

**To: Unicode Technical Committee**

**From:** Charles Korankye, Adinkra Alphabet Encoding committee

**Subject:** Adinkra

**Date:** August 15, 2020

## **Background**

Adinkra Alphabet is a phonetic writing system derived from Adinkra symbols. Adinkra symbols have been in existence for many years and are used throughout the world. Adinkra symbols are used by the Akans of Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire with a total population of over 25 million. Some scholars date the origin of Adinkra symbols to the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. Adinkra symbols are used in writing and as pictographs and logographs. Adinkra symbols are an Akan and Ghanaian heritage. Adinkra symbols are used in stamped cloths by Ghanaians. Adinkra symbols are not standardized making it difficult for the average individual to read it.

The creation of Adinkra Alphabet is to standardize Adinkra symbols for ease of writing and make it possible for the wisdom of Adinkra symbols to be taught in schools. Adinkra Alphabet is therefore a continuity of Adinkra symbols and not separate from it. Adinkra Alphabet grew in popularity since its creation in 2015 as it is used by lovers of Adinkra symbols in the same way as they use Adinkra symbols. There is however a generation gap as Adinkra symbols are used by older and more traditional Ghanaians and Adinkra Alphabet is used by the younger generation. Adinkra Alphabet carries all the meanings of Adinkra symbols with an added unique phonetic sound and numerical value. Akans are the most populous ethnic group in both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire making almost 50% in population in both countries. The Akan language, wisdom and proverbs are transmitted through Adinkra. For the purpose of inclusion Adinkra Alphabet was created for the 4 major languages in Ghana which are Akan, Ewe, Ga and Dagbani. Adinkra symbols are not taught in schools as they are viewed as ethnic based. In the past Adinkra symbols were stamped on clothes worn by Akan royalty. More recently Adinkra cloths are worn by all. Adinkra symbols are also used for decorations, designs, tattoos, and logos.

Adinkra Alphabet was created in 2015 with 26 characters for the 26 Latin characters as English is the language of instruction in Ghana. The largest Adinkra Alphabet group is on Facebook with over 120,000 followers. In Jan of 2016 two additional characters "ɛ" and "ɔ" were added by the request of the Adinkra Alphabet Facebook followers. This extended the characters to 28. In 2017 members of the other three major tribes in Ghana Ewe, Ga and Dagbani requested that their characters be included and this addition extended Adinkra Alphabet to 42. The first Adinkra Alphabet characters developed in 2015 required several strokes. As most of the follower's hand write Adinkra Alphabet they requested simplification of the characters requiring fewer strokes. This resulted in the creation of simplified Adinkra Alphabet characters in 2017. Although the characters for Adinkra Alphabet were defined, a standardized font was not created until 2020.

Currently the most common use of Adinkra Alphabet is in writing Ghanaian proverbs, poetry, and songs.

The Adinkra Alphabet project group has an Akan to English Adinkra Alphabet dictionary located at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RvbpelsiWGCA6QLISuaJB2zKk3J2eCg8/view?usp=sharing>

Plans are underway to develop Ewe, Ga and Dagbani to English Adinkra Alphabet dictionary. These are huge projects that requires contribution from varies languages experts and encoding Adinkra will make it possible to make these projects as public projects with contribution from various individuals.

A detailed review of Adinkra Alphabet, Akan, Ewe, Ga and Dagbani was published in the Ghanaian daily graphic on July 18, 2018.

Adinkra Alphabet was successfully launched in Ghana on November 6, 2018 at the Teacher’s Hall in Accra Ghana. Present during the launch are Representative of the First Lady of Ghana, Rebecca Akufo-Addo, Frankaahene (Chief) of Akuapem Traditional Area, representatives of all the four major ethnic groups, Traditional leaders, A representative from the Balm Library of the University of Ghana and journalists.

### Script Name

The name of the script is Adinkra.

### Structure

Adinkra Alphabet is a phonetic writing system. There are no capital or lower-case characters in Adinkra Alphabet. Each character has a unique sound. Double articulation in Ewe and Dagbani Alphabet are given single unique characters. Nyame Dua is assigned to apostrophe in Dagbani alphabet. Writing in Adinkra Alphabet run from left to right. Letters do not join with one another.

Each Adinkra character also has a unique numerical value and a virtue.

