

## **Art in Funeral Ceremonies, an Indigenous Cultural Identity of Asantes**

**E. A. Asante<sup>1</sup>, A.E. Asmah<sup>2</sup>, J. Adjei<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1&3</sup>Department of General Art Studies  
African Art and Culture Section  
KNUST, Ghana.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Integrated Rural Art and Industry  
KNUST, Ghana.

### **Abstract**

*Asantes in Ghana are endowed with various ceremonial practices and art forms which emphasize the identity of the indigenous Asante and promote their socio-cultural development. Unfortunately their funeral practices which this study seeks to dwell on is suffering acculturation that needs to be re-examined and realigned to promote the socio cultural development of the Asantes as evident in the findings and analysis of the data. The rationale therefore is to discuss the funeral rites of the Asantes by placing these practises in its factual historical and cultural perspective. It also seeks to bring to the fore the indiscernible role art played in funerals. The Descriptive method of Qualitative Research was used in the study. The research made known the neglected funeral practices and the relegated funerary arts, which have characterized today's funeral ceremonies.*

**Key Words:** Culture, Asantes, Funeral practices, Funerary arts, Identity, acculturation

### **Introduction**

The culture of every society is one of its greatest assets and the basis of its development. It is the soul, spirit and life of that society. Culture portrays the real nature of the people and identifies them as unique persons. The pressure exerted on indigenous Ghanaian culture by western ones has greatly undermined the former in almost every dimension, including funeral ceremonies. This development has brought about changes in certain funeral practices and the arts that go with them. This is evident in the seeming lack of appreciation for certain traditional funeral practices culminating in the introduction and the wholesale acceptance of foreign funerary arts on the altar of traditional ones. These have consequently left family members overburdened with debt. In the midst of this situation, two problems have been identified which call for scholarly attention.

Firstly, most people in 'Asanteland' do not seem to know the role art plays in the various rites associated with funeral ceremonies in Asante. Secondly, funeral ceremonies in Asante have undergone acculturation to the detriment of indigenous Asante culture. The study therefore seeks to bring to the fore the indiscernible role art plays in funerals as well as to discuss aspects of the Asante funeral rites in its factual-historic and cultural perspective. In this regard, the following research questions were posed to drive the study. What role does art play in funeral ceremonies in Kumasi? What cultural facts about Asante funeral rites?

### **Materials and Methods**

In gathering data for this study, combined research approaches have been adopted. The researchers opted for the qualitative research method for this study. This approach was chosen because it offers both the ethnographic and case study traditions which are of immense benefit in a research of this nature. The researchers have a long period of ethnographic experience in the setting under study. This method therefore, helped to achieve the set objectives. Best (1981) asserts that qualitative studies were subject to vivid and picturesque descriptions; and not merely expressed in quantitative terms. Such qualitative study endeavours to give a rich description of the people, the artefacts, ceremonies, conversations and places.

The idea is to paint a holistic picture in order to have a comprehensive understanding, and not a numeric analysis of data. This method used for this research described specific funeral scenes vis – a – vis the use of art.

## **Results and Discussions**

### **Key Concepts of Art and Funeral**

Art is seen as “the work of man, human skill or the creation or expression of what is beautiful”. Newton (1955) posits that, “Art is a human conception made manifest by the skilful use of a medium”. Funeral on the other hand is the burial, burning or disposal of a dead body with the usual religious ceremonies. According to Rattray (1927), a funeral is a Rite of passage dominated by the theme or idea of separation. Among Akans, a person’s *Abusua* (matrilineage) or clan hosted by birth is the primarily responsible for the funeral of the *Kra*, or soul of the individual. The oldest female and male of the lineage are thus the key players. In the light of this study, therefore, all the human conceptions made manifest by the skilful use of media that give pleasure to the senses associated with the disposal of a dead person’s body characterized by the usual religious ceremonies were closely studied. Here, man-made objects as well as actions discernible at any particular funeral may be termed funerary art.

Just as the practice of burying the dead is as old as the culture of mankind so is its activities concerning burial and as culture passes through stages of development, it brings along diverse and sophisticated use of art. According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, (1972, vol. 9) discoveries of burial grounds on ancient human habitat have exposed some stunning information about artefacts used in burying the dead. Burials have been partly or wholly conditioned by geographical, historical, philosophical, religious beliefs and cultural resources in relationship with the dead. Whatever conditions a burial practice, art exerts its influence. Our study reveals that the universal practice of using artefacts or funerary art is in consonance with the belief in life after death which varies slightly in as many as there are beliefs. What seems clear from available literature is that art appears to permeate virtually all burial rites.

