




Adinkra Symbols & Meanings







Source: adinkrasymbols.org








Adinkra are visual symbols with historical and philosophical significance originally printed on cloth which royals wore to important ceremonies. Originating from the Gyaman people of Ghana and la Côte d'Ivoire, the symbols have assumed global importance and are now found in logos, clothes, furniture, sculpture, earthenware pots, and many others.







Saturated with meaning, these symbols have come to symbolize the richness of Akan culture and serve as a shorthand for communicating deep truths in visual form. As an example, the fact that most universities in Ghana use at least one Adinkra symbol in their logo demonstrates the gravitas their use has come to symbolize.



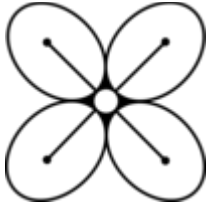

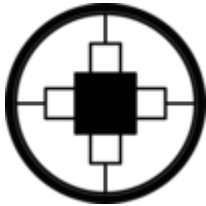


List of Adinkra Symbols with Meanings








#	Symbol	Name	Meaning
1		Gye Nyame	Except God. A symbol expressing the omnipotence of God. Probably the most popular Adinkra symbol. It is featured on Ghana's largest-denomination banknote, the 200 cedi note.
2		Sankofa	Go back and get it! A symbol of the wisdom of learning from the past to build for the future. From the Akan proverb, "Se wo were fi na wosan kofa a yenkyiri," meaning, "It is not taboo to go back for what you forgot (or left behind)."
3		Sankofa	Another Sankofa symbol





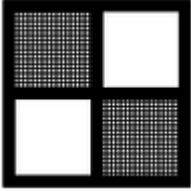


4		<p>Adinkrahene</p>	<p>King of the Adinkra symbols. A symbol for authority, leadership, and charisma. Also a symbol for qualities associated with kings. Adinkrahene is reportedly the inspiration for the design of the other symbols.</p>
5		<p>Dwennimmen</p>	<p>Ram's horns. A symbol of strength (in mind, body, and soul), humility, wisdom, and learning. This symbol features prominently in the logo of the University of Ghana, Ghana's first and largest university.</p>
6		<p>Funtumfunefu Denkyemfunefu</p>	<p>Conjoined crocodiles. A symbol of unity in diversity giving a common destiny; sharing; from the proverb, "Funtumfracu denkyemfracu, wowo yafunu koro nanso wonya biribi a wofom efiri se aduane no de no yete no wo menetwitwie mu," to wit, Funtumfracu and Denkyemfracu share a stomach but when they get something (food) they strive over it because the sweetness of the food is felt as it passes through the throat.</p>
7		<p>Nkyinkyim</p>	<p>Twisting. A symbol representing the tortuous nature of life's journey.</p>
8		<p>Odo Nnyew Fie Kwan (Odo Nyera Fie Kwan)</p>	<p>Love does not lose its way home. Those led by love always end up in the right place.</p>
9		<p>Denkyem</p>	<p>Crocodile. A symbol of adaptability and cleverness.</p>







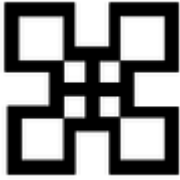
10		Nea Onnim	He who does not know; from the proverb, "When he who does not know learns, he gets to know."
11		Nsoromma	Star (literally, "child of the heavens"). A symbol of faith and the belief in patronage and dependency on a supreme being
12		Aban	Fortress (or castle). A symbol of strength, seat of power, authority, and magnificence.
13		Abe Dua	Palm tree. A symbol of wealth, resourcefulness, and self-sufficiency.
14		Adwo	Calmness. A symbol for peace, tranquility, and quiet.
15		Agyin Dawuru	Agyin's gong. A symbol of faithfulness, alertness, and dutifulness. Designed to commemorate the faithfulness of one Agyin who was a dutiful servant and gong-beater of the Asantehene.
16		Akoben	War horn. A symbol of a call to action, readiness to be called to action, readiness, and voluntarism.

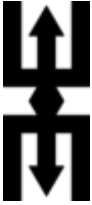






17		Akofena	<p>A sword of war (or the state ceremonial swords). A symbol of state authority, legality, the legitimized authority of a ruler, recognition of gallantry of heroic deeds. Ghana's coat of arms shows one of these ceremonial swords crossed with a linguist's staff in its top left quadrant.</p>
18		Akoko Nan	<p>The foot of a hen. A symbol for discipline coupled with care and nurturing; from the Akan proverb, "Akoko nan tia ba na enkum ba," literally, "The foot of a hen steps on the child (chick) but it doesn't kill the child (chick)."</p>
19		Akoma Ntoaso	<p>Joining of hearts. A symbol of agreement, togetherness and unity or a charter. An amplification of the concept of Akoma</p>
20		Akoma	<p>Heart. A symbol of love, goodwill, patience, faithfulness, fondness, endurance, and consistency.</p>
21		Ananse Ntontan (Ananse Ntontan)	<p>Spider's web. A symbol of wisdom, craftiness, creativity, and the complexities of life. It is the web of Ananse, the crafty spider who is preeminent in African folklore.</p>
22		Ani Bere A Enso Gya	<p>No matter how red-eyed one becomes (i.e. how serious one becomes), his eyes do not spark flames. A symbol of patience, self-containment, self-discipline, and self-control.</p>






