



African Personality and Spirituality: The Role of Abosom and Human Essence

By Anthony Ephirim-Donkor

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There is a divine pronouncement among the Akan that all human beings are children of God (Nana Nyame), none a child of the earth (mother); meaning that human beings are spiritual in origin, descending directly from God via the Abosom (gods and goddesses). Every person then has a deity as father (?gya-bosom), recognition of which existentially enables a person to fulfil one's career or professional blueprint (*Nkrabea*). Intrinsically, therefore, human beings embody the very essence of the Abosom, which manifests itself behaviorally and psychologically in a manner identical to those of the gods and goddesses.

African Personality and Spirituality: The Role of Abosom and Human Essence therefore addresses ultimate existential concerns of the Akan, revealing the essence of the primeval gods and goddesses and how they transform themselves into human beings, as well as the psychology of personality characteristic attributes, the phenomenon of spirit alightment, and other manifestations of the gods and goddesses, and the imperative of ethical existence and generativity (?bra b?) as basis of eternal life.

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Editorial Review

Review

One beautiful thing about this book is the author's use of the question-and-answer style, analogies, and proverbs to clarify some aspects of his discussion to better enable the reader to follow these discussions.... [T]he book is well researched and written... Ephirim-Donkor succeeds in doing what he sets out to do: to add to the existing knowledge on indigenous African religions. This book, then, would be an important resource not only for Africanists, religious hermeneutics, social and cultural anthropologists, theologians, counsellors, academics, students of religion and philosophy, but also for all those interested in getting to know the Akan of Ghana in general. (*Reading Religion*)

Indeed Dr. Anthony Ephirim-Donkor is the quintessential 'Nyamesem,' the Akan designation for theologian, or one who plumbs the depth of Akan spirituality in both practice and philosophical acuity. This book is at once epic and epochal in the sense that it clearly demonstrates in unique and unusual fashion the heretofore-unconsidered spiritual profundity of African spirituality and culture—a masterful and elegant display of the metaphysics, psychology and ethics of the rich spiritual traditions of the Akan of Ghana. (Salim Faraji, Concordia University Irvine and California State University Dominguez Hills)

Anthony Ephirim-Donkor has written a very intriguing book about how Africans look at religion and philosophy. The book is a must read for anyone who wants to understand the way Africans and African Americans order their religious and social lives. (Abel A. Bartley, Clemson University)

About the Author

Anthony Ephirim-Donkor is associate professor of religion and Africana studies and chair of the Department of Africana Studies at Binghamton University, State University of New York. He is also the traditional king of Gomoa Mprumem, Ghana.

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