Concluding from the study, it is evident, that the significance of the use of funerary artifacts is to: show respect and honour, provide a dwelling, place, use for services; be a means of pacification to prevent the soul of the dead from coming back, show the kind of life to be led after death, be a sign or symbol of religion, show the idea of rebirth; be a means of sustenance; assist in ‘resurrection’; protect from demons or dangers; ensure favourable verdict at the judgment of the dead, continue occupation such as hunting; save the living from the vengeance of the dead and see to the admission of the soul to the land of the dead.

The above imply that the dead would reciprocate such gesture to lead an honest, peaceful, exemplary life, being accepted to continue his life in the spiritual world, as well as guarding the living. In the light of this study, coupled with the various roles of funerary art outlined above, it is obvious that art goes beyond the physical.

### **Art and burial practices**

Many writers such as Rattray, Sarpong, Mbiti, Opoku, Nketiah and Meyerowitz, agree with the current researchers that the real function of funeral ritual is not to release emotion but to create, manifest, and affirm basic values of society as is the case in Asante. For instance, a widow’s wailing does not necessarily provide comfort but publicly reasserts the significance and value of the marital bond at the moment of its dissolution by death. Psychological factors such as guilt, desire for expiation, and fear shows to what extent death customs, with their accompanying art forms, answer unconscious needs. Authors like Rattray (1927) and Mbiti (1975) have written that the rites which intend to assist the deceased in his life after death often imply the generally conceived intention of getting rid of him and to prevent his return either in body or as a *saaman* or ghost. Every African society people are very sensitive to what is done when there is a death in the family. Death marks a physical separation of the individual from other human beings. This radical change, the funeral rites and ceremonies are intended to draw attention to that permanent separation. Meticulous care is taken to fulfill the funeral rites, and to avoid causing any offence of the departed. By so doing, the body is subjected to all forms of body art in many ways.

Among traditional Asantes, when death is imminent, relatives comes around and when condition worsens, a last gulp of water is given to the person to quench his death thirst.

Right from the preparation of the corpse to final funeral rites, art is employed. In the event of the death of a husband, the widow is expected to provide sponge, soap, towel, cloth, blanket, pillow and a long piece of handwoven cloth called '*Danta*' which was used in the olden days as underwear. These items are used for the bathing and lying in state of the dead husband. Ameyaw-Benneh(1999) posits that upon death, the corpse may be washed, shrouded, dressed up, or laid on the ground or in a state with ritual objects or funerary artefacts near it. Religious Obsequies may be observed at the house, at a place of worship or at the place of disposal with funerary arts. The actual disposal of the body may include the provision of the dead person's necessities such as amulets, food, weapons and treasures.

Depending on the status of the dead person, either killed or live human beings such as a man's (ruler's) wives and slaves 'accompany' him to serve him or they are symbolically represented by funerary artefacts such as paintings or sculptures.

Before the burial is mourning this varies from different mourners and relatives. Some of the various ways in which this is expressed are funerary banquet, the wearing of distinctive colours, or special hairdo. Pouring of libation and its associated artistic performance, offering, abstention from certain aspects of social life, purification and the like form part of mourning activities. Society at large also participates with the immediate mourners through response to graphic arts of obituaries, notices (a relatively modern trend), verbal arts of speeches, as well as visits and attendance at various ceremonies (Owusu, S. B. 1999).

The mode of disposal of the body is usually dictated by cultural, religious, economic, political and social differences or factors. It may be determined by membership of a particular social group, clan association, degree of initiation into a secret or ritual society, rank or status such as chief, sex, age, achievements, ethico-social status like criminal, hero, villain, and manner of death such as suicide or accident (Butt-Thompson 1929). It is no gainsaying that the above factors also determine the extent to which art is used. The bottom line, however, remains that funerary art permeates anything associated with death. Historically, the middle of the Paleolithic period is supposed to be the time when the first use of artefacts for funeral started and is still in use today. The use of artefacts greatly increased during the Upper Paleolithic period and carried on to the Mesolithic period. (Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol.9, 1972:1014).

