



**Reinventing African Chieftaincy
in the Age of AIDS, Gender,
Governance, and Development**

Edited by Donald I. Ray, Tim Quinlan,
Keshav Sharma, and Tacita A.O. Clarke

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GLOSSARY

- Abakosem** (Ghana): oral history, told by royal drummers (*akyerema*) on their “talking drums” (*fontomfrom, atumpan*) and recalled during royal funerals and festivals by the chief’s heralds (*abafo*).
- Abebuo** (Ghana): speaking in proverbs in Akan.
- Aboakyer** (Ghana): Deer-catching festival of the Effutu of Winneba.
- Abusua** (Ghana): Akan “matriclan” or “family lineage” whose ancestry is traced back to an original female ancestress by oral history.
- Abusuapanin** (Ghana): head of “matriclan.”
- Acephalous societies** (Ghana): such as the Tallensi of the Upper Region, which are ruled by heads of lineages who exercised mainly moral authority, and by tendanaas or “earth priests”; these differ from societies that have centralized political authority systems, such as the Akan, or the Gonja, the Dagomba, the Mamprusi, and the Nanumba people who select and elect “traditional authorities” or “chiefs”; note that the Ga-Adangme and Ewe people of south-eastern and eastern Ghana combine both types of authorities.
- Adae** (Ghana): monthly festival in commemoration of royal ancestors among the Akan.
- Adee** (Ghana): thing, in Akan.
- Adeshye kasa** (Ghana): “royal speech” as well as “regalia,” such as stools, swords, canes, umbrellas, cloths, jewellery, headgear used during ritual performances, are hinting at the importance of a constant “royal” control over hierarchy and structure; in particular, on the occasion of festivals.
- Afahye** (Ghana): festival; each region of Ghana celebrates yearly (sometimes monthly) festivals.
- Ahemfie** (Ghana): palace.
- Akoa** (pl. **nkoa**) (Ghana): social category of “subjects” into which past “slaves” were assimilated to the rest of the township.
- Akuraa** (pl. **nkuraa**) (Ghana): village.

- Akwambo** (Ghana): Path-clearing festival of the Fante, Gomua, and Agona
- Akwankwaa** (pl. **nkwankwa**) (Ghana): commoners, “young men” generally grouped in associations.
- Amakhosi** (South Africa): plural of *inkosi* in South Africa.
- Amansem** (Ghana): matters of the state.
- ANC** (South Africa): African National Congress.
- Anansesem** (Ghana): lit. “stories about Ananse, the Spider”; tale.
- Apoo**: festival of the Brong people of Wenchi, Nkoranza, and Tachiman.
- Asantehemmaa, Wenchihemmaa** (Ghana): “queenmother” of Asante, of Wenchi.
- Asantehene**: “King of Asante” remains the most powerful and influential “traditional authority” of the Republic of Ghana today as the Asante people once ruled over virtually the whole territory of contemporary Ghana (eighteenth and nineteenth centuries).
- Asem** (pl. **nsem**) (Ghana): matter.
- Atetefo** (Ghana): people of long, long ago; early ancestors who were gathering and hunting, moving from place to place, before “historical times” of permanent settlements and chiefdoms.
- Avudwene** (Ghana): songs performed during the Kundum festival.
- Aware** or **Awadee** (Ghana): marriage.
- Awaregya** (Ghana): divorce.
- Bafaladi** (Botswana): aliens or refugees.
- Barima** (Ghana): Akan noble title for a man.
- Basarwa** (Botswana): Botswana government’s imposed term on the First People.
- Batlhanka** (Botswana): commoners.
- Bogosi** (Botswana): chieftainship institution.
- Botlhanka** (Botswana): servitude.

Chibuku (Botswana): A locally brewed strong beer.

CONTRALESA: Congress of Traditional Leaders of South Africa.

Damba (Ghana): festival observed among the Dagomba, Mamprusi, Gonja, Nanumba, and Wala of the Upper Regions.

Dikgosi (Botswana): chiefs; plural of *kgosi*.

Dikgosana: Sub-chiefs (plural).

