

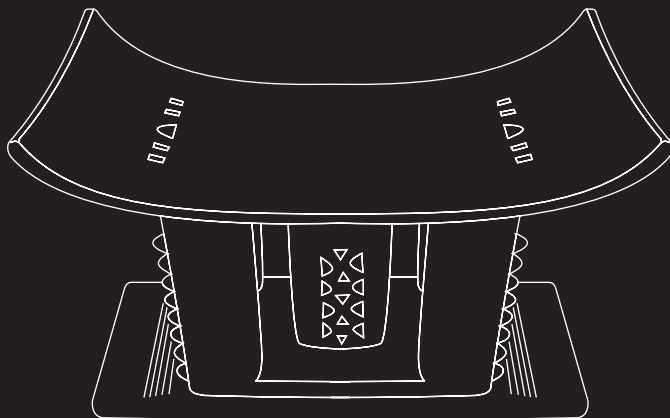
# ASHANTI/ASANTE STOOL

For the Ashanti (or Asante) tribe of Southern Ghana the stool is a very important object: they believe the stool is the seat of the owner's soul. When not in use, the stool is leaned against to wall to prevent other souls from sitting on it. Traditionally, the

Ashanti stool is carved from a single woodblock and has a wide crescent-shaped seat, a flat base and a detailed support structure. Every Ashanti stool is unique as the specific markings, designs and shapes on the support structure indicate the owner's status and

power and his position in the tribe's society. For instance, if the stool is meant for a **chief** or a leading person within the tribe, the base of the stool is decorated with **leopards** or **elephants**, two signifiers of royal power. This makes the Ashanti stool a practical as well as a spiritual object. The Ashanti royal throne is also a stool, known as *Sika 'dwa*, the **Golden Stool**. As the Golden Stool houses the spirit of the entire Ashanti Empire, it must never touch the ground and is therefore always placed on a blanket or on its own stool. The Golden Stool is also fea-

tured on the **Ashanti flag**. In 1900, the British occupiers ordered the Ashanti tribe to grant them the Golden Stool, which led to an armed rebellion known as the **War of the Golden Stool**. To prevent the sacrilege of the royal throne, a few skilled Ashanti craftsmen designed a brass mould of the Golden Stool and smeared it with gold. But after the British had taken this fake Golden Stool to their home country and melted it, all the gold came out leaving the brass mould. This resulted in the **annexation** of Ashanti to the British Empire.



## Visual references

## Sources and further information

<http://www.ashanti.com.au/>

<http://anansistories.com/Anansesem.html>

<http://www.ghana50.gov.gh/tourism/index.php?op=getAshantisiteInfo&id=4>

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asante\\_royal\\_thrones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Asante_royal_thrones)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/4chapter6.shtml>