

THE UNIQUE POSITION OF OLUBADAN'S IN YORUBA TRADITIONAL HISTORY

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Oluwo of Iwoland, Oba Abdulrasheed Akanbi in his interview with Femi Makinde on January 1, 2017, Sunday Punch, raised a lot of issues concerning Ibadan Chieftaincy System, settlements of Yoruba refugees within his domain in the nineteenth century and his family background which linked Iwo to the cradle, Ile-Ife.

There are good reasons why we should seek to expand our understanding of the past, because each of us is a product of history. The more we understand our past that brought us to where we are today, the better we are likely to understand ourselves, who we are and where we are going

History needs to be, as indeed it is, re-written from time to time and past events revalued in the light of fresh developments and new ideas. The facts of history are not settled by verbal insults or mere ego-tripping. Historical knowledge and enlightenment cannot translate to controversies, if the purpose is to seek and break new grounds over historical dogma and make-belief accounts. Every historical account, like other fields of knowledge must draw its premises and conclusion from sound logic.

The Oluwo of Iwo, Oba Abdulrasheed Akanbi, should know that historical accounts all over the world have been noted to have an evolutionary trend when previously held beliefs, opinions and concepts are demolished under the weight of more factual, verifiable and attainable revelations by new frontiers of knowledge. The history of Ibadan and Iwo including those of other sub-ethnic groups in Yorubaland is not immune to this kind of historical trend.

BACKGROUND

Ile-Ife, according to Dr. J.A. Atanda (1980) was only one of the early Yoruba settlements. Growing side by side with Ile-Ife and deriving inspiration from it were other centres of Yoruba settlement which developed into well-organized political entities known as kingdoms such as: Owu, oyo, Ijebu, Ijesa, Popo, Egba, Sabe, Dassa, Egbado, Igbomina, the sixteen Ekiti principalities, Owo and Ondo.

The ruling dynasties of most, if not all, of these kingdoms trace their origin to Ile-Ife and descent directly or indirectly to Oduduwa.

Also, at various other times, according to Chief (Dr.) M.A. Fabunmi (1985), the Odole Atobase of Ife, after this royal exodus, several illustrious personalities, wither individually or in groups, migrated from Ile-Ife for diverse reasons e.g. hunting adventure, ambition to found own villages and towns. For example, Adekola Telu, the progenitor of the founder of Iwo, Ogunfunminire who built Isheri, Lagelu, Oro Apatamaja (nickname), who founded Ibadan e.t.c.

Consequently, Yoruba people are made up of a number of subgroups of which the principal ones are as follows, according to Oluremi I. Obateru, 2006:

- (i) The Awori of Badagry area of Western Lagos State;
- (ii) The Egbado (now Yelwa) and Egba of Western Ogun State;
- (iii) The Oyo and Ibadan of Northern and Southern Oyo State respectively;
- (iv) The Ijebu of Eastern Ogun State;
- (v) The Ife and Ijesha of Southern Osun State
- (vi) The Osun of Northern Osun State;
- (vii) The Iloye and Ikale of Southern Ondo State;
- (viii) The Ondo, Akure and Owo of Central; Ondo State;
- (ix) The Akoko of Northern Ondo State;
- (x) The Ekiti of Ekiti State;
- (xi) The Igbomina of Ilorin area, Kwara State;
- (xii) The Yagba, Bunu and Aworo (Kakanda) of Kabba District.

Finally, the process of establishing Oduduwa type of monarchy, according to Professor I.A. Akinjogbin (2002); went from about the 9th century until about the 115th century or later. Not all the kingdom went directly from Ife, many others went from the kingdom that originally migrated from Ile-Ife. All of them had one symbol or the other that tied them to Ile-Ife and made them “**sons of Oduduwa**”, so that today after about a thousand years of history, most Oba’s who wear the beaded crown are regarded as descendants of Oduduwa.