Dwa (pl. *nnwa*) (Ghana): stool.

Dwantoa (Ghana): dispute settlement (mediatory) by Queenmother; “pleading.”

Efiesem (Ghana): matters of the house.

Homowo (Ghana): Ga festival (“Hooting at hunger”).

Induna (South Africa): headman, usually reports or accountable to the chief, but in some communities headmen perform the roles and functions of chiefs where there are no chiefs or in areas where historically there have never been chiefs. In a normal traditional structure, the chief has *izinduna* (pl. of *induna*) serving under him, and they are responsible for trying minor cases or attending to the needs of their immediate communities. The *izinduna* refer serious matters to the chief. The *izinduna* are also responsible for land allocation within their respective parts of the chiefdom. They are the chief’s eyes and ears.

IFP (South Africa): Inkatha Freedom Party.

Inkosi (South Africa): word commonly used for a hereditary chief or traditional leader of one of the peoples of South Africa whose political office is rooted in the pre-colonial states and other polities. The same word applies to the king, although the king is usually referred to as *Ngonyama/Isilo* (lion).

Izinduna (South Africa): plural for *induna*, a traditional leader of a ward and part of the *inkosi*’s councillors in South Africa.

Imizi (South Africa): directly translated as “homesteads” of family members, but in pre-colonial times also the main unit of subsistence

production, usually bound together by ties of kinship (real and fictive) and marriage.

kgosi (Botswana): chief.

Kgosigadi (Botswana): female chief.

Kgotla (Botswana): traditional village assembly presided over by a chief.

Kgosana (Botswana): sub-chief.

Kgosi Kgolo (Botswana): paramount chief

Kumasehene, Ejisuhene, etc. (Ghana): “traditional ruler” of Kumase, of Ejisu, etc.

Kundum (Ghana): Nzema-Ahanta festival.

Kuro (pl. **akuro**, **Nkuro**) (Ghana): town.

Ntlo ya DiKgosi (Botswana): House of Chiefs.

Mafisa (Botswana): Social security mechanism in Botswana through which poor families were loaned cattle they could use for milk drought power and could occasionally be rewarded by a calf. This system had the effect of reinforcing patron-client relationships.

Matimela (Botswana): stray cattle

Merafe (Botswana): nations (plural).

Meratshwana (Botswana): minority nations (derogatory).

Mfecane (South Africa): Zulu wars of expansion.

Morafe (Botswana): nation.

Na (Ghana): traditional leader of the Dagbon in the northern states, whose symbol of office was a skin and who was surrounded by military wings with heads in a system similar to that of the Akan.

Nana or **Nene** (Ghana): title, respectful word of address to a chief, to a queenmother, or to an elder in general.

Nananom (Ghana): “royal” ancestors remembered as the founders of the chiefdoms; also, assembly of chiefs, of elders.

- Nhyiamu** (Ghana): traditional council, which works hand in hand with the traditional ruler(s).
- Nkwankwaahene** (Ghana): head of the “young men.”
- Nnanso** (Ghana): settlement, place in the forest.
- Nwonkoro** (Ghana): songs of praise.
- Obaa** (pl. **mma**) (Ghana): Akan woman.
- Oberempon** (pl. **aberempon**) (Ghana): “big men,” in charge of affairs around the fifteenth century (clearance of forest with the help of imported “slaves,” exploitation of gold mines and exportation of gold); took over as so-called “owners of the land” and probably became the first chiefs.
- Odehye** (pl. **adehye**) (Ghana): social category for “free-born,” associated with the status of “nobility” and often translated as “royals”; generally claiming to be the first occupants of the land and of the “stools.”
- Odikro** (pl. **adikurofoo**) (Ghana): head of a town, lit. “the owner of the town.”
- Odwira** (Ghana): annual festival in Akwapem, Akim, and Akwamu.
- Ohemmaa** (pl. **ahemmaa**) (Ghana): traditional female ruler, erroneously perhaps but commonly called “queenmother” in English (she is not often the mother of the chief); one talks of “parallel dual leadership,” of the chief’s “female counterpart.”
- Ohene** (pl. **ahene**) (Ghana): “chief” or “traditional ruler” or “stool-holder.”
- Ohene dwa**, or **adehye dwa** (pl. **nnwa**) (Ghana): “royal stool,” thus chiefs and queenmothers are “enstooled,” or “destooled” amongst the Akan, the Ewes, and the Ga-Adangmes.
- Okomfoo** (pl. **akomfoo**) (Ghana): traditional healer, priest.
- (O)kuno** (pl. **(o)kunonom**) (Ghana): husband.
- Okyeame** (pl. **akyeame**) (Ghana): chief’s spokesman, speech intermediary.

