LESSON 12: EMPOWERING LEADERS

Leadership Arts of the Cameroon Grassfields, Africa

Fig. 3.1
Mask. Bamileke peoples, Bamendjo, Cameroon. Late 19th century. Wood, paint, iron, dowel, plant fiber, plant gum. H: 53.34 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of the Wellcome Trust. X65.820.

LESSON 12: EMPOWERING LEADERS
Leadership Arts of the Cameroon Grassfields, Africa

Lesson Summary and Objectives

A study of the leadership arts of the Cameroon Grassfields provides opportunities to consider how integral the arts are to notions of power and leadership. Students study the works and then consider their functions from background information they have been given. An additional activity centers on a short film, "Pageantry in the Palace," and students discuss and develop in writing their reactions to the film. Students will

- Explore the integral connection between art and power in the Cameroon Grassfields through research and creative word games.
- Gain insight into the culture of the Cameroon Grassfields by viewing and analyzing a short film on royal pageantry.
- React and respond to notions of pageantry among peoples of the Cameroon Grassfields and compare these to practices in their own lives.

Background Information

From precolonial times to the present, Africa has been rich in arts that support leadership and governance. The arts have served to uphold and strengthen those in power and their domains. In turn, rulers have often been patrons of the arts with the volume of artistic production dependent on their ability to marshal ample resources.

Among the most powerful leadership arts in Africa are those from the kingdoms of the Cameroon Grassfields, a mountainous region of western Cameroon. The Bamum, Bamileke, Bangwa, and other kingdoms share many cultural traditions. For centuries extensive trade networks, political interactions, and royal gift-giving facilitated cultural exchange and the creation of royal arts in the area. The oldest known Grassfields kingdom of Bamum dates to the sixteenth century.

Communities in the Cameroon Grassfields have historically been organized around large centralized authorities or rulers, known as *fon*. Prior to the colonial period, *fon* were religious, economic, and political leaders who were also considered to be divine. *Fon* redistributed wealth, controlled trade, and were great patrons of the arts. The *fon's* best artists often received noble titles for their service, demonstrating the importance of the arts to Grassfields royalty.

LESSON 12: EMPOWERING LEADERS
Leadership Arts of the Cameroon Grassfields, Africa

Beaded headdress for elephant mask, Bamileke peoples, Cameoon. Before 1880. Fiber, textile, beads, wood. H: 47 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. William Lloyd Davis. X64.86.

The colonial administrations of the twentieth century challenged the authority of *fon* and diminished their position within Cameroon Grassfields societies. Prior to German colonization, the Bamum Kingdom, for example, was highly stratified, with its hierarchy supported by the kingdom's stunning artistic accomplishments. As the *fon's* power was restricted by colonial authorities, the amount and quality of royal art diminished. Nevertheless, *fon* have remained important leaders and artistic conventions developed centuries ago have been carried through the colonial and postcolonial eras, continuing to empower those who rule in the eyes of those who are ruled.

The imposing mask shown on the cover of this lesson **(fig. 3.1)** was owned by Msop, a men's association that honored leaders in Bamileke society. Msop masks have been observed at enthronement ceremonies, mourning festivals for significant people, and during the *tso* dance, performed at the funerals of kings and queens. During the *tso* dance, the mask was worn on the forehead of the performer, looming over the audience. When worn, cloth or fiber may have hung from the bottom of the mask.

LESSON 12: EMPOWERING LEADERS
Leadership Arts of the Cameroon Grassfields, Africa

About the Artist

Both men and women created works of art for Grassfields royalty. A 1920 illustration in Suzanne Blier's book *The Royal Arts of Africa* (1998, 196) shows women creating pottery and baskets and men carving and sculpting. A large number of artists were necessary to create the accumulation of art for the royal treasury and the best artists were rewarded with noble status for the work they produced. The large *tsesah* mask in the *Empowering Leaders* section **(fig. 3.1)** was most likely collected in Bamendjo or Bandjoun by the French Protestant missionary Reverend Franck Christol in the very early twentieth century and then entered the Wellcome Collection in 1932. Approximately a dozen similar masks have been attributed to the Bandjoun or Bamendjo workshop, each carrying its own name and belonging to a specific ruler. A kingdom possessed only one such mask at a time. The oldest known masks were made by artists in the nineteenth century, and as late as the 1980s, artists at Bandjoun were still making copies of them.

Crest mask, buffalo, Oku peoples, Western Grassfields, Cameroon, 19th–20th century. Wood. H: 31.7 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Anonymous Gift. X77.935.

Curriculum Connections

1. Arts and the *Fon*

Activity

Distribute copies of **Handout LEADERSHIP ARTS OF THE CAMEROON GRASSFIELDS** so that students can read about power and the arts in this region. At the bottom of the handout there are twelve scrambled words—all are referenced in the narrative—that are to be unscrambled and circled in the accompanying **Handout WORDSEARCH**. Photographs of the twelve art objects named make up the **Handout ARTS AND THE FON** with each of the photos labeled with a letter of the alphabet. On the following **Handout READING ABOUT THE FON**, students will write the twelve words, unscrambled, in the appropriate blanks and will insert the identifying letter in the box at the end of each sentence. A Teacher's Key follows.

2. Pageantry in the Palace

In the accompanying video for class viewing, narrator Usmanou Nsangou returns to his Cameroon home. The film shows market day near his village and a special biennial Nguon festival. Here we see people filling the city, and we hear their music, sense the rhythms of their dance, and experience their group pride in their heritage

Activity

As you show the video, have students consider the following questions:

1. How is pageantry played out in front of the palace?
   People surround the king, singing, preceding him by walking backwards, sounding horns, shooting guns into the`air, thrusting up and down the umbrellas that shade him, performing with a variety of rhythms, headdresses, and masquerades.

2. What do we see that tells us that we're in the presence of the king?
   His garments can be worn only by the king and his ministers, he sits on a royal throne, he is surrounded by ministers, people come to pay him respect.

3. How do the people honor their king and what do they do to impress him?
   People offer him gifts, they perform for him.

4. How does the king show care for the people?
   He sits in front of the palace where visitors can freely come to see him. The gate is always open.

5. What objects seen in the video are like those in this section of the exhibition?
   You will see a tsesah *and other masks, a fly whisk, and beaded regalia.*

6. What comments does the narrator make about the masks we see danced? What reactions do the students have to the masquerades?
   Ngoua says that the masks represent spirits and can be feared or revered. The features are enlarged and distorted. When a person dons the mask you don't see that person any more.

