

THE ORIGIN OF OLUBADAN BEADED CROWN AND THE CHANGING STATUS OF THE RULERS

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Historical Background

Historically, **Lagelu** was the ancestor and founder of Ibadan who migrated from **Degelu Compound**, Ajamapo area in Ile-Ife as confirmed by the **HRM, the Oni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II** in 2016 during, the visit of Ibadan cultural week committee to the palace of Ooni of ile ife.

The **mother of Lagelu** was the first **daughter** of **Ooni Luwo Gbagida**, the only female Ooni in Ife history and the **18th Ooni who ruled in the 15th century**. Her husband was **Chief Obaloran** (now an Oba), one of the Council members of Ooni of Ife (**Ihare or Alagba –Ife**). The daughter married the **son of Obalufe**, the head of Ooni state council member. The product of the marriage was **Prince Adio Lagelu** who derived his crown from his grandmother just like **Prince Adekola Telu, the ancestor of Oluwo of Iwo**, who was the **first son** of Ooni Luwo Gbagida. Lagelu with his wives and children migrated from Ile-Ife to found **Eba-Odan** and later **Ibadan** in the middle of the 16th century around **1554 A.D**

Lagelu and his successors wore beaded crowns and adopted the title of Olubadan according to Dr. Jide Fatokun in “IBADAN: Facts and Figures (2011)”. But when Ibadan was occupied by the army of Ife, Ijebu, Oyo, and friendly Egbas after displacing Lagelu descendants who invited them to avenge the death of **NKANLOLA the granddaughter of Lagelu sacrificed by Oluwu Akinjobi**, they set aside **Lagelu’s hereditary succession** and all its perquisites, including the beaded crown. The **Aboke** family still keeps the original beaded crown. The claim was confirmed by Aboke Ifasola Ifamapowa, the reigning Aboke and Chief T.A. Akinyele (2011).

Understanding Reforms in Ibadan Chieftaincy System

The reform started with the new policy of the colonial government as explained by Dr J.A Atanda and quoted by Toyin Falola (1989 p. 242) that: the doctrine that the jurisdiction of any Native Authority must be based on the consent of the people over whom such authority would be exercised. The administration (of Oyo province) was considered by Lagos to be too centralized.... (with an) Alaafin who would not readily be persuaded to change the status quo.

In 1934, during the time of Resident Ward-Price, a new Ibadan Native Authority, independent of Oyo, was constituted. While Oyo was opposed to this, Ibadan welcomed the change with the deepest satisfaction. In the same year, the headquarters of Oyo province was transferred to Ibadan from Oyo where it remained until **1938** as headquarters of the Chief Commissioner, Western Provinces. The title **changed from Baale to Olubadan, in 1936.**

Ibadan Chiefs responded to the **1934 reform** as Oliver Twist would do, they wanted other changes. What became their second major grievance was the title of **Baale** which they now wanted to change to the Olubadan which carried with it **the aura of an Oba and not that of Village head. To them, the Baale title had become a derogatory one for the status of their ruler** and too common, because it was borne by the heads of tiny villages, palm wine sellers, and farmers guilds. In making a request for a change in **July 1936**, they indicated a preference for the **OLUBADAN, and alluded to other related issues in order to obtain the consent of government.** (Toyin Falola 1989 p.244).

The request was granted in October and gazatted on the 29th of the same month in 1936 by the Colonial Government in Lagos. The notice in the gazette did not fail to recognize the opposition to the change by the Alaafin Ladigbolu 1, while it also emphasized the fact that it was a mere cosmetic – that is, the title of “Olubadan” does not confer upon the holder the right to wear beaded crown, and that it is hoped that no holder of it either in the future shall have such aspiration. This clause was part of the

issues alluded to in their application in order to obtain the approval of the government in Lagos headed by Governor Burdillion through Gazette Notice No. 1424.

Baale Okunola Abass Alesinloye became the first Olubadan in 1936 after reigning for six years as Baale of Ibadan 1930-1936. In 1946 For purpose of **regulating chieftaincy succession** in the land, Ibadan Native Authority made a Declaration of Native Law and custom on 19th August,1946, based on the appeal made by the then reigning Olubadan Oyetunde I. The Declaration was amended on 16th January, 1950 to cater for succession to other traditional officers left out in the 1946 declaration. Specifically as regards other chiefs, the Declaration stated:

“APPOINTMENT Of Chiefs other than Olubadan, shall be effected by automatic promotion of the chiefs next in seniority in either the Olubadan or Balogun line Chiefs”

Events that Led to Chieftaincy Declaration;

From inception of the “third Ibadan” in 1825 the rulers of Ibadan had been the military head (i.e. Balogun) of the town until the British take-over in 1893. The “Constitution” was tampered with in 1895 when Balogun Akintola declined the office of Baale. Since they did not want to promote his junior in the Balogun line above him, an Otun Baale Osuntoki, was chosen, and this was the first time when the Otun had the opportunity to become Baale. Hitherto, the post of Otun represented the apex of the career of the Baales line of chiefs. In 1902, when Balogun Kongi wanted to become the Baale, he was denied the opportunity to occupy the post (Toyin Falola 1989 p.51).