## Vowels

⊙ →	[ah]	○ →	[oh]
◇ →	[a]	∪ →	[or]
∟ →	[e]	⊞ →	[uh]
		ε →	[er]

## Consonants:

ɿ →	[bɛ]	□ →	[in]
⊠ →	[chɛ]	⊞ →	[nyɛ]
⊙ →	[dɛ]	✕ →	[inn]
⊕ →	[da]	⊞ →	[pɛ]
⊗ →	[dzɛ]	⊞ →	[ir]
⊞ →	[fɛ]	⊞ →	[sɛ]
⊞ →	[fi]	⊞ →	[shi]
⊞ →	[gɛ]	⊞ →	[tɛ]
⊞ →	[gbɛ]	⊞ →	[tsi]
⊞ →	[ga]	⊞ →	[vi]
⊞ →	[hɛ]	⊞ →	[vɛ]
⊞ →	[kɛ]	⊞ →	[wɛ]
⊞ →	[kpe]	⊞ →	[yɛ]
⊞ →	[il]	⊞ →	[zɛ]
⊞ →	[im]	⊞ →	[zi]

The uniqueness of Adinkra Alphabet from the current Latin writing system in Ghana is that words are formed using only the sounds. It is difficult to read a text written in any Ghanaian local language in Latin because the wrong sounds are used in most cases. The confusion is from the fact that Letter 'e' in English has the sound of Letter 'a' in Ghanaian languages and Adinkra. The same case applies to letter 'i' in Ghanaian languages and Adinkra which has the same sound as letter 'e' in English. This can be seen in the names of the Adinkra symbols. "Gye Nyame" (which symbolizes God) should be written "Gyi Nyami" if written with English phonograms. "Adinkrahene" should also be written as "Adinkrahini" if written with English phonograms. Although the standard writing in Ghana is to use the sound of Latin script the confusion described above continues to prevail making it difficult to read and understanding text written in local languages even by educated Ghanaians.

# ADIANKRA ALPHABET

(Akan, Ewe, Ga and Dagbani)

A circle with a central dot.	A stylized human figure with arms raised.	A vertical bar with a horizontal bar across the top.	A circle with a square inside.	A diamond shape.	A stylized letter 'F'.
a	b	c	d	e	f
A wavy line.	A stylized letter 'H'.	A stylized human figure with arms raised.	A stylized letter 'X'.	A stylized letter 'K'.	A stylized letter 'L'.
g	h	i	j	k	l
A stylized letter 'M'.	A square.	A circle.	A stylized letter 'P'.	A stylized letter 'Q'.	A stylized letter 'R'.
m	n	o	p	q	r
A stylized letter 'S'.	A stylized letter 'T'.	A square with a horizontal bar across the top.	A stylized letter 'V'.	A stylized letter 'W'.	A stylized letter 'X'.
s	t	u	v	w	x
A stylized human figure with arms raised.	A stylized letter 'Z'.	A square with an 'X' inside.	A diamond with a cross inside.	A stylized letter 'D'.	A stylized letter 'E'.
y	z	ch	d	dz	ε
A stylized letter 'F'.	A circle with a dot inside.	A stylized letter 'Y'.	A stylized letter 'K'.	A square with a cross inside.	A stylized letter 'N'.
f	gb	y	kp	ny	ŋ
A stylized letter 'O'.	A stylized letter 'S'.	A stylized letter 'T'.	A stylized letter 'U'.	A stylized letter '3'.	A stylized letter 'Y'.
o	sh	ts	u	3	Y

# ADINKRA ALPHABET

## AKAN, EWE, GA AND DAGBANI

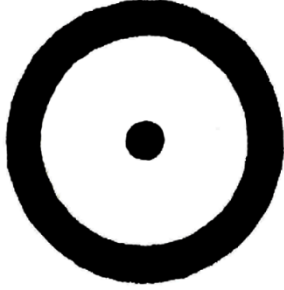
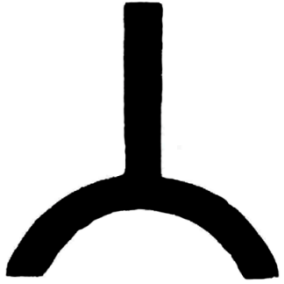

