitterness and resentment.
- Knowledge acquired from elders in the process of the conflict management strengthens relationships by increasing confidence that individuals or groups of people can resolve disagreements.
- Participation in the **Otor** communal meal and the processes involved increases one's confidence that the relationship can survive stress and adventure once the community interest is upheld.
- It releases anger, anxiety and insecurity and sadness which, if kept inside, can disturb the individual mentally. The whole process of **Otor** communal meal is fun. It reduces boredom gives new goals, motivates one to learn, take appropriate action and stimulates interests. Life would be incredibly boring if there were no conflicts.
- The process results in an agreement that allows all participants to achieve goals.
- The agreement which depends on both the living and ancestors maximizes joint outcomes, benefits the community and is in all participants' best interests.
- The **Otor** communal meal strengthens a positive relationship among participants by increasing their liking, respect and trust for each other.

- It increases participant's ability to resolve future conflicts with each other constructively
- The community teaches how to reveal ones underlying interests while expecting the other to do the same for the benefit of the community at large.
- . Again the **Otor** communal meal conflict management strategy teaches that it is important sometimes that one needs to give up ones goal in order to maintain a relationship. This means that we must think more about the goal of the other in order to maintain the relationship. Sometimes it comes to a point in the arbitration when neither of the individuals or parties involved is ready give in. The '**Abusuapanin**' comes in to ask 'Do you consider the relationship more than your personal goals or your personal goals more than the relationship.' The usually reminds the parties involved in the conflict to remember that it is important to 'forgive and make peace' for the sake of a relationship. Where either side claims to hold the truth and do not want to give in to amicable settlement they are also reminded that truth is relative and that our very senses deceptive, and therefore it is important to hold the relationship above personal goals and allow peace to prevail.
- . In the arbitration, elders teach lessons, especially, to those who belong to high social status and want to bully their way through tactics to force the other to yield. The tactics may include making threats, imposing deadlines, committing oneself to unalterable positions and making demands that far exceed that which is actually acceptable are not profitable in any conflict situation. The **Otor** meal celebration is intended to make peace among all manner of people in the community and teaches that all are equal as human beings. Sometimes in the arbitration where personal or group goals are as important as the relationship, and it appears that both parties cannot get what they want, the elders are able to adopt a method of compromising which may

involve sacrifices. Compromising may require the parties ‘meeting in the middle’ so that for example either party would be required give up part of a piece of land to which of each of the parties claim are theirs.

- One is also taught how to withdraw from a conflict until he and the other person have calmed down and he is in control of his feeling. When the *Abusuapanin* realizes that both parties have become highly emotional he may ask them to go and reflect over the issue and come at another time to meet the elders before participating in the *Otor* ritual meal.

2.11 Conclusion

The *Otor* communal meal ritual has evolved as a result of their history and cultural systems. They are aware that conflicts are inevitable in any given community but must be managed carefully in order to achieve positive outcomes. Conflicts if managed well focus attention on problems that have to be solved and clarify what one cares about and is committed to. It also motivates one to solve problems and clarify how one needs to change. Community participation is very important in *Worawora* conflict resolution hence the communal ritual of eating together. Women play important roles in the preparation and serving of this ceremonial meal. The *Otor* communal ritual process strengthens relationship among participants by increasing their liking, respect and trust for one another. It also increases participants’ ability to resolve future conflicts with each other constructively and religiously.

CHAPTER THREE

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION AS A TOOL FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN AFRICAN COMMUNITIES

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to define Religion and Philosophy and explain the role of Philosophy in Religion. It would also want to find out whether there is any relationship between philosophy which is a discipline of reason and Religion which is a discipline of faith. Furthermore, it is the aim of the study to examine the philosophical and religious implications of the *Otor* communal meal in conflict management/resolution in *Worawora* and indigenous African communities as a whole. The works of Kofi Asare Opoku who was a senior research fellow in Religion and Ethics, Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana will be consulted in this chapter. However, other scholars and people interviewed would be used as references in the work.

3.2. Religion and Philosophy defined.

3.2.1 What is Religion?

The phenomenon of Religion practiced by many people in the world is very difficult to define. This is because it manifests itself in various forms. To some, there is a personal supreme God who is believed to be the creator and sustainer of the world. It is a relationship in which man is conscious of the absolute majesty and infinite power of God.

To those who believe there is an ultimate creator-God, religion is defined as the conscious and voluntary relationship to God, which expresses itself in grateful worship and loving

care.⁸² Others also believe in the existence of the multiplicity of gods who are spirit and their output to life is influenced by beliefs that are associated with them. These gods are ends in themselves and deserve worship. It could be spirit, possibly the spirit of forefathers. There are some who consider religion as a phenomenon in which one embraces something as ultimate, something of universal principle, which is not necessarily a personal God but that which can also be trusted to bring salvation to man. To this people, salvation is believed to be achieved through certain forms of spiritual and ethical exercises. In which ever sense Religion is regarded, it can be said to be something basic to reality, something of an ultimate concern, something not of a mere human formulation and may not even be a social concern but of an all-embracing value.

To the African religion is the key to understanding reality and that it is impossible to be a human being without religion. Asare Opoku writes:

A close observation of Africa and its societies will reveal that religion is at the root of African culture and is the determining principle of African life. It is no exaggeration therefore to say that in traditional Africa, religion is life and life is religion. Africans are engaged in religion in *whatever they do*- whether to be farming, fishing or hunting; or simply eating, drinking or travelling. Religion gives meaning and significance to their lives, both in this world and the next. It is hence not an abstraction but a part of reality and everyday life. In other words as Professor Idowu has so aptly put it Africans are "People who in all things are religious". It should be apparent, then, that to understand Africa and its people the influence of religion on their lives must be fully appreciated.⁸³

It must be stated emphatically that African religion must be studied in relation to African worldview and indigenous knowledge systems or indigenous perspectives. If it is studied or viewed in western religious perspectives it will not be uncommon to deny that there was anything like religion in Africa. Asare Opoku mentioned in his book that Robert Maffat a nineteenth-century missionary who worked among the Bechuanas, Hottentots

⁸² Louis Berkhof, *A summary of Christian Doctrine* (U.S.A.:Eerdmans Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, 1960), 7-8.

⁸³Kofi Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion* (Jurong, Singapore: FEP International Private Limited, 1978) 1.

and Bushmen in South Africa wrote that Satan had erased every vestige of Religious impression from their minds. Again Opoku refers to the German explorer Leo Frebenius, stated in his book, *The voice of Africa*⁸⁴ that before he set foot in Africa, he had read the following words in a German magazine that “before the introduction of a genuine faith and high standard of culture by the Arabs, the natives had no political organization nor strictly speaking any Religion”.

Therefore, in examining the pre-Muhammedan condition of the Negro race, one must confine oneself to the description of their crude Fetishism, their brutal and often cannibalistic customs, their vulgar repulsive idols and none but the most primitive instincts determine the lives and conduct of Negroes who lack every kind of ethical inspiration.⁸⁵ It is important to note that these observations by these foreign scholars lacked the truth about Africans religion because they studied it through their worldviews and European perspectives.

The African is indeed is religious and in all things they have a conscious and voluntary relationship with God, spirits and ancestors which they express in grateful worship and loving service. Their religion is expressed in everything they do- language, proverbs, songs, stories, leadership institution, drumming, dancing, conduct beliefs, politics, cult practices and all other culture categories. It is wrong to define the others religion in the context of one’s worldview and cultural perspectives. In fact, every religion has elements of beliefs, practices and conduct as basic characteristics which must be respected.

Worawora people, just as all other **Akans** are very religious. To them Religion is life and life is religion. Religion is seen in all their cultural categories- rituals (like **otor** communal

⁸⁴ Leo Frobenius, *The Voice of Africa*, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), xiiif

⁸⁵ Asare Opoku, *West African Traditional Religion*, 2

meal) festivals, language, proverbs, songs, stories, politics, eating, hunting, drinking and travelling. They consciously and voluntarily worship God, Gods and ancestors which they express in grateful worship and loving service. The manner of their religious worship and service is not left to arbitrary will of man but as determined by the community which comprises of both the living and the dead. Their worldview of man, sacrifice, life and life after death are all based on the understanding of religion. Religion to them involves the whole human being, his intellectual, his emotional, and his moral faculties. Religion serves as a means of educating and nurturing of the young ones. Festivals and rituals like the *Akwantutenten* and the *Otor* communal meal are meant to draw attention to his historical events and preserve unity and identity. They are also meant to draw the living society closer to the ancestors whose achievements teach lessons upon which a better future would be built. This is what religion means to them (the *Woraworas*).

3.2.2 What is Philosophy?

The word philosophy comes from the Greek word *philia* (*philen*) to love and *sophis* (Wisdom). Literally; therefore, philosophy can be defined as love of wisdom. Generally philosophy is reasoning about of life, it is the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge. It is trying to ask and trying to find answers to life. For example what is the purpose of values and reality or the wisdom embedded in the cultural forms of a group of people such as their language, proverbs, songs, stories, politics, drumming, rites and other cultural practices. Philosophy as an academic discipline, however, is devoted to the comprehensive and systematic study of the ultimate nature of things. As early as the 6th Century BC, people began searching for general understanding of values and reality by chiefly speculative means rather than observational means. For example, whether all things were basically made out of one substance, Monism, or whether they were made out of more than one substance usually referred to as Pluralism. Some also asked questions

concerning permanence and change. Questions were also asked about the nature of being, for example about the nature of man and his purpose in the world. Furthermore people sought the understanding about values like language, proverbs, symbols, songs and stories. People reflected on things they did not understand and devoted themselves to the comprehensive and systematic study of the ultimate nature of values and reality. Philosophy became classified into various branches like logic, ethics, metaphysics, aesthetics, axiology and epistemology. All these terms are explained below.

Logic: The act of reasoning.

Ethics or moral Philosophy: The study of dealing with the goodness/rightness or wrongness of an act.

Axiology: The study of the ultimate nature of values:- Understanding things that are valuable.

Metaphysic: Finding out things beyond the physical being which are real.

Aaesthetics: Appreciation of beauty in nature for example music.

Epistemology: this has to do with knowledge-when do we say we know.⁸⁶

3.2.3 Philosophy of Religion

As time went on philosophical questions were raised covering virtually all aspects of life and human enquiry. We leave philosophical questions on science, Religion, Art, History, Mathematics, language and other disciplines. These disciplines are also known as Second Order activities. This is because the philosopher in the above areas is not propounding another religious, scientific and historic theories but analyzing and finding meaning of the

⁸⁶ Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10thed.

concepts and ideas that has been used in the first group. The philosopher of religion for example does not necessarily engage himself in religious activities but wants religious people to make claims and then s/he uses these claims to raise questions. So that philosophy of religion is a critical investigation which tries to comprehensively to understand and find justification for religious claims and beliefs as well as practices. The philosopher of religion wants to know the meaning of such concepts as salvation, Hell, Heaven, life after death and others. The philosopher of religion also wants to know how consistent, how rational, how adequate, how valid religious claims are.

3.3 What if anything is the relationship between (logic) philosophy and faith (religion?)

The relationship between faith and logic has been an issue of discussion and debate over the years. Logic is a science that deals with principles and criteria of validity of inference and demonstration, a science of formal principles of reasoning.⁸⁷ While the principles of logic are certain the conclusions one obtains from them are only as certain as the underlying assumptions. It means that a valid argument does not necessarily constitute a true statement. Nevertheless, it is also a fact that without an assumed truth of logic, language itself becomes meaningless. Faith on the other hand is concerned with the acceptance of a belief without conclusive or logical evidence.⁸⁸

Some philosophers and theologians have tended to deny that any connection is possible, claiming that logic and faiths are totally different and should be considered differently because they are irrelevant to each other. They capture their view in the saying that ‘what

⁸⁷ H. D. Lewis, *Philosophy of Religion*

⁸⁸ The penguin English Dictionary, Revised Edition, 1969

has Jerusalem to do with Athens.⁸⁹ Others have affirmed a relationship between philosophy and religion based on the argument that religion is always discussed within the limit of reason.

In relation to the **Worawora** of Ghana the question of whether there is any relationship between Philosophy (Logic) and Religion (faith), Afua Fosua had this to say:

I have never thought of whether there is any difference between Philosophy and Religion because the people of **Worawora** think the disciplines are inseparable. All religious activities have philosophical implications and all philosophical discourses have religious implications. For example it has been our custom not to go to the farm or fishing on Thursdays. This injunction has both religious and philosophical implications. The philosophical implication is to allow the human beings, the fishes and even the forest some rest. It is during this period that our elders also visit secret places like the sacred forests to check on community treasures like gold which are normally hidden in sacred forests. The religious implication is that the 'living dead' and spirits will punish the recalcitrant ones for disobedience and for disturbing their privacy.⁹⁰

Religion and philosophy to them are not rivals but bed mates and jointly these two disciplines impart positively on society. To the **Woraworas** the relationship between religion and philosophy is not a matter of contention and without one the other cannot function well.

3.4 The Philosophical Perception of *Otor* Communal Meal in **Worawora**

In dealing with the philosophy of **Worawora** we shall concern ourselves with the general understanding of their values such as proverbs, song and stories used in their **Otor** ritual celebrations. Furthermore, their indigenous wisdom forms which they can claim ownership of before their encounter and adoption of western patterns of knowledge and education. Generally **Worawora** philosophy is embedded in their proverbs language, songs, stories and leadership forms. Philosophy concerns itself with the search for

⁸⁹ Ryan Darius, *An introduction to Philosophy of Religions*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1993),

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⁹⁰ An interview with Afua Fosua at Worawora.

understanding of values and reality. The philosophical perception of **Otor** communal meal of the **Worawora** will therefore centre on understanding the symbolic value of **Otor** communal meal or the values embedded in the ceremonial **Otor** communal meal.

The **Otor** communal meal signifies **friendship love and unity**. Traditional wisdom of the **Worawora** considered eating a meal together as the most basic way of sharing common life. In addition to the understanding that the food restores what has been lost and gives strength to what lies ahead, sharing a meal signified love, friendship and unity. There is a saying in **Worawora** that says ‘I love you to the extent that I am ready to leak your saliva’. This saying implies that saliva is something detestable but when love sets in it is no longer undesirable. Eating a meal together in one bowl is a way of sharing or tasting one another’s saliva. For example eating from a bowl of **fufu** or **Otor** together is a way of sharing one another’s saliva. This is because all put their fingers into the bowl, take some of the food, put it in their food and leak their hands with their tongues (thereby covering their hands with their saliva) and putting it back into the bowl of food. In the process those eating the meal together share one another’s saliva. The same understanding applies to kissing which is a way of sharing another’s saliva and which is undesirable and shared by lovers only. It is a way of saying that ‘I love the other person to the extent that I am ready to share the others saliva’.

In **Worawora** thought it is impossible to eat with one’s enemy. They say ‘How can I leak the saliva of my enemy’. Again, it is impossible for enemies to drink from the same calabash or pot since enemies cannot share common saliva. It is only lovers and friends who can eat together and in a way sharing one another’s saliva. Nobody is ready to share the saliva of one’s enemy. The **Otor** meal eaten together during special occasions especially the **Akwantutenten** festival is eaten by those who are ready to forgive and reconcile with their enemies. That is why it is important to solve differences through the

Otor ritual meal arbitrations before one participates in the communal meal. Refusal to do this before partaking in the **Otor** ritual meal is a breach of **Nananomntamor** the oath of the ancestors which spells doom, not only for the individual but sometimes, for a whole family. They often ask the philosophical questions such as ‘how I can share my enemies’ saliva’ in other words how can I eat with my enemy from one bowl?

The above understanding reveals the philosophical perception of **Otor** communal meal with its accompanying notions of human and divine community in love and unity. The **Otor** communal meal signifies a **covenant**. The **Worawora** think of relationship in covenantal terms and use the communal meal to seal the covenant of friendship. The term of the covenant is a promise to cherish the bond of unity and love among the human and divine community. This they promise to do by upholding all their cultural systems embedded in traditional symbols, rites, worldviews and institutions. The covenantal dimension of the **otor** communal meal speaks directly to philosophical conservation of love and unity and peace in the community. The **otor** communal meal also signifies **reconciliation and togetherness**. In the communal meal of the people of **Worawora** it is understood that aggrieved people must be ready to thrash out their differences and above all offer unconditional forgiveness for the sake of peace in the community. The belief that those who refuse to abide by the ritual meal injunctions bring calamity upon themselves and their families is enough to compel people to forgive and reconcile in order to attain that level of togetherness that feels and works like one body.