7. What memories are brought back to the narrator?
   He has memories of coming to the town with his grandmother, of the music and pageantry, of happiness.

Activity

Pageantry has transformed the community. The video ends with people returning to their outlying homes and the town growing quiet. Have students contrast the lively mood and excited ambiance that pervades the celebration with the empty streets and quiet atmosphere following. Their work could take the form of a "Now/Then" poem. Or they could develop a poem as a group effort, deciding together what they will cite and then contributing lines to describe the event. Some suggested elements:

Colorful umbrellas twirling
Curved sticks finding rhythms on drums
Horns sounding out their calls
Rifles shooting their announcements to the sky
Motorcycles caravanning through the town
Gongs ringing proclamations to the people

Activity

Encourage students to recall an event with elements of pageantry (parades, fairs, holiday celebrations, performances, weddings). What kinds of memories do these events evoke and how did students feel being a part of these events?

LESSON 12: EMPOWERING LEADERS
Leadership Arts of the Cameroon Grassfields, Africa

Useful Readings

Blackmun Visona, Monica, Robin Poynor, Herbert M. Cole, and Michael D. Harris, eds.
2001 *A History of Art in Africa.*
New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Blier, Suzanne Preston
1998 *Royal Arts of Africa.*
London: Laurence King Publishing.

Geary, Christraud M.
1992 "Elephants, Ivory, and Chiefs: The Elephant and the Arts of the Cameroon Grassfields."
In *Elephant: The Animal and Its Ivory in African Culture*, edited by Doran H. Ross, 229–257.
Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History.

Poynor, Robin
2001 "Cameroon Grasslands." In *A History of Art in Africa*, edited by Monica Blackmun Visona, Robin Poynor, Herbert M. Cole, and Michael D. Harris, 338–352.
New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Ross, Doran H., ed.
1992 *Elephant: The Animal and Its Ivory in African Culture.*
Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History.

Photograph Captions

Handout ARTS OF THE FON

A. Beaded headdress for elephant mask, Bamileke peoples, Cameroon. Before 1880. Fiber, textile, beads, wood. H: 47 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mr. William Lloyd Davis. X64.86

B. Drinking horn, Bamum peoples, Cameroon. 19th century. Horn, pigment. H: 29.5 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Peter J. Kuhn. X91.410

C. Chief's stool, Western Grassfields, Cameroon. Late 19th–early 20th century. Wood, plant fiber. H: 42 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of the Wellcome Trust. X65.1617

D. Pipe bowl, Bamum peoples, Cameroon. 19th–20th century. Terra-cotta. H: 25 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Mary Hastings Bradley. X63.405

E. Ceremonial Chair, Central Western Grassfields, Cameroon. Early 20th century. Wood. H: 81.3 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of the Wellcome Trust. X65.1621

F. Beaded Gourd, Bamileke peoples, Cameroon. 19th century. Gourd, glass beads, textile, felt, thread, cowries. H: 62.5 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of the Wellcome Trust. X65.5813a,b

G. Elephant mask, Bamileke peoples, Cameroon. 20th century. Beads, cotton, wood. H: 150 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Anonymous gift. X82.569

H. Beaded gourd, Grassfields, Cameroon. 19th–20th century. Gourd, glass beads, textile, felt, thread, wood, cowrie shells. H: 50.8 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of the Wellcome Trust. X65.5815a,b

Photograph Captions (cont.)

I. Fly whisk, Bamum peoples, Cameroon. 19th century. Raffia cloth, glass beads, horsehair, iron, nails, raffia thread. H: 121 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of George G. Frelinghuysen. X67.2052

J. Prestige collar with buffalo heads, Bamum peoples, Cameroon. Late 19th–early 20th century. Brass, copper. Diam: 26 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of the Wellcome Trust. X65.8228

K. Mask (*tsesah*), Bamileke peoples, Bamendjo, Cameroon. Late 19th century. Wood, paint, iron dowel, plant fiber, plant gum. H: 53.34 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of the Wellcome Trust. X65.5820

L. Crest mask, buffalo, Oku peoples, Western Grassfields, Cameroon. 19th–20th century. Wood. H: 31.7 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Anonymous Gift. X77.935

Note to Teachers:

This lesson is part of the curricular materials developed to accompany the exhibition ***Intersections: World Arts, Local Lives***. Although this and companion lessons are self-contained, each will be enhanced when used in conjunction with others in this resource. Addressing several lessons within each unit will facilitate the incorporation of the study of world arts and cultures into your curriculum.

The lesson is based on works in the third section of the exhibition called *Art and Power*. In this gallery works are introduced that serve to define and assert power. See "Unit Three—Art and Power" for an introductory statement on the unit, along with some provocative "Questions for Thought," and suggestions that will inspire the students to relate the unit to their own lives.

Images of objects to be shown to students may be printed as handouts (from within each lesson), viewed online at the ***Intersections*** web link http://collections.fowler.ucla.edu, or downloaded from the curriculum page on our website.

In this unit the topics and lessons are

Lesson 12: Empowering Leaders: Leadership Art of the Cameroon Grassfields, Africa
Lesson 13: Negotiating Gender: Portrayal of a Hunter: *Ere Egungun Olode*, Nigeria
Lesson 14: Negotiating Gender: Powerful Mother: *Ere Gelede*, Nigeria
Lesson 15: Status and Prestige: To Make the Chief's Words Sweet: A Counselor's Staff, Ghana
Lesson 16: Status and Prestige: A Wall of Status and Prestige, Africa, Asia, and the Americas
Lesson 17: Harnessing Spirits: Pacific Northwest Arts, United States and Canada
Lesson 18: Harnessing Spirits: The Hornbill: Bird of Prophecy, Malaysia

Unit 3

Handout: LEADERSHIP ARTS OF THE CAMEROON GRASSFIELDS

Leadership Arts of the Cameroon Grassfields

The *fon* are leaders of kingdoms and chiefdoms in the Cameroon Grassfields of west Central Africa. Before the Germans colonized the area in 1884 *fon* had even more importance and a large variety of special arts were displays of that power. Germany gave up their colonies to England and France after World War I, and even though *fon* were not as powerful as before, and even though not as much art was produced, the leaders and the artistic traditions continued.