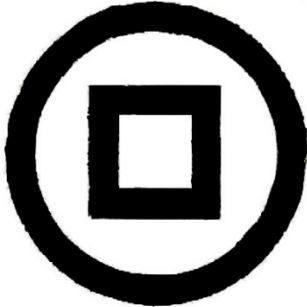
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2.  Bi Nka Bi (B/b)
3.  Ɔwɔ Foro Adobe (C/c)
4.  Dame-Dame (D/d)
5.  Eban (E/e)
6.  Fawohodie (F/f)
7.  Gye Nyame (G/g)
8.  Hwemudua (H/h)
9.  Ese Ne Tekrema (I/i)
10.  Ɛpa (J/j)
11.  Kintinkantan (K/k)
12.  Mmere Dane (L/l)
13.  Mpatapɔ (M/m)
14.  Nkyimu (N/n)
15.  Nyame Biribi Wɔ Soro (O/o)
16.  Pempamsie (P/p)
17.  Denkyem (Q/q)
18.  Asase Ye Duru (R/r)
19.  Sankɔfa (S/s)
20.  Aya (T/t)
21.  Nea Onnim No Sua A Ohu (U/u)
22.  Bese Saka (V/v)
23.  Wawa Aba (W/w)
24.  Akokɔnan (X/x)
25.  Duafe (Y/y)
26.  Fihankra (Z/z)
27.  Mframadan (Ch/ch)
28.  Funtunfunefu-Denkyemfunefu (Ɖ/d)
29.  Mpuanum (Dz/dz)
30.  Dwennimmen (Ɛ/ɛ)
31.  Hye Wonhye (F/f)
32.  Mate Masie (Gb/gb)
33.  Ɔkɔdeɛ Mmɔwɛrɛ (Y/y)
34.  Nyansapɔ (Kp/kp)
35.  Nsaa (Ny/ny)
36.  Nkɔnsɔnkɔnsɔn (ɔ/ɔ)
37.  Ɔsram Ne Nsoromma (Ɔ/ɔ)
38.  Kete Pa (Sh/sh)
39.  Nyame Nnwu Na Mawu (Ts/ts)
40.  Akoma (U/v)
41.  Nkyinkyim (Ʒ/Ʒ)
42.  Nyame Dua

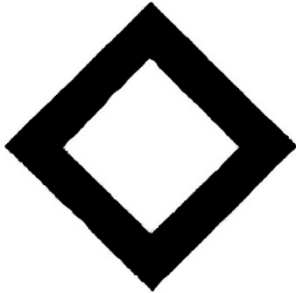
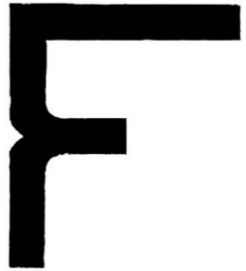
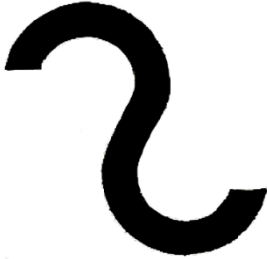
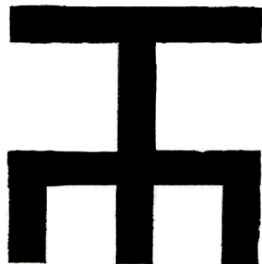