The **Otor** community meal also signifies **participation**. It is a way of admonishing people to be team players rather than selfish players it reminds them of the fact that a team is likely to win only if they play together rather than playing selfishly to satisfy their personal ambitions. The system calls for greater participation and use of personal skills for the benefits of the entire community. The **Abusuapanin** and the elders have their roles to

play. They mobilize funds and lead arbitration processes. The young men and women prepare the festival grounds by erecting sheds as the young women fetch firewood and cook. The drummers and dancers also perform with symbols and gestures of their corporate life values. All should participate by contributing their skills for the promotion of the goals of the community which is summed up in the proverb ‘one stick does not build a house’ meaning participation or team work is better than selfish work. Standing aloof or working to satisfy one’s personal interest does not pay. The **Otor** communal meal teaches group process. The **Otor** communal meal signifies **service for the poor and oppressed in the community at large**. A strong ethic flows from the understanding of the communal meal, ‘no one should go hungry while others feast’. The values of family, community and mutual aid are at the heart of the communal meal and it is a compelling meal to help the poor and the oppressed. Nobody should go hungry as far as communal concept of life is concerned ‘I live because we live not we live because I live’ the understanding of the ritual meal empowers people to offer themselves for community development. ‘What I have is for all’ idea drives people to donate money for building schools, hospitals, roads, community centers, toilets, markets and other social amenities for their community.⁹¹

3.5 The Religious Perception of *Otor* Communal Meal in *Worawora*.

Religion is the system of beliefs, practices and conduct of a group of people. The **Worawora** religious beliefs include creeds which generally express their world views. The creeds engage the cognitive domains of the individual as they attempt to summarize and systemize the beliefs convincingly to adherents. The belief systems therefore have implications for teaching and education. The practices include engagement with their

⁹¹ Interview with Okyeame Kwabena Peasah of *Worawora*

cults-for examples practising medicine, drumming, dancing, singing, sacrificing, communal eating and worshipping. The practices also have implications for teaching and education.

The **conducts** include their codes which regulate behaviour in the society. This includes codes of dressing and ethics. The **Otor** ritual meal reminds the community (which comprises human and the divine) of their corporate commitment to uplift the good of the society. The human and divine members of the community have their parts to play. Human beings are supposed to play their physical roles by providing all physical resources and promoting good relationship among themselves. Additionally it is duty of the human beings to teach the younger ones their beliefs systems. For example it is the duty of human beings to teach the Akan religious worldview of unified spirit world, (the spirits are not enemies) sacrifice and worship. It is the responsibilities of the divine in the community to empowers and supervise the activities of the human counterparts. Both must endeavour to ensure the good of the community for posterity.

The belief of the **Worawora** is that, during the **Otor** communal meal both human and divine members of the community must come together to renew their commitments and impart their belief system to the younger generation. They do this through stories, proverbs, and symbols, songs, drumming and dancing. The **Otor** communal meal does not only provide the forum to teach their belief systems but also teach practices inherent in the belief systems like practising medicine, sacrifice, and worship of specific deities and the black stool.⁹² As the community comes together to eat a common meal from a common bowl they understand that is a moment to impart their religious practices. Nobody should be selfish and keep skills and special knowledge of divine medicine and herbs from the

⁹² An interview with Okyeame Kwabena Peasah of Worawora.

younger generation. Families who are noted for possessing special divine skills of medicine and hunting are supposed to impart them for only a small fee. It is important however, that the family secrets are not disclosed in this exercise since this could incur the displeasure of the deities. For example one could teach someone from another family or tribe how to cure a snake bite but one is not allowed to disclose how the medicine was acquired by the family (that is a family secret).

Special religious rituals are performed within the **Otor** communal meal before special skills and knowledge must be imparted for the welfare and good of the community. It also a period of teaching the code of conduct of the community this is because codes of conduct differ in African communities however there is a common thread of a similarly underlying all of them (This is applicable to beliefs and practices also).

Worawora like other **Akans** have similar codes of conduct. They use **Kente** for special occasions with the **Aheneba**⁹³ sandals. Sub chiefs have a way of putting on their cloths when addressing superiors. Using wrong gestures during social functions and when addressing superiors like the **Omanhene** can attract punishments. Tough sanctions are also put in place to regulate conduct in marriage affairs incest bestiality, necrophilia are all forbidden. Even though polygyny is allowed it is based on the ability to take care of an extra wife. Women are subject to their husbands and do not cook for them during their menstrual periods (This has changed).

The young are taught to show respect to the elderly and are supposed to greet the elderly when they meet. The elderly is supposed to greet the younger ones when they enter their homes. Animals are supposed to be treated well. Nobody is supposed to injure an animal

⁹³ A special native sandals used when dressed in Kente

when it disturbs your comfort. The worse you can do is to send it to the chief's house for a price to be paid by the owner. Language used in public must be decent individuals must be circumspect in the use of language since abusive language is the source of community cataclysms. During the **Otor** communal meal good eating habits are taught- washing of hands, taking portions that fits ones mouth at a time, minimizing talking while eating, avoiding hasty eating in order to allow others to have their turn are all taught. It is believed that the ancestors have special interest in the behavior of the living and would punish those who fault the codes of conduct in the community. The **Worawora** perceive the **Otor** communal meal as a religious forum of human and divine to interact and impart good moral values to promote the peace of the community. It is time for religious renewal imparting and learning. The belief practice and conduct embedded in the culture of Worawora are all dependent on their world view which must be passed on to subsequent generations through rites like the Otor communal meal celebrations.⁹⁴

3.6 Prayers, songs, proverbs and symbols used in Otor Communal meal in Worawora.

Busia⁹⁵ in discovering the place of traditional prayer in Akan life indicates that it is through libation that men establish contact with the spiritual beings and powers whose aid they seek. There is usually an invocation a calling of the Supreme Being, the gods, and the ancestors by name, and the prayers as the drink is offered. Sometimes, libation is also poured at the end of a ceremony to mark the breaking off of the contact established with the supernatural powers. The pouring of libation is therefore, frequent. The pouring of libation in **Worawora** is frequent and it is poured at all social function and religious

⁹⁴ Interview with Okyeame Kwabena Peasah

⁹⁵ K.A. Busia, 'Ancestor Worship, Libation, Stools, festivals: A viewpoint' in S.G. Williamson (ed) *Christianity and African Culture* (Accra: Christian Council of the Gold Coast, 1955), 22.

ceremonies. During the **Otor** communal meal ceremonies it not only drinks that are offered but some of the mashed yams or **Otor** is offered to the supernatural powers. A typical prayer (**Apae**) offered during the **Otor** ritual ceremony goes like this:

Nyankopon Twereduampong, yabre wo nsao... (Response yue)

Asaase Yaa nsa;

Nananom nsamanfo, monsa nie:

AsuoTano, begye nsa

Bretuo abusua nsa

Oyoko abusua, nsa nieoo.

Yefre mo nne a, ene sen?

Yerebe-siesie onua ne onua ntem

Yerebe pe biakoye nkabom ne mpontu

Yesre se mobema yen akyigyina na nea yerebeye yi akoso asomdwe mu

Yesre ntiase, odo, yiyedie, asomdwe ne

Nkwatenten wo asem siesie ne odo edidiyi ase.

Nipabonefo a, ekaa won nko na oman yi asee ne mu amane de

Obi nto nsa mfanhyira ne tamfo:

Yesre Nananom se saa onipa no,

Nananom mma no nnhunu anigye da...

Response: mo ne kasa! (Endorsement from the crowd)

The literal translation of the above will read

[Dependable God, we bring you drink;

Mother Earth (*Asaase Yaa*), drink:

Our great ancestors (*Nananom*), this is your drink:

River god.... Come for a drink

Bretuo clan, this is your drink

Oyoko clan, this is your drink

Why are we calling you today?

We are gathered to resolve differences between brother and brother

We have come to seek unity and progress

We beg you come and support us so that our intentions will materialize and bring peace

We ask for understanding, love, progress, peace and long life in this conflict resolution and communal meal

For the evil person who will wish us ill

No one buys drink to pour libation to bless his enemies,

So do not let such an enemy ever enjoy life

The crowd endorses the prayer by saying: “Well said”.]⁹⁶

The above prayer expresses the intentions of the **Otor** ritual meal. It also reveals the world view of the people of **Worawora**. The supernatural beings are not rivals. Collectively they work towards the good of the community and members of the community who are evil must not enjoy life.

3.6.1 Proverbs

Akan traditional wisdom and philosophy are embedded in proverbs. These proverbs are traditional wise sayings that direct the individual to discover knowledge from ordinary statements. Proverbs are a repository of Akan thought and philosophy. Akan proverbs are outcomes of close observations, deep experiences and self-understandings. They are

⁹⁶ This is a typical libation prayer during Otor ceremonial meal

selected from the world of animals, religion, traditional leaders and historical events. The **Okyeame**,⁹⁷ traditionally is expected to be conversant with traditional proverbs.

Proverbs when used in public are not immediately explained. Those who are not able to discern their meanings therefore, do not benefit from conversations in social gatherings. The traditional leaders like all other members of the society can miss the meanings of message when they are embedded in proverbs with deep traditional philosophical thought. The **Okyeame** who is considered to be an expert in traditional wise sayings, explains the proverbs when they are used by others to address the leader. In an effort to explain the proverbs to the leader, they use other similar proverbs or explain the proverbs in simple language. The **Okyeame**, by explaining proverbs that others use to address the traditional leader, provides insights of traditional wisdom to the leader and the gathering as a whole. When the traditional leader communicates to others, the **Okyeame**, if necessary, presents his words in proverbs to the gathering of the specific person or people he is addressing. During the **Otor** festival, the chiefs and the **Abusuapanins** use proverbs to remind the community of the need of unity. Most importantly, however the proverbs express the kind of strategy being used to manage a particular conflict. The strategy may depict problem solving, compromising, smoothing, withdrawal and forcing attitudes. Two examples each of the strategies embedded in the proverbs are given below:

Those that reflect a problem solving strategy may include:

Obiara nni anoyi anaase mmue nyinaa nanso onipa biara wo n'adwene wo biribi ho.

Penpenka, nokware di ne ahotoso na etutu mmepow.

Translation

‘No person has the final answer but everybody has a piece to contribute’

⁹⁷ The spokesperson at traditional gatherings

‘Frankness, honesty, and trust will move mountains’

Those that reflect a compromising attitude may include:

Ti m’akyi na me nso me ti wo de.

Bo me na memo de abotoyam ba.

Translation

‘You scratch my back, I scratch yours’

‘Tit for tat is fair play’

Those that reflect a smoothing strategy may include:

Nsemmerew dwodwo akomaden.

Nsemde de ntease papa ba.

Translation

‘Soft words win hard hearts’

‘Smooth words make smooth ways’

Those that reflect a withdrawing strategy may include:

Ehia se wopini w’akyi wo akasakasa ho.

Se baanu nya akasaakasa nea oye din no nya nnidi.

Translation

‘It is easier to refrain than to retreat’

‘When two quarrel, the person who keeps silent first is the most praiseworthy’

Those that require a forcing attitude or strategy may include:

Se worentumi ma obi nnwene se wo a, ma no nye senea woye w’ade.

Tumi bunkam fa wo ho di so.

Translation

‘If you cannot make a person think as you do, make him or her do as you think’

‘Put your foot down when you want to stand’

The kind of strategy usually used may depend of the attitude of those involved in the conflict. For example a forcing strategy may be applied on an individual or group of people who want to prove difficult despite their unruly attitudes.

3.6.2 Songs

Akan traditional wisdom is also contained in songs. Songs are composed to convey the wisdom and thought of the people. Songs proclaim historical events, thought, philosophy and observations from day to lives of the people. The melody and tone of the song express the mood at that time. There are songs for funerals, (dirges) festive occasions like child naming ceremonies, puberty rites and marriage. One of the notable songs sang during the ‘*Otor*’ ritual communal meal goes like this:

Nkabom ma ahonden

Mpaepaemu ye nkoguo

Nye wonkoa ne Onyansafo

Tie afoforo de

Nyansabrosofo se

Akroma nson wo dua so

Na wobo baako tuo a

Ebeka nsia

Nanso nyansa se

Akroma nson wo dua so

Na wobo baako tuo a

Baako koraa nka

Wonyinaa tuko

Tie odasane tie

Tie na bre woko ma ase

Tie na fa asemkye

Nyansa ye Owyina,

The literal translation of the above will read

Obaako nsa ntumi ntwá ho nhyia

Unity is strength

Division is defeat

You are not the only wise person

Listen to others:

One who is too wise says

There are seven hawks on a tree

If I gun down one with my musket

There will be six left on the tree

But wisdom says

If there are seven hawks on a tree

And you gun down one

There will be none left

The others will fly away

Human being, listen

Listen and humble yourself:

Listen and forgive others

Wisdom is a Baoba tree

One hand can't encircle it

This special song sang during the **Otor** ritual festival seeks to remind members of the community not to be too wise in their own sight. Instead they must seek to respect collective decisions and the views of others. What you think is right in your sight may be wrong ‘after all’. This is conveyed in the part of the song that says; ‘One who is too wise says – There are seven hawks on a tree, if I gun down one with my musket there will be six more left on the tree. Mathematically, that might be right but wisdom will tell you it is wrong. This is because if you gun down one with your musket, the frightening noise of the musket will drive away the other six. These songs are meant to encourage individuals in the community to give peace a chance. Furthermore, one should not think that one is always right but listen to the insights of others, especially the community.

3.6.3 Symbols

The **Woraworas** like all Akans use philosophical and religious symbols during festive and especial occasions to express various messages. The most common symbols used during the **Otor** ritual meal for conflict management is the **Akyeampoma** especially when chiefs are involved. The **Akyeampoma** is commonly used by the Linguists, spokespersons and messengers of the various chiefs and sub-chiefs. The top of the staff have been carved with different symbols depicting Akan wisdom and values. It also depicts Akan aesthetics and sculpture. They are also educational materials during social functions and conflict management proceedings like the **Otor** ritual meal celebrations. According to Nana Addo Dankwa III,⁹⁸ these objects are full of meaning and anecdotes and they send messages to and about people at various times. The top of the **Akyeampoma** at any moment is determined by the occasion and the message that the **Okyeame** intends to transmit. The message is therefore, understood, not only by the words that the **Okyeame** expresses

⁹⁸ Nana Addo Dankwa III, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The future* (Accra: Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2004), 87.

orally, but also by the ability of the recipients to read the meanings of the sculpture he presents. The symbol on top of the *Akyeampoma* is also intended to educate the public or the gathering. Prayers, proverbs, songs and symbols are very educative during the *Otor* ritual celebrations of the *Woraworas*. They convey the philosophy, religion, History and values of the people of *Worawora*. They entreat people in the community to strive for unity and peace which are very crucial for development

3.7 Religion a Tool for Conflict Resolution in Indigenous African Communities.

Religion is basic to reality. Something of an ultimate concern, something not of a mere human formulation and may not even be a societal concern but of an all-embracing value. To the African religion is the key to understanding the reality of life from birth to death. It is difficult to tell how religion began; it is ever present (endemic) and influences value in societies. Anything that affect a society's value cannot be understood without studying its philosophical and religious implications. For example to learn about why people hold certain positions in life from birth through to death rites which they do not want to depart from, it is important to study their History, religion and philosophy.

According to the World Book Dictionary⁹⁹ a conflict is a fight, struggle, battle, disagreement, dispute or quarrel. A conflict can be as small as a disagreement or as large as a war. Probably the most influential definition is that of Deutsch¹⁰⁰ who states that a conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur. An activity that is incompatible with another activity is one that prevents, blocks, or interferes with the occurrence or effectiveness of the second activity. Incompatible activities may originate in one person, between two or more people, or between two or more groups. The word conflict literally

⁹⁹ World book Dictionary, 1sted (USA: 1963)

¹⁰⁰ M. Deutsch, *The resolution of Conflict* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1973), 3-5

means ‘striking together with force’.¹⁰¹ There are times when group members needs and preferences strike together and produce disruptive effects – How are these disruptive effects managed. Religion which is a conscious and voluntary relationship to the supernatural and which permeates all human societies is used as a tool to admonish those in conflict.

In African communities, the supernatural divine beings are supposed to know better than ordinary human beings. Whenever their presence is invoked in conflict situations or to determine matters that are beyond human comprehension and knowledge their revelations and decisions are respected without any reservation. Human beings are humbled when supernatural beings set in to adjudicate in any matter to find the truth in any conflict situation. They often come not only to expose the offender but severely punish offenders. In Ghana, any conflict that demands the involvement of the supernatural in order to ascertain the truth is treated with utmost caution. Nobody wants to go to the shrine to determine the truth of a matter since everybody knows the consequences for the guilty party. In almost all conflict management processes in indigenous Africa, swearing an oath is an integral part. The ancestors and deities would judge those who swear by the content of their oaths. As part of the oath they indicate that if they do not tell the truth in the matter before the elders and the chief who occupies the stool of the ancestors and deities, the appropriate calamity should befall them. The oath religiously compels those involved in the conflict to tell the truth and only the truth. Truth is very essential in any conflict management process. Akan traditional leaders remind parties involved in conflicts of the implications of the oath they swear because it determines the future of their lives. During conflict resolution processes this oath is said by the parties involved in ***Worawora***.

¹⁰¹ K. Thomas, ‘Conflict and Conflict management: A viewpoint’ in M. Dunnette (ed), *handbook of Industrial and organizational Psychology* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1976), 889-935

Me X (Kwasi Poku)

MekaNananomntam se

Nsem a mebekayi

Nokwoarebiaraewom no meka

Metontamyi

Nananomntwimaso

The literal meaning is as follows

I X (Kwasi Poku)

I swear the oath of the ancestors

That what I am going to say

Is the truth only

If I violate the oath

May the ancestors punish me (source)

The religious act of swearing an oath is a tool that enhances conflict management. Swearing an oath is a religious tool in conflict resolution in Akan communities. The stool of the Akan chiefs is religious symbols. The stool represents the authority of the ancestors and deities that control the community. It is sacred and has spiritual power. Those who appear before the chief to seek redress on matters of conflict must therefore consider themselves as standing before the ancestors and deities. Busia calls for a study of the Akan Black Stool as a major symbol that must be considered for the exploration indigenous knowledge systems including conflict management structures. Busia states:

I think it is true to suggest that for the Akan, the stool is the symbol par excellence of his future. This is why I threw the challenge which I throw again that the

question of the place of chieftaincy in the Christian church of the Gold Coast is important and urgent, if Christianity is to touch the whole of our group life'.¹⁰²

He further indicates that the Asante people have concepts of right and wrong which emanates from their religious beliefs. He writes

The Asante have concepts of right and wrong, of acceptable and unacceptable behavior, culturally defined in terms of their own life and belief, and as has been apparent in the belief accounts given, ancestors and gods punish those who violate the intentionally – sanctioned code and reward those who keep it.