Grassland communities still traded with each other and rulers continued to show their alliances with other rulers by exchanging gifts. With the *fon* still holding control over the people and the arts, each kingdom kept up its own traditions. *Fons* determined the materials that were used and the kinds of art that were made in their kingdoms. Because of much trading, however, interactions, and gift presentations, the style of one kingdom influenced that of the others.

A *fon* was important to the arts in many ways. The best artists in the area worked for him and his court. The most expensive and rarest materials could be used only on works for him. In the palace the art was displayed as a demonstration of the importance of the *fon*. Stools and chairs, drinking containers and vessels, pipes with carved bowls, fly whisks made of horsetail, masks, headdresses, sculptures, necklaces, and other jewelry were all part of his treasury.

Drinking palm wine is a sacred activity for the ruler and his associates. Containers for the wine are usually covered in beautiful designs made from many colorful beads. On important ritual and social occasions people are served the wine in drinking horns made of buffalo, ram, or cow horns.

Often the decorations on the beaded bottles and drinking horns represent animals, especially those associated with royalty. The leopard, buffalo, and ram are noted for their endurance, strength, and their long lives, attributes fit for a king. These animals also appear as masks, especially worn by men whose job is to keep order in the community.

Elephant masks, performed during funerals and public ceremonies, used to be worn by warriors. Now powerful, wealthy men belong to the groups that wear them. Long panels of beaded or stitched cloth flow over the performers' chests and backs, seeming to be the long trunks of elephants. Round "ears" come out of the animals' heads.

An especially large mask, called *tsesah*, towers over the audience when it is worn on a performer's head at festivals and funerals.

Unscramble these words from the story and circle them in the **Handout WORDSEARCH**.

ADBES	_____	EPPI BLOW	_____
LEBTOT	_____	ROPSDALE	_____
THEEPLAN	_____	SKAM	_____
LYF SWIKH	_____	CAKECLEN	_____
DARSHEEDS	_____	OTOLS	_____
NORH	_____	FLABOUF	_____

Unit 3

Handout: LEADERSHIP ARTS OF THE CAMEROON GRASSFIELDS

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Elephant masks, performed during funerals and public ceremonies, used to be worn by warriors. Now powerful, wealthy men belong to the groups that wear them. Long panels of beaded or stitched cloth flow over the performers' chests and backs, seeming to be the long trunks of elephants. Round "ears" come out of the animals' heads.

An especially large mask, called *tsesah*, towers over the audience when it is worn on a performer's head at festivals and funerals.

Unscramble these words from the story and circle them in the **Handout WORDSEARCH**.

ADBES	_BEADS_____	EPPI BLOW	_PIPE BOWL_
LEBTOT	_BOTTLE_____	ROPSDALE	_LEOPARDS_
THEEPLAN	_ELEPHANT__	SKAM	_MASK_____
LYF SWIKH	_FLY WHISK__	CAKECLEN	_NECKLACE__
DARSHEEDS	_HEADDRESS_	OTOLS	_STOOL_____
NORH	_HORN_____	FLABOUF	_BUFFALO___

Handout: WORDSEARCH

Leadership Arts of the Cameroon Grassfields

K O E O O T M A S K B E
O A C D L D L D S S L S
T S A L E W R L Y T L H
R I L O W A O N T E S K
E B K H P O S O N D S R
A W C O T L B H A I E A
S S E R D D A E H K D K
P L N N L E B W P P W H
K A N E D E Y E E I B O
B U F F A L O S L S P I
M A U P F O E O E C I F
S B A S C E A O B E E N

Unit 3

Handout: ARTS FOR THE *FON*

A

B

C

D

E

F

G

H

I

J

K

L

Unit 3

Handout: READING ABOUT THE *FON*

FOR THE STUDENT

Word Bank:

BEADS
BOTTLE
ELEPHANT
FLY WHISK
HEADDRESS
HORN
PIPE BOWL
LEOPARDS
MASK
NECKLACE
STOOL
BUFFALO

1. This huge _____ has large eyes, mouth, nose and cheeks. It was worn on a dancer's forehead. Moving high above the people, it honored the leaders. ☐

2. _____ and masks are carved into this prestigious chair. It was carved for the king and served as the royal throne. ☐

3. Only the elite had use of horses so this _____ _____, made of a horse's tail, showed the high status of the owner. The beaded handle shows a ram, an animal that stands for the king's strength. ☐

4. Two beaded animal figures sit on the top of this extravagant _____. ☐

5. The mighty _____ is known for its strength. This mask has long panels to stand for the animal's trunk and large circles to stand for its ears. Only a wealthy, important man may wear this mask. ☐

6. This _____ is covered with beads. With similar objects it was placed near the *fon* on important occasions. ☐

7. A _____ made of a ring with thirty-three metal buffalo heads might be buried with a king as a sign of his wealth. ☐

8. The *fon* drank palm wine from a vessel made of an animal's _____. ☐

9. Some animals, including the _____, elephant, leopard, and horse are associated with royalty because of their strength, power, speed or cunning, all traits desirable in a king. ☐

10. Multi-colored _____ were markers of wealth in the Cameroon Grasslands. They form geometric shapes decorating the furniture, masks, clothing and utensils of the *fon*. ☐

11. The _____ has carved human figures to support the seat. This is a marker of authority and prestige. ☐

12. Most pipes are quite plain. The carved face on this _____ _____ shows that it belonged to a king or another person of high rank. ☐

Unit 3

Handout: READING ABOUT THE *FON*

FOR THE TEACHER

Word Bank:

BEADS
BOTTLE
ELEPHANT
FLY WHISK
HEADDRESS
HORN
PIPE BOWL
LEOPARDS
MASK
NECKLACE
STOOL
BUFFALO

1. This huge ___MASK___ has large eyes, mouth, nose and cheeks. It was worn on a dancer's forehead. Moving high above the people, it honored the leaders. (K)

2. ___LEOPARDS___ and masks are carved into this prestigious chair. It was carved for the king and served as the royal throne. (E)

3. Only the elite had use of horses so this ___FLY___ ___WHISK___, made of a horse's tail, showed the high status of the owner. The beaded handle shows a ram, an animal that stands for the king's strength. (I)

4. Two beaded animal figures sit on the top of this extravagant HEADDRESS. (A)

5. The mighty ___ELEPHANT___ is known for its strength. This mask has long panels to stand for the animal's trunk and large circles to stand for its ears. Only a wealthy, important man may wear this mask. (G)

