

Name of the Element: Craftsmanship of Traditional Woven Textile – KENTE

Domain: Traditional Craftsmanship

Community: Bonwire, Adanwomase, Ntonso, Agotime – Kpeotie Tafi and Agbozume Communities

Region: Ashanti and Volta Region

Brief Description: Kente weaving process in Ghana has a combination of knowledge, skills, artistic techniques and ideas with spiritual value and symbolism of the materials used and the product. Kente is a Ghanaian hand-woven textile from silk or cotton yarns. The arrangements of patterns, as well as the finish cloths are named with proverbs, which reveal the thoughts, customs, norms and beliefs of these communities. In the communities, the color and design of the textile is determined by age, status and gender. Products such as spun cottons, silk threads, dye yarns (usually cottons and rayons) are used to make kente strips using the West African Men's horizontal, double/triple heddle loom which is composed of 13 pieces. The weavers resist any modifications with any of the loom parts. The strips are woven together and it takes a period of 16 weeks to make a 12 yard piece of cloth. The art of making traditional textiles is a unique part of the Akan and Ewe speaking communities in Ghana. Kente is associated with royalty and to a large extent recognized as the national textile of Ghana.

On a large scale the Bonwire, Adanwomase and Agotime Kpeotie are the most popular kente weaving communities in Ghana. The craft is predominated by males in these communities with fewer women participation as weavers. There are many kente weaving groups within the rural cultural centers within the communities, and the skill of kente weaving among other arts and crafts is transmitted through identification, research, documentation, exhibitions in halls/museums during cultural/traditional festivals and artisans fairs. Decorative kente products are used largely to decorate the interiors of modern living and public spaces in Ghana. Kente products are made into souvenirs in Ghana for foreign guests and tourists, and used to honor guests at special events. Kente products are still largely used as part of the Ghanaian national costumes at national events, holidays, festivals, funerals and to an extent stage acts and performances

Process involved:

1. Selecting the threads or yarns to use: The yarns or threads used to make kente is selected based on the desired outcome of the weaver. This therefore determines the colors of the fabric when it is ready. There are three different methods to make kente. The first weaving method is the no design or single weaving method where there is design on the fabric. It employs the use of only one color of yarn. The color set on the background remains the only color that will appear on the finished cloth making it very easy to learn. Then there is also the double weaving and triple weaving method which are more complex means of weaving and have more beautiful color combinations in the end product.

2. Setting the thread into the loom: The weaver sets the selected yarns or threads into the shuttle, the background of the loom, unto the hurdle and the beater, which is also a part of the loom.

3. Using the loom: to use the loom, the weaver who usually is a man sits inside the loom and uses both hands and feet to make strips of kente. Kente is first made in long strips which are joined together to make one piece of cloth.

Photograph:



Consent:

Submitted by: National Folklore Board