The visible symbol that represents the ancestors is the Black Stool. By giving consideration to the Black Stool as the symbol par excellence Busia suggests that if the ancestors can enforce morality and determine what is good or bad then attention must be given to the Black Stool, the symbol that represents them. The black stool is therefore a religious tool in conflict management indigenous Akan communities including *Worawora*.

3.8 Philosophy: A tool for conflict management in indigenous African communities

The search for values undergirding the way of life of a group of people is a philosophical one. In order to manage conflicts effectively in a given community it is very important to understand the value systems of that particular society. Leaders are philosophical tools used in conflict management in indigenous African communities. During their confinement¹⁰³ periods especially, nominated candidates are made to learn about institutions adequately. They are made to understand the meaning of their culture and appreciate their philosophical implications. The confinement period further creates the opportunity for the people who are knowledgeable in the traditional values to gather

¹⁰² K.A. Busia, 'Ancestor worship, libation, festivals: A viewpoint' in S.G. Williamson (ed) *Christianity and African culture* (Accra: Christian Council of Gold Coast, 1955), 21-2

¹⁰³ The confinement period is a period in which selected chiefs are kept indoors for special rituals

around the new leader for effective teaching and learning for the proper formation of the new leader. For instance, Obaapanin Ofosua¹⁰⁴ of Worawora indicated in an interview that the confinement period for a new chief in the town brings together knowledgeable elders and citizens who are tasked to explain the value systems of the community to new leaders. They explain and educate them on public behavior and values. For instance, respect for elders, governance, history, drum language, traditional dancing and conflict management procedures. She said that when royals are selected they are confined in our traditional house. I have lived in that house almost all my life when a **Worawora** chief is selected; he is confined in our house for twenty-one days for the elders and other rulers to educate him. He learns everything about the stool. He is taught how to handle the sword when swearing an oath, how to greet, how to dance in a palanquin, conflict management skills, history and other traditional values. This is because after his installation he assumes the position of educator in traditional values. Swearing an Oath is an important philosophical tool in conflict management. Even though it seems to be a religious exercise it has deep philosophical implications. The swearing takes place after the confinement phase. It serves as the peak of the installation process in Akan traditional leadership. It also forms an important part in any conflict resolution process in any indigenous African society. Oath swearing has been considered a social contract between traditional leaders and their leaders and their people. Nana Addo Dankwa III argues that

the oath is not only a social contract, but it provides political direction of rulers. He noticed that 'Our ancestors, therefore, instituted oath swearing systems, which in effect, is a sort of social contract, binding both the family offering leadership and the families forming the community to observe strictly the agreement they accepted. The leader had jurisdiction over all the members of the community and gave political direction, led tribal armies, settled disputes, administered land and did many acts for the good governance of the community.'¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ A former fetish priest of Worawora who was interviewed

¹⁰⁵ Nana Addo Dankwa III, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The future* (Accra: Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2004), 72

Nana Addo Dankwa III mentions the role of oath swearing in conflict management as a social contract binding the parties involved in a conflict to observe strictly the agreement in the conflict management process. The oath provides more than a social contract but provides the opportunity to offer deep information not only to those swearing the oath (those involved in the conflict) but also to the larger community. The core value of swearing an oath is to offer education to those taking the oath and to the others who listen. Those involved in the conflict, who swears the oath, are aware of the situations that can cause their disgrace and doom in case they refuse to honour the oath. Others also assess their conduct after the conflict management by the oath they swore. Oath swearing and its philosophical significance is an efficient tool in conflict management in African communities.

Furthermore, the stool of the Akan chiefs are not only religious symbols, they also have philosophical and educational implications which are relevant for conflict management. Nana Addo Dankwa III¹⁰⁶ indicates that ‘the lack of proper information and the shrouding of the black stool in secrecy do create false impressions and misinformation about this traditional symbol’. Explaining why the Black Stool is shrouded in secrecy he remarked that it was for security reasons. According to him ‘the Black Stool is rarely displayed in public primarily because of security reasons and not for religious reasons as conceived by many’¹⁰⁷. It has been argued that the Black Stool is not only a religious symbol but also an educational material with philosophical implications in leadership formation and conflict management situations. Nana Addo Dankwa indicated that the Black Stool represents memories of past traditional leaders and the special indigenous knowledge and

¹⁰⁶ Nana Addo Dankwa III, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The future*(Accra: Konrad Adenauer Foundation, 2004), 68

¹⁰⁷ Nana Addo Dankwa III, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The future*, 68

contributions that are associated with them. The special contributions in terms of wisdom and knowledge hold them tall as great Kings and judges. This is what explains the observation of Nana Addo Dankwa III that:

Since the black stool constitutes the history books of the periods of reign of the chiefs whose memories the stool represents, when a chief goes to the stool house during the **Adae** festival period, the court historians take the opportunity to narrate to the chief the good deeds of the past chiefs, whose memories have been preserved with Black Stools. The idea is to enable the living chief to learn about and emulate the good deeds of the noble ancestors¹⁰⁸

An encounter with a Black Stool, therefore gives access to a chapter of a communities history. The preservation of knowledge about a particular leader, his beginnings, qualities, achievements, philosophy, challenges and endings, these are enshrined in the black stool. The qualities, achievements, philosophy and challenges of a past ruler are relevant for subsequent generations. Every Akan King or ruler is periodically expected to sit in state to hear cases brought before him. It is therefore very important for a ruler to acquaint himself with knowledge associated with the black stool and current knowledge systems in order to pass wise and culturally informed judgment. The black stool is therefore a philosophical and educational tool in conflict management in African communities.

3.9 Conclusion

The role religion and Philosophy plays in conflict management cannot be under emphasized in view of the above discussion. Even though many think that there is no connection between religion and philosophy (Jerusalem and Athens) it is clear that this disciplines whether considered together or separately have immense influence on human society as far as conflict management is concerned. The people of **Worawora** according

¹⁰⁸ Nana Addo Dankwa III, *The Institution of Chieftaincy in Ghana: The future*, 73

Afua Fosua¹⁰⁹ do not see any contradiction between religion and philosophy since religious language must operate in an understandable manner for people to appreciate in conflict management situations. She emphasized that the ability of both religion and philosophy (separately or together) to regulate conduct in the society is unquestionable. The philosophical and religious perception of the **Otor** communal meal in **Worawora** has a great deal of influence on the conduct and behavior of the people. This is because both perceptive have educational implications and the people **Worawora** learn a great deal from the insights they offer. Proverbs, prayers, songs, and symbols offer deep religious and philosophical insights necessary for conflict management. They are educational materials that Akans in general use to convey messages to and about people at various times. It can be said without any reservation that religion and philosophy are very important tools in **Worawora** life and thought for conflict management.

¹⁰⁹ An interview with Afua Fosua a former fetish priest of **Worawora**.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE *OTOR* COMMUNAL MEAL AND ITS RELEVANCE FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION

4.1 Introduction

In view of current knowledge systems facilitated by internet facilities, the world has become a global village. Indigenous African communities can therefore not live in isolation or as Islands of their own but must seek to learn from others globally in order to enjoy fulfilling meaning of life. This chapter will examine conflicts in the light of their advantages and disadvantages and how the *Otor* communal meal is relevant to the management of these conflicts. Again, the essay will look at the constitution of Ghana and conflict management in order to identify the similarities and differences with *Otor* ritual conflict management and conflict management in the constitution of Ghana. Furthermore, this chapter will study the historical changes associated with conflict management in *Worawora* and the effect of conflicts on the *Worawora* community. Finally the chapter will examine the *Otor* communal meal as a tool for conflict resolution and its effects on the people of *Worawora*.

4.2 Types of conflict.

Conflict is a situation in which people, groups or countries are involved in serious disagreement or argument. Conflict is a necessary process of life. Within the individual, there is always conflict of thoughts, choice and interest, to mention but a few. This is known as intra-personal conflict. This not only makes decision making difficult, but also has been identified as one of the major sources of stress. On the other hand, the inter-personal conflict occurs between individuals, states, groups and organizations or members of an organization. Conflicts can also be either constructive or destructive. Whenever

disagreement arises, we say there is a conflict. While conflict is universal and occurs naturally, crisis (or violence) is almost always the key by-product of conflicts. If conflict is properly managed or resolved, there will be peace. If on the other hand, resolution and reconciliation fail, the conflict will degenerate to chaos, crisis or war.¹¹⁰

Stages of Conflict

There are four established stages of escalation of conflicts to crisis:

- **Dispute (or Latent) Stage:** when there is a bitter argument, but no fixed position taken. Conflict situation exists, but not yet recognized.
- **Polarisation (or Perceived) Stage:** When bitter arguments still go on and fixed positions are becoming discernible. We say conflict situation is recognized at this stage.
- **Segregation (or Tension) Stage:** When the disputants have taken entrenched positions that cannot be compromised and they are ready to fight to maintain their positions.
- **Destruction (or Manifest) Stage:** The disputants take steps which are usually violent, to maintain their positions.¹¹¹

It is important to note that conflict is not the only factor responsible for crisis/violence and that crisis/violence is not just limited to breaking of limbs and bones and spilling of blood. In fact, violation of various constitutional and civil rights of individuals (and groups) constitute violence against these persons. Thus apart from physical violence, we have:

- Social Violence (social inequality; denial of right to education, etc.)
- Economic Violence (state-induced poverty, etc)

¹¹⁰ R. Hopper, *The revolutionary process: Social Forces* (New York: Yalley University Press, 1978), 28

¹¹¹ D.W. Johnson, The effects of role reversal on seeing a conflict from the opponents frame of reference: Unpublished manuscript, University of Minesota, 1972

- Environmental Violence (noise, degradation, pollution, etc)
- Mental/Psychological (keeping one incommunicado, etc)
 - Sexual Violence (rape, weird sexual practices, etc)
 - Verbal Violence (foul and aggressive language, curses, etc)
 - Cultural Violence (unfair and discriminatory cultural practices, etc)
 - Intellectual Violence (plagiarism, using the intellect to glorify violence)
 - Domestic Violence (child abuse, spouse battering, etc)

Causes of Conflicts and Crisis

All over the world, conflicts, crisis and violence are midwived by inordinate desires for political and economic advantages, greed, ego-related problems and plain mischief. Injustice and inequitable distribution of resources cause resentments, which invariably give rise to conflict situations.

Conflict Management

This deals with how to control or manage an existing conflict so that it does not escalate, thereby leading to chaos, crisis and war. At this stage, efforts are made to ensure that constructive conflicts do not degenerate and become destructive, and become difficult to manage.

Conflict management differs from **Peace Building** in that the latter aims to prevent conflicts from even arising in the first place. The activity involves engaging individuals, groups, parties and stakeholders in processes that enhance peaceful coexistence outside conflict situations.¹¹²

¹¹² J. Horai, Attributional Conflict. *Journal of Social Issues*, 1977:88-100

Conflict Resolution

This deals with settlement of conflict that may have already taken shape. It can be by reconciliation or alienation. Conflicts should be resolved before they get to the destruction (or action) phase.

Methods of Conflict Resolution

There are two major methods of resolving conflicts.

- Regular Dispute Resolution
- Alternative Dispute Resolution

Regular Dispute Resolution (RDR)

This includes the regular or conventional system of reporting a case to the police, getting the offender prosecuted, convicted and sentenced. It also covers civil litigations. This is basically by litigation in court, that is, through legal process. Under this system, the winner takes it all. There is always a winner/loser ending.

Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)

This method incorporates other methods of conflict resolution that are options or other possible ways of resolving conflicts to the regular system. In this type of dispute resolution strategy, people are encouraged to go for a win-win solution (instead of a win-lose or lose-lose situation).

Types of Alternative Conflict Resolution

Arbitration: The parties appoint a neutral person/body to adjudicate on their differences. The resolution (award) is enforceable by a court of law. However; the procedure is different from the usual court process/es.

Mediation: Under Mediation, the parties appoint a neutral person who will guide them in the resolution of the conflict. The mediator does not adjudicate or give judgment.

Mediation is guided by negotiation. The mediator is not a party to the negotiation but a contributory observer.¹¹³

Negotiation: The parties meet without a third party and work at resolving their conflict. One very popular negotiation strategy (especially at the international and diplomatic levels) is the **Harvard Negotiation Project**.¹¹⁴ This strategy has the following four (4) cornerstones:

- Separate the people from the problem
- Focus on interests not positions
- Generate a variety of possibilities before deciding on what to do
- Insist on some objective standards

Mediating in a Conflict

Bearing in mind that the essence of mediation is to reconcile the disputants, as well as maintain or improve on their social relationship, the mediator must not do or say anything that can escalate the conflict. Furthermore, the mediator has no authority to lay down decisions or enforce verdicts. He should therefore not force his opinion on the disputants.

What a Mediator must do

He/She must:

- Maintain neutrality
- Be diplomatic but honest
- Be kind and friendly but firm, calm and disciplined, patient and optimistic
- Treat contenders as matured equals and give each person an opportunity to express him/herself in a calm manner and controlled environment
- Be a good listener and observer

¹¹³ D.W. Johnson & R Johnson, *Creative Conflict* (Edina: MN Interaction Book Company, 1987), 11

¹¹⁴ A popular alternative conflict resolution

- Withdraw as soon as you become emotionally involved
- Be confident
- Know when to withdraw.

What a mediator must not do

He/She must not:

- Accept any form of gratification from any of the disputants
- Stretch the issues
- Discuss the issues with any of the disputants in the absence of other party
- Mediate on matters he has personal interest in, prejudice or bias against
- Assume authority or pass judgment
- Dabble into any conflict without invitation
- Recount what you heard somewhere else
- Call the attention of the law enforcement agent/agency to the conflict
- Advise them to go to court.

Steps to Proper Mediation

The mediator must remember that all conflicts are all about power. S/he should take into consideration the cause and urgent purpose of each conflict. What people want to accomplish through a conflict has to be understood properly and taken seriously, hence:

- Take into cognizance the extended and complicated series of happenings
- Observe and consider the actions and reaction of the people involved
- Select details and choose your words carefully.

Why Resolve Conflicts?

There should be sincere and continuous dialogue amongst all stakeholders where there are issues threatening peaceful coexistence and those issues should be resolved. It is always better to talk over it than to fight over it. According to a special report by the World Bank,

crisis and violence arising from unresolved conflicts have very high costs, destroying past development gains and leaving a legacy of damaged assets and corrosive mistrust that impedes future progress. Conflicts, crisis and violence beget more conflicts, crisis and violence. They destroy our present and our future. They are ill winds that do not blow anybody any good. And while conflicts are natural and even crisis to a lesser extent, we can minimize and manage conflicts and by so doing eliminate crisis/violence or reduce them to an insignificant minimum.¹¹⁵

How not to resolve Conflicts?

People should also appreciate that the optimal conflict resolution strategy is problem solving/collaboration (that is, looking for mutually satisfactory solution) as against:

- Withdrawal / Avoidance (neutrality, avoiding the conflict)
- Smoothing / Accommodation (ignoring the conflict)
- Forcing / Competition (confrontation, win or lose)
- Compromising (which fails to satisfy either party)

Reconciliation

Another important element in conflict resolution is Reconciliation. It is an activity within the practice of conflict resolution, and focuses on transforming relationships at the personal level. Reconciliation is therefore referred to as a process. It is rooted in the theological tradition as well as psychological concepts of reconciliation but does not refer to specific programme activities. Reconciliation is a Christian concept, but it is also found in many other religions and takes on different characteristics in different cultures. Co-existing in a multi-cultural and multi-religious society like ours requires the need to explore some of the diverse approaches to reconciliation. Hearing other traditions and

¹¹⁵ D.W. Johnson & R Johnson, *Creative Conflict*, 12

faith perspectives on reconciliation and forgiveness often helps us understand our own tradition more fully.

Ritual is commonly used in reconciliation process because it is a powerful way of recognizing important events and employing multiple senses. It links the past, present and even the future. The symbols used in rituals are able to convey much more meaning than words often are. For example, lighting a candle is a powerful symbol of warmth and life that can change the ambience of an entire room without saying a word. We have simple rituals, such as how we greet each other and eat our meals; and more elaborate rituals, like funerals among others. Some rituals for reconciliation are explored in the various tradition discussed below.

Christianity

Here Christ is central to the reconciliation process; Christ embodies the promise of God's reconciliation, which Christians try to follow. Understanding how reconciliation occurs varies across Christian groups. The Catholics promote the role of the victim in initiating reconciliation and offering forgiveness based on a restored relationship with God, whereas a protestant perspective emphasizes that the process needs to start with the offender asking for forgiveness.

Another way to understand reconciliation within Christianity is to focus on restoring relationships. There are four dimensions of relationships in which reconciliation occurs: **spiritual, personal, social, and ecological**. Each dimension must be addressed in order to achieve full reconciliation.