6. This ___BOTTLE___ is covered with beads. With similar objects it was placed near the *fon* on important occasions. (H)

7. A ___NECKLACE___ made of a ring with thirty-three metal buffalo heads might be buried with a king as a sign of his wealth. (J)

8. The fon drank palm wine from a vessel made of an animal's ___HORN___. (B)

9. Some animals, including the ___BUFFALO___, elephant, leopard, and horse are associated with royalty because of their strength, power, speed or cunning, all traits desirable in a king. (L)

10. Multi-colored ___BEADS___ were markers of wealth in the Cameroon Grasslands. They form geometric shapes decorating the furniture, masks, clothing and utensils of the *fon*. (F)

11. The ___STOOL___ has carved human figures to support the seat. This is a marker of authority and prestige. (C)

12. Most pipes are quite plain. The carved face on this ___PIPE___ ___BOWL___ shows that it belonged to a king or another person of high rank. (D)

LESSON 13: NEGOTIATING GENDER

Portrayal of a Hunter: *Ere Egungun Olode*, Nigeria

Fig. 3.2
Workshop of Adugbologe, prior to 1922. *Ere egungun olode* headdress. Yoruba peoples, Nigeria. Wood, pigment. H: 45 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of the Wellcome Trust. X65.9051.

Unit 3

LESSON 13: NEGOTIATING GENDER

Portrayal of a Hunter: *Ere Egungun Olode*, Nigeria

Lesson Summary and Objectives

In this lesson students explore the use of *egungun* masks in rituals devoted to honoring ancestors, as practiced by Yoruba peoples from Nigeria and Benin. They discuss family rituals that celebrate their own ancestors, construct special dress ensembles to honor them, employ poetry as a way to memorialize loved ones, and discuss contrasts between cultures, as inspired by the experiences of Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka. Students will

- Consider traditions of respect and honor for elder relatives and ancestors and compare these to practices of the Yoruba peoples of Nigeria.
- Explore *egungun* masquerades of the Yoruba peoples of West Africa and its diasporas through discussion, artmaking activities, and creative writing.
- Use the writing of Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka to reflect on the challenges of growing up in two cultures.

Background Information

Among the Yoruba peoples of southwestern Nigeria and southeastern Benin, ancestors are honored through *egungun* masquerades. *Egungun* masks may manifest recently deceased spirits who return to the world of the living to see their families before making the final journey into the spirit world. The masquerades are rich with satire and symbolism and honor the ancestors, or "living dead," by continuing their traditions and celebrating family lineages. The masker is completely covered by the cloth ensemble he wears—and the manipulation of the cloth is key to the sense of theatre and dance it embodies. While the ensemble conceals, it also reveals a reality not otherwise observable—the presence and power of the "living dead" who can affect the affairs of the living.

Members of the masquerade group (always men) prepare in a sacred grove, often reciting prayers and attaching amulets so that they will be ready to receive ancestral spirits. "Its true power and purpose are activated only when a masker enters the costume, transformed into the presence and power of the ancestors in an Egungun ceremony" (Fitzgerald 1995, 55). Costumes (completely concealing the identity) of *egungun* dancers vary across regions; some are made entirely of grasses, most are made of fabric. Best known are the layered *egungun* ensembles of sumptuous, brightly colored, multi-textured panels **(fig. 3.4)**. As the wearer walks in an exaggerated fashion and executes leaps and dances, the spectacular layers of cloth will rise, fall, and whirl about **(fig. 3.5)**.

LESSON 13: NEGOTIATING GENDER

Portrayal of a Hunter: *Ere Egungun Olode*, Nigeria

Masks or wooden headdresses complete the *egungun* ensemble. The two headdresses **(figs. 3.2 and 3.3)** in the *Negotiating Gender* section of the exhibition express concerns of gender and in particular, reflect the importance and power of hunting as a man's profession. Both examples display the distinctive braided hairstyles of hunters. Representations of thunder axes, a pressure drum, monkey heads, and vials for storing powerful substances adorn the head of the larger headdress. These are symbolic references to the abilities of ancestors to protect the families of hunters and their children and to societal roles that are gender-based.

About the Artist

These *egungun* headdresses were made in Abeokuta, Nigeria, one in the nineteenth century, the other in the early twentieth century. The older mask **(fig. 3.2)** is attributed to Adugbologe, member of a renowned family of carvers. The Adugbologe family workshops in Abeokuta have become well-known for producing headdresses for the *egungun* society. As is typical in such workshops young woodcarvers, along with other descendents and lineage members, train under their fathers and thus continue family traditions.

Fig. 3.3
Ere egungun olode headdress. Yoruba peoples, Nigeria. Wood, cloth, pigment. H: 31 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of the Wellcome Trust X56.9148.

1. Ancestors

The Yoruba respect and honor their ancestors as powerful beings who can influence the fate or fortunes of the living. Their ability to protect hunters—and especially their children—is alluded to by the representation of power symbols on the *egungun* mask. When a baby is born, people look at the newborn to find reminders of the personality or physical features of an ancestor.

Activity

Give students opportunities to discuss their deceased relatives. How are their lives remembered and celebrated? Was their death commemorated? If so, how? How do memories of the deceased influence students' lives today? Does anything about the student remind their family of an ancestor? Have them talk about these connections.

2. Whirling Flashes of Color

There is no set design for *egungun* costumes, but typically they are made up of layers of fabric panels, colorful collages embellished with sequins, mirrors, ribbons, cowry shells, and amulets. Among the multi-layered, multi-colored, multi-textured patchwork, red is often the predominant color. Ancestors are honored with the brightest colors, most intricate appliqués, and the best velvets and brocades that the family can afford. These elements combine to display a static beauty when stationary, but when worn by a circling dancer the cloth panels flare out, the layers rise and fall, and the colors blur into a dizzying, spinning, moving storm of beauty and power.

Activity

Students can be inspired by *egungun* traditions to honor their own ancestors. They may cut a variety of fabric scraps into fairly uniform strips and attach the tops of the strips (sewing, gluing, stapling, or using Velcro) to an oversized shirt and sweatpants. Always begin by attaching the pieces at the bottom of rows and overlap succeeding rows above them. To get the feel of the movement of fabric without constructing a complete costume, they may also create overlapped strips to accent a sleeve or the front of a shirt, or down the side of a pants leg. Students can investigate the fabrics they will use: research how and where the textiles were made, arrange them by colors or patterns, decorate and embellish individual pieces to make them more valuable, and compose stories about the performance and/or the ancestor honored.