The Otun Baale succeeded in the end .In 1904 a constitutional amendment was made to the effect that only the Otun Baale could become the Baale and Balogun Apampa had to become an Otun Baale in order to become eligible for the Baaleship. Apampa had to engage in a reckless power rivalry with Baale Dada Opadare who was forced to live only for a short period in the throne (1904-1907). From 1895 till 1914,

all the Baales held the title of Otun-Baale prior to their appointment and were generally opposed by the Balogun.

The Balogun chiefs did not, however give up the struggle to have an automatic promotion to the Baaleship. After Baale Irebins death in 1914, the struggle of the Balogun chiefs materialized as one of them (Situ, son of Aare Latoosa) was made the Baale in the same year.

During the reign of Olubadan Abass Alesinloye, Iyalode Rukayat Ajisomo Arogubodi (1851-1951) was deeply involved in the protest against Oba Alesinloye Okunola Abass, the first Olubadan of Ibadan. The protest hinged on widespread suspicion that Olubadan Abass wanted to promote the claim of Bello Okunola Abass, the President of Egbe Omo Ibile Ibadan (Ibadan Descendants Union) from 1930 to 1950 as his successor.

During the reign of Olubadan Oyetunde I, for the purposes of regulating chieftaincy succession, Ibadan Native Authority made a Declaration of Native Law and Custom of on August, 1946 based on the appeal made by the then Olubadan.

Finally, the Chieftaincy Committee of Ibadan District Council, designated by a Western Region Legal Notice as the competent Council, made another Declaration on 8th August 1959. The declaration, which superseded that of 1946 and its 1950 amendment with respect to the Olubadan, was signed by its chairman and secretary, I.B. Akinyele and William A. Warren respectively”.

It was subsequently approved by the Minister of Local Government, D.S. Adegbenro on 7th October, 1959 and Registered by the Permanent secretary, Ministry of Local Government on 28th October, 1959. It has remained in force since then, despite the attempt made to subvert it in 1983 because High Chief Oloyede Asanike, the rightful successor to the departed Olubadan D.T. Akinbiyi, was illiterate, the laid down order was eventually upheld. That Is;

- (1) Succession to the stool of Olubadan shall be in strict rotation between “the Olubadan line “and “THE BALOGUN LINE “.
- (2) There are eleven (11) king makers as under :
- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| Otun Olubadan | The Balogun |
| Osi Olubadan | Otun Balogun |
| Asipa Olubadan | Osi Balogun |
| Ekerin Olubadan | Asipa Balogun |
| The Iyalode | Ekerin Balogun |
| | Seriki |
- (3) The field of selection for the purpose of the foregoing provision shall not exceed beyond the Ekerin Olubadan on the Olubadan line and the Ekerin Balogun on the Balogun line.
- (4) Any Chief from any of these embraced in provision (a) above found guilty by a meeting of the Chiefs who are traditional members or the Council (at which the nominated candidate shall not be present) of disregard of or disrespect to the patron of or disrespect to the position of authority of the Olubadan, or of a senior chief under Native Law and Custom may not be eligible for nomination.

Alaafin’s Contribution to the Debate on Request for Beaded Crown;

In a motion moved by the HIM .Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi on the chamber of the Oyo State Council of Obas and Chiefs, on the 7th December 1976 to grant the Olubadan of Ibadan, Oba Gbadamosi Adebimpe and Soun of Ogbomoshu Oba Jimoh Oladele Oladunni Ajagunbagbe III and their successors-in-title the perpetual right to wear beaded crown, the following were the substance of the motion.

“Members would vividly recall that in the meeting of 11th of November, 1976 held in this Chamber, His Highness - Oba Gbadamosi Adebimpe, the Olubadan of Ibadan paved the way for this event by this application for authority to wear a beaded crown. Consequently, the Ooni of Ife, The Owa Obookun of Ilesha, the Orangun of Ila and may self were briefed so that the matter could receive a most careful consideration

THE OLUBADAN OF IBADAN

The people of Ibadan are among the most virile and progressive of the Oyo speaking people in Oyo state. They played vital role in the old Empire when the Alaafins political and royal sovereignty were never in doubt.