- Oman** (pl. **aman**) (Ghana): “traditional area” or “state”; a first map of *aman* was drawn as early as 1629 by the Dutch Hans Prophet.
- Omanhene** (pl. **amanhene**) (Ghana): “head of an *oman* or state.”
- Onipa** (pl. **nnipa**) (Ghana): human being.
- Opanin** (pl. **mpanimfoo**) (Ghana): family elder, senior.
- Osomfo** (pl. **asomafo**) (Ghana): “functionaries” within the palace who were grouped inside “service groups” or *afékuo* with leaders such as the *Akyemehene* (head of spokesmen), the *Ankonwasoafobene* (head of stool carriers), the *Akyinyikyimfobene* (head of umbrella carriers). They are examples of the hereditary leaders of the palace service groups.
- Owura, wura** (pl. **awuranom**) (Ghana): lord and master; sometimes a term of address.
- Oyere** (pl. **oyerenom**) (Ghana): wife.
- Pasua** (Ghana): military wings; their heads remain important subordinate chiefs; for instance, there are the *Kyidombene* (head of rear guard), the *Nifahene* (head of right wing), the *Osafobene* (head of groups of men, assistants to war leaders), the *Osabene* (war leader) and the *Kontihene* (part or the rear guard at war; regent).
- RDP** (South Africa): Reconstruction and Development Programme. A central program of the first ANC government led by former president Nelson Mandela, 1994–1999.
- Regional council** (South Africa): a region consisting of towns and traditional authorities along regional lines within a province.
- Regional authority** (South Africa): a body consisting of traditional authorities within a regional council.
- Shabeen** (South Africa and Botswana): Traditional/semi-private place for drinking.
- Shikati** (Botswana): paramount chief in Seyeyi.

Sika Dwa Kofi (Ghana): “Golden Stool born on Friday,” stool of the Asantehene. While chiefs from southern Ghana occupy stools, chiefs from the North (Dagomba, Gonja, Mamprusi, Nanumba) use skins; thus, they are “enskinned.”

Traditional authorities (Ghana): Term often used interchangeably with “chief” to denote political leaders whose legitimacy (and hence authority) is derived from offices established in the pre-colonial era.

Traditional authorities (South Africa): Refers to areas controlled by traditional leaders. This is preferred over the phrase “tribal authorities.”

Traditional leaders (South Africa): a term used for *amakhosi* (chiefs). In South Africa, some regard this as a debatable term since some of the leaders were appointed during the colonial era. This is the term used for South Africa’s National House of Traditional Leaders and the six Provincial Houses of Traditional Leaders.

Traditional courts (South Africa): In the case of KwaZulu-Natal, this refers to formal buildings, although historically cattle enclosures or trees were used as spaces for traditional gatherings or trying cases. Recently, there has been a move to turn these courts into administrative centres, rather than mere tribal courts. The change is due to the fact that they are used for more than just trying court cases or traditional gatherings. There is a move away from using the term “tribal courts.”

Ubukhosi (South Africa): chieftainship or the institution of traditional leadership.

Unicity/Metro (South Africa): a metropolitan municipality involving more than one town in South Africa. Usually, it incorporates the main city, small adjacent towns, and rural communities under traditional leaders.

Ukusisa (Botswana): the act of giving tribute, such as cattle, usually from chief to follower as gifts and part of redistribution or for favours undertaken.