Fig. 3.4
Egungun ensemble. Yoruba peoples, Nigeria. Mid-20th century. Cloth, glass beads, cowrie shells, thread, wood, burlap, leather, plant fiber. H: 160 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Hammer. X90.694.

3. Making, Dancing, Seeing

Performance of an *egungun* masquerade is not the sole prerogative of the person dancing the mask and costume. It is a community event, a give-and-take among the maskers and those who join them, chase them, or try to run away from them. Sounds are heard emanating from the masquerade as well as from the drummers and other musicians and from the people viewing.

Activity

Consider the mask maker. *Egungun* masks are carved in workshops. According to scholar Christopher Slogar in his 2002 *African Arts* article, sometimes separate pieces carved in advance are added to the mask to accommodate the wishes of the client. Let students draw objects that show respect and then add and arrange them on outlines of masks that they have previously drawn.

Consider the *egungun* masker. He is the manifestation on earth of the spirit of an ancestor. In performance his voice is that of a low rumble or high falsetto. The masker *is* and is *not* himself: he becomes the metaphorical bridge between the living and the dead. How might he feel? Women participate by singing *oriki* or "praise poems" (see Activity 4 in *Lesson 14: Negotiating Gender: Powerful Mother:* Ere Gelede, *Nigeria*.).

Consider the viewers. They hear drums in the distance, they become aware of the songs and chants of many women. The sounds become louder and louder. Surrounded by the sounds, by friends and relatives moving about, and by multi-colored, whirling costumed images, they may feel excited, frightened, overwhelmed, or may have any number of other responses. How do your students think they might react? Can they recall seeing or participating in a performance that excited their senses as an *egungun* masquerade might affect a young Yoruba?

Students can write a poem from the perspective of a maker (as artist, writer, musician, etc.), a performer, or a viewer to or listener of a piece of art or performance.

4. Remembrances of *Egungun*

Activity

Wole Soyinka, the first African to win the Nobel Prize in Literature (1986), was born in Nigeria, of Yoruba heritage. His immediate family was Christian; his father was headmaster of the Christian school. In his autobiography, *Ake: The Years of Childhood* (1989), Soyinka explored the contrasts of living in the two worlds of the white Christian and the native Nigerian. On pages 31 and 32 he cites remembrances of *egungun* from his childhood and considers their many meanings (**Handout REMEMBRANCES OF EGUNGUN**) that you may share with your students.

Students may have experienced this coming together of two or more lifestyles, particularly if they have moved to a new home from a different region or country. Let them share these and discuss their reactions.

Activity

Older students should read the classic novel, *Things Fall Apart,* by Chinua Achebe, another acclaimed Nigerian writer. His account of European colonization in Africa tells the story from the point of view of a local youth and his fellow villagers caught between the two worlds.

Fig. 3.5
This *egungun* masquerade honors a hunter/warrior family—note the distinctive hunter's coiffure that descends to the left, surrounded by carved skulls of animals and birds. Both the mask shown in this photo and the mask featured in Figure 3.1 were carved in the workshop of Adugbologe of Abeokuta, Nigeria. Photographed by Margaret Thompson Drewal and Henry John Drewal in Abeokuta, Nigeria during the *egungun* festival, 1978.

5. *Masksong for Our Times*

Still another respected Nigerian writer, Emmanual Obiechina, used the metaphor of the masquerade to comment on life in post-Independence Nigeria during the 1960s and 1970s. According to the book jacket of *Masksong for Our Times*, "...the masquerade speaks with the voice of an ancestral spirit, evoking the authority to say what everyone else avoids saying and the license to articulate hard, uncomfortable truths about society." Obiechina's poems in this collection include proverbs, chants, and prophecies as commentary on situations of modern times.

Activity

The poem "Song of a Madman" can be adapted by your class, using similar short, repetitive lines to express feelings about a frustrating situation in their experience.

"Song of a Madman"

However fast yam runs goat will eat him
However fast goat runs tiger will eat him
However fast tiger runs man will eat him
However fast man runs earth will eat him
However fast earth runs something will eat him
However fast something runs something bigger will eat him
So, that's how it is, something will eat him.

Useful Readings

Achebe, Chinua
1959 *Things Fall Apart.*
New York: Ballantine Books.

Blackmun Visona, Monica, Robin Poynor, Herbert M. Cole, and Michael D. Harris, eds.
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African Arts *35 (4): 14–27.*

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New York: Random House.

Soyinka, Wole
1981 *Ake: The Year of Childhood.*
New York: Random House.

Unit 3

LESSON 13: NEGOTIATING GENDER

Portrayal of a Hunter: *Ere Egunggun Olode*, Nigeria

Note to Teachers:

This lesson is part of the curricular materials developed to accompany the exhibition ***Intersections: World Arts, Local Lives***. Although this and companion lessons are self-contained, each will be enhanced when used in conjunction with others in this resource. Addressing several lessons within each unit will facilitate the incorporation of the study of world arts and cultures into your curriculum.

The lesson is based on works in the third section of the exhibition called *Art and Power*. In this gallery works are introduced that serve to define and assert power. See "Unit Three—Art and Power" for an introductory statement on the unit, along with some provocative "Questions for Thought," and suggestions that will inspire the students to relate the unit to their own lives.

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In this unit the topics and lessons are

Lesson 12: Empowering Leaders: Leadership Art of the Cameroon Grassfields, Africa

Lesson 13: Negotiating Gender: Portrayal of a Hunter: *Ere Egungun Olode*, Nigeria

Lesson 14: Negotiating Gender: Powerful Mother: *Ere Gelede*, Nigeria

Lesson 15: Status and Prestige: To Make the Chief's Words Sweet: A Counselor's Staff, Ghana

Lesson 16: Status and Prestige: A Wall of Status and Prestige, Africa, Asia, and the Americas

Lesson 17: Harnessing Spirits: Pacific Northwest Arts, United States and Canada

Lesson 18: Harnessing Spirits: The Hornbill: Bird of Prophecy, Malaysia

Unit 3

Handout: REMEMBRANCES OF EGUNGUN

From *Ake: The Years of Childhood* by Wole Soyinka (1989, 31–32)

As a young boy the famous Nigerian author Wole Soyinka was surpised upon learning that the family compound of his close friend Osiki had its own *egungun* masquerader. On hearing this, Wole recalled: "that the *egúngún* were spirits of the dead. They spoke in guttural voices and were to be feared even more than kidnappers. And yet I had noticed that many of them were also playful and would joke with children." Curious, Wole asked Osiki if he was actually there when the egúngún emerged from the bottom of the earth.