Their contributions to the history of Yoruba land are unique; the diplomatic and military prowess of the people of Ibadan during the nineteenth century is fresh in our memory. it is just appropriate that the Olubadan should wear a beaded crown

The irony of the situation is that the Ibadan people never allowed their enviable past record to have the better of themselves. Barring the skirmishes of the last 1930s on the issue and even when lesser natural rulers under Ibadan Native Administration enjoyed the entitlement of beaded crowns they restrained their aspirations tamely.

It was this attitude that was highly praised by the Oni of Ife in his address to the conference of Obas and Chiefs of the old Western region held on the 7th of May 1957. I quote “don’t let us deceive our selves it is not the hood that make the monk; it is not the beaded crown that made the Oba. For instance, you have in the hierarchy of Chiefs rulers such as the Olubadan of Ibadan the fact is that **non-wearing of beaded crown by them** does not detract a jot from the importance and dignity attached to their titles and their personalities”

We have every cause to praise the patience, maturity, and the contributions of Ibadan people in the past and present scheme of Yoruba political hegemony ; and that they should have to wait so long to ask constitutionally our inescapable duty as members of this great body to grant them.

Chairman, on the basis of the aforementioned reasons, I therefore, as the Alaafin of Oyo, move passionately that Oba Gbadamosi Adebimpe and all other subsequent Olubadans be accorded recognitions in the matter of wearing beaded crowns and other paraphernalia of office.

The request was consequently granted. Thus Oba Gbadamosi Akanbi Adebimpe, the Olubadan of Ibadan land (1976—77) , was the first olubadan to wear beaded crown. With the

Chiefs Wearing Beaded Crowns Order, 1977 Ibadan was the number 64 on the 67 long lists with effect from 1st December 1976

Ooni, Oba Okunade Sijuwade's Comments

As a result of the contribution of Alaafin of Oyo to the granting of beaded crowns to Olubadan of Ibadanland by the Council of Obas and Chiefs in the Oyo State, news and rumors were going round , even contribution by commentators on the Radio programme; the late Oba Okunade Sijuwade II. The Ooni of Ife had this to say;

Late Oba Okunade Sijuwade II, the Ooni of Ife at the Awos Book launch published in the Nigerian Tribune of Friday 20th of January 2009, said “the Olubadan crown has nothing to do with Oba Lamidi Olayiwola Adeyemi III, the Alaafin of Oyo. The controversy was finally laid to rest in 1976 between the then Governor of Oyo State, Major General David Jembewon and the late Oba (Sir) Adesoji Aderemi; the then Chairman of Council of Obas and Chiefs of Oyo State with my good self, then as Prince Okunade Sijuwade in attendance. According to Oba Okunde Sijuwade, the meeting was short and precise because of Ibadan historical background and affiliation to ILE-IFE.

The Ooni stated that ‘the first founder of Ibadan Crown Prince Adio Lagelu was a direct son of Luwo Gbagida, who had a beaded crown with fringe benefits and sent to settle in Ibadan in 1410 A.D’.

He went further, Ibadan has always been political headquarter of the Yoruba people , where Papa Awolowo served as the first Premier of the defunct Western Region , followed by the Late Chief S.L. Akintola.

The approval of the beaded crown by the Oyo State Council of Obas and subsequently by the State Government has proved the claim of some of Ibadan elders wrong that the request for the beaded crown would be wedged in between the Ooni of Ife and the Alaafin of Oyo in the controversy that was to emerge as to which of them will grant Ibadan's crown

Since the approval of beaded crown for Olubadan of Ibadanland, the wearing of beaded crowns has become the Sword of Damocles dangling over the Ibadan Traditional System because some unwary Baales in Ibadanland have been surreptitiously lured into

turning themselves into pawns in the hands of politicians with the juicy carrot of wearing of beaded crowns even if the heads are nothing more than Chinese-made artificial beads. The hood does not make the monk (Chief T.A. Akinyele July, 2011).

His Excellency, Engr. (Dr.) Omololu Olunloyo, Former Executive Governor of Oyo State once said in a lecture delivered by him in honour of Ibadan Progressive Union (IPU) 2012; *“Some rude and recalcitrant chief, who should really be a minor chief, subordinate to a paramount ruler are anomalously Part II. He became a ridiculously flexible tool in the hands of careless politicians who fully exploited his garrulous and contemptuous personality only to leave him in the lurch he is today”. It is not enough to be a consenting or a prescribed authority. Sensible classification must be embarked upon by government.*

In Ogun State, there are four paramount rulers for Egba, Ijebu Ode, Ijebu Remo and Yelwa (former Egbadò); also there are first class and third class Obas. This classification of Obas has become imperative for Oyo State.