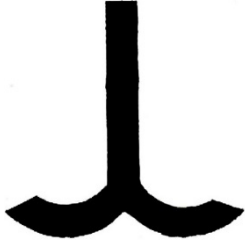


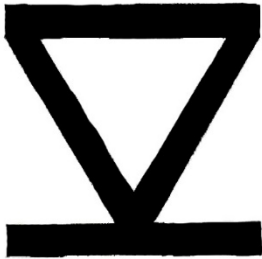
No.	Character Name	Numerical Value	Virtue
1	Adinkrahene	3	Mercy/Kindness
2	Bi Nka Bi	40	Peace
3	Ɔwɔ Foro Adobe	6	Victory
4	Dame Dame	4	Judgement
5	Eban	20	Charity
6	Fawohodie	9	Kingship
7	Gye Nyame	0	God
8	Hwemudua	50	Perfection
9	Ese Ne Tekrema	30	Growth
10	Ɛpa	60	Moderation
11	Kintinkantan	70	Humility
12	Mmerɛ Dane	80	Constancy
13	Mpatapɔ	90	Reconciliation
14	Nkyimu	100	Precision
15	Nyame Biribi Wɔ Soro	5	Beauty
16	Pempamsie	2	Understanding
17	Ɖenkyɛm	8	Foundation
18	Asase Ye Duru	200	Providence
19	Sankɔfa	1	Wisdom
20	Aya	20	Endurance
21	Nea Onnim No Sua A, Ohu	7	Service
22	Bese Saka	400	Resourcefulness
23	Wawa Aba	500	Perseverance
24	Akokɔnan	600	Discipline
25	Duafe	700	Cleanliness
26	Fihankra	800	Security
27	Mframadan	10,000	Resilience
28	Funtunfunefu Ɖenkyɛmfunefu	7,000	Harmony
29	Mpuanum	5,000	Diversity
30	Dwennimmen	10	Fortitude
31	Hye Wonhye	1000	Imperishability
32	Mate Masie	11,000	Skillfulness
33	Ɔkɔdeɛ Mmɔwɛɛ	9,000	Prudence
34	Nyansapɔ	3,000	Strength
35	Nsaa	4,000	Intelligence
36	Nkɔnsɔnkɔnsɔn	8,000	Excellence
37	Ɔsram Ne Nsoromma	900	Responsibility
38	Ketɛ Pa	13,000	Faith
39	Nyame Nnwu Na Mawu	2,000	Immortality
40	Akoma	6,000	Love
41	Nkyinkyim	12,000	Adaptability
42	Nyame Dua	24,000	Knowledge

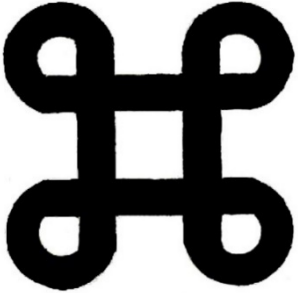
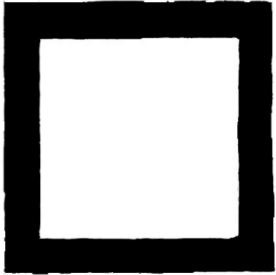
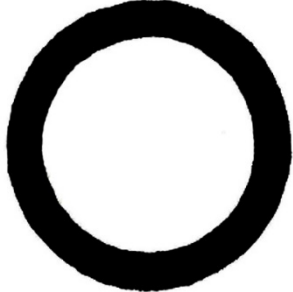
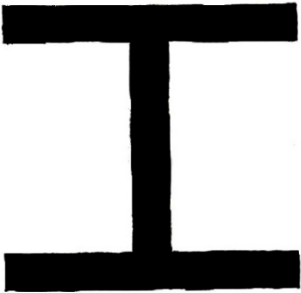


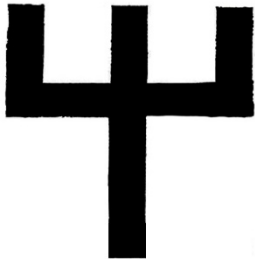
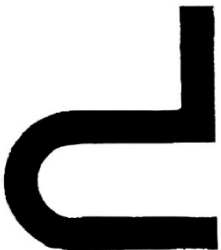

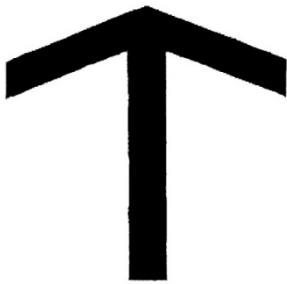
## Character Repertoire

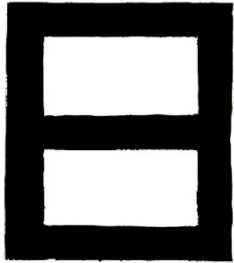
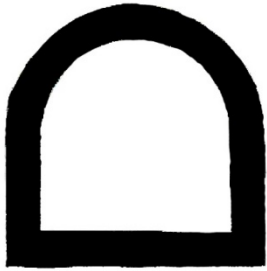
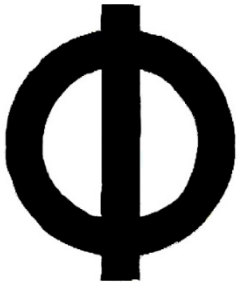
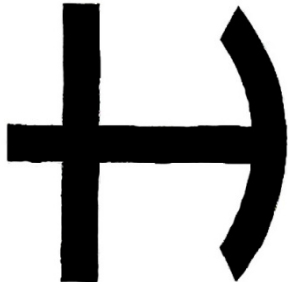
No./Name	Adinkra Alphabet Glyph	Adinkra Letter
1. Adinkrahene		A/a
2. Bi Nka Bi		B/b
3. Ɔwo Foro Adobe		C/c
4. Dame Dame		D/d