Writing on history of the memorial and funerary artefacts, the Encyclopedia Britannica (1972) Rattray (1927); Mbiti (1975), Opoku (1978) assert that tombs and coffins have undergone similar developments worldwide. A tomb implies the idea of home or house of the dead, although it is loosely applied to all kinds of graves, funerary monuments and memorials. In primitive cultures, the dead were buried in their own houses. This resulted in the production of ornament material primeval house types. Brick and stone tombs appeared with advanced technology. According to Tom Philips web page, in central Africa, stone sculptures have been used as funerary monuments in a relatively restricted area lying north of Angola. In the neighbouring areas, the tradition of stone funerary monument is replaced by funerary ceramics of a variety of forms. Other carved monoliths occur in eastern Nigeria and the contiguous area of the Western Cameroon Republic. Even though in Ghana many of the terracotta funerary sculptures are labelled as Asante, the majority of such is a Southern Akan with the most Northern concentration coming from Adanse Fomena (Kuada, John and Chacha, Yao, 1999). In addition were a variety of rich ceramic vessels. For instance, a widow's wailing does not necessarily provide comfort but publicly reasserts the significance and value of the marital bond at the moment of its dissolution by death.

Also, psychological factors such as guilt, desire for expiation, and fear show to what extent death customs, with their accompanying art forms, answer unconscious needs. Authors like Forde and Jones (1950), Rattray (1927), Mbiti (1975) have written that the rites which intend to assist the deceased in his life after death often imply the generally conceived intention of getting rid of him and to prevent his return either in body or as a ghost. Nana Baffour (personal communication, February 2012) opines that in the Asante society people are very sensitive to what is done when there is a death in the family. Death marks a physical separation of the individual from other human beings. This is radical changes, and the funeral rites are intended to draw attention to that permanent separation. As a result of the above elucidation, meticulous care is taken to fulfill the funeral rites, and to avoid causing any offence to the departed. By so doing, the body is subjected to all forms of body art in many ways. Among traditional Asantes, when everything pointed to the imminent death of a person, there would always be some relatives around and when his condition worsened, they would give him his last gulp of water to quench his death thirst. Right from the preparation of the corpse to final funeral rites, art is employed.

In the event of the death of a husband, the widow is expected to provide (artefacts) sponge, soap, towel, cloth, blanket, pillow and a long piece of hand-woven cloth called '*Danta*' which was used in the olden days as underwear. These items are used for the bathing and lying in state of the dead husband. In agreement to the above finding, Ameyaw (1999) posits that upon death, the corpse may be washed, shrouded, dressed up, or laid on the ground or in a state with ritual objects or funerary artefacts near it. Religious Obsequies may be observed at the house, at a place of worship or at the place of disposal with funerary arts. The actual disposal of the body may include the provision of the dead person's necessities such as amulets, food, weapons and treasures.

Depending on the status of the dead person, either killed or live human beings such as a man's (ruler's) wives and slaves 'accompany' him to serve him or they are symbolically represented by funerary artefacts such as paintings or sculptures (personal communication, Nana O. Asah 1999). Before the burial is mourning this varies from different mourners and relatives. Some of the various ways in which this is expressed are funerary banquet, the wearing of distinctive colours, or special hairdo. Libation is pouring and its associated artistic performance, offering, abstention from certain aspects of social life, purification and the like form part of mourning activities. Society at large also participates with the immediate mourners through response to graphic arts of obituaries, notices (a relatively modern trend), verbal arts of speeches, as well as visits and attendance at various ceremonies.

The findings of this study revealed that the mode of disposal of the body in Asante culture is usually dictated by cultural, religious, economic, political and social differences or factors. Butt-Thompson (1929) also asserts that in some cases it may be determined by membership of a particular social group, clan association, degree of initiation into a secret or ritual society, rank or status such as chief, sex, age, achievements, ethico-social status like criminal, hero, villain, and manner of death such as suicide or accident. It is no gainsaying that the above factors also determine the extent to which art is used. The bottom line, however, remains that funerary art permeates anything associated with death.

### **The use of coffin**

Osei (2002) agrees that coffins are quite common in Asante culture. They were used in olden times. They are said to have been fashioned out of the great flat buttress roots of the *onyina* (silk tree). Rattray (1927), asserts that when a coffin was used, the body was wrapped in mats. The current study revealed that modernisation has influenced, to a greater extent, the arts associated with funerals in Kumasi. Oral tradition suggests that in ancient times, hollowed-out tree trunks or barks of trees were the commonest objects within which dead Ashanti bodies, wrapped up cotton wool, were placed before burial. The current practice is that expensive locally made coffin and even in the case of wealthy individuals, coffins made of silver, brass or glass and like media are sometimes imported to befit the position and status of the deceased or to display the wealth of the living relatives. Customarily, it is the children of the deceased who purchase coffins in Asante. Sometimes, too, it is some organisation to which the deceased belonged which provides the coffin. A most recently emerging trend in the Asante region is that neighborhood welfare groups *Koroye-kuo*, as part of members' show of love and unity to a departed colleague; offer to provide the coffin for the burial, among other things.

