

POET'S CORNER

The Jones'

By Keith A. Brantley (Izulu Poets)

Just when you had them licked,
The Jones' moved
and broke the groove
you had going.
New car, new clothes
just for the showing.

Gotta' find new Jones'
in this game of keep up.
Jones to Jones
let no one creep up
while you're getting ahead
who's left behind?
and do they mind
That you are their Jones'?

You and Mrs. Jones;
You and Mr. Jones
and don't forget baby Jones;
You've all got a thing going on.
Keep up keep away
for another dollar for another day
to Jones and Jones again.
Jones to Jones,
it never ends.

AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY

DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE WEARING?

By Gwen Walker

When you wear **Kente Cloth**, do you really know what you are wearing?

Kente is an Asante ceremonial cloth, hand-woven on a horizontal treadle loom. Strips measuring about 4 inches wide are sewn together into larger pieces of cloths. Cloths come in various colors, sizes and designs and are worn during very important social and religious occasions.

In a total cultural context, Kente is more than just a cloth. It's a visual representation of history, philosophy, ethics, oral literature, moral values, social code of conduct, religious beliefs, political thought and aesthetic principles.

The term "Kente" has its roots in the word "Kenten" which means a basket. The first kente weavers used Raffia fibers to weave cloths that looked like kenten (a basket); and thus were referred to as "kenten ntoma," meaning "basket cloth." The original Asante name of the cloth was



GWEN WALKER

"nsadugso" or "nwontoma," meaning "a cloth hand-woven on a loom," and is still used today by Asante weavers and elders. Many variations of narrow-strip cloths, similar to kente, are woven by various ethnic groups in Ghana and other places in Africa.

Kente, as we know it today, was developed in the 17th Century A.D. by the Asante people. It has its roots in a long tradition of weaving in Africa dating back to about 3000 B.C. The origin of kente is explained with both a legend and historical accounts. A legend has it that a man named Ofa Kraban and his friend Kwaku Amegar from the town of Bonwire (now the leading kente weaving center in Asante),

learned the art of weaving by observing a spider weaving its web. Taking a cue from the spider, they wove a strip of raffia fabric and later improved upon their skill.

They reported their discovery to their chief Nana Bobie, who in turn reported it to the Asantehene at that time. The Asantehene adopted it as Royal Cloth and encouraged its development as a cloth of prestige reserved for special occasions.

Historic accounts trace the origin of kente to early weaving traditions in ancient West African kingdoms that flourished between 300 A.D. and 1600 A.D. Some historians maintain that kente is an outgrowth of various weaving traditions that existed in West Africa prior to the formation of the Asante kingdom in the 17th Century. Archaeological research has dated examples of narrow-strip cloths woven in West Africa to as early as the 11th Century A.D. and perhaps earlier.

Some Asante elders and oral

historians maintain that Asante craftsmen developed the art of kente weaving during the reign of the Asantehene, Nana Oti Akenten (1630-1660). It was upgraded to a royal cloth during the reign of King Osei Tutu (1697-1731).

In African civilizations in the Nile Valley such as Kemet (Egypt), and Nubia or Kush, there is an abundance of pictorial and archeological evidence proving the existence of a weaving industry as early as 3200 B.C.

Individuals wearing kente should seek to preserve and protect its cultural authenticity and the prestige associated with it.

We should all remind individuals wearing kente of the importance and significance of its history and meaning. The wearing of kente shouldn't just be a fad, nor should individuals wait until February (Black History Month) to wear it. Decorate your home with it using good judgment.

HEALTHWIRE

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differences in survival rates, "there is room for everything."

Rather than dismissing casual factors like poverty and a lack of access to care, this research says that "in addition to socioeconomic factors, there are differences in the tumors of these women...it's multi-factorial," Dr. Osborne explains. The study found that African American and Latino women were more likely to get the disease before age 45. In addition, their tumors grew faster and were less responsive

to estrogen and therefore less likely to respond to drug taxofifen and some other breast cancer treatments. And, while the variations in survival statistics may seem small, Dr. Osborne pointed out that "even a small percentage difference still effects thousands and thousands of women, because so many women have breast cancer."

One of the same problems — more aggressive tumors —

exist for African American men suffering from prostate cancer. African American men have the highest rates of prostate cancer in the world (National Cancer Institute). An Eastern Virginia Medical School study found that African American men suffered from more aggressive forms of the disease even when the disease was diagnosed at stages similar to those of white patients. Studies at Norris Comprehensive Cancer Center are shedding light on possible causes for this difference. Work comparing levels of testosterone and 15-alpha reductase, which are both implacable in the growth of prostate tumors in Japanese American, white and African American men found that African Americans had high levels of both substances, while white and Japanese patients had high levels of either 5-alpha reductase or testosterone. Japanese men, incidentally, have very low rates of prostate cancer.

New research at the University of Southern California has also shown radical differences in the gene coding for the receptor that blinds testosterone. "We saw clear differences between Asians, whites and blacks which correlate exactly with their relative risks of the disease," said Dr. Gerhard Goetzee.

To Be Continued

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HEALTHBRIEFS

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America, and blacks have the highest rate of the disease.

Cancer of the prostate can usually be cured in it's early stages with radiation, surgery or hormone therapy.

"Regular exams can detect the cancer early," said Dr. Peter Scardino, director of the MatsunagaConte Prostate Cancer Center at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. "If it spreads beyond the prostate, it could be fatal."

It is particularly important for black men to be checked regularly, Scardino said.

JAZZ IN THE NIGHT

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Wilkins' band boasts a library containing many arrangements by his brother Ernie Wilkins — one of the recognized masters of the art of writing for large jazz ensembles.

Like Wilkins, tenor saxophonist Bill Trujillo is a veteran of the big band era. He has performed as featured soloist with the bands of Charlie Barnett, Woody Herman and Stan Kenton, and was a member of the quintet led by the great Kenton arranger and composer Bill Russo. Since moving to Las Vegas in 1960, Trujillo has played at nearly every hotel-casino, working with Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Joe Williams, Sarah Vaughan, and a host of other major entertainers.

Four of Las Vegas' most highly-regarded jazz musicians have recently joined together to form the group known as Utopia. The quartet is composed of saxophonist Phil Wigfall, keyboardist Stefan Karlsson, bassist Morrie Loudon and drummer John Abraham. Much of the material performed by this high energy ensemble is written by the band members themselves.

For more information about "Jazz Into The Night," call the Jazz Society Hotline at 457-9141.

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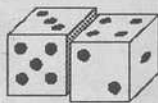
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