THE FOUNDATION AND FOUNDING FATHERS OF IBADAN

It should be understood from the oral and written traditions that there are “**three Ibadans**”. The ancestral founder of the first Ibadan migrated from Ile-Ife who was called Lagelu “Oro-apata-maja from Degelu Compound Ajamapo area, in Ile-Ife. As the oral traditions explain, **the first Ibadan** disintegrated as a result of destruction. The survivor of the destruction and Lagelu sought refuge on **Oke’badan hills** at Awotan on Akufo road, Ido Local Government Area, Ibadan. From this place, the present Ibadan was established around 1784 A.D., called “**Ori-yangi**”

The present site located at the foot of Mapo Hill was divided into six (6) quarters namely: (i) Itun Eledumare (2) Itun Akaasi (3) Itun Ogboni Lisa (4) Itun Gbede Oke Ob (5) Itun Ilaro/Iseri, and (6) Oke ati Isale Atan.

Political crisis and the wars in northern Yorubaland, which ultimately led to the fall of the Oyo Empire early in the nineteenth century, and the Owu Wars between Ile –Ife and Ijebu on one side and the Owus on the other fought between 114-1820 were prelude to the establishment of the “**third Ibadan**”. Olowu Akinjobi sought refuge at the “**Second Ibadan**” ruled by Lagelu’s descendant to give rise to the establishment of Owu Ogberere. As a result of the death of Olubadan’s daughter sacrificed by Olowu Akinjobi to the goddess of Oba River, another Owu war broke out. This second Ibadan suffered from defeat and desertion. It was later occupied by **War Chiefs** who took part in destroying surrounding Egba towns taking possession of any compound they chose. According Rev. Samuel Johnson (1912-1978 page 224), the war chiefs and their men from Oyo, Ife, Ijebu and friendly Egbas re-peopled Ibadan again but not by the owners of the town. Maye Okunade, a bold and brave Ife Chieftain being their leader while Labosinde another Ife man was the deputy, but his mother was a princess of Ikoyi, an Oyo Provincial town.

There was a remarkable political change in the 1820s and 1830s when the settlement of Ibadan was transformed from a mere agglomeration of different settles into a permanent town principally owned, inhabited, and controlled by the Oyo refugees, according to Toyin Falola (1989), the initial congregation at Ibadan was along ethnic lines: the numerically superior Ife soldiers and Oyo-Yoruba refugees chose Oja-Iba; the Ijebu lived in the south at Isale-Ijebu and settled at Yiosa.

This pattern of settlement was a clear indication of the exsisting political cleavages in Ibadan war camp. Each group had its leaders, and the people looked upon them for authority. It was the attempt by the notables among these military leaders to create an hegemony, one that would cut across ethnic lines that accounted for the “civil wars. Since the Owu war, Ile-Ife leaders; Maye Okunade ands Labosinde, had acquired tremendous respect and power. The period of 1820s was also a period of strength for the Ife kingdom, which saw Ibadan camp as an extension of its territory and power. What threatened Ife’s hegemony at Ibadan was the numeral superiority of the Oyo as well as the political ambition of the leading members of its ruling class.

Foundation of Abeokuta

The Egba were the first casualty in this rivalry. They were expelled from Ibadan and had to migrate to Abeokuta where a new, more secure and permanent home was established in 1830 led by Chief Sodeke who died in A.D. 1844

In the Nigeria Tribune of 10th September, 2010 Oba Adejju Tejuoso said; “Tejuoso was the Chief High Priest of the Egba to settle in Abeokuta. The Egba arrived in Abeokuta (under Olumo Rock) on August, 1830, that is, Egba Alake, Oke-Ona and Gbagura. The Owu came in 1834. Tejuoso’s aternal Great-Grandfather Karunwi was crowned as the first Osile Oke-Ona Egba in Abeokuta in 1890”.

On August 5, 1975, Oba Onipede, the Alake was crowned in Abeokuta; a reminiscence of the 1830 day in Aught as above. It was some considerable time after 1834 that Ijaiye joined them, and so by degree all the Egba townships, about 153, became concentrated at Abeokuta, the new town comprising Ijemo, Itoko and a few others who were already on the spot (Rev. Samuel Johnson, 1921).

Iyalode Efunroye Osuntinubu, who was born in 1805 at Ijokodo, Gbagura to the Egba tribe of the Yoruba nation, her family was among about 150 migrants that resettled under the leadership of Egba veteran war leader, Sodeke. They all found common refuge under Olumo Rock at Abeokuta in 1830 (Prince Adelegan Adegbola, 2009 page 370).

Even, according to Samuel Johnson, after the foundation of Abeokuta there were still some Egbas residing at Ibadan. Egba women also who were unable or unwilling to go with their husbands to the new settlement were taken as wives by the **new colonist at Ibadan** and they became the mothers of the children of the first generation of the **new Ibadan** - i.e. the “third Ibadan.