### **Body art of the corpse**

Before narrowing down the discussion on this to Asante, it would be appropriate to look at the universality of this practice based on available literature. "The body is not only depicted in art. It is used in making art, or is transformed to become art itself. The human body is material for art making. It can be painted or sculpted, or can be part of a performance or spectacle." Lazzari & Schlesier (2002) Asantes cannot agree with the above assertions more and have therefore adopted the human body (both dead and living) and incorporated it in their funerary arts to convey ideas and beliefs at the expense of words. As a result, they have a repertoire of funerary body art comprising painting of the skin, coiffure or hairdressing costume including footwear, wearing of amulets, bracelets, necklaces, anklets and general body adornment to portray certain beliefs in connection with the death. Asantes can also be identified with burying artefacts together with the dead. However, this practice is not the preserve of only the Asantes, rather, a custom in many parts of Africa. Mbiti (1975) identifies some of the works of art as spears, bows and arrows, stools, snuff, ornaments, tools, and domestic utensils. The greatest treasures ever discovered in a burial place were those of King Tutankhamen of Egypt who died in B.C. 1352. These were discovered in his tomb in Upper Egypt nearly 3,300 years later in 1922. They comprised jewels, furniture, shrines, and portrait masks all covered with gold, worth an inestimable amount of money.

In Asante, there are variations in the body art of the dead. These are dictated by factors such as the circumstances of the death, age, social position, and status of the deceased. Various forms of ‘ghost’ or ‘soul’ currency (*SamanSika* or *KraSika*), in the form of ornaments of a certain shape and design, are bound round the wrists of the corpse. Gold dust is often put into its ears and into the hollow above the zygomatic area, known as *sikagubea* (the place for pouring gold dust). Gold dust is also bound up in a small packet and tied to the loin cloth; hair is sometimes placed in the mouth. The research revealed that the hair is a form of money or has some value in the world of ghosts (Rattray 1927). The current researchers recognized that sometimes, the head of the corpse is shaved and marked with alternate red, white, and black stripes, made with *sono* (red dye), white clay, and *bidie* (charcoal). Benenneh, 1999 (unpublished thesis), however, gives a different interpretation of these colours as follows: “Invariably, the red represented the blood of the living relatives, the black, death and the white the ancestors. The motive behind this was also to subject the dead person to easy recognition should he or she walk as a *saman* (ghost). Also in the indigenous presentation and the preparation of the corpse, the Study revealed that Asantes occasionally placed a brass pan beneath the head and later this is buried in this position, in order to receive the head when it drops off and instead of the hands being folded, they are sometimes allowed to rest with the fingers on one of the metal vessels called *Kudoɔ* which contain gold dust.

The bottom line still remains that the dead body was dressed and adorned far more opulently than it might ever have done when alive. Highly polished brass beds were in common use. These were covered with several layers of blanket and multi-coloured expensive and good quality *Kentecloths*. Generally, the body was laid in a supine position with the hands either folded across the chest or lying parallel to the trunk. It was covered with a very expensive *efununtoma* (shroud) which was usually a *Kentecloth* and adorned with every available form of “ghost or soul currency” in the form of golden or silver ornaments of various shapes, sizes and designs. This has also been confirmed by Benneh (1999).

### Funeral donations

As result of using cotton wool for burial practices, it became scarce and consequently treasured. Relatives then began to experience difficulty in getting the required quantity and due to this; they called on sympathizers, friends and well-wishers to donate some cotton for wrapping the corpse. This practice brought about the concept of *nsaabodeɛ* a corrupted form of *asaawa* (cotton) and *aboadeɛ* (helper). This also brings into focus the concept of *asiedeɛ* (funeral goods). This is a practice where a widow or widower of a deceased as well as his or her loved ones give items ranging from mats, pillows, pieces of cloth to handkerchiefs and rings. A western dimension of wreath presentation has also become a common practice. Another school of thought among Asantes opines that the term *nsaabodeɛ* has been derived from the practice of offering small quantities of palm-wine *nsafufuo* as donations to assist the bereaved family to enable it offer drinks to the sympathizers during the funeral. Thus, *nsaabodeɛ*, literally means wine assistance. Whatever the etymology of *nsaabodeɛ*, all contributions in this regard either directly to the bereaved family or indirectly to the deceased was termed thus.