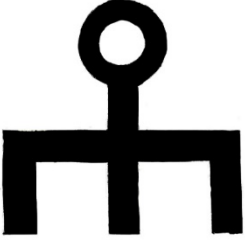
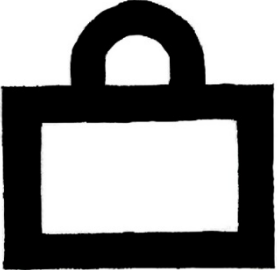
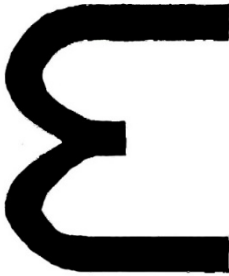
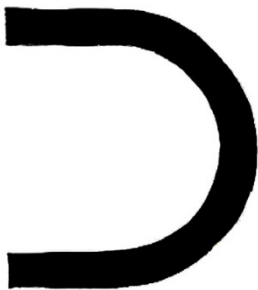
No./Name	Adinkra Alphabet Glyph	Latin Equivalent
5. Eban		E/e
6. Fawohodie		F/f
7. Gye Nyame		G/g
8. Hwemudia		H/h


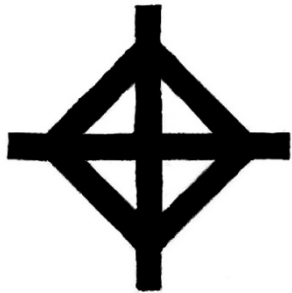
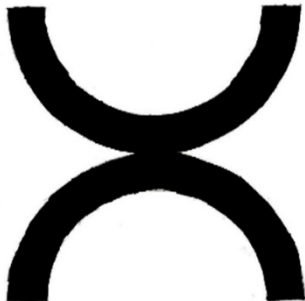
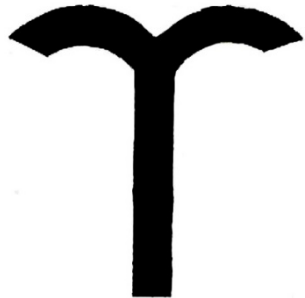
No./Name	Adinkra Alphabet Glyph	Latin Equivalent
9. Ese Ne Tekrema		l/i
10. Epa		J/j
11. Kintinkantan		K/k
12. Mmere Dane		L/l

No./Name	Adinkra Alphabet Glyph	Adinkra Letter
13. Mpatapo		M/m
14. Nkyimu		N/n
15. Nyame Biribi Wɔ Soro		O/o
16. Pempamsie		P/p


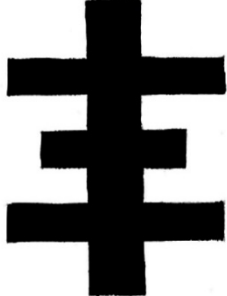

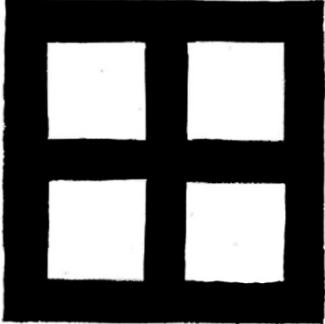
No./Name	Adinkra Alphabet Glyph	Adinkra Letter
17. Denkyem		Q/q
18. Asase Ye Duru		R/r
19. Sankofa		S/s
20. Aya		T/t

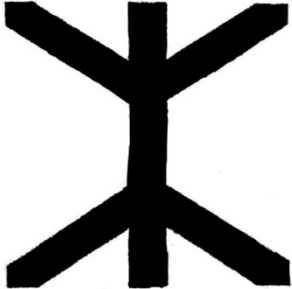
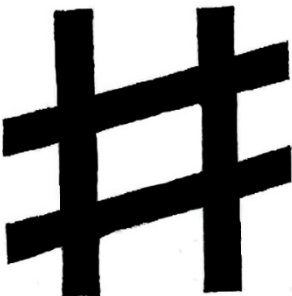

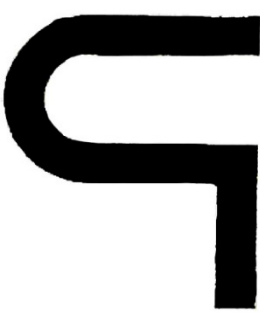
No./Name	Adinkra Alphabet Glyph	Adinkra Letter
21. Nea Onnim No Sua, Ohu		U/u
22. Bese Saka		V/v
23. Wawa Aba		W/w
24. Akokonan		X/x