Osiki explained: "Any of us can watch. As long as you are male of course. Women mustn't come near." He then related that there were "different kinds of egúngún: the dangerous ones with bad charms who could strike a man with epilepsy and worse, the violent ones who had to be restrained with powerful ropes, [those] with…magical tricks [who] would transform themselves into alligators, snakes, tigers and rams and turn back again into *egúngún*. Then there were the acrobats…able to tie up their limbs in any manner they pleased."

"Can I come back as an *egúngún* if I die?" Wole asked Osiki.

"I don't think so…. I've never heard of any Christian becoming an *egungun*."

"Do they speak English in the *egúngún* world?"

"I don't know. Our own *egúngún* doesn't speak English," said Osiki with a shrug.

Wole thought about the saintly images he'd seen: "The stained-glass windows behind the altar of St. Peter's church displayed the figures of three white men, dressed in robes which were very clearly *egúngún* robes. Their faces were exposed, which was very unlike our own egúngún, but I felt that this was something peculiar to the country from which those white people came. After all, Osiki had explained that there were many different kinds of egúngún. I sought his opinion on the three figures only to have [my older sister] Tinu interrupt."

"They are not egúngún…. Those are pictures of two missionaries and one of St. Peter himself."

"Then why are they wearing dresses like *egúngún*?"

"They are Christians, not masqueraders. Just let Mama hear you."

"They are dead aren't they; They've become *egúngún*, that is why they are wearing those robes. Let's ask Osiki."

….

LESSON 14: NEGOTIATING GENDER

Powerful Mother: *Ere Gelede*, Nigeria

Fig. 3.6
Ere gelede headdress. Yoruba peoples, Nigeria. Wood, paint. Circa 1932. H: 24 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of the Wellcome Trust. X65.4742.

Unit 3

LESSON 14: NEGOTIATING GENDER
Powerful Mother: *Ere Gelede*, Nigeria

Lesson Summary and Objectives

Through a study of *gelede* masquerades of the Yoruba peoples of Nigeria students explore art as a powerful medium for commentary on issues of concern to the community. Students will discuss gender roles among the Yoruba and in their own communities. Creative writing activities provide opportunities for students to compose praise poetry and to explore the expressiveness of proverbial speech. Students will

- Explore *gelede* masquerades of the Yoruba peoples of Nigeria and gain understanding of the power of art as it comments on social, political, and historical issues.
- Discuss the limits and freedoms of gender in both their own communities and in Africa. Students write homages to women they respect.
- Engage in creative writing activities to explore the power of proverbial speech, as related to masquerade traditions.
- Practice skills of visual literacy as they analyze *gelede* mask types.

Background Information

With *gelede* masquerades, the Yoruba pay tribute to "our mothers," those who hold extraordinary powers to effect both the positive and negative. Along with their ability to give life, women are known to possess powers to end it—they can benefit their society, bringing fertility and prosperity, and conversely they can be harmful, causing disease, scarcity, and calamities. Yoruba acknowledge this dual power in song, dance, and poetry.

With elderly women leading the *gelede* society, both men and women are active participants. Although the masquerade was first danced by a woman, today the dancers are all men. The mask faces **(fig. 3.6 and 3.7)** are those of older women with serene and composed expressions.

The *gelede* association also addresses issues of topical importance. Many *gelede* masks have a carved superstructure depicting current events or signs of modernity, such as motorcycles or politicians. These anecdotal scenes emerging from the heads of "our mothers" elicit audience discussion. Such performances are still very common today, and the topics depicted may range from public health to political controversies.

LESSON 14: NEGOTIATING GENDER
Powerful Mother: *Ere Gelede*, Nigeria

Fig. 3.7
Eloi Lokossou (Republic of Benin, artist's dates unknown)
Ere gelede headdress Wood, paint.
Circa 1900s. H: 55 cm.
Fowler Museum at UCLA.
Anonymous gift. X2006.5.1.

About the Artist

Eloi Lokossou is a prolific Yoruba artist who creates works for *gelede* in the south central Benin Republic. His *gelede* masks typically show the calm face of a woman surmounted by a statement about wealth, status, and modernity. On this contemporary mask **(fig. 3.7)** the serenity of a woman's face contrasts with the vitality and modernity of the superstructure. Others works by this artist depict traditional stories of the Yoruba peoples.

Curriculum Connections

1. Grouping *Gelede* Masks

African scholar Henry Drewal (1978, 18) places *gelede* masks into four categories:

- Those that recognize respected members of the society, such as hunters, warriors, drummers, market women, and particularly the powerful "mothers."
- Those showing hierarchy, usually with several figural compositions or motifs of animals.
- Those that commemorate mythical events or people.
- Satirical masks making fun of a person or situation.

Activity

Students can design and draw a mask for one or more of the categories, making them appropriate for their own location and situations. What members of their community are respected enough to warrant a mask in their honor? How can they show the status of an important person or situation in a composition suitable for a mask? What events from their community would be worthy of commemoration in a mask? What situations or people can rightfully be satirized?

2. *Gelede* and Today's World

Another purpose of the *gelede* association is to address issues of social relevance. Many *gelede* masks have a carved superstructure depicting current events; some are provocative such as those that address controversy about a new vaccine; others display signs of modernity, such as an airplane, a politician, or a motorcycle as in the mask in the *Art and Power* section of ***Intersections*** **(fig. 3.7)**. These anecdotal scenes elicit discussion among audience members.

Activity

After making a drawing of a placid, calm woman for the base of a mask, the student should design its superstructure around a social issue or current event (as mentioned above), but pertinent to the student's world. These may include issues of ecology, education, and politics. How will the composed, cool, simply drawn face contrast with the busy, chaotic upper part of the mask?

3. Gender Roles

The *gelede* honors powerful women—elders, ancestors, and deities. A Yoruba woman's status traditionally has been based on her wealth and her reputation as a trader, rather than on her husband's importance. Today in many parts of Africa the boundaries drawn between men's and women's roles and occupations are no longer absolute.