THE FALL OF MAYE OKUNADE

The final episode was the political rivalry between the Ife and the Oyo which culminated in a war for the control of Ibadan which was referred to as GBANAMU WAR in 1833. The Ife attracted support from Edunabon, Erunmu and Ipetmodu; and Oyo-Yoruba who also received assistance from Ijaye, Ede and Iwo where there were other pockets of refugees. The Oyo-Yoruba won, and Ibadan became, up till today, an Oyo-Yoruba town.

In reacting to this incidence; Chief (Dr.) M.A. Fabunmi (1985) the Odole Atobase of Ife said: “The political Supremacy of Ife was shattered a little more than a century ago when it was defeated by the strong military power of Ibadan. Since then Ife has remained

only a spiritual and cultural Yoruba capital; and the resilient core around which the culture of the land crystallized”

The notable military figures that spearheaded and fought the war to expel the Ife sub-group hold a public meeting and decided to establish a town where all the Oyo refugees would live not temporarily as before, but permanently for three reasons;

- The first was the fear of returning to their original homes which were still under the threat of the Fulani
- The second factor was consideration for defence and security. This was why they settled at Oke Mapo (Mapo Hill) and clustered around its brow. Thus Ibadan was referred to *Ilu ori oke* (the city on the hill).
- The last factor was the agricultural potentialities and the other economic advantages offered by the location. Generally, economic considerations were factors in the establishment of any settlement by the Yoruba. The area must be fertile and well-watered to allow for farming. Therefore, the new site was not found to be suitable, but it also had an extensive land reserve for expansion.

Ibadan as a camp described by Rev. Samuel Johnson in his book, completed in 1897 but published in 1921 by Dr. Johnson “*History of the Yorubas*”, **Professor Toyin Falola (2012 pg. 7) also noted that: “*the new town of Ibadan was small; it was not more than a kilometre in all directions from Ojaba at the centre; its layout closely followed the pattern of the older Yoruba towns. It had a market centrally located at Mapo*”. Surrounding this market in all directions were the earliest compounds of the military chiefs and other notable warriors. These compounds were built at the base and brow at Oke Mapo for security reasons. Throughout the 19th century, this central area at Oke Mapo remained the most heavily populated”**

In terms of governance of the new settlement, the most important task which faced the military leaders was the problem of integrating all the various Oyo and some other sections (for example, the few remaining Ijebu, Egba, and Ife) in the community under an effective political authority. In fashioning a new government, the migrants had very little justification duplicate the old Oyo System of a monarchical government. A **military aristocracy** was therefore set up where most of the notable warriors of the 1830s controlled the reigns of government.

FOUNDING OF IWO

Adekola Telu was a Prince from Ife and son of the 18th Ooni of Ife, a female called Luwo Gbagida who married Chief Obaloran (Chief (Dr.) M.A. Fabunmi, 1982), the Odole Atobase of Ife. Prince Adekola Telu migrated sometimes in the 14th century from Ife to found his own settlement (Encyclopedia Britannica Online Edition, 2007-04-06).

According to I.B. Akinyele in “Iwe Itan Ibadan 1911”, Adekola Telu settled at IGBO-ORITA near Ilesa where he ruled and nerve got to Iwo. He was succeeded by his three children: Romu, Ogunfenumodi and Jikanmu. The children left Igbo-Orita and settled at Ogundiagbaro, an area subject to flooding and later left for Erunmu district but none got to Iwo. The third son, Jikanmu died on the way but his son, Olumade Pariu founded Iwo after 161 years they left IGBO-ORITA. The present Oluwo, Oba Abdulrasheed Akanbi also confirmed that Adekola Telu died at Igbo Orita and never got to Iwo as claimed by some authors (Please see Sunday, Punch of January 1, 2007).

ON BAALESHIP OF IBADAN

Oluwo claimed that Iwo monarchs used to appoint Olubadan from Iwo. According to him, *“it was not that we would ask them to nominate a candidate but we would appoint somebody from here and send him to be Olubadan. The first Baale in Ibadan, Baale Olugbode was sent from Iwo to be the Olubadan. Orowusi, Oderinlo were sent to rule Ibadan others were Ogunmola and Balogun Alli-Iwo”*. This shows that Oluwo of Iwo, as a custodian of Yoruba tradition is ignorant of the process of choosing Bale of Ibadan and the process of choosing a Yoruba Oba which was revolutionized by Ibadan rulers to accommodate all Yoruba ethnic groups living in Ibadan.