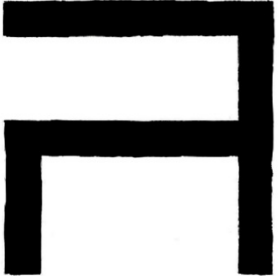
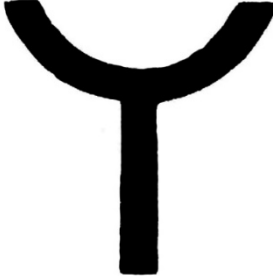
No./Name	Adinkra Alphabet Glyph	Adinkra Letter
25. Duafe		Y/y
26. Fihankra		F/f
27. Dwennimmen		E/ε
28. Jsram Ne Nsoromma		C/c

No./Name	Adinkra Alphabet Glyph	Adinkra Letter
29. Mframadan		Ch/ch
30. Funtunfunefu Denkyemfunefu		Ɖ/ ɖ
31. Mpuanum		Dz/dz
32. Hye Wonhye		Ƒ/ ƒ



No./Name	Adinkra Alphabet Glyph	Adinkra Letter
33. Mate Masie		Gb/gb
34. Okodea Mmɔwɛ		Y/y
35. Nyansapɔ		Kp/kp
36. Nsaa		Ny/ny

No./Name	Adinkra Alphabet Glyph	Adinkra Letter
37. Nkɔnsɔnkɔnsɔn		D/ ɲ
38. Ketɛ Pa		Sh/sh
39. Nyame Nwu Na Mawu		Ts/ts
40. Akoma		U/ ɒ

No./Name	Adinkra Alphabet Glyph	Adinkra Letter
41. Nkyinkyim		3/ 3
42. Nyame Dua		

**Punctuation**

Latin script punctuation is currently being used with Adinkra. Nyame Dua is used as an apostrophe marker in Dagbani.

**Numbers**

Each Adinkra character has a specific numerical value in addition to having a specific phonetic sound.

## Collation

The sort order in the chart is what is currently used as below:

⊙ < ʌ < Ⅱ < ⊕ < ◇ < F < ʒ < 𐌆 < ʇ  
⌘ < 𐌆 < ∇ < 𐌆 < □ < ○ < Ⅰ < 𐌆 < 𐌆  
Ϟ < ʇ < 𐌆 < 𐌆 < ⊕ < 𐌆 < 𐌆 < 𐌆 < 𐌆  
⦿ < 𐌆 < 𐌆 < ʇ < ⊕ < 𐌆 < ⊕ < 𐌆 < 𐌆  
Ɔ < # < X < 𐌆 < 𐌆 < ʇ

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Charles Korankye, 2017, Adinkra Alphabet: The Adinkra Symbols As Alphabets & Their Hidden Meanings. Wisconsin, USA: Adinkra Alphabet.

## Acknowledgements

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## Ghana Patriotic Song

ሕደባ ዐረዐ ዐሩዐሩገ ባገ

Yen ara asaase ni

ደሕደ ዐጎጋጠገጠጠጠ ጸዐ ሕደባ

Eye abodenden ma yen

ጸዐጊሕዐ ዐ ባዐባዐባዐጸ ጸቀገጎ ጊዘገገ,  
ባሕዐ ጠገ ገዐዐ ጸጋ ጸዐዐ ሕደባ,

Mogya a nananom hwie gui, nya de too ho maa yen,

ጎጠዘ ጸገ ባገ ቀዐ ባሩዐ ሩዐ.

Adu me ne wo nso so

ሩደ ሕደጎደሕደ ጎገ ዐገዐዐ ሩዐ.

Se yebeye bi atoa so.

ባገጸገገደ ባገረዐሩዐ ባዘዐገዐዘረዐባገ;

Nimdee ntraso nkokrane;

ባገ ዐገደሩደጸገባዘዐጸገባሕዐ,

Ne apesemenkomenya,

ዐጠገ ሕደባ ጎረዐ ጸዘ ጠደጸ,

Adi yen bra mu dem,

ጸዐ ሕደባ ዐሩዐሩገ ጸዐ ጠጋ ዐገዐጸ.

Ma yen asase ho do atom.

Reference: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/537265430551995123>