Spiritual: The spiritual dimension refers to creating harmony and restoring broken relationship with God. This relationship is central to the other relationships: an individual needs to restore his or her relationship with God before moving on to restoring other relationships.

Personal: The second dimension involves reconciling with the “self.” In Christianity, renouncing personal sinfulness to God leads to forgiveness. When forgiveness is received, it is expect to lead to personal tranquillity, peace, and harmony – reconciliation with the self.

Social: Reconciling with those around us, our neighbors and the larger human community, is a third dimension. We need to restore relationships with our neighbors and larger community to reflect justice, mercy, respect and love. Relationships, here, reflect reconciliation at the other dimensions; if we are not spiritually or personally reconciled, it is unlikely that we may be able to achieve social reconciliation.

Ecological: The fourth dimension of reconciliation can be called reconciling with nature. From a Christian perspective, this dimension recognizes that humans cannot be fully reconciled with God while disrespecting and abusing God’s creation. Reconciliation at this level calls for respect of and care for nature and the ecological system in which we live. Christian tradition employs different rituals that involve scriptural reflection, prayer, and songs among others to achieve reconciliation, but based on the principle of the respect of the dignity of the human person as the image of God.¹¹⁶

Islam: Reconciliation and forgiveness are also explored in Islam and the Koran. One of the most powerful uses of reconciliation in Islam is linked to two rituals: *sulh*, or settlement, and *musalaha*, or reconciliation.

Sulh is a ritual that consists of three stages, which incorporates *musalaha*. In the first stage the families of the victim and offender choose respected mediators (*muslihs*). In the process, they publicly acknowledge that a crime is committed. The second stage is the reconciliation or *musalaha* itself. Here, the mediators work to produce a pardon and

¹¹⁶ D.W. Johnson & R Johnson, *Creative Conflict*14.

settlement. In the process, the honour and dignity of both parties need to be upheld and restored. It is important that both parties retain respect within the community while a crime is acknowledged. This is particularly important because large groups of the community are involved, not just individuals as is often the case in western, individual cultures. In the third stage, a public ritual is held that brings the community together as the main guarantor of forgiveness between the offender and the victim.

The public ceremony of **sulh** includes four stages: (1) the act of reconciliation; (2) the parties shaking hands under the supervision of the mediators; (3) the family of the offender visiting the home of the victim to drink a cup of bitter coffee; and (4) the offender's family hosting a meal. The ritual of **sulh** does not necessarily emphasise either the victim or offender's role in initiating the process, but does emphasise using a third party to help facilitate the process. In this way, community relations are maintained and honour is preserved for both parties. Rituals, such as **sulh**, can be very powerful for acknowledging and resolving a grievance, and allow the victim and offender, and their families to resume some kind of relationship. Judaism, Buddhism and other religions including African traditional religion have their own perspective on reconciliation, which is vital to conflict resolution.¹¹⁷

4.3 The Constructive or Destructive nature of Conflicts

A conflict exists when the actions of a group of persons or a person attempting to maximize their/his needs and benefits prevent, block, interfere with, injure or in some way

make less effective the actions of another group or another person attempting to maximize their needs and benefits¹¹⁸. Types of Conflicts are based on

- Differences in needs, values and goals.
- Scarcity of certain resources, such as power influence, money, time, space (land), popularity and position.
- Rivalry – Enmity that occur naturally (sex) and because they are deliberately created, for example marrying a second wife is a deliberately created rivalry for the two wives and the husband.

All types of conflicts derive basically from interests and can end in lawsuits, war, separation, divorce and murder. Deutsch¹¹⁹ explains that the Chinese character for crises represents a combination of the symbol for danger and the symbol for opportunity. Inherent in any conflict is the potential for destructive or constructive outcomes. On the destructive side, conflicts can create anger, hostility, lasting animosity and even violence. It can also result in pain and sadness. Any type of conflict stems from interest; whether land, marriage, property distribution, tribal, domestic, abuse (verbal or physical) politics or religion and can end in lawsuits, divorce, and war. Destructively managed conflicts are highly costly to a group or individual, destroying their effectiveness, ripping apart relationship, sabotaging work, delaying and decreasing, teaching and learning in a community and devastating individuals' commitment to the groups' goals, sense of security and personal feeling.¹²⁰ Conflicts according to Janz & Tjosvold¹²¹ however, carry the potential for many important positive outcomes. Conflicts can focus attention on

¹¹⁸ D. W. Johnson & F. P. Johnson, *Joining together: Group theory and group skills*, 6th ed. (USA: Allyn & Bacon, 1975), 335

¹¹⁹ M. Deutsch, *The resolution of conflicts*, 336.

¹²⁰ T. Janz & D. Tjosvold, 'Costing effective vs. ineffective relationships: A method and first look' *Canadian Journal of Administrative Sciences*, 2 (1985): 51-53.

¹²¹ T. Janz & D. Tjosvold, 'Costing effective' : 51- 9

problems that have to be solved and energize and motivate one to solve them. Conflicts can clarify how one needs to change. Patterns of behaviour that are dysfunctional are highlighted and clarified by conflicts. Conflicts can clarify what one cares about and is committed to. One only fights over wants and goals one values. And one fights much more frequently and intensely with people one values and cares about. The more committed one is to one's goals, the more committed one is to the other person, the more frequent and intense the conflicts. Conflicts can clarify who one is and what one's values are. This means that it is through conflicts that one's identity is developed and it can help one to understand who the other person is and what his/her values are. It is through conflicts that the identity of one's friend and acquaintances are clarified. Conflicts keep a relationship clear of irritations and resentments and strengthen relationships by increasing one's confidence that the two of you can resolve your disagreements. A good conflict may do a lot to resolve the small tensions by interacting with others and increase one's confidence that the relationship can survive stress and adversity. 'A conflict a day keeps depression away' says a traditional saying in *Worawora*. Conflicts can release anger, anxiety, insecurity, and sadness that if kept inside makes human mentally sick. Conflicts can be fun. Being in a conflict reduces boredom, gives one new goals, motivates you to action, and stimulates interests. Life would be incredibly boring if there are no conflicts. To conclude it is not the presence of conflicts, but the way in which they are managed, that determines whether they are destructive or constructive. The *Otor* communal ritual meal seeks to manage conflicts constructively. Even though the traditional processes involved in the *Otor* ritual meal are well defined with its religious and philosophical implications it is also worth noting that the strategies involved can differ according to new ways of managing conflicts. The discussion involved in the *Otor* communal meal management process informed by traditional customs and new ways of conflict

management allow all participants to achieve their goals. This indigenous process maximizes joint outcomes, benefits everyone and a whole lot is in all participants' best interests. The **Otor** communal meal ritual conflict management process is relevant to indigenous African communities because of the communal and collective manner in which it is managed. This is mainly the way it differs from the strategy used by civil courts patterned according to western structures. Another significant difference is the intensive indigenous education involved in every stage of the conflict management. This indigenous conflict management style strengthens relationship among participants by increasing their liking, respect and trust for each other. It also increases participants' ability to resolve future conflicts with each other constructively.¹²²

4.4 The Constitution of Ghana and Conflict resolution. -Fundamental Human Rights and Freedom. Article 22

The fundamental human rights are enshrined in the 1992 Ghana Republican Constitution in order to curtail conflicts and ensure fairness. The rights entrenched in the constitution of Ghana (the Abridged 1992) page 4, promote fundamental human rights and thereby prevent or reduce conflicts. Some of the rights entrenched in the constitution are the following:

- Nobody shall be deprived of his life intentionally.
- Every person shall be entitled to his personal liberty.
- Nobody shall be held in slavery or servitude.
- All persons shall be equal before the law.

¹²²Afua Ofosua, Interview at Worawora.

- A person shall not be discriminated against on grounds of his gender, race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, creed, social or economic status.
- Every person has the right to own property either alone or in association with others.
- A person's charged with a criminal offence, shall be given a fair hearing within a reasonable time by a court.
- No property of any description or interest in or right over any property shall be compulsorily taken possession of or acquired by the state without reasonable justification.
- A spouse shall not be deprived of a reasonable provision out of the estate of a deceased spouse whether or not the spouse died having made a will.
- Administrative bodies and officials shall act with fairness and in compliance with the law. Persons aggrieved by any act of such bodies and officials shall hews the right to seek redress before any courts.
- Every person shall have the rights to work under satisfactory, safe and healthy conditions and for which he shall receive equal pay for equal work without discrimination of any kind.
- All persons shall have the right to equal educational facilities and opportunities.
- Every person is entitled to enjoy, practice and promote any culture, tradition or religion subject to the provisions of this constitution.
- Women and children shall be accorded special care and protection to realize their full potential.
- Disabled and sick persons shall have access to appropriate facilities, assistance and opportunities taking their physical and mental conditions into account.

2. In addition, the following general fundamentals freedoms are guaranteed by the constitution.

- Freedom of speech and expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media.
- Freedom of thought conscience and belief, which shall include academic freedom.
- Freedom of assembly including the right to take part in processions and demonstrations.
- Freedom of association, which will include the freedom to form or join trade unions or other associations national and international.
- Freedom of access to information, subject to such qualifications as the law may permit.
- Freedom of movement within Ghana, the right to leave and re-enter and immunity from expulsion from Ghana.

3. Fundamental rights and freedom of the individual may be restricted when the President under special powers bestowed on him, declares that a state of emergency exists in Ghana.

4. A state of emergency may be declared in which an action by a person or persons threatens the country or part of the country may render such declaration necessary.¹²³

The above provisions contained in the constitution are well thought out to curtail any form of conflict that might emanate from the society. It is the protection and preservation of fundamental human rights and freedoms of everybody in the Ghanaian community. The Executive (President), Legislature (Parliament), Judiciary (Courts) and all persons are enjoined to respect and uphold these right and freedoms in order prevent conflicts in the Ghanaian society. One of the major sources of conflict areas in the Ghanaian community

¹²³ The Republic of Ghana, The Constitution of Ghana Abridged, 1992: 4

especially in the Akan community pertains to property sharing in case of the death of a spouse. Since the Akan community is generally a maternalistic one, the right of the spouse especially the wife is abused when the man dies. This is because the property of the man belongs to his sisters, nieces and nephews and not his children. Akan customs have a way of taking care of that especially if the man used family lands (which belongs to the maternal line). The wife and children are normally left out and are supposed to look for their share among their family (maternal family). This traditional practice has brought a lot of conflict between the widow and the man's sisters especially if they jointly acquired any property. Article 22 (1992) of the fundamental human rights and freedom requires that:

- A spouse shall not be deprived of reasonable provision out of the estate of a spouse whether or not the spouse died having made a will.
- Parliament shall as soon as practicable after the coming into force of this constitution enacts legislation regulating the property rights of spouse.
- With a view to achieving the full realization of the rights referred to class (2) of this article.
 - Spouse shall have equal access to property jointly acquired during marriage.
 - Assets which are jointly acquired during marriage shall be distributed equitably between the spouses upon dissolution of the marriage.¹²⁴

This provision has brought a lot of conflicts between husband, wife and families in cases where the husband has died. This happens especially if the property acquired (for example a Building) is situated on the man's family land. Akan culture demands that part of the property be given to the man's family (if not all). The **Otor** communal ritual meal for

¹²⁴ The Republic of Ghana, The Constitution of Ghana Abridged, 1992: Article 22

conflict management considers the religious and philosophical perspective of traditional knowledge systems when dealing with such conflicts. The strategy of combining the religious and philosophical cultural values systems to settle such cases is more effective. The strategy should therefore be used to complement what is embodied in the constitution.

4.5 The Meaning of Conflict among the *Worawora*

Woraworas understand that, if conflicts are managed constructively they yield positive results for the whole community. On the other hand, conflicts result in dysfunction when not managed well. They believe that interest is the underlying factor for all conflicts. All Conflicts of Interest are therefore given the utmost attention they deserve. According to Okyeame Peasah,¹²⁵ the *Worawora* understand that conflict is inevitable in any human society and organization and that it has the potential of stifling progress if it is not managed well. That is why their ancestors instituted the *Otor* ceremonial communal meal, which is a meal meant to reconcile people in conflict.

The stages of reconciliation in the *Otor* communal meal is based on collective decision making from the first day the elders meet to resolve a matter. Interest is the root cause of all conflicts in any human society; differences in needs and values, fighting over scarcity of certain resources such as power, influence, money, time, land, popularity and position all come under Conflict of Interest. The *Worawora* understand that conflicts exist because individuals or groups have goals and interests that conflict with another person or group of peoples' goal and interests. In dealing with conflicts they believe that some are trivial and must be treated as such; for example young girl or boy refusing to greet an elderly person is considered a trivial conflict if such a matter is brought up for consideration. The reasons for not greeting might be of choice or ignorance. In this matter the boy or girl is

¹²⁵ An interview with one of the linguists of Worawora

encouraged and educated on the importance of greetings in the community. The elderly one who complained might be consoled and admonished to develop a ‘big heart’ to contain the ‘ignorance’ of the younger one. On the other hand, when a young girl or boy insults an elderly one, it is taken very seriously. In dealing with this matter, the parents of the younger one and other family members as well as the aggrieved elderly person and his family meet with *Abusuapanin* or the chief and his elders to deliberate on the matter. This often ends up with ‘smoking a peace pipe’ in the form of greeting, drinking or eating together. This is often after the necessary sanctions have been meted out to the erring person. In sum, the goal in any conflict situation is placed on a continuum between being of little importance to being highly important. Elders who adjudicate these matters try to reach an agreement that satisfy the needs of the parties involved and the goals of the community. Generally, in matters of relationship, maintaining an appropriate relationship with the other after a matter has been resolved may depend on whether it is a temporary relationship or a permanent one. Matters of relationship according to Okyeame Peasah¹²⁶ are placed on a continuum between being of little importance to being of high importance. To people involved in a conflict, how they behave towards each other depends on how important to them the goals are and how important they perceive the relationship to be. For example, in a land litigation conflict individuals and parties involved in the conflict take decisions dependent on how important that piece of land is to them and how important the relationship between themselves and the litigating party or individual is. Elders are trained to consider how important the goals and relationship factor is to individuals and groups in conflict. In answering a question as to whether *Woraworas* think that conflicts have spiritual implications, Okyeame Peasah answered ‘Yes’ and ‘No’

¹²⁶ Chief linguists of *Worawora*

– He said ‘yes’ because, according to him, some think that conflicts are spiritually generated. This is due to their belief in the spirit world which had both good and bad spirits. It is therefore, not impossible that bad spirits can instigate or influence human beings against their neighbors which will result in serious conflicts. He recounted a story in which a lady consulted an evil spirit to help her win the love of a man she desired. The conditions given by the spirit required that after her need has been met she should provide her benefactor (the spirit) with human blood every three years. The woman complied with this requirement for fifteen years and stopped. Again the spirit gave her a talisman to be hidden in the couple’s bedroom but one day the man saw the talisman and destroyed it. Immediately the talisman was destroyed the man came back to his senses and began asking questions. Where am I? Is this the woman I married? Are these my children? The conflict between this man and the wife became so intense that the **Abusuapanin** and his elders had to consider divorce in order to bring peace in their lives. Okyeame Peasah finally said that spiritually motivated conflicts are not ignored in conflict situations in **Worawora**. That is why they offer prayers to the spirits and ancestors in settling any dispute. Nevertheless, he also made it clear that they don’t think that all conflict situations are spiritually motivated. They believe that most conflicts are conflicts of interest, which means they stem from needs, values, goals, and the scarcity of certain resources as power influence, money, land, popularity and position. The **Otor** ceremonial meal and the strategies involved does not only consider the spiritual factors but most importantly interactive discussions, awareness creation about needs, values and goals of the community and collective decision taking. Elders trained to handle conflicts traditionally understand that conflicts are complex and differ and must apply knowledge appropriate to the situation within the strategy of the **Otor** communal ritual meal.

4.6 Historical changes associated with conflict in *Worawora*

Conflict management in *Worawora* dates back to their association with the *Ashantis*. The *Ashantehene*¹²⁷ is the supreme judge and spiritual head who arbitrates all matters including conflict of interest. He however, delegates his duties to his sub-chiefs and *Abusuapanins*. These officials sit periodically to settle petty disputes that crop up within the community. Afua Ofosua, a former priestess of the *Woraworas*, states that the influence of leaders on their people in settling disputes is closely related to their knowledge of their history, governance, customs and traditions and above all the spiritual authority they wield. Leaders of Ashanti adjudicate cases with the help of the fetish priests who they consult, when necessary, to reveal what is hidden from mortal beings. This style of conflict management (that is, combining knowledge derived from history, customs and traditions with divine revelation and explanation) was inherited from their association with their forefathers, the Asante. However, there were changes connected with conflict management as the people left *Kuntanase* in 1732 and settled in their present location after almost forty (40) years. There have been changes again after their settlement in their present settlement. After departing *Kuntanase* they also lived a semi-nomadic life as they moved from place to place in search of permanent settlements through conquest. It would be recalled that during the time of Nana Opoku Ware I¹²⁸ there was massive campaign for land to extend the boundaries of the Ashanti Kingdom. There were no land boundaries in those days, as boundaries were determined by occupation through conquest. In their wilderness or semi nomadic period, conflict management ranged from spiritual diagnoses (that is consulting their deities) to scientific or ethical diagnoses (using indigenous knowledge systems available to settle matters). During this period much of the time was

¹²⁷ The Chief of all Ashantis.