His Excellency, Senator Isiaq Abiola Ajimobi, the Executive Governor of Oyo State, in implementing the Chieftaincy Panel’s Findings, should have seized the opportunity to embark on the classification of Obas and Chiefs (Baales), followed by the upgrading of Baales to wear beaded crowns with the consent of the Council of Obas and Chiefs. The procedure was even followed during the military era in 1976. Well, this is an era of politics; Governor Alao Akala did the same thing when he was leaving by upgrading Baale Akibio of Ilora, Baale of Tede, Baale Aale of Oke Elerin in Ogbomoso and the rotation of Chairmanship among the Olubadan of Ibadanland, Soun of Ogbomoso, and the Alaafin of Oyo in 2011.

EFFORTS TO CLASSIFY CHIEFTAINCY TITLES

With reference to classification of chieftaincy titles in Oyo State, the administration of His Excellency, Senator Rasidi Adewolu Oladoja in November 23, 2015, upgraded and classified some chieftaincies in Oyo State to Paramount, First, Second and Third class categories respectively in consonance with the reality of the present time and the need to enhance the status of Obas and Chiefs in Oyo State.

According to Dr. Jide Fatokun in his book: “Ibadanland, Facts and Figures, 2011” in the classification exercise, **the Alaafin of Oyo, the Olubadan of Ibadanland and the Soun of Ogbomoso** were classified as **Paramount Traditional Rulers** respectively.

Frist Class Traditional Rulers in Ibadanland were eleven (11) High Chiefs up to Jagun on both sides and **four Baales** namely: Onijaye of Ijaiye, Baale of Lalupon, Onikereku of Ikereku and Baale of Erunmu.

There were fifteen (15) Baales in the **second class** category namely: Baales of Egbeda, Awaye, Omi-Adio, Akufo, Apete, Lagun, Ejioku, Ile-Igbon, Aba Nla, Latunde, Idi-Ayunre, Araromi, Akanran, Ido and Iroko. Others were in **third class** category.

However, the Administration of His Excellency, Senator Isiaka Abiola Ajimobi, the Governor of Oyo State (2011-2019), set up a Chieftaincy Panel of Inquiry for the reform of Chieftaincies in Ibadanland and in the implementation of WHITE PAPER upgraded the title of Olubadan from His Royal Majesty (HRM) to **His Imperial Majesty (HIM)** as the Paramount Ruler of Ibadanland.

Secondly, all the eleven (11) High Chiefs were upgraded to the position of **Beaded Wearing Obas** and were given the title of **His Royal Majesty (HRM)** for the first time in the history of Yorubaland with the exception of Ile-Ife, the Cradle of Yoruba civilization where the Late HRM, Oba Okunade Sijuwade II, the Ooni of Ife upgraded his High Chiefs (**Agba Ife or Ihare**) to the position of Obas. Eleven (11) other Obas in this category are outside Ibadanland.

The Baales were upgraded to the position of **coronet** wearing Obas. For clarification and record purposes; they were: Onijaye of Ijaiye, Oniroko of Iroko, Onikereku of Ikereku, Ololodo of Olodo, Elegbeda of Egbeda, Onido of Ido, Alakufo of Akufo, Oloke of Okelade-Okin, Alawotan of Awotan, Olafa-Igbo of Offa-Igbo, Onilagun of Lagun, Alaba of Aba-Nla, Alakanran of Akanran, The Onilalupon of Lalupon, The Elerunmu of Erunmu, The Onilegbon of Ile-Igbon, The Ologburo of Ogburo, The Olomi of Omi-Adio, The Onilatunde of Latunde, The Onidiayunre of Idi-Ayunre, The Alajia of Ajia.

The upgrading was published in the Government Gazette No. 3. Vol. 43, Oyo State Notice No. 20 dated March, 2018 with reference to section 28 (i) of the Chiefs Law Cap. 28, Vol. 1 Laws of Oyo State of Nigeria, 2000. This gazette publication also mentioned other Baales in Oyo State outside Ibadanland that were upgraded into **Crown Wearing Obas** with the title of His Royal Majesty.

In conclusion, the deed has been done, that is: *obe ge omo leti an fi obe pamo, Obe ti se un ti yio se*. We should not continue to cry over spilt milk because *Culture and Tradition will continue to change with time*. Let there be peace in Ibadanland for progress and development to be achieved in our daily life.