Activity

Do we retain perceived boundaries in our society? Have students divide a paper vertically into two columns and label them "male" and "female." Call out a long list of professions, pausing only slightly after each example to give students just enough time to write it in the column that they associate with the occupation. (Your list may include teacher, principal, doctor, nurse, security guard, police officer, lawyer, judge, business executive, secretary, artist, musician, soldier, chef, waiter, writer, physicist, mail carrier, fire fighter, pilot, flight attendant, mayor, governor, president etc.) Discuss the responses. Do students believe that there are still traditional roles for men and women? Did their responses reflect tradition or their own experiences? They will undoubtedly find so many exceptions to the "convention," that the validity of stereotypes will be put into question.

Activity

There have been many powerful women in the lives of students, some personally known to them and others playing roles in the larger society. Students can study important women in the fields of government, education, business, religion, and, perhaps most importantly, in their own families. Have students write an homage to one of these women.

Activity

Students may research the leadership roles played by powerful women in Africa, including the first elected woman president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia who was elected in 2006.

4. Praises and Proverbs

Gelede performances typically include male leaders singing and reciting proverbs, praise poems, riddles, and jokes that invoke the powers of "our mothers" and comment on actions of people in the community.

Activity

Praise poems, important in celebrations of the *gelede* association, are also sung or chanted by most other West African peoples. Praise poems may take many forms, but typically the person being praised is repeatedly named, not only by actual name, but by nicknames and descriptive substitutes for that name. The subject's family, community, position, deeds and occasionally misdeeds, and his or her ancestors may also be named. Rhyming is not important in a praise poem, but rhythm is, and the poem may take the form of a chant (often accompanied by drum beats), or a call-and-response form of song. You may structure original praise poems for your students with the above information, and suggest the number of lines, reminding students to repeat the subject's name or variation of the name.

Activity

Women are the subject of many Yoruba proverbs, some of which are quoted in Mineke Schipper's *Source of All Evil: African Proverbs and Sayings on Women* (1991, 37–41). These include 'Mother is gold, father is mirror,' meaning that a mirror is fragile and unreliable because it may break at any time. 'The child who bites the back of his mother will find no other willing to carry him.' 'One without a mother should never get a sore on his back' suggests that one's mother can be counted on to remedy a difficult situation. Students can find and interpret more proverbs of the Yoruba and of other peoples of Africa, and can collect proverbs familiar to them that relate to women.

LESSON 14: NEGOTIATING GENDER
Powerful Mother: *Ere Gelede*, Nigeria

Useful Readings

Blackmun Visona, Monica, Robin Poynor, Herbert M. Cole, and Michael D. Harris, eds.
2001 *A History of Art in Africa.*
New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Cole, Herbert M., ed.
1985 *I Am Not Myself: The Art of African Masquerade.*
Los Angeles: UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History.

Drewal, Henry
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African Arts 11 (3): 18, 19, 97, 98.

Fitzgerald, Mary Ann with Henry J. Drewal and Moyo Okediji
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African Arts 28 (2): 55–57.

Obiechina, Emmanuel
2003 *Masksong for Our Times.*
Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc.

Poyner, Robin
2001 "The Yoruba and the Fon." In *A History of Art in Africa*, edited by Monica Blackmun Visona, Robin Poyner, Herbert M. Cole, and Michael D. Harris, 228–273.
New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.

Schipper, Mineke
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Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Inc.

Slogar, Christopher
2002 "Carved Ogboni Figures from Abeokuta, Nigeria."
African Arts 35 (4): 14–27.

Unit 3

LESSON 14: NEGOTIATING GENDER
Powerful Mother: *Ere Gelede*, Nigeria

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Lesson 15: Status and Prestige: To Make the Chief's Words Sweet: A Counselor's Staff, Ghana

Lesson 16: Status and Prestige: A Wall of Status and Prestige, Africa, Asia, and the Americas

Lesson 17: Harnessing Spirits: Pacific Northwest Arts, United States and Canada

Lesson 18: Harnessing Spirits: The Hornbill: Bird of Prophecy, Malaysia

Unit 3

LESSON 15: STATUS AND PRESTIGE

To Make the Chief's Words Sweet: A Counselor's Staff, Ghana

Fig.3.8 (Detail)

Osei Bonsu. Kumase, Ghana, 1900–1977. Counselor's staff. Circa 1930. Wood, gold leaf. H: 155 cm. Fowler Museum at UCLA. Gift of Steve and Linda Nelson. X88.680a-c.

Unit 3

LESSON 15: STATUS AND PRESTIGE

To Make the Chief's Words Sweet: A Counselor's Staff, Ghana

Lesson Summary and Objectives

Learning activities focus on the importance of oratory wisdom among the Akan peoples of Ghana. Through writing and artmaking experiences students explore the ways that verbal and visual ideas can work together to express notions of importance for the Akan and by extension, in their own lives. Students will

- Examine the importance of oratory wisdom among the Akan peoples of Ghana through discussion and oral presentations.
- Use creative writing and artmaking activities to explore how verbal and visual ideas can complement each other in expressing knowledge, wisdom, and power.
- Consider the relationship between tradition-based systems of oral communication and the concerns of modern media through discussion and role-playing opportunities.

Background Information

One of the most telling and visually striking documents of Akan regalia is the gold-leafed staff carried by the chief's counselor on all public occasions (fig. 3.9). Its resplendent imagery communicates the status and wisdom of leadership. The *okyeame* (or counselor) serves as mediator between the chief and those who wish to speak with him and repeats the words of the chief and those of his guests—he is said to "make the chief's words sweet." This image of two men seated at a table with one reaching for food and the other grasping his own stomach implies the maxim, "The food is for the man who owns it and not for the man who is hungry," an assertion that chieftaincy belongs only to the rightful owner or leader.

About the Artist

Nana Osei Bonsu is considered the most important Asante carver of twentieth-century Ghana. During his lifetime he was the chief carver to three Asantehenes or kings of the Asante people. Bonsu's work has been widely recognized, published in many scholarly journals, and appears in private and museum collections. You can learn more about the artist in *Lesson 6: Mother of the Band: The Ntan Drum, Ghana* in Unit 2 of this curriculum resource unit.