Foreign religion and westernization have suppressed the use of certain traditional requirements of money and the other numerous items which used to accompany the dead to the spirit world. The dress code of the corpse, apart from traditional rulers, is also yielding to pressure from westernisation. This is partly attributed to the scorn with which Christianity, Islam and western culture look at this practice, as it is considered idol worship. The marginalization of these traditional requirements is also blamed on the activities of grave looters, who, it is alleged, spy on the proceedings at funeral grounds and later loot graves containing such wealth. This second assertion is buttressed by the fact that grave looting is prevalent in urban centres where extravagance is displayed during funeral ceremonies. The application of art in the funeral ceremonies of Asante has brought about some cultural conflicts. There were situations when the researchers came across a dead Asante chief adorned in typical Asante regalia but was mounted in a sitting posture.

### The Funeral Scene

Traditionally, Asante funeral days are Mondays and Thursdays if they happen not to be *nabɔne* (bad days), days especially reserved for the deities to descend and partake of men’s affairs. This situation has changed over the years and nowadays most funeral ceremonies in in the region are held on Saturdays when government and other workers are free to attend. Thus, the complexity of modernization has influenced all facets of life including funeral ceremonies.

It used to be sheds constructed of sticks and covered with palm fronds that provided shade for funeral ceremonies. Socio-technological advancement has however brought in its wake a more convenient environmental art piece for funeral ceremonies in Kumasi as well as in many other parts of the country. Hired canopies are the order of the day. It must be stated that this new practice has led to the proliferation of canopy-hiring commercial ventures in the region. Close relatives of the deceased sit upon mats (Plate 1) provided for that purpose in front of the sheds or canopies while the rest, well-wishers, sympathizers and friends, are provided with benches and or foldable wooden chairs. Plastic chairs are now largely in use at funeral grounds in Asante region.



**Plate 1. Children of the deceased at a typical Asante funeral**  
Source: Researchers

Opportunities are provided for well-wishers, sympathizers and friends to express their sympathy in monetary terms. In this regard, male relatives take their positions at strategic points behind tables to receive donations for which receipts are issued. It is an almost obligatory practice to announce such donations at the funeral grounds for all present to hear. No tangible reasons have been assigned to these announcements as the donor is given a receipt to show acknowledgement of the donation. It is now a common phenomenon to see donors crowding at public address systems at funeral grounds waiting impatiently for their donations to be announced. Formerly, only drinks were provided but now food is served to participants in the family house, or in cases where there are huge numbers of people to be served, other places, apart from the family houses, are sought within the vicinity to accommodate them. Sometimes, a catering service enterprise is contracted to prepare and serve the food.



**Plate 2. Adɔsoa group at a funeral**  
Source: Researchers

The *Adɔsoa* procession (plate 2) in Asante culture has not given way to modernity. Instead, this has been magnified to reflect a show of wealth. At certain funerals, especially those of elderly people, one may notice that a procession of women and girls dressed in *Dansinkran* outfits led by a group of others carrying well-polished brass bowls containing well-arranged items depicting an almost infinite aesthetic appeal. This procession would suddenly appear at a corner amidst chanting of appellations by onlookers. They will then proceed in a retinue, characterized by an un compelling majestic walk, round the funeral grounds. Thus, *Adɔsoa* appears to exhibit almost all the art forms in the funeral rites of Asantes. The *Adɔsoa* bundles trace their origins to the funerals of kings.

Traditionally, the grand children of the deceased are not left out in the body art as well as the performing art associated with funeral ceremonies. These children, who are not expected to fast, move from one end of the community to the other stamping the ground with old pestles and chanting, “*Nana awuoo!*”, “*Yemmuannaoo!*” It is said that by so doing, they are insisting on a demand for money to purchase food, implying that if the demand was not met, they would disrupt proceedings at the funeral grounds (Nketia, J.H.K. 1955). This performance has however ceased in Asante due to acculturation. The grand children are no longer identified by this performance, rather by arranged black and white cloths.