23		Asase Ye Duru	The earth has weight. A symbol of providence and the divinity of Mother Earth.
24		Aya	Fern. A symbol of endurance, independence, defiance against difficulties, hardiness, perseverance, and resourcefulness.
25		Bese Saka	Bunch of cola nuts. A symbol of affluence, power, abundance, and plenty. Also a symbol of togetherness and unity
26		Bi Nka Bi	Fern. A symbol of endurance, independence, defiance against difficulties, hardiness, perseverance, and resourcefulness.
27		Dame Dame	Checkered. A symbol of craftiness, intelligence, and strategy.
28		Dono Ntoaso	The double dono; joined tension talking drum. A symbol of united action, alertness, goodwill, praise, rejoicing, and adroitness.
29		Dono	The tension talking drum. A symbol of appellation, praise, goodwill and rhythm.

30		Duafe	Wooden comb. A symbol of feminine consideration or good feminine qualities such as patience, prudence, fondness, love, and care.
31		Eban	Fence. A symbol of safety, security, and love.
32		Epa	Handcuffs. A symbol of law and justice.
33		Ese ne Tekrema	Teeth and tongue. A symbol of improvement, advancement, growth, the need for friendliness and interdependence.
34		Fafanto	Butterfly. A symbol of tenderness, gentleness, honesty, and fragility.
35		Fihankra	An enclosed or secured compound house. A symbol of brotherhood, safety, security, completeness, and solicity.
36		Fofo	A flowering plant (bidens pilosa). A symbol of warning against jealousy and covetousness.

37		Gyawu Atiko	The back of Gyawu's head. A symbol of valor and bravery. Used interchangeably with the Kwatakye Atiko symbol.
38		Hwehwemudua	Measuring rod (rod of investigation) or rule. A symbol of excellence, superior quality, perfection, knowledge, and critical examination.
39		Hye Wo Nhye	Burn you won't burn (fig. unburnable). A symbol of toughness and imperishability; also a symbol of permanence.
40		Kramo Bone Amma Yeanhu Kramo Pa	The bad muslim makes it difficult for a good one to be recognized. A symbol of warning against deception and hypocrisy.
41		Kuronti ne Akwamu	Kuronti and Akwamu. A symbol of democracy, sharing ideas, taking council.
42		Kwatakye Atiko	The back of Kwatakye's head. A symbol of valor and bravery. This symbol is also called Gyawu Atiko. It is said to be a hairstyle of Kwatakye, a war captain of old Asante.
43		Mako	Peppers. A symbol of inequality and uneven development; from the proverb "All peppers on the same plant don't ripen at the same time."

44		<p>Menso Wo Kenten</p>	<p>I am not carrying your basket. A symbol of industry, self-reliance, and economic self-determination.</p>
45		<p>Mframadan</p>	<p>Well-ventilated house. A symbol of resilience and readiness to face the vicissitudes of life.</p>
46		<p>Mmere Dane</p>	<p>Time changes (times change). A symbol of the temporariness of good times.</p>
47		<p>Mpatapo</p>	<p>Pacification knot. A symbol of pacification, forgiveness, and reconciliation.</p>
48		<p>Mpuannum</p>	<p>Five tufts (of hair). A symbol of loyalty and priestly office</p>
49		<p>Nkonsonkonson</p>	<p>Chain. A symbol of unity, community.</p>
50		<p>Nsaa</p>	<p>A type of woven cloth, renowned for its quality. A symbol of excellence, genuineness, and authenticity.</p>

51		Nteasee	Understanding. A symbol for understanding and cooperation.
52		Nyame Biribi Wo Soro	God, there is something in the heavens. From the saying, "God, there is something up there (in the heavens); let it come to me." A symbol of hope and inspiration.
53		Nyame Dua	God's tree (sacred stump). A symbol of God's presence and protection.
54		Nyame Nwu Na Mawu	God won't die for me to die; a symbol expressing the immortality of the human soul.
55		Okuafo Pa	Good farmer. A symbol of diligence, hard work, and entrepreneurship.
56		Osram ne Nsoromma	Moon and star. A symbol of faithfulness, fondness, harmony, benevolence, love, loyalty, and femininity.
57		Owuo Atwedee	Ladder of death. A symbol of the certainty and universality of death.

58		Sepow	Executioner's knife. A symbol of justice.
59		Tamfo Bebre	The enemy will suffer; the enemy will stew in his own juice. A symbol for ill-will, jealousy, and envy.
60		UAC Nkanea	UAC lights. A symbol of technological advancement.
61		Wawa Aba	Seed of the wawa tree. A symbol of hardiness, toughness, and perseverance.
62		Woforo Dua Pa A	When you climb a good tree. A symbol of support for good causes.