- First and foremost, Olugbode was not the first Baale of Ibadan but Maye Okunade from Ile-Ife, Baale Olugbode succeeded Bale Opeagbe in line with the succession plan and Ibadan chieftaincy system fashioned out by Are Oluyedun and Basorun Oluyole. Baale Olugbode was from Owu Kuta near Iwo founded during the earlier Owu war.
- Others before Baale Olugbode were Oluyedun, the son of Afonja, the late Are Ona-Kakanfo of Yorubaland from Ilorin before he joined others at Ibadan after the failure to take Ilorin back from the Fulanis during Ogele and Mugbamugba wars where Eesu and Nupe lost his live and Ofa was also lost to the Fulanis.
- Next was Lakanle who Reverend Samuel Johnson described as the bravest of the braves from Oyo-Ile.
- Next was Basorun Oluyole, the son of Basorun Yamba whose mother was the daughter of Alaafin Abiodun Adegolu.

- Next was Balogun Oderinlo who led the war at Osogbo in 1840 A.D. to check mate the Fulani incursion of Yorubaland from Agbagba-Ile near Ilorin. He migrated to Olupona where he became the head of hunters and founder of Olode Compound from where he migrated to Ibadan.
- Bale Opeagbe was from Ogbomosho.
- He was initially the Osi Balogun Oderinlo and he became the Baale because Lajumoke the Otun Balogun had died shortly after Oderinlo.

BASORUN OGUNMOLA'S HISTORY

At page 55 of the first edition (1997) "The New Perspective to Oyo Empire History: - 1530 – 1944, Chief M.O. Ogunmola, Otun of Oyo described the profile of Ogunmola as follows:

Ogunmola was already operating in Ibadan and was one of the Yoruba war chiefs of Oluyole. Ogunmola had come from his home, Odogbo, a small town now extinct, about thirteen kilometers to the west of Oolo on Ogbomosho to Ilorin road in the present Orire Local Government with Ikoyi-Ile as its headquarters in Oyo State.

Generally, Ogunmola was generous, just and fareless. As a warrior, he possessed valour and courage" he was associated with Fesu near Iwo as a result of Yoruba civil wars referred to by Oluwo of Iwo. According to P.C. Lloyd:

"A knowledge of the Yoruba past must be gleaned from myths, legends, folk-tales, praise-songs and the like, all of which are rapidly being forgotten by all the younger generation"

The warrior's Oriki (totem) or praise-song goes thus:

Ogunmola, Odogbo;

Olodogbo Keri logun

A-la-eeru ma ku u

This can be translated thus:

Ogunmola, from Odogbo;

The Chief of Odogbo;

A brilliant star in battle

Who licks ashes unharmed.

Ogunmola had “**gumbo**” tribal marks and not the same with Iwo tribal marks (which reassembles abaja), the same and similar with Sunmola Alao Laamo from Ikoyi. The difference is that Ogunmola had five horizontal marks as against four of Sunmola Alao Laamo.

BALOGUN OKUNMADE ALI-IWO

Balogun Okunmade Ali-Iwo accompanied Ibadan army to Kutuje war (1862-1864). His paternal side was Ogbomosho as the grandson of Oba Soun Jogioro (1714-1770). His mother was the daughter of Olumade Pariu, the first Oluwo of Iwo. He came to Ibadan after the Kutuje war on the passionate appeal of Oluwo of Iwo, Oba Mohammadu Lamuye I (1819-1909) as a result of the crisis between Sanusi, Balogun’s son, and the Oluwo. Sanusi first settled at Ogburo because Ologburo was Balogun’s friend before he left for Lagumote which finally became Lagun, a town under Ibadan, in Lagelu Local Government Area. Ogunmola allocated land to him at Alli-Iwo compound near Agodi after installing him as “Babasale of Ibadan”. His descendants, Oba Memudu Alli-Iwo became the Olubadan of Ibadanland in 1952 for the first time.

UNDERSTANDING IBADAN CHIEFTAINCY SYