



Promoting Excellence in Knowledge

# GHANA ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES EPHRAIM AMU MEMORIAL LECTURE 2023



## TOPIC:

# THE ETHICS OF NATION-BUILDING: PERSPECTIVES FROM THE LEGON TRADITION OF PHILOSOPHY



**SPEAKER**

## PROF. MARTIN ODEI AJEI, FGA

Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy  
and Classics, University of Ghana-Legon

**CHAIRMAN**

## PROF. JOSEPH R. A. AYEE, FGA

Vice President, Arts Section, GAAS



**DATE:** THURSDAY SEPTEMBER **21** 2023 | **TIME:** 5:30 PM

**VENUE:** GHANA ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES AUDITORIUM

#3 Research Crescent, Casely Hayford Road, Airport Residential Area, Accra

**LIVE ON**



MEETING ID

892-6475-9767



Ghana Academy of  
Arts and Sciences



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## PROGRAMME

- 5:30 PM
- Welcome Address and Introduction of Chairman  
*Prof. Joshua Y. Abor, FGA,*  
*Assistant Honorary Secretary, GAAS*
- Chairman's Remarks and Introduction of Speaker  
*Prof. Joseph R. A. Ayee, FGA*  
*Vice President, Arts Section, GAAS*
- Song Ministration by Choir
- Lecture Begins
- Song Ministration by Choir
- Chairman's Closing Remarks
- Honorary Secretary's Remarks
- Refreshments

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IN ATTENDANCE:  
IMMANUEL CHOIR, MADINA-ACCRA

ABOUT THE SPEAKER

**PROF. MARTIN ODEI AJEI, FGA**

*Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy and Classics,  
University of Ghana*

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**M**artin Odei Ajei is an associate professor of philosophy in the Department of Philosophy and Classics at the University of Ghana. He obtained a DLitt et Phil in philosophy from the University of South Africa, an MPhil from University of Ghana, and a BA (Hons) from the University of Stockholm, Sweden. His research interests include African philosophy, applied ethics, political philosophy, and philosophies of liberation. He is the author of more than thirty peer-reviewed journal articles and book chapters and of two books: *The Paranormal: An Inquiry into Akan Metaphysics and Epistemology* and *Africa's Development: The Imperatives on Indigenous Knowledge and Values*. He is also the editor of an anthology of philosophical commentary on Kwame Nkrumah's philosophy: *Disentangling Consciencism: Essays on Kwame Nkrumah's Philosophy*. He has held several fellowships, the latest of which was fellow of the German Reference Center for Ethics in the Life Sciences, University of Bonn. He is currently working on his third book: *Empathetic Humanism: A Legon Tradition of African Philosophy*. Prof. Ajei is a Fellow of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences.

**SYNOPSIS OF LECTURE:**  
**THE ETHICS OF NATION-BUILDING:**  
**PERSPECTIVES FROM THE LEGON TRADITION**  
**OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**N**ation-building is an effort by a State - a political and legal entity in international law – to attune its citizens to its pursuit of the ideals of nationhood. Nation-building, thus, signifies both a political and moral need. Political because of the aspiration to forge a political unit whose citizens think, act and live in unified pursuit of demarcated ideals – in the case of Ghana - of the ideals of freedom and justice. And moral because the ideals such as freedom and justice are moral, in as much as they seek to ensure the harmonious coexistence of Ghanaians; as well as their survival, interests and welfare. For these reasons, politics furthers the ends of ethics, and so the former ought to be guided by the latter. Thus, the nation-state of Ghana, as a political entity in pursuit of the ideal of nationhood, ought to assume a moral duty to work unceasingly toward achieving the common good of Ghanaians. This lecture enunciates and defends the thesis that philosophers who have been affiliated with the University of Ghana have produced a body of thought and a systematic approach to philosophy that merits the status of a tradition of philosophy; and that this tradition is exemplified by distinctive moral philosophical perspectives that are germane to the task of nation building in Ghana.

**H**e was born on 13 September 1899 at Peki-Avetile (also called Abenase) in the Peki traditional area of the Volta Region and as a male child born on a Wednesday was called Kwaku. His father was Stephen Amuyaa, a wood carver who was popularly called Papa Stefano. His mother was Sarah Akoram Ama. Ephraim Koku Amu was baptised by the Rev. Rudolf Mallet on 22 October 1899.

Amu first went to school in May 1906 and at about age 12 he entered the Peki Blengo E.P. Boarding Middle School, where he showed much interest in and love for music and agriculture.

Amu passed the standard 7 School Leaving Certificate examination and also passed the Abetifi Teachers Seminary Examination. In 1916 he and two other colleagues had to walk 150 miles from Peki to Abetifi with their boxes on their heads to start teacher training education.

Dr. Ephraim Amu (later Tata Amu) attained national stature very early in life as a creative artist and an intellectual. He combined the role of musician with that of an educator, social critic and cultural activist.

Tata Amu was concerned not only with the theory and practice of music and related arts, but also with larger issues of tradition and innovation, change and progress, the role of patriotism in nation building and the moral code of civil society. He always had something inspiring or thought-provoking to say in his songs and reflections.

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#### GENESIS OF EPHRAIM AMU MEMORIAL LECTURES

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The Ephraim Amu Memorial Lecture was instituted in the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences through the initiative of Emeritus Prof. J.H. Kwabena Nketia in 1999. The maiden lecture was delivered the same year by Emeritus Prof. J.H. Kwabena Nketia on the topic: Synoptic Portrait of Amu.

Subsequently, the Amu Memorial Lecture Series has been delivered by eminent scholars most of whom are themselves Fellows of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences.

**Ephraim Amu Memorial Lectures delivered since 1999 are as follows:**

- 1999      Synoptic Portrait of Amu,  
*Prof. Emeritus J. H. Kwabena Nketia, FGA*
- 2000      The Legacy of Ephraim Amu,  
*Prof. Kofi Agawu, FGA*
- 2001      Ephraim Amu: A Portrait of Cultured Patriotism,  
*Dr. Letitia E. Obeng, FGA*
- 2002      Music in Worship: Aid or Hindrance,  
*Most Rev. Prof. Emeritus Kwesi Dickson, FGA*
- 2003      Music and Moral Philosophy: Ephraim Amu's Compositions Revisited,  
*Prof. R. F. Amonoo, FGA*
- 2004      The Poetry of Ephraim Amu,  
*Prof. L. A. Boadi, FGA*
- 2005      Theological Landmarks in the Life and Thought of Ephraim Amu,  
*Rev. Philip Laryea*
- 2006      Bridging the Gap between Tradition and Modernity: Ephraim Amu as Music  
Educator,  
*Dr. A. A. Agordob*
- 2007      In Search of A Lifelong Learning Education Programme for Ghana: Lessons from the  
Life- Work of a Farmer, Artist and Teacher,  
*Prof. James Flolu*
- 2010      Discoveries and New Insights in Tonal Linguistics Facilitate reading of Mother Tongue:  
Introducing the Ephraim Amu Principle,  
*Dr. F.I.D. Konotey-Abulu, FGA*
- 2011      The Dr. Ephraim Amu Phenomenon: Import and Relevance for this Generation,  
*Prof. Ablade Glover, FGA*
- 2012      Medicine, Music and the Mind: Implications of Ephraim Amu's Music for Ghanaians,  
*Prof. S.K. Owusu, FGA*
- 2016      Colonial Legacy and the Challenge of Self-Naming,  
*Prof. Kofi Anyidoho, FGA*
- 2017      "O'er Heathen Lands Afar': Missionary Hymnody, Ephraim Amu's Musings and  
Christianity as a Non-Western Endeavour"  
*Very Rev. Prof. J. Kwabena Asamoah-Gyadu*
- 2018      *The Musings of a Chief in Contemporary Ghana*  
*Nana Professor S.K.B. Asante, FGA*
- 2019      Re-imagining Us the Role of Popular Music in Self-actualization:  
*M.anifest [ Kwame Ametepee Tsikata ]*
- 2021      Unlocking Music Mirage - Inspiration From Amu's Musicology  
*Prof. Paul K. Buab-Bassuab, FGA*
- 2022      The Performing Arts, Morality And The Ghanaian Identity  
*Most Rev. P. K. Sarpong, FGA*