¹²⁸ The second Asantehene

spent on working out new strategies to conquer new lands than resolving internal disputes. Those who had internal wrangles were made to dispose of them quickly in the spirit of forgiveness. It is important to note that during this period people were aware of traditions, customs and wrath of the ancestors and deities when they contravened customs and traditions. For example a man is deeply aware of the consequences of sleeping with his neighbors' wife and would not dare commit such an offence. He is aware that such an act does not bring calamity to the individual only but to the whole community. It could even result in losing wars during their conquest campaigns. Conflicts of interest were quickly disposed of during their conquest period in order to focus on their major assignment of fighting wars and defending themselves. However, this does not mean that attention was not given to resolving petty disputes. Leaders and sub chiefs, *Abusuapanins* and their elders took it upon themselves to settle these disputes within the perimeters of indigenous knowledge systems and within their customs and traditions. If necessary the divine beings were consulted to reveal truths and punish the recalcitrant people.

The first settlement of the *Woraworas (Oyokos)* after they left *Kontanase* was *Domakwaa* in Denkyira. Later they trekked southward to settle at *Agyanoa* near the Aburi Botanical Gardens in the Eastern region. Meanwhile part of the group branched off and settled at Atibie-Kwahu led by their leader *Akora Oko*. Their conflict management in *Aburi* was better organized since they had time to settle internal matters. Gatherings meant to settle internal disputes were presided over by the *Abusuapanins* and their elders but difficult matters were referred to their leader, Nana *Tiprekese*.¹²⁹ It was in this strategy of conflict settlement that the *Otor* ceremonial meal was instituted to compel all community members involved in conflict to bury their difference for the sake of unity and oneness.

¹²⁹ The chief who led the Woraworas from Kontanase

The deities, who are involved in the conflict management, are appeased with drinks. The people slaughtered animals in order eat together and assuage the wrath of the ancestors with erring members of the community. Sometimes instant justice in the form of death was also meted out to victims of erring parties in the conflict. After settling in **Aburi** for almost twelve years, war broke out between **Akyems**¹³⁰ and the **Akwamus**.¹³¹ Since the **Worawora** people did not want to take sides, they travelled eastwards trekking along the Volta River to **Nkrofena** at **Nkonya**.¹³² After staying with the **Nkonyas** for ten (10) years they fought with them resulting in the death of their leader and warlord **Tiprekese Baah**. His nephew, Opoku Frefre took over and led them the top of a mountain **Mmosombepo**.¹³³ They managed to conquer the **Chokosi**¹³⁴ people north of their settlements. They stayed in the **Ofiebeposo**¹³⁵ also the **Mmosombepo** for a hundred years and therefore named the place **Ewareware**, which was corrupted to **Worawora**. In 1891 the first Basel Missionary to that part of the country, Rev. Nicholas T. Cerk from the Basel Mission at **Osu**, a Jamaican climbed the **Mmosombepo** or fetish mountain and convinced the people of **Worawora** to move to the foot of the mountain which they accepted. They moved finally in 1899.¹³⁶ Their system of conflict management did not change so much. They settled disputes collectively within the **Abusuas**. Then on festive occasions like the **Akwantuteten** they managed other conflicts by hearing conflict cases at the courts of the **Abusuapanin** and if necessary at the **Omanhene's** palace. Today stages involved in the **Otor** conflict management include

¹³⁰ A group of Akan speaking people who settled in the Eastern region of Ghana

¹³¹ A group of Akan speaking people who settled beyond the river Volta.

¹³² A group of Guan speaking people in the Volta Region of Ghana

¹³³ Literal meaning is 'The mountain of the gods'

¹³⁴ A tribe the Woraworas drove away through war in order to settle in their present abode

¹³⁵ Literal meaning is 'Home mountains'

¹³⁶ The Akwantutenten brochure of 2001 during the visit of the Ashantihene (Nana Osei Tutu II)

- Swearing the ancestral oath which informs you about consequences of lying and breaching an oath.
- The process of Education – Thorough education is given by informed leaders of the community on the moral and ethical codes of the society.
- Education is provided on the customs and traditions of the people based on both religious and philosophical explanation. The community is also briefed on current laws of the state.
- Conflicts of interest are handled in an interactive discussion mood. Ultimately however, parties involved in the conflicts are admonished to consider relationship above material goals (comprising wants) for the sake of peace in the society. Time for reflection is provided to reconsider ones position.
 - The fetish priests are consulted when the veracity of a matter is in doubt.
 - Time to reconcile privately is permitted but with witnesses and within a time frame.
- Those involved in the conflict are integrated into the community through education.
 - Communal ceremonial meal is celebrated as a sign that all differences are buried and that aggrieved parties have covenanted to live in peace and unity. This meal re adjusts members of the community especially those involved in the conflict psychologically and socially. The interesting thing about **Worawora** indigenous methods of managing conflicts especially through the **Otor** communal meal strategy is that special education is provided at every stage of the conflict management process?

4.7 How the Otor ritual meal was used to resolve a problem

In an interview with Afua Ofosua¹³⁷ she mentioned that the Otor ritual communal meal has been used to solve problems. She recalled a matter in which two problems coming from the same father and mother went into the same girl. It happened that the younger brother got into a relationship with the girl first while the elder one was studying abroad. When the elder brother arrived from abroad he met the girl in the house that very night and showed interest in her. The girl never mentioned that she was in a relationship with his younger brother but allowed him to sleep with her. The younger brother got to know about it and decided not to talk with the elder brother. The parents tried hard to reconcile them but to no avail. The matter was brought to the *abusuapanin* to be treated during the Otor communal ritual meal celebrations.

The three, namely the two brothers and the lady were summoned for arbitration. To begin, libation was poured to invite the unseen members of the community and solicit their help in the matter before them. After that the oath of the ancestors was administered by spokesperson of the Abusuapanin. This oath reminded them of consequences of dishonesty.

The abusuapanin gave a short introduction of the matter before him and his elders and invited the younger brother to state his case first and then followed by the elder one. When it got to the turn of the lady involved she could not talk but started sobbing.

The next stage was answer to questions from the *Abusuapanin* and his elders. The younger brother was questioned first. It was clear from the questions and answers that he was not in the house the night his elder brother arrived from abroad but got to know about

¹³⁷ Afua Ofosua interviewed on February 17th, 2013 at Worawora.

the incident through his female cousin. The female cousin was invited to confirm this and she did.

It was the turn of the elder brother. The questions and answers revealed that he did not know anything about the relationship between the lady and his brother. Nobody told him and the lady did not either. Nevertheless, the questions and answers also showed that he should have inquired about the lady from some family members before sleeping with her since he had just arrived from abroad that very night. The elders made it clear to him that it was not wise to sleep with a girl he did not know.

The lady however, did not answer any question; she stood before the gathering sobbing throughout. She was blamed for all the mess in the family and her parents were asked to appease the family with a Ram and two bottles of schnapps. The younger brother asked the Abusuapanin to give him time to manage the pain caused by his elder after which he would be ready to talk with him. The elders, however, gave a lot of education, citing a lot of examples why it was not advisable to procrastinate. He did not agree until one of the traditional priests addressed him ‘You will be offending the gods and the ancestors if you refuse to oblige.’¹³⁸

He finally agreed to reconcile with his brother after the elder brother had apologized and earnestly asked for forgiveness. They hugged each other and called the favourite names of each other. The next day they participated happily in communal meal as a sign that all differences have been buried. The lady however, did not show up in the communal meal celebrations and none of the brothers married her later.

¹³⁸ Afua Ofosua, Interview, 20th February 2013 at Worawora (Interview conducted by self).

A land litigation between two families (for the purpose of confidentiality the names of the families have been withheld and alphabets would be used to represent them)

The background

Two famous families fought over a small piece of land that separated their farmlands. According to the *Abusuapanim* of family 'A', a member of family 'B' had gone to shift the boundary from its original place to another in the interest of the latter. He said the land which is at *Dobanta* lay at the foot of a mountain and is about seven kilometers from Worawora. According to him none of the members of his family was able to visit the land for a number of years because all the young men and women had travelled and others were in school. Furthermore, there was a family land which was nearer Worawora and members of the family preferred to farm on this piece of land to going all the way to *Dobanta*. The *Abusuapanim* of family 'A' argued that their long absence from the piece of land at *Dobanta*, tempted some members of family 'B' to move the boundary post.

The *Abusuapanim* of family 'B' on the other hand argued that the piece of land in question rightly belonged to them and that because members of family 'A' were not visiting the land they had forgotten the correct boundary. He mentioned that the remains of some oil palm trees on the boundary which they fell to tap palm were still there as a testimony. However members of family 'A' denied knowledge of any such oil palm trees as boundary signs. This land litigation conflict became so bad that the chief of the town Nana Daasebre Asare-Baah (V) had to restrain both families from visiting the said piece of land until an amicable solution was found.

How this matter was resolved during the *Otor* communal meal celebrations

1st stage: During the main *Otor* ritual meal celebration Nana Daasebre Asare-Baah V invited both families to his palace and impressed upon them the need for peace and unity

in *Worawora*. Again, he reminded them about the consequences of swearing the ancestral oath and eating the *Otor* meal deceitfully.

2nd stage: The oath was administered by the Okyeame Nana Peasah. Again, he reminded them of the consequences of breaching the oath. He told them that the oath was a covenant with mystical powers.

3rd stage: Nana Daasebre Asare- Baah told the litigating parties that he had consulted other elderly members of the clan and those whose farms were situated around families 'A' and 'B' but was still not sure whether the boundary post was moved or not. He however, decided to re- demarcate the land.

4th stage: The parties were asked to recess to enable them to think about the decision of Nana Daasebre Asare- Baah (V). After the recess, members of family 'A' agreed to Nana's decision but family 'B' demanded that unless family 'A' compensated them for accusing them falsely they would not abide by Nana's decision. Nana Daasebre Asare- Baah (V) explained that he never said family 'A' was guilty of accusing family 'B' wrongly. He warned family 'B' for giving a wrong interpretation of what he said. Family 'B' then apologized to Nana and said they would abide by the decision of the elders.

5th stage: Both parties said it was not necessary to consult the oracles or fetish priest on this matter.

6th stage: Nana again gave education on the eating of *Otor* meal together. He told them what the *Otor* meal stood for:

- 'The *Otor* meal is a covenantal and mystical meal and cannot be eaten in deceit.'
- 'We are one after the ritual meal and so cannot fight one another since nobody hurts his own body.'
- 'You must remain in love for tasting one another's saliva.'

- ‘You must respect the decision of elders, living or dead and cannot go back on your word.’

7th stage – The *Otor* communal meal was prepared by those traditionally designated to do so. The litigating parties, the chief and elders as well as all members of the community present partook of the meal amidst drumming, dancing and embracing one another. This ended the bitter land dispute between the families.

Case 3

Dishonesty in Marriage

The background

A man was invited by his *Abusuapanim* in a case of infidelity on the part of the man's wife. According to the man (referred to as Mr. 'A') his wife had cheated on him and the man involved was no other person than his bosom friend (referred to as Mr. 'B'). The *Abusuapanin* invited the two men (Mr. 'A' & 'B') before his elders. The wife of Mr. 'A' was also invited. Mr. 'A' was the first to give the side of his story. He said he had noticed a questionable emotional attachment between his wife and his bosom friend Mr. 'B'. When he confronted his wife on the matter she denied it and said 'How could you conceive such a diabolical thought about your own friend?' and added that her husband must not mar the relationship between him and his friend. Meanwhile, some neighbors had informed Mr. 'A' about the seemingly ugly relationship between his wife and friend but his wife denied it. Mr. 'A' then confronted his friend who responded with bitter insults.

One day however, Mr. 'A' caught his wife and friend making love in his friend's room. He had been informed by some neighbors that his wife was with his friend even though the

wife had sought permission from him to go for a church choir practice. He rushed to his friend's house and caught them in the act of making love. After raising an alarm his wife rushed at him in fury, pushed him aside and ran out of Mr. 'A' house. Mr. 'B' however, got on his knees and begged his friend after realizing the fury in his eyes. Mr. 'A' told his friend that he will never forgive him and left the room. When he got home instead of his wife showing remorse she packed her belongings and walked out of the house that night. The following day Mr. 'A' reported the matter to his *Abusuapanin* who invited Mr. 'B' and Mr. 'A's wife but Mr. 'A's wife did not respond to the call. Again Mr. 'B' apologized sincerely to Mr. 'A' and begged for forgiveness but Mr. 'A' refused to accept his apology even before the *Abusuapanin*. A week later, the wife of Mr. 'A' came back to her husband in the company of her relatives to beg for mercy and forgiveness but Mr. 'A' refused to accept their apology. The woman and her relatives then went to the *Abusuapanin* to plead for help. The *Abusuapanin* tried much to resolve the matter but failed. However, during the *Otor* communal meal festival another attempt was made to resolve the issue and this time it yielded a positive response.

How it was resolved during the *Otor* meal festival

Stage 1: The *Abusuapanin* invited all the parties and told them to give peace a chance not only for their personal interest but also for the sake of the society. He then invited Mr. 'A' and pleaded with him to forgive his wife and his friend in the name of God, the ancestors and for the good of the society as well as his family.

Stage 2: The administration of the Oath: According to Mr. 'A' he could not say 'No' to the *Abusuapanin's* plea considering the number of people gathered but when the oath was being administered he decided to say 'Yes' from his 'heart' taking into consideration the part of the oath which said that any 'yes' or 'no' must come from the '**heart**' and must be the '**truth**' otherwise while eating the *Otor* meal the food should choke him to death

Stage 3: The *Abusuapanin* told the gathering that he had heard the matter and had discussed it thoroughly with his elders and they had decided to take two bottles of schnapps, three rams with horns, twenty tubers of yams, two bags of local rice, a fowl and seven pots of palm wine from Mr. 'B' as rectification to the unseen and seen members of the community as well as to Mr. 'A'. He also declared that the family of the Mr. 'A's wife should compensate Mr. 'A' with two bottles of schnapps, one ram with horns, five tubers of yams, a bag of local rice and a white piece of calico. All the items were expected to be brought to the *Abusuapanin's* house for onward transmission to the appropriate places.

Stage 4: – The parties were asked to respond to the verdict given by the *Abusuapanin* and elders. Mr. 'B' and the family of Mr. 'A's wife pleaded for consideration in the number of items to be presented. However, the *Abusuapanin* and his elders did not heed to their plea.

Stage 5: There was no need to consult any oracle to ascertain any truth.

Stage 6: The *Abusuapanin* educated the gathering especially the parties involved in the matter about the meaning and essence of taking the *Otor* communal meal.

- 'The *Otor* meal is a covenantal and mystical meal and cannot be eaten in deceit.'
- 'We are one after the ritual meal and so cannot fight one another since nobody hurts his own body.'
- 'You must remain in love after tasting one another's saliva.'
- 'You must respect the decision of elders, living or dead and cannot go back on your word.'

Other elderly people also gave pieces of advice and the importance to be attached to the *Otor* communal meal ritual.

Stage 7 – The *Otor* communal table was set by some elderly women whose duty it was to do so. After prayers were said by the Okyeame, Mr. 'A' and wife with Mr. 'B' were asked to put mussels of the *Otor* in one another's mouth to signify reconciliation as all others

partook of the meal amidst drumming and dancing and embracing one another. This ended the marriage problems between Mr. 'A' and his wife.

Case 4

Building Construction Case

The Background

(The people in the story will be referred to as Mr. 'A' and Mr. 'B')

Mr. 'A' travelled abroad and sent money to his cousin to put up a five bedroom flat for him. His cousin periodically sent him pictures showing progress of work and later sent him the picture of the completed building. Mr. 'A' sent him a letter of gratitude and gave him some money to show his appreciation. Without notifying him Mr. 'A' and his wife arrived in Ghana and proceeded to Worawora the following day. He went to the site where the building was supposed to be situated but to his astonishment there was nothing at all on the land not even a foundation profile. Apparently, Mr. 'A's cousin has been sending him pictures of another person's house which was being constructed. He went to his cousin to find out what the matter was only to realize that he had been swindled. He decided to report the case to the police but some people advised him to report the matter to his *Abusuapanin* first. Mr. 'A' found out that Mr. 'B' his cousin had used the money for another purpose. He has used it for transport business and had bought a fleet of vehicles out of the money. This created enmity between the two cousins since Mr. 'B' promised to refund the money with interest but paid only half of it. The *Abusuapanin* invited both parties in order to resolve the matter. Fortunately the period fell within the *Otor* meal festival when such matters were resolved amicably.

How the processes of the Otor communal meal were engaged to settle the matter.

Stage 1: The *Abusuapanin* invited all the parties and told them to give peace a chance not only for their personal interest but also for the sake of the society. He told the gathering he

had done his personal investigation and found out that Mr. 'B' was guilty and promised Mr. 'A' that he would retrieve the rest of the money for him with interest. Mr. 'A' complained bitterly about the behavior of his cousin (Mr. 'B') He said he had not been fairly by his cousin He added that Mr. 'B' was capable of paying him all the money at once considering the success of his transport business but has just refused to do so. The *Abusuapanin* told Mr. 'A' that part of the problem came from him for he should have informed other family members about the project so that collectively they would supervise the work for him.

2nd stage: The oath was administered by Okyeame Donkor, the Okyeame of the clan. He reminded them of the consequences of breaching the oath. He told them that the oath was a covenant with mystical powers and that they must cooperate with the elders.