Widowhood rites are still observed today in Asante. One must however be quick to state that aspects of these rites considered to be idol worship by foreign religions are left out. The widow contributes to the *adesiedie* (funeral goods) that are used to wash and prepare the corpse. Asantes believe that it is important to wash off the earthly pollution of the body so that the spirit can be transmitted into the spirit world. The items constituting a widow’s funeral goods may include a blanket, bed sheet, pillow, mat, *ahenemma* (native sandals), bucket, assorted soaps, sponge, cloth, perfume and power, *danta* (loin cloth). Identifying the widow by smearing of the widow with *ntwima* (red clay) on the face and shoulders on the day of burial is no longer a common practice except in the case of a dead chief. Again, at the funeral grounds, instead of traditional leaves held by the widow, specially designed synthetic flowers are used. The dress code of the widow still remains *kuntunkuni* (black) and *kobene* (red). However, the red cloth is now worn over the black, a reversal of her dressing when the death occurs initially. Sackey (2001), confirms that even in the face of modernity, a widow cannot put on any form of jewellery until after a year.

### **Body art of mourners**

The blood relations of a deceased Asante are requested by custom to shave their hair and place it in the *abusuakuruwa* (family pot) which has a lid with a terra-cotta fashioned in such a manner as to represent the dead person. According to Ameyaw-Benneh, (1994) this was frequently painted with red, white and black stripes.

In his account, Mbiti also points out the shaving of the hair by immediate family members, something he claims happens in many parts of Africa. This gave the possible symbolism of the shaving of the hair as a mark of separation, showing that one of the family members has been separated from them. At the same time, it is an indication of people’s belief that death does not destroy life, since the growth of new hair indicates that life continues to spring up.

Various signs and symbols are used to show that one’s relative has passed on. The body of the living members of the deceased person’s family is not exempted in this regard. Apart from the shaving of the hair, the people smear their bodies with white clay, a sign of death and mourning. Some Asantes, however, smear *ntwoma* (red clay) on the forehead, cheeks and arms. Clay symbolizes the dirt or filth which death has brought upon the family and it is dumped on the bodies of only the blood relations and the widow or widower. Three strips of red clay are made from left to right on the forehead. This is known as *Kotobirigya*. A similar one called *ntwomampaemu* (division of red clay) is made from the back of the shaven head to the forehead and the same pattern referred to as *a safe* are made on the upper arms. Ameyaw-Benneh (1994), observes that, these patterns portray the particular mourner as very close or dear to the deceased. The three lines are probably related to the three principles which feature quite prominently in Akan culture: first, *Onyame* (God), the giver of the *Okra and* to whom it returns upon death; second, *AsaseYaa* (mother earth goddess) which would accept the body and third, the ancestors who would welcome (or reject) the *Saman* (*ghost*) of the deceased into their fold.

The sons of the deceased wear net caps with miniature ladders, red pepper and egg shells attached to it. The net symbolizes the helplessness of the wearer - *Nsuoyiri me, na -hwan\_nabe to atenaayi me?* (I am drowning in the flood waters, and who would rescue me with a net)? The red pepper indicates the seriousness of the occasion, *M’aniaberemako* (My eyes are as red as pepper). Pepper is red as well as hot, therefore, it symbolises grief, sudden calamity, violent pain and an act of war. The egg shells portray the saying, *Atome ne nkosuahono* (I am left with only egg shells). Had the father or mother been alive, it would not have been egg shells, rather a whole fowl. The miniature ladder on its part indicates the saying, *owuoatwedee, baakomforo* (the ladder of death is not mounted by only one person). This is a clear manifestation of Asantes’ belief that death is universal. In Asante tradition, family members of the bereaved matriclan wear *kobene* (red cloth) at a burial. (Plate 3) *Kobene* symbolizes grief, melancholy, and the loss of a close relation. It establishes a relationship with the dead. (Hagan 1970 & Hagan, G. P. and Odotei I. K., (2001)).



**Plate 10.**  
**Women wearing *kɔbene* at a funeral**

### **Conclusion**

The study has revealed that traditionally, funerals in Asantes culture to a large extent reveal their cultural identity. Even though acculturation has brought about certain changes in the funerary arts of Asante, they have not been completely annihilated. With this in view, some of the indigenous and culturally beneficial funerary arts should be retained while at the same time paving ways for change to suit modern conditions. It is also interesting to note that the cultural identity of Asantes is to a large extent linked to the funeral practices and funerary arts of the people. To help the present and future generations come to terms with their true identity, every effort ought to be made to restore the use of discarded indigenous funerary arts (that are beneficial) in funeral ceremonies in Asante Culture

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