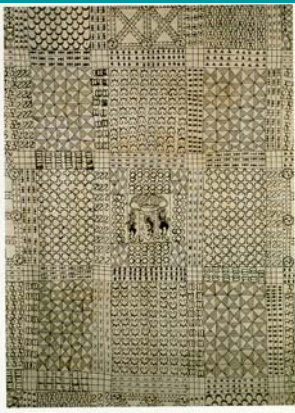


# CLOTH AS METAPHOR

## CLOTH SYMBOLISM OF THE AKAN OF GHANA



Asantehene Nana Osei Tutu II wearing adinkra cloth



Cloth given as a gift by the Asantehene to King of Holland in 1825



The Akan of Ghana and the Ivory Coast (Cote d'Ivoire) incorporated the ideographic and pictographic writing systems in their decorative arts in such media as textiles, metal casting, wood carving, pottery, and architecture. Knowledge encoded in decorative arts embodies views about social organization, religious values, and technological skills. Adinkra cloths of the Akan represent one of the most highly evolved systems of writing in Ghana. Every combination of colors, every juxtaposition or intersection of line and form, every pattern, traditional or idiosyncratic, contain data that can be imparted in some form or another to anyone. The adinkra symbols seem to act as mnemonic devices or cues, which trigger broader reflections about the nature of life and aesthetics. Meanings and names may change or vary from one area and from one artist to another, reflecting a fluid dynamic situation, susceptible to current events and changing concerns.



OWUO  
BEGYA  
HWAN