3rd stage: The *Abusuapanin* told the gathering that upon consultations the elders have decided to fine Mr. 'B' for defrauding and deceiving Mr. 'A' and to appease the seen and unseen members of the community. He was to present two bottles of schnapps, two rams with horns, five fowls, ten tubers of yams, one bag of local rice and three pots of palm wine (some of these items would go to Mr. 'A'). The items were to be presented in two weeks' time. Furthermore, Mr. 'B' was to make all other payments of the debt he owed Mr. 'A' in three weeks' time since he would be living for Europe very soon.

4th stage: Mr. 'A' and Mr. 'B' and some of the family members who accompanied them were asked recess and think about the verdict. After the recess Mr. 'B' pleaded with the *Abusuapanin* to reduce the number of items to be presented. After consultation with his elders his plea was turned down.

5th stage: Consultation of the oracles or fetish priest was not necessary on this matter.

6th stage: The *Abusuapan* again seized the opportunity to educate the gathering on the essence of the *Otor* meal of the Woraworas and summed up in the following words:

- ‘The *Otor* meal is a covenantal and mystical meal and cannot be eaten in deceit.’
- ‘We are one after the ritual meal and so cannot fight one another since nobody hurts his own body.’
- ‘You must remain in love for tasting one another’s saliva since that is what eating in one bowl signifies.’
- ‘You must respect the decision of elders, living or dead and cannot go back on your word.’

7th stage – The *Otor* communal meal was prepared by those traditionally designated to do so. Mr. ‘A’ and ‘B’ ate the *Otor* together as other members of the community joined them to do so. They partook of the meal amidst drumming, dancing and embracing one another. This is how the relationship between the two brothers was restored.

4.8 Effects of Conflicts on the people of Worawora

The management of conflicts is an important aspect of maintaining cooperation, unity and strength in a community. In view of this the people of **Worawora** pay a lot of attention to conflict resolution. The intensive education provided during the process of **Otor** ritual conflict management process in **Worawora** is the main difference between the conflict management by the civil courts and the **Otor** communal ritual meal conflict management. When conflicts are managed well they have many desirable effects. Conflicts in **Worawora** have contributed to the solution of many problems. This is because conflict can focus attention on problems, energize and provide motivations to solve them. Conflicts can clarify what one cares about and also clarify how one needs to change.

Patterns of behavior that are undesirable are highlighted and clarified by conflicts. These positive effects of conflicts on *Worawora* people are derived from the *Otor* communal meal conflict management process, in which people bring their conflicts to the open and face them directly for the best solution to be discovered. In this indigenous conflict management process patterns of behavior that are dysfunctional are highlighted and dealt with by the society. Conflicts have also helped to clarify what the values of the community are. Since intensive education is given at every stage of the conflict management process, it has also helped opposing parties to understand who the other person is and what his or her values are. To the people of *Worawora* conflict keeps a relationship clear of irritations and resentment and strengthens relationships by increasing the confidence that members of a community can resolve their differences. Conflicts may do a lot to resolve the small tensions that crop up as a result of interacting with others and increase one's confidence that the relationship can survive stress and adversity. Furthermore, conflicts in every community release anger, anxiety, insecurity and sadness that, if kept inside can cause mental disturbances. Conflicts can be fun. It has helped members of the *Worawora* community to reduce boredom, generating new goals, motivating people into action and stimulating interests. Properly managed conflicts in *Worawora* have helped the leaders to implement the decisions of the community for the benefit of the society.

On the destructive side, conflicts have created a lot of anger, hostility, lasting animosities and even war among the *Worawora* people. According to Afua Ofosua¹³⁹ it was internal conflicts that prevented them from presenting a united front in their war against the *Nkonyas*. She said that their short stay in *Nkonya* was beset with a lot of internal

¹³⁹ A former fetish priest in *Worawora* who I interviewed

wrangling. Petty quarrels which could have been managed constructively degenerated into serious hostilities. The *Nkonyas* took advantage of the disunity among them and fought them resulting in the death of their leader Nana Tiprekese. Destructively managed conflicts are highly costly to a group of people, by destroying the groups' effectiveness, ripping apart relationships, sabotaging work and individual commitment to group goals as well as their sense of security and personal feeling.¹⁴⁰ (Janz & Tjosvold p336). However, it is positively managed conflicts, exercised within the *Otor* communal meal conflict management process, that have brought the *Worawora* people this far as one people with one destiny. Oral history has it that, it was internal conflicts at *Domakwaa* in *Denkyira*¹⁴¹ that led to some of their groups separating and settling at Atibie Kwahu under a leader called Akora Oko. Afua Ofosua said it was as a result of conflict that Nana Twerefour Tim also led a group that settled at Kwahu Dukoman. Opanyin Owpana and other groups headed towards the coast because of internal conflicts. The effect of this divisions and separations had a toll on the strength of the main *Oyoko* group that left Ashanti because wars that could have been won by strength of numbers were lost. The above were some of the positive and negative effect of conflict of a strong Oyoko group that left Ashanti in 1732.

4.9 The *Otor* communal meal a tool for conflict management

The *Otor* communal meal ritual has both religious and philosophical implications (As discussed under the topic: The religious and philosophical perception of *Otor* communal meal). These implications are tools or strategies for conflict management. Education is the key to uncovering the strategies embedded in the *Otor* ceremonial meal for conflict

¹⁴⁰ T. Janz & D. Tjosvold, 'Costing effective'

¹⁴¹ An Akan tribe from whom the Ashantes asserted their independence.

management. At every stage of conflict management process up to the celebration of the **Otor** communal meal, special education is given out to acquaint community members, especially those engaged in the conflict, of indigenous knowledge embedded in proverbs and symbols as well as in customs and traditions (Religious or philosophical). The tools for indigenous conflict management are embedded in proverbs grouped under styles of conflict resolution used by elders in the Otor communal ritual meal. The strategies for conflict management used in the process of **Otor** communal meal are reflected in the following proverbs. The principles involved in all the strategies are used according to the nature of the conflict. Chiefs, **Abusuapanin** and elders are trained to understand that conflicts are complex and differ and they must apply strategies relevant to the situation within the principles of **Otor** communal ceremonial meal for conflict resolution. The following traditional proverbs which have both religious and philosophical meanings reflect the strategies and principles preferred in the **Otor** ritual communal meal process for conflict management. Nevertheless, leaders are allowed to use principles in the various strategic groups to complement and supplement the other for effective results. In these proverbs the **Otor** communal meal which based on education presents tools for conflict resolution in indigenous African societies. The traditional proverbs below show the strategy preferred in the **Otor** ritual communal meal for conflict management on a scale of preference. Strategy 'A' (Problem solving) is the best strategy engaged in the **Otor** ritual conflict management process. The following are proverbs which reflect different strategies used in the **Otor** communal meal conflict management. The Akan versions of the various categories of strategies are followed by the English translations.

Strategy 'A' - Akwan a wofa so si ohaw ono.

- *Bra seisei ara na yenwene mmom.*
- *Nokware fi nimdee mu na enye odudow adwene mu.*

- *Obiara nni anoyi anaase mmue nyinaa nanso onipa biara wo n'adwene wo biribi ho.*
- *Gye nea owo ope pa se obekyere n'adwene wo nokware a okura na onya mfaso wo afoforo nokware ho.*
- *Penpenka, nokware di ne ahotoso na etutu mmepow.*
- *Fa wo haw to gua na gyina mu pintinn na eno na wobesow amo koraa.*
- *Se wututu a, na nodware beda adi.*
- *Bre wo ho ase na ma osoro tumi nni w'asem ma wo.*

Strategy 'A'- Problem Solving

- Come now let's reason together.
- Truth lies in knowledge, not majority opinion.
- No person has the final answer but every person has a piece to contribute.
- Only the person who is willing to give up his or her monopoly on truth can even profit from the truths that others hold. (Be ready to listen)
- Frankness, honesty and trust will move mountains.
- Bring your conflicts into the open and face them directly, only then will the best solution be discovered.
- By digging and digging, the truth is discovered.
- Be humble, to allow the divine to sought things out for you within the spirit of forgiveness and unity.

Strategy B (Compromising) – This is sometimes used but it is not the preferred option as far as **Otor** communal ritual meal conflict management is concerned.

Strategy ‘B’ – Nsawosodi

- *Ti m’akyi na me nso me ti wo de.*
- *Abodoo fa ye sen se emu nyinaa behwere wo.*
- *Nsesa a asisi nnim si oham ano.*
- *Bo me na memo de abotoyam ba.*
- *Yekyekye yen ho ade a, ede ayonkofa papa ba.*
- *Se wonya ade bi mu fa a, eye sen se ade mu no nyinaa bebo wo.*
- *Se afanu no ma afaafa a, ede ntease papa ba.*
- *Tirimydie ne nsawosodie mapa ye nyanesom nhyehyee.*

Strategy ‘B’- Compromising.

- You scratch my back, I’ll scratch yours.
- Better half a loaf than no bread at all.
- A fair exchange brings no quarrel.
- Tit for tat is fair play.
- One gift for another makes good friends.
- Getting part of what you want is better than not getting anything at all.
- When both give in half way, a fair settlement is achieved.
- Tolerance and compromise are religious acts for peace.

Strategy C (Smoothing) – Is an option also used in the Otor conflict management strategy (provisions for religious settlements).

Strategy ‘C’- Teeye Asiesie

- *Nsemmerew dwodwo akomaden.*
- *Nsemde de ntease papa ba.*

- *Ayeomye kum atamfo.*
- *Abutayom nsem ho hia na yento ma hwee.*
- *Nsem bokoo de asomdwoe ba.*
- *Boodooye di abufuw so nim.*
- *Se obi de obo bo wo a, nso fa asaawa mfuturu bo no.*
- *Nyame nnipa kora won ntamso.*

Strategy ‘C’ Smoothing

- Soft words win hard hearts.
- Smooth words make smooth ways.
- Kill your enemies with kindness.
- Kind words are worth much and cost little.
- Soft words ensure harmony.
- Gentleness will triumph over anger.
- When one hits you with a stone, hit him her with a piece of cotton.
- Learn from the words of oath that you swear.

Strategy ‘D’-Twesan.

- *Ehia se wopini w’akyi wo akasakasa ho.*
- *Se baanu nya akasaakasa nea oye din no nya nnidi.*
- *Nea oguan akono san ko da foforo.*
- *Tew wo no fi nnipa a woye animguasefo ho.*
- *Mfa wo ho mmo mtokwonpefo esiome se wobema w’abrabo aye awarehow.*
- *Okwan pa a wobeyi akasakasa akwa ne se wobetew wo ho afi ho.*
- *Eho nhia se wobema w’ani abere ho.*
- *Osoro tumi beko ama wo se woma ho kwan a.*

Strategy 'D' Withdrawing

- It is easier to refrain than to retreat from a quarrel (prevention is better than cure)
- When two quarrel, the person who keeps silent first is the most praiseworthy.
- He who fights and runs away lives to fight another day.
- Stay away from people who disagree with you.
- Avoid quarrelsome people as they will only make your life miserable.
- The best way of handling conflicts is to avoid them.
- There is nothing so important you have to fight for it.
- The divine will fight your battles if you allow Him. (Cast your burdens upon Him for he cares for you).

Strategy 'E'-Se wobehye nnipa bi (ohye)

- *Se worentumi ma obi nnwene se wo a, ma no nye senea woye w'ade.*
- *Tumi bunkam fawohodi so.*
- *Wako oko pa ama n'atamfo aguan.*
- *Nkonimdi mma ma won a wodwene se wobedi nim.*
- *Nea ompe se oguan ma afoforo guan.*
- *Fa won an si pintinn wo baabi wope se wogyina.*
- *Yewo nnipa baanu wo wiase nkonimdifo enna nkogufo.*
- *Ahoo^uden a enwu bedi ahooden ewu so.*

Strategy 'E'- Forcing the other

- If you cannot make a person think as you do make him or her do as you think.
- Might overcome rights.
- He has conquered well that hath made his enemies flee.
- Fields are won by those who believe in wining.

- A person who will not flee will make others flee.
- Put your foot down where you mean to stand.
- There are two kinds of people in the world, the winners and the losers.
- The might of the immortal will overcome the right of the mortal.

4.10 Conclusion

The **Otor** communal meal ritual has already been discussed under the topic: What is the **Otor** communal meal in **Worawora** in chapter two its religious and philosophical implications have also been discussed in chapter three? To sum up, the **Otor** communal meal is a ceremonial meal celebrated to make peace which is necessary for unity and strength to thrive among the **Woraworas**. When the Chief announces to the community that the **Otor** communal meal would be celebrated it means that the process of conflict management should begin within the community starting from the **Abusuas**. It is a collective conflict management strategy which begins with swearing of an oath in all the other stages education and interactive discussions are interspersed until an amicable conflict resolution is achieved. The climax of the process is the **Otor** ritual meal which signifies that in the name of peace and unity all differences are buried. The communal meal in itself rallies people around for education which is one of the greatest tools in the **Otor** ritual meal for conflict management.

CHAPTER FIVE

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

Chapter five will focus on the relevance of *Otor* communal meal as a strategy for conflict management for policy makers like Governments, Educationalists, Churches, Parents in Families and Households. The study is particularly be relevant to this group of people because they deal with conflicts directly in the society. The police may also find it beneficial because they also deal with conflicts when the need arises but are not directly connected to policy making, their main charge is law enforcement. The works of Rattray would be used as I look at the relevance of this communal ritual meal for the above policy makers in indigenous African communities. Nevertheless, the works of other African Scholars would be engaged to support my views. The *Otor* communal ritual meal for conflict management in *Worawora* offers alternative conflict resolution strategy for Ghana and Africa as a whole.

5.2 Summary

The *Otor* communal ritual meal in *Worawara* offers an alternative conflict management strategy for indigenous African countries. The strategy lies in the use of religious and philosophical thought of the people to effectively in togetherness achieve results in conflict management. In *Worawora* thought and practice religion and philosophy are bed mates, there is no contradiction whatsoever in their functions. The academic relationship between religion and philosophy has been treated elaborately in chapter three of this work and the position of the *Worawora* people was elaborated. The *Worawora* religious injunctions also have philosophical implications; however, none is emphasized above the other. The ability of the *Worawora* to combine the religious and philosophical

perspectives of the **Otor** communal ritual meal interspersing it with traditional education in conflict management gives it a distinct alternative conflict resolution strategy for African countries. The combination of arbitration, Mediation and Negotiation in the strategy is also unique about the **Otor** communal ritual meal strategy. It is not always a win-win situation. Sometimes the guilty party is declared and in this case the guilty party is made to pacify the ancestors and the justified party.

5.3 Recommendation

The communal ritual meal for conflict management in **Worawora** is recommended as a strategy for Ghanaians and African countries as whole. The Otor communal ritual meal may be of relevance for Governments, Churches, Educationists, and Heads of families and households

5.3.1 Governments

The government will benefit from the **Otor** ritual communal meal if they factor into their policy strategies used by indigenous African communities in conflict management. It is important that the government sets up a committee to study alternative conflict management in African indigenous communities like **Worawora**. Additionally, they must look out for studies done by scholars on this matter in order to come out with informed conflict management strategies for Ghanaians. The government should adopt case studies on **Otor** ritual communal meal in **Worawora** for conflict management since a lot of ethnic groups in Ghana, especially the Akans practice **Otor** communal meal as a means of showing forgiveness and reconciliation. The studies will help government to understand history, customs, traditions and values of indigenous people which will help them appreciate the way they conduct themselves and improve on it. This will enable the government enact conflict management laws that are relevant to Ghanaians in general and

most importantly to particular communities. Laws would then be enacted to embrace collective decision making which has both religious and philosophical undertones.

Furthermore interactive discussions based on education in indigenous knowledge system with its religious and philosophical perspectives would be discussed. The studies will give the government the opportunity to do some pilot testing in Ghanaian communities and if found to be helpful, it could be generative it for conflict management resolution in the country. This will help to reduce the number of conflict cases piled up in our civil courts. The **Otor** ritual conflict management strategy will decentralize conflict management institutions, if adopted by the government, since almost every community will be allowed by law to use the strategy for conflict management. It will help the government to impart the fundamental human rights embedded in the traditions, customs and values of the people since periodic education during the ritual celebrations will be given. It will also enable the government to compare the effectiveness of our civil courts in terms of performance to the indigenous strategy resolving mechanisms. It will encourage administrative bodies in conflict management to act in fairness in view of their customs traditions and being aware of the spiritual implications. When people are informed about their culture and codes of conduct it becomes difficult to violate them and that will help minimize the number of conflict cases the government would have to deal with. It will complement the work of the current civil courts since the **Otor** communal ritual meal conflict management process arbitrates matters in traditional settings that are more fulfilling and satisfying to those involved in conflict. It will enable the government to be educated on what indigenous communities understand on issues like personal liberty, slavery or servitude, gender, race, color, ethnic origin, religion, women and children, and social or economic status, property distribution and marriage which often come up in matters of conflict management. It is obvious that western styled civil courts do not have

all the requisite indigenous knowledge system that could facilitate the arbitration of matters of conflict in indigenous communities. The Ghanaian indigenous strategies for conflict management were not allowed to inform the construction of western styled courts. The **Otor** communal ritual meal for conflict resolution will furnish government with the requisite information on conflict management and help the state to understand and interpret conflict management in African terms.