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## THE ACADEMY

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**T**he Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences is Ghana's Premier Learned Society. It was founded in November 1959 by Government Instrument of Incorporation. Its aim is to bring together the highest level of intellectuals, experts, professionals in the country to constitute a 'Think Tank' in the Arts and Sciences to enable it advise government and other relevant bodies on issues of importance to national development.

### **Mission**

The mission of the Ghana Academy of Arts and Sciences is to encourage the creation, acquisition, dissemination and utilisation of knowledge for national development through the promotion of learning.

### **Objectives**

The Academy's objectives are to:

- Promote the study, extension, and dissemination of knowledge of the Arts and Sciences;
- Promote the establishment and maintenance of proper standards of endeavour in all fields of the arts and sciences;
- Recognize outstanding contributions to the advancement of the arts and sciences in Republic of Ghana;
- Contribute actively to the advancement of Ghana and Africa in particular and the world in general by examining and addressing issues of development; and
- Do any other things that are conducive or incidental to the attainment of all or any of the foregoing objectives.



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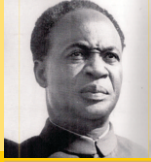
# PRESIDENTS

## GHANA ACADEMY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

[ 1959 - 2024 ]



Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, FGA  
1959 - 1981



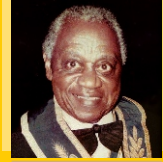
Dr. Kwame Nkrumah, FGA  
1961 - 1966



Mr. Justice N.A. Ollennu, FGA  
1969 - 1972



Prof. E.A. Boateng, FGA  
1973 - 1976



Prof. C.O. Essmon, FGA  
1977 - 1980



Prof. F.G.T. Torto, FGA  
1981 - 1982



Most Rev. Prof. K.A. Dickson, FGA  
1983 - 1986



Dr. E. Evans-Anom, FGA  
1987 - 1990



Rev. Prof. C.G. Baata, FGA  
1991 - 1992



Prof. D.A. Bekoe, FGA  
1993 - 1996



Prof. J.H. Kwashina Nketia, FGA  
1997 - 1998



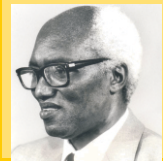
Prof. Prof. T. Sai, FGA  
1999 - 2002



Nana Dr. S.K.B. Asante, FGA  
2003 - 2006



Dr. Letitia E. Oboeng, FGA  
2007 - 2008



Prof. Reginald Fraser Amonoo, FGA  
2009 - 2010



Prof. F.K.A. Allotey, FGA  
2011 - 2014



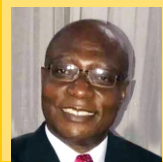
Prof. Akiagga Sawyer, FGA  
2015 - 2016



Prof. Aba Bentil Andam, FGA  
2017 - 2019



Justice Prof. Henrietta J.A.N.  
Mensu-Bonsu, FGA (2019 - 2020)



Emeritus Prof. Samuel Sefa-Dedeh, FGA  
2021 - 2022



Prof. Kofi Opare Nti, FGA  
2023 - 2024

### OFFICE & LOCATION ADDRESS:

P.O. Box M32, Accra-Ghana, #3 Research Crescent,  
Casely Hayford Road, Airport Residential Area, Accra

#### ENQUIRIES



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