Curriculum Connections

1. The Old Woman and the Stick

According to Herbert M. Cole and Doran H. Ross in *The Arts of Ghana* (1977, 160), "the first Asante linguist, surprisingly, was an old woman, Nana Amoah. Whenever anyone did wrong they would run to the old woman and ask her to beg for them in front of the Asantehene. Nana Amoah, bent with age, could walk only with the help of two sticks. When she came before her king she stood with the two sticks, always rejecting his offer of a seat. Nana Amoah argued eloquently for the offenders, who were invariably forgiven by the Asantehene. When she died, her son Adoku took her place and used her walking sticks in her honor."

Activity

Students, working in pairs, can offer original versions of how the counselor's staff came into use. They should compose narratives to be read to the class. *(Some scholars believe the European mace carried by officials as a symbol of authority was the inspiration and others say it mimics the European use of walking canes, originally called messenger sticks.)*

Activity

For an alternative activity students could relate how other objects in the *Status and Prestige* section of the exhibition were first used or began to acquire significance to the people.

2. The *Okyeame* Speaks

The ability to speak with wisdom, confidence, and conviction is especially valued by the Akan peoples, and best understood through the office of *okyeame*, wise advisor to the Asantehene and other chiefs. The *okyeame* (pronounced o-cham-ee) acts as chief advisor, judicial advocate, military attaché, foreign minister, prime minister, and political trouble-shooter. He offers prayers and toasts, is known as the authority on local lore and traditions, and serves as intermediary between the chief and those who wish to talk to him. People who wish to converse with the chief speak instead to the counselor (*okyeame*), who in turn speaks for them to the chief. Conversely the chief does not speak directly to his subjects or guests but speaks through the counselor who embellishes his words with appropriate proverbs and other sayings.

Activity

Have the students evaluate what would result from the arrangement of a linguist serving as an intermediary *(The chief does not make decisions lightly or on his own, the wise counselor must always be part of the decision-making. Speaking through the linguist keeps a chief from speaking foolishly in public, without thinking or with anger.)*

Activity

At times during the school week each student should have an opportunity to speak as a chief, never directly to others but always through his or her own designated "linguist" who will relay his/her words to those who wish to have conversation. They in turn, must not speak directly to the chief, but to the linguist who will speak for them. At the end of the week have the students evaluate the experience.

3. *Akyeame* and Modern Media

The traditional role of the *akyeame* in Akan chieftaincy—as a state counselor or linguist—has continued even after Ghana gained its independence from British rule in 1957. This position maintained the importance of the spoken word and traditional communication arts. In his article "African Folk and the Challenges of a Global Lore" in *Africa Today* (1999, 16), Kwesi Yankah discusses the difficulties of retaining these traditional arts in a time of modern communication. In the same article he repeats Akan references to the telephone as *ahmomatrofo*, meaning "liar," "the tale-bearing wire," "string or wire that conveys lies, unverified information"... This implies, he says, that fast traveling news, whose veracity cannot be checked, is not trustworthy. He continues:

> "Similarly, a newspaper is called *koowaa krataa*, which literally means loose-tongued paper...and the general word for foreign language, *apotofoo kasa*, (implies) a language hurriedly improvised for ad hoc use, lacking permanence or authenticity...and among the Yoruba, many refer to the radio as 'the machine that speaks but accepts no reply'" (1999, 16).

Activity

Students should list the advantages and disadvantages of three modes of communication: 1) two people in ordinary conversation, 2) speaking through an intermediary such as an *okyeame*, and 3) speaking via electronic media such as telephone or television.

Activity

In the previous activities do students bring up the importance of listening? To reinforce this important part of communication, let them engage in the following thirty second activity: Each student should work with a partner and when signaled to begin, each of the pair should begin—simultaneously—to tell of something important that happened to him or her this week, or something terrible that they remember, or something that they are now or used to be afraid of. With each member of the pair involved in relating his or her own story, how much of the other's story were they able to absorb before the thirty seconds passed? Follow with a discussion of the experience.

4. Staffs of Wisdom

The earliest staffs were probably topped by plain rounded knobs, but today's staffs feature elaborate, gilded, and meaningful figures at the top. Those on the finial of the staff in the exhibition **(fig. 3.8)** represent two men seated at a table with one reaching for food and the other grasping his own stomach.

Activity

After closely studying the image carved by Osei Bonsu, the students should give their impressions of the message the artist meant to depict, and then compose a saying to go with the image. After they have given their original interpretations, inform the class that the saying represented is "The food is for the man who owns it and not for the man who is hungry," an assertion that chieftaincy belongs only to the rightful owner or leader, not just anyone thirsting after power.

Activity

Osei Bonsu and other Ghanaian carvers used a wide variety of images on the counselors' staffs that they carved. These illustrate other proverbs well-known to the Asante. As above, let students make drawings to illustrate the following maxims, and expand on their meanings:

- "If the chief takes care of his subjects, they will in turn take care of him."
- "One should not attempt to do what is beyond one's capabilities."
- "If you fire at a lion and do not kill it, it would have been better not to fire at all."
- "If one man scrapes the bark [medicine] off a tree, it will fall to the ground."
- "To be a ruler is like holding an egg in the hand; if it is pressed too hard it breaks; but if not held tightly enough it may slip and smash on the ground."

5. A Staff for Yourself

Activity

Students can make their own staffs with clay and long dowels or handles from brooms or mops. After creating the saying that they want to represent themselves, each should use a ball of clay to shape a figure over the top of the staff. Wrapping tape around the figure would insure its stability. Use gold or yellow paint on the figure. The staff itself can be decorated (Asante staffs are often elaborately carved).

LESSON 15: STATUS AND PRESTIGE

To Make the Chief's Words Sweet: A Counselor's Staff, Ghana

Useful Readings

Avins, Lyn and Betsy D. Quick
1998 *Wrapped in Pride Curriculum Resource Unit*
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Cole, Herbert M.
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Unit 3

LESSON 15: STATUS AND PRESTIGE

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Lesson 13: Negotiating Gender: Portrayal of a Hunter: *Ere Egungun Olode*, Nigeria

Lesson 14: Negotiating Gender: Powerful Mother: *Ere Gelede*, Nigeria

Lesson 15: Status and Prestige: To Make the Chief's Words Sweet: A Counselor's Staff, Ghana

Lesson 16: Status and Prestige: A Wall of Status and Prestige, Africa, Asia, and the Americas

Lesson 17: Harnessing Spirits: Pacific Northwest Arts, United States and Canada

Lesson 18: Harnessing Spirits: The Hornbill: Bird of Prophecy, Malaysia