According to Kwame Bediako¹⁴² ‘what was observed in Africa was understood and interpreted, not in terms of Africa but in terms of Europe, that is, of the European value-setting.’ Bediako identifies as European value-setting for our institutions like churches, courts and schools. The Europeans did not make efforts to promote the enduring culture practices about which Rattray¹⁴³ observed ‘very little was known, not only by the missionaries and government functionaries but also by the indigenous educated people’. Rattray who earlier worked with the colonial government of the then Gold Coast but later decided to take a study of indigenous value systems of the Asante in order to use this knowledge to inform policy matters in Ghana observed that:

...an accurate acquaintance with the nature, habits and customs of alien population is necessary to all who have to live and work amongst them in any official capacity, whether administrators, executive officers, missionaries, or merchants, because, in order to deal effectively with any group of mankind it is essential to have that cultural sympathy with them which comes of sure knowledge.¹⁴⁴

The policy to study Akan indigenous values system contained in rituals, customs, habits, proverbs songs and symbols was, primarily, to help the British colonial government to “deal effectively” with the people and bring development to the indigenous people. In a

¹⁴² Kwame Bediako, *Theology and Identity: The impact of conflict upon Christian thought in the second century and modern Africa* (Oxford: Regnum Books, 1992), 235.

¹⁴³ R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1923), 11.

¹⁴⁴ R.S. Rattray, *Ashanti* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 5.

sense, Rattray and all the other staff of administration were required to have some level of understanding of indigenous value systems of the people they functioned within. Beyond the efficiency of the staff, the usage of cultural values was considered as a political strategy for penetrating the religious and philosophical thought system of the people. For example, the indirect Rule policy of the colonial British government was pursued through the traditional government leadership system. Again knowledge of Ashanti legal system was of paramount importance to the colonial government as it was engaged in framing Native Jurisdiction ordinances, in schemes for use by native Tribunals for conflict management and in planning for indirect rule¹⁴⁵. Rattray connected the successful future of *Ashantis* and, for that matter, indigenous communities to the preservation of their indigenous value system. He observes that

... The law and constitution of these people were evolved and finally based upon the indigenous beliefs is to suggest something that goes deeper than the exposition of an interesting academic theory. It is to state a fact of considerable significance in the field of practical West African politics today. Upon the correct application of this knowledge must, I believe, depend our satisfactory tutelage of this people and ultimately, their own success in self-government.¹⁴⁶

For Rattray to connect 'satisfactory tutelage' that will lead to ultimately, their own success in self-government was to suggest that he saw a future which the others (colonial administrations) had not seen. The *Otor* communal ritual meal for conflict resolution will offer government to restructure courts that will be relevant to indigenous people for socio-economic development. Knowledge derived from the *Otor* ritual communion meal for conflict management would equip the government with adequate knowledge about African institutions and use this knowledge in their policy formulations.

¹⁴⁵ R. S. Rattray, *Ashanti law and constitution* (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), v.

¹⁴⁶ Rattray, *Ashanti law and Constitution*, vi.

5.3.2 Churches

Churches in Africa are involved in conflict management since they are both social and spiritual organizations and therefore, cannot avoid conflicts. According to Matthew, (18:15-17 RSV) ‘if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every word may be confirmed by evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church, and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector’. This text supports the view that conflicts exist in the church as a body of Christ and must be given the attention it deserves. The **Otor** communal meal ritual for conflict management will be relevant for conflict management in the church since the strategy considers the social cultural context of the community. Andrew Walls¹⁴⁷ observed that churches and missions need deep scholarship related to indigenous knowledge systems. Knowledge in the **Otor** communal meal ritual will help the church to extend their missionary enterprise to areas like chieftaincy institutions and conflict management. He considers learning as mission field where Christian scholars are called to work. These scholars need indigenous intellectual resources and devotion to enable them function effectively. He writes that,

It is necessary to realize that ‘the world of learning is a mission field too. Quality, depth and range of scholarship are the marks of vocation - and a collegial and demanding vocation needing all the traditional missionary attributes of devotion perseverance and sacrifice.’¹⁴⁸

It is important therefore, as a mark of Christian scholarship to learn the indigenous value system in order to deal with challenges of conflict as they embark upon their missionary work. The **Otor** communal ritual meal offers indigenous resources for conflict

¹⁴⁷ Andrew Walls, *The missionary movement in Christian History: Studies in the Transmission of faith* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2000), 28.

¹⁴⁸ Walls, *The missionary Movement in Christian History*, 152.

management in the churches. The construction of a relevant conflict management for the Akan churches must consider Akan indigenous communal meal ritual practices as significant religious and philosophical resources or tools. Western missionaries however, denied Christian indigenous communities such an approach to conflict resolution. Andrew walls stated that ‘the early missionaries had little in their theology to cause them to look for God in African traditional religion’.¹⁴⁹ If Wall’s assertion is right, then it can be concluded that churches or missionaries did not give the theology that could facilitate the integration of African intellectual resources into the churches for solving their problems. The **Otor** communal meal ritual, therefore, should be allowed to inform the construction of a relevant conflict management for Africans. Again, Rattray¹⁵⁰ said that the very future of the African, specifically the Akan, was deeply connected to the integration of their indigenous practices or value system in whatever developmental programs that are being pursued. The urgency of Rattray’s study was determined by the visible rejection and destruction on indigenous values and knowledge systems by the missionaries and indigenous people who had had some encounters with European patterns of education and missionaries. Rattray summed up the phenomenon in the following way:

The educated African however, has been cut off from and is out of sympathy with the life of his own people. He had learned in nine cases out of ten, if he has not actually been taught to despise his own illiterate brethren and the unlettered past of his race concerning that past he really knows little or nothing and generally care less ...If, as it is probable, he has been educated in one of the mission schools, then his whole training, until quite recently, has been one which it has not appeared orthodox or even conceivable to his teachers that there must be something in the African’s own culture and religious beliefs worth of retention side by side (for a time at least) with the ethical teachings of Christian theology.¹⁵¹

Rattray was concerned with the visible neglect of indigenous values by the Christian churches and even indigenous Africans who had had some encounters with European

¹⁴⁹ Andrew Walls, *The cross cultural Process in Christian History* (New York: Orbis Books, 2002), 120.

¹⁵⁰ Rattray, Ashanti (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 5.

¹⁵¹ Rattray, Ashanti (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 87-8.

patterns of Education. He suggested that missionaries should learn to integrate indigenous values systems in whatever developmental institutions they offer the people of Ghana and Africa as a whole. It is in this vein that the **Otor** ritual communal meal for conflict management and other indigenous value systems are relevant for the church in Ghana today.

Rattray again made a very important point when he said that even though the churches may consider some of the indigenous cultural practices as foolish and childish, they must realize how real they still are over vast areas of the African continent. He admonished the missionaries to read their history before in a spirit of indignation sit in judgment upon the African. This is how he puts it:

Foolish and childish in the extreme as many of these beliefs may seem to us, we must realize how terribly they still are over vast areas of the African continent, where they persist in spite of the restraint of paternal administration and steady advance of civilization. We must be careful to read the history of our own very remote past, before in a spirit of pious indignation, we sit in judgment upon the African.¹⁵²

The church must consider these suggestions carefully when putting in place policy that direct institutions like schools, hospitals and agricultural establishments of the church. They must carefully study indigenous value systems and not destroy them because they are the very foundations upon which African communities are built. In this direction, the adoption of the processes of **Otor** ritual communal meal as a strategy for conflict resolution is very relevant for the church. The church will do better if they consider indigenous knowledge systems in planning developmental activities for the church.

5.3.3 Educationists

Education should aim at producing holistic human beings who would fit into the society which is summed up in the current educational Act, 2008 Act 778. (The education Act,

¹⁵² R. S. Rattray, Religion and Art in Ashanti (Oxford: Oxford university Press, 1927), 34.

1961 Act 87 has been repealed to bring into existence Education Act, 2008 Act 778 assented on 6th January 2009). Education should aim at developing the cognitive (head), affective (heart) and the psychomotor (hand) domains of individual so that they may contribute meaningfully to their community and society. A holistic human being must be informed about their cultural values and use them to develop the community in which they live. It is important that those who are tasked with the responsibility of providing policy directions for effective education and those who are trained to execute these policies are well informed about the cultural settings of the beneficiaries. The only way educationalists can impart on African societies effectively is to situate the type of education they provide within their indigenous knowledge system.

This is clear from the works of Rattray¹⁵³ in his studies on the Asante of Ghana. In his interaction with the Akan and European cultures Rattray considered the need for critical appraisal of their education policy in order to maintain aspects of the culture that were good and beneficial. He said that Africans have a lot to learn from their European counterparts; however, they should not discard their own relevant cultural practices in their effort to learn from others. He observed that it is important for educationists to formulate policies that will focus on their African identity. They should develop a sense of pride in the customs, rituals and value systems they have inherited, he claimed. “I have told them that they will become better and finer men and women by remaining true Ashanti and retaining a certain pride in their past and that their greatest achievement is to follow and build upon lines with which the national *sunsum* or soul has been familiar since first they were a people”.¹⁵⁴ He seems to suggest to them that they should build their

¹⁵³ Rattray, *Ashanti*, 11-2.

¹⁵⁴ Rattray, *Ashanti*, 12.

future on line on which they are familiar with, in other works they should build their future on education that is embedded in their indigenous knowledge systems.

Rattray's intention was to conserve Akan indigenous education system that he considered helpful for the formation of their children and nation building. He wanted then to eliminate educational policies that would not be helpful in nation building of positive cultural and national identity. He did not only encourage the people to build their future based on traditional education systems but demanded critical examination of the culture in order to discard cultural practices that would be detrimental to progress, He stated. 'I have told them that the work of the new department is to study their institutions, which the rising generation is tempted to despise and that it is anxious and ready to help and advice the nation as to what will be of assistance to it conserving, and not destroying, all those customs that are best and not detrimental to progress'¹⁵⁵.

Rattray as a government official did not lose the sense of objectivity and critical assessment of his study of Akan value system. Cultural practices that could retard progress of Akan society were to be avoided. However, cultural systems that would facilitate growth and development must be retained in their educational systems. He further urged Africans to extend the examination of cultural practices to European culture and eschew the negative ones from their educational system. He added that the integration of cultural systems in their educational system must be pursued on the grounds of critical examination. He summed it up like this:

I have tried to make the people understand that we are here among them to help them by grafting on to their institutions such of our own as will enable them to take their place in the commonwealth of civilized nations, not as denationalized Ashanti, but as an African people who will become the greater force and power in

¹⁵⁵ Rattray, *Ashanti*, 12.

the Empire because they have not bartered the wealth of their past, metaphorically and not infrequently in reality, for a coat, a collar, or a tie.¹⁵⁶

It is important in the foregoing discussion that, the study of **Otor** communal ritual meal as an indigenous conflict management practice is a tool for growth and development and worthy of retention and imparting in indigenous African communities. It is important. Educationalists must integrate into their policies enduring cultural practices that will facilitate growth and development. When, **Otor** communal ritual is integrated into school curricular it will help students appreciate the relevance of indigenous cultural practices in conflict resolution and encourage them to study other neglected traditional practices for progress and development. In view of the above discussion it is obvious that the **Otor** communal ritual meal is relevant to educational policies for African countries. Rattray in his works indicates that education must be made relevant to the needs of the citizen. The highlights of the Act 778 of 6th January, 2009 seeks to provide for the establishment of an educational system intended to produce well balanced individual with the requisite knowledge, skills, values, aptitudes to become functional and productive citizens for the total development and the democratic advancement of the nation and for related matters. The **Otor** communal ritual meal for conflict management if adopted is a tool in hand for educational policy makers to produce citizen for total development of the nation and for related matters.

5.3.4 Parents in Families

In this work parents would refer to parents of families and household. John S. Mbiti¹⁵⁷ indicates that for the people of Africa the family have a wider circle of members than the word suggests in Europe or North America. According to him, in the traditional society, the family includes children, parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters who

¹⁵⁶ Rattray, Ashanti, 12-3.

¹⁵⁷ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy* (New York: Anchor Books, 1970), 139

may have their own children and other immediate relatives. Again, he says that the family includes the departed relatives, whom he designated as the 'living-dead'. These are, as their name implies 'alive' in the memories of their surviving family to which they once belonged in their physical life. Those living-dead solidify and mystically bind together the whole family. The living members of the family say that they see departed members of their family appearing and coming to them. Furthermore, Mbiti writes that,

African concept of the family also includes the unborn members who are still in the loins of the living. They are the buds of hope and expectation and each family makes sure that its own existence is not extinguished.¹⁵⁸

This means that the family must provide for its continuation and prepare for the coming of those not yet born. That is why, African parents are anxious to see that their children find husbands and wives, otherwise failure to do what is expected of them could spell doom for the family. It is the same reason that parents in the family must be informed to inform their offspring. They must have good understanding of their traditional customs and value system and make all efforts to pass it on to subsequent generations. It is not uncommon to see African parents admonishing unborn babies in the womb. It is during the **Otor** communal ritual meal for conflict management that a lot of education on traditional customs and rites as well as cultural value system are intimated. The **Otor** communal ritual meal brings members of the community together for conflict management. Embodied in the conflict management strategy are educational programs intended to inform members of the community about their indigenous knowledge systems and how they impact on conflict management and good relationship as a whole. This is how the **Otor** is relevant to parents of families.

¹⁵⁸ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 139

5.3.5 Parents in Households

The household is the smallest unit of the family, consisting of the children parents and sometimes the grandparents. According to Mbiti, it is what one might refer to as “the family at night” for it is normally during the night that the “household is really itself”. He says that it is as night that the children are with their immediate children in matters pertaining to domestic relationships. He submits that: The household in Africa is what in European and American societies would be called ‘family’ if a man has two or more wives; he has as many households since each wife would usually have her own house erected within the same compound where other wives and their households live.¹⁵⁹ A village in the African context is the congregation of households or joint households. During the **Otor** communal ritual meal celebrations all households or joint households who belong to a certain **Abusua** headed by the **Abusuapanin** would congregate to celebrate the rite. The **Otor** communal meal offers the opportunity to households to participate in the communal meal celebrations in order to learn from the proceedings which would help them to avoid similar mistakes in the future. The different households also learn from the **Otor** communal meal arbitration’s strategies they could use in conflict managements within their various households. This work will offer parents in families and households the understanding of various strategies used in indigenous African communities for conflict management. Parents, families and households have the opportunity to now use written materials on the **Otor** communal ritual meal to facilitate and ensure the process of formation. The **Otor** communal ritual meal (written work) for conflict management would support and facilitates the oral nature of education embedded in the ritual. This does not mean that the oral nature of Akan traditional education, (lack of

¹⁵⁹ John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 140

written source) implies lack of philosophical thinking. Kwame Gyekye,¹⁶⁰ a leading African philosopher indicates that there is no good reason to suppose that the lack of written sources implies the absence of philosophical thinking. Gyekye who studied Akan philosophical thought systems, argues that the conceptual schemes in African customs and traditions (for example in the philosophical and religious perceptions of the *Otor* communal meal) provide enough grounds for intellectual justification for indigenous religious and philosophical thought and other knowledge systems. Gyekye further argues that to deny African people's philosophical thought is to imply that they are unable to reflect on or conceptualize their experience. If Gyekye's assertion of indigenous people ability to conceptualize their experiences is right, then Akan symbols, institutions and concepts of education are intellectually potent, written works done later only support and facilitate the oral works.

Legitimacy of African Traditional Education, through the cultural categories, can be established with or without written or book culture as suggested by Western scholars.

Gyekye argues that,

... it is therefore, legitimate to make the assumption that every culture produces a philosophy, or put differently, that there is a philosophical component to cultures thought system. Because the philosophies of some cultures have been written down for countries, and as a result of the dissemination of the written word, it has been possible over time for those philosophies to be interpreted, elucidated, refined and extensively developed, both vertically and horizontally. The philosophies of some other cultures, notably those of Africa, have not met with such fortune and have consequently, remained part of the Oral tradition.¹⁶¹

It is clear from the above view that parent and families and households in Africa should still regard oral forms in the culture to inform traditional formation patterns. Nevertheless, efforts should be made to document African cultural forms to support the Oral forms in

¹⁶⁰ Kwame Gyekye, *An essay on African philosophical thought* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), xi

¹⁶¹ Kwame Gyekye, *An essay on African philosophical thought*, 10

traditional education and formation. This work will offer parents, families and households who are the primary traditional educators written understanding of various strategies used in African indigenous communities for conflict management.

5.4 Conclusion

When the announcement goes for the **Otor** communal meal celebration especially during festive occasion every **Worawora** citizen is aware that it is also an announcement for traditional conflict management in the community to begin. Every matter of conflict must be resolved before one partakes in this special communal meal. The process starts in the Abusua and is referred to the chief if necessary but most often it does not travel beyond the boundaries of the **Abusuapanin** because of the cost involved. The process starts with an oath to speak the truth in the matter before the **Abusuapanin** and his elders who also represent ancestors. Those involved are then allowed to state their concerns in the presence of the gathering. Witnesses are allowed and cross examination is done by the opposing parties themselves not by lawyers as in the secular civil courts. The next step is the intensive education and interactive discursion which takes place between the parties and the elders to reveal where things went wrong. It involves awareness creation on the customs, traditions and values systems of the **Worawora** community. The proverbs, songs, symbols and stories reflect the kind of strategy being used by the elders to manage the conflict. The next stage is the verdict which is passed in consultation with the ancestors and this is followed by **Otor** communal meal as a sign of acceptance of the verdict and reconciliation.

The reconciliation creates a strong sense of belongingness that makes it difficult for citizens to go into conflict. The ability of the elders to combine religious and philosophical

perspectives of their knowledge systems makes the exercise a distinct conflict resolution strategy.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

(Interview Guides) A Guide for Interviews, Questionnaires and Telephone Conversations for Selected Chiefs and Elders, *Abusuapanins*, Traditional Priests, Educated And Uneducated (Youth And Elderly)

What Preparations Are Required For *Otor* Communal Meal?

Instructions

Please tick 'Yes or No' where applicable.

Choose the correct answer from the possible answers

Provide your own answers where possible.

1. What is the *Otor* communal meal?
 - a. A ceremonial meal b. A fun meal c. breakfast meal
2. Have you ever participated in the *Otor* communal meal?

[] Yes [] No
3. What is the relevance of this symbolic meal?
 - a. To celebrate unity and peace b. To prepare for war c. To provide for the hungry and needy in the society d. Specify
4. Do you need to go through any preparation in order to participate in this ceremonial meal?

[] Yes [] No
5. If 'No' to question 4, why?
 - (a) Because it is open to all (b) because you only need to clean heart
 - (c) Because of time constraints (d) specify
6. If 'Yes' to question 4, what preparations do you need?
 - (a) Making peace with enemies (b) Paying a specified amount

(c) Writing a letter of participation (d) Specify

7. Do you need to go through any process for peace making?

☐ Yes ☐ No

8. If 'No' to question 7 why?

(a) Because it is not necessary (b) it is time wasting

(c) Because it is not mandatory (d) Specify

9. If 'Yes' to question 7, what are the processes? Specify

10. Are some of the following included in the process – Mark them

(a). Early morning gatherings to collectively discern the truth

(b) Arbitration meetings by selected elders

(c) Divination

(d) Dialogue (No interference from 3rd Party)

(e) Dialogue (Respectable 3rd party involvement) (f) Confessions (conflict due to stealing or taking somebody's wife)

(g) Libation (a) oath taking (b) Witness stage in judgement

(h) Registration of cases officially

i. Invoking curses upon guilty if necessary (ii) Paying a fine

j. Reconciliation or **Otor** communal meal stage

11. What kind of conflicts are managed through the **Otor** ritual process

(a) social/conflict of interest (b) Conflict of war (c) Specify

12. Are some of the following social/conflicts of interests managed in the **Otor** communal meal ritual process? (Please mark them)

a. Abuse (Physical and Verbal)

b. Slandering

c. Land/boundary matters

- d. Fornication and Adultery cases
- e. Childbirth in marriage
- f. Irresponsibility in up keeping of child
- g. Ownership of child problems
- h. Stealing problem
- i. Witchcraft and killing
- k. Succession problems/ Inheritance problems
- l. Others

APPENDIX II

A guide for interviews, questionnaires and telephone conversations for selected chiefs and elders, *abusuapanins*, traditional priests, educated and uneducated (youth and elderly)

How is the *Otor* meal eaten?

1. Is the *Otor* meal meant to satisfy hunger? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. What kind of meal is it?
 - (a) An ordinary meal to nourish the body
 - (b) A symbolic meal meant to foster unity
 - (c) Specify
3. Do you need to wash your hands to eat the meal? ☐ Yes ☐ No
4. If 'Yes' to question 3, why?
 - (a) Health reasons
 - (b) For ritual purposes
 - (c) Specify
5. If 'No' why?
 - (a) Because of African stomach, fears no disease
 - (b) Because everybody bathed earlier
 - (c) It is not necessary
 - (d) Specify
6. What are the ingredients used in the preparing the *Otor* meal? Specify
7. Are some of these ingredients used in preparing the 'Otor' meal – (please mark them)
 - (a) Yams
 - (b) Red oil
 - (c) Salt

- (d) Groundnut
8. Do you eat the 'Otor meal with your hands?
- [] Yes [] No
9. If 'Yes' to question 8 why?
- (a) Because it is a ceremonial meal
- (b) Because tradition demands that
- (c) Because I am a African
- (d) Specify
10. If 'No' to question 8, why?
- (a) Because it is unhygienic to do so
- (b) Because tradition does not demand it
- (c) Because I like eating with my hands
- (d) Specify
11. Do you eat it hurriedly? [] Yes [] No
12. If 'Yes' to question 11, why?
- (a) Because if one does not hurry the food will get finished
- (b) Because one will be punished if one relaxes in each
- (c) Specify
13. If 'No' to question 11, why?
- (a) Because tradition demands that it should be eaten slowly
- (b) Because there is no need to hurry
- (c) Specify

APPENDIX III

A Guide For Interviews, Questionnaires And Telephone Conversations For Selected Chiefs And Elders, Abusuapanins, Traditional Priests, Educated And Uneducated (Youth And Elderly)

What is the religious significance of the *Otor* Meal?

1. Do you eat the ***Otor*** meal because you are hungry?

[] Yes [] No

2. If 'Yes' to question 1, why?

(a) Because meals are expected to satisfy hunger

(b) Because I don't eat before the ***Otor*** meal

(c) Specify

3. If 'No' to question 1, why?

(a) Because it is a ceremonial meal

(b) Because when I am hungry I wouldn't eat ***Otor***

(c) Specify

4. Do you believe the unseen members of the community participate in the communal meal?

[] Yes [] No

5. If 'Yes' to question 4, why?

(a) Because the community comprises of both the seen and unseen

(b) Because they are hungry

(c) Specify

6. If 'No' to question 4, why?

(a) Because I do not believe in the unseen

(b) Because they don't have mouths

- (c) Specify
7. Do you believe they participate in the process of peace making?
[] Yes [] No
8. If 'Yes' to question 7, why?
- (a) They know the truth and would not hide it
- (b) They know better than the physical beings
- (c) They are part of the community and must participate
- (d) All of the above
9. If 'No' to question 7, why?
- (a) Because they don't exist
- (b) Because they have a world of their own
- (c) Specify
10. What is their main role in the process of the **Otor** communal meal?
- (a) To participate as members of the community
- (b) To show their solidarity
- (c) To show lasting solutions to problems
- (d) Specify
11. Does the process of the **Otor** communal meal promote conflict management? []
Yes [] No
12. If 'Yes' to question 11, how?
- (a) By compelling members deal with differences for the sake of peace in the society
- (b) By suggesting unity and oneness in a symbolic way
- (c) It implies a covenant with the condition to 'let go' which must be fulfilled or face consequences
13. If 'No' to question 11, why?

- (a) Because 'eating' a meal has no significance apart from nourishing the body
- (b) Conflict management is not a matter of eating meals
- (c) Specify

APPENDIX IV

A guide for interviews, questionnaires and telephone conversations for selected chiefs and elders, *abusuapanins*, traditional priests, educated and uneducated (youth and elderly)

What is the philosophical significance of the *Otor* Meal?

1. Do you eat the *Otor* meal because you are hungry?
[] Yes [] No
2. If 'Yes' to question 1, why?
 - (a) Because meals are expected to satisfy hunger
 - (b) Because meals promote satisfactory socializing
 - (c) Satisfaction socially, naturally resolves a lot of problems
 - (d) Specify
3. If 'No' to question 1, why?
 - (a) Because I participate in the *Otor* meal for social and physical fulfilment but not for satisfaction of physical hunger
 - (b) Because when I am hungry, I wouldn't eat *Otor*.
 - (c) Specify
4. What does the *Otor* meal signify?
 - (a) Love
 - (b) Unity
 - (c) Forgiveness
 - (d) Specify
5. How does the *Otor* meal signify love?
 - (a) Eating together in one bowl implies tasting one another's saliva – it means 'I love you to the extent that I love to taste your saliva'
 - (b) Eating together means 'I want to be in love with you, not in conflict with you.'

- (c) In African thought we don't eat and drink with enemies we eat with loved ones.
- (d) Specify
6. Does the **Otor** meal signify Unity? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. If 'Yes' to question 6, why?
- (a) Because we do not eat with your enemies
- (b) It is hypocrisy eating with your enemy
- (c) It means for the sake of unity I am ready to taste your saliva
- (d) Specify
8. If 'No' to question 6, why?
- (a) Because eating together does not mean unity
- (b) Because I cannot know what is in the head of my enemy
- (c) Specify
9. Do you believe that symbols have rationale or meaning?
- ☐ Yes ☐ No
10. If 'Yes' to question 9, How?
- (a) Since they are symbols and not the real thing they definitely point to something beyond themselves.
- (b) Symbols like learning aids promotes understanding
- (c) Specify
11. If 'No' to question 9, why?
- (a) Symbols give ambiguous
- (b) Symbols don't mean what they portray
- (c) Specify
12. How do we discern the mind of the unseen members of the community?
- (a) Divination

(b) Ancestral Songs

(c) Specify

13. How does traditional and ancestral songs sang during **Otor** meal celebrations promote conflict management?

(a) Through the wise sayings in the songs

(b) Through sharing of experiences

(c) It is in songs that reason and emotions meet to promote conflict management

(d) Specify

APPENDIX V

A guide for interviews, questionnaires and telephone conversations for selected chiefs and elders, *abusuapanins*, traditional priests, educated and uneducated (youth and elderly)

What expectations are required from participants?

1. Do you believe the **Otor** meal is a covenant meal? [] Yes [] No
2. If 'Yes' to question 1, why?
 - (a) Because tradition holds it is a covenant for peace in the community
 - (b) Because it climaxes the processes of **Otor** meal celebration
3. If 'No' to question 1, why?
 - (a) Because tradition does not hold it as such.
 - (b) Because eating together has no covenantal implications
 - (c) Specify
4. Are some of the following expectations required of participants of the covenant meal? (Please mark them)
 - (a) Forgiveness and reconciliation
 - (b) Community involvement
 - (c) Peace and unity
 - (d) Specify
5. Do you like the **Otor** ceremonial meal? [] Yes [] No
6. If 'Yes' to question 5, why?
 - (a) It brings peace and reconciliation
 - (b) It promotes socialization and fraternization
 - (c) Specify
7. If 'No' to question 5, why?
 - (a) It is unchristian

- (b) It promotes idol worship
 - (c) Specify
8. Do you notice and change after the **Otor** meal celebrations?
- [] Yes [] No
9. If 'Yes' to question 8, why?
- (a) Those who did not talk to one another converse happily
 - (b) Those who do not exchange gifts now do so
 - (c) Specify
10. If 'No' to question 9, why?
- (a) Some still nurse resentment with others.
 - (b) Bad inter-personal relations still exist in the community
 - (c) Specify

APPENDIX VI

Table 4:

Do you think the preparation period is necessary for peace?

REASONS	RESPONDENTS
Because of dawn dialogue with Opponent	23
Opportunity to meet selected elders first	17
Opportunity to meet the <i>Okomfo</i> privately	11
To avoid public disgrace	5
To avoid public ridicule	5

From indications on the table, there is the need for preparation period. The most important preparation is to talk over the issue at dawn.

Table 5:

What kind of conflict is managed in the *Otor* conflict resolution?

RESPONDENT	NO	PERCENTAGE
Intra Conflict (Groups, Countries etc.	14	21.875
Interpersonal Conflict (Between Individuals)	49	76.5625

From the Table 5, most people think that interpersonal conflicts are more rampant than intrapersonal conflicts.

Table 6:

Is the *Otor* meal meant to satisfy hunger?

RESPONDENT	NO.	PERCENTAGE
Yes	6	9.375
No	59	92.1875

From Table 6, the *Otor* meal is not meant to satisfy physical hunger.

Table 7:**Give reasons for eating ‘Otor’ with hands washed**

REASONS	NO
Because of Health Reasons	50
For ritual washing	6
For the sake of obedience	4
For the sake of Love	2
I don’t Know	2

From Table 7, indications are that health reasons constitute the main reason why people wash their hands before eating the *Otor* meal. Ritual washing of hands constitutes an insignificant reason for washing hands.

Table 8:**Give reasons for not eating the *Otor* meal with your hands?**

REASONS	NO
Because it is unhygienic to do so	5
Because the tradition does not demand so	21
Because I don’t like eating with my hands	32
Because my right hand is amputated	2
Because of a boil on my right hand	3

From table 8, people don’t like eating the *Otor* meal with their hands because they are not used to eating with their hands.

Table 9:**Give reasons for either eating hurriedly or slowly.**

REASONS	NO
If I eat slowly others will cheat me	33
Because tradition demands that it should be eaten slowly	3
Because tradition demands that it should be eaten quickly	8
Because there is no need to hurry	9
Because I want enough	11

From Table 9, the indication is that people eat hurriedly because they don't want to be cheated by others.

Table 10:**Give reasons why you participate in the *Otor* communal meal.**

REASONS	NO
Because meals are expected to satisfy Hunger	2
Because I will save some money	7
Because I don't eat before the <i>Otor</i> Meal	3
Because it is a Ceremonial Meal	11
Because it is a sign of Love and Peace	41

From Table 10, the indication is that a lot of people participate in the communal meal for the sake of love and peace.

Table 11:**How often is the Otor ritual successful in conflict management?**

RESPONSES	NO.	PERCENTAGE
Very often	51	79.6875
Not often	13	20.3125

From indications on Table 11, percentage levels of those who think the Otor ritual is successful in conflict management is quite high in the community who participate in the **Otor** communal meal as compared to those who don't.

Table 12:

Give reasons for believing that unseen members of the community participate in the Otor Communal Meal.

REASON	NO.
Because the community comprises of both the seen and unseen	40
Because they are Hungry	2
Because I don't believe in the unseen	7
Because they don't have mouths	4
Because they don't have hands	3
Because they enjoy meals also	8

Table 12 shows that the main reason for believing that unseen members participate in the **Otor** communal meal is that they are members of the community.

Table 13:

Do you believe the unseen members participate in the process of peace making?

RESPONSES	NO	PERCENTAGE
Yes	61	95.3125
No	3	4.6875

From Table 13, the percentage level of those who believe that the unseen members participate in the communal meal is very high. It means that it is a meal both the seen and unseen.

Table 14:

What is the main Religious significance of the Otor meal?

RESPONSES	NO.	PERCENTAGE
Socialization	18	28.125
Unity and Peace	35	54.6875
Resolving Conflicts	11	17.1875

Indications from Table 14 is that, the percentage level who think unity and peace is the most important purpose of the **Otor** meal is great compared to other reason.

Table 15:

Give reasons for why you think the unseen members either participate or not.

RESPONSES	NO.
They know the truth and would not hide it	11
They know better than the physical beings	19
They are part of the community and must participate	21
Because they don't exist	2
Because they have a world of their own	10
I don't Know	3

The Table shows that, the main reason why people think the unseen members participate in the **Otor** communal meal is that they are part of the community.

Table 16:

Does the process of the *Otor* communal meal promote conflict resolution?

RESPONSES	NO	PERCENTAGE
Yes	61	95.3125
No	3	4.6875

From Table 16, indications are that the percentage level of those who think that **Otor** communal meal promotes conflict resolution is quite high.

Table 17:

Do you think that symbols have meaning?

RESPONSES	NO.	PERCENTAGE
Yes	62	96.875
No	2	3.125

From Table 17, the percentage level shows that symbols have meaning and should be considered as such.

Table 18:

How do you discern the mind of unseen members of the community on a scale of preference?

RESPONSES	NO
Divination	28
Libation	13
Ancestral Songs	10
Casting lots	7
Punishment	16
Past Experience	10

From the Table 18, the indication is that, the mind of the unseen members of the community can be discerned mostly through divination.

Table 19:

How does a traditional and ancestral song sung during Otor ritual meal promote conflict management on a scale of preference?

RESPONSES	NO.
Through wise sayings in the songs	24
Through sharing of experiences	6
Reasons and Emotions combine to calm tempers	4
Songs teach moral lessons	30

The responds indicated on the table show that traditional ancestral songs promote conflict management because of the wise sayings in the song and the moral lessons they teach.

Table 20:

Do you believe the *Otor* communal meal is a Covenant meal?

RESPONSES	NO.	PERCENTAGE
Yes	59	92.1875
No	5	7.8125

From Table 20, indications are that the *Otor* communal meal is a covenant meal and must be taken serious.

Table 21:

What are the expectations after taken the *Otor* communal meal on a scale of preference?

RESPONSES	NO.
Forgiveness	5
Reconciliation	10
Community Participation	11
Peace and Unity	22
Socialization	5
Freshness / Freedom	25

Table 21 shows that peace and unity rates highest among all others in the expectations anticipated after taking the ritual meal.

Table 22:**Do you notice any change after the celebrations?**

RESPONSE	NO.	PERCENTAGE
Yes	34	53.125
No	30	46.875

From indications on Table 22, the percentage levels of those who think they notice changes after the *Otor* meal is greater than those who think they don't. However, the difference is insignificant. It means that some don't notice any change after eaten the *Otor* communal meal.

Table 23:

Give reasons why you think there are changes or there are no changes after eating the ritual *Otor* ritual meal?

RESPONSES	NO
Those at loggerheads now talk to one another's	25
Those who do not exchange gift now do so	14
Some still continue in their hostility	20
Some claim that they have forgiven but their action show otherwise	5

Table 23 shows that, a lot of people who were at logger heads with one another talk to each other after eaten the *Otor* communal meal. It also shows that significance number also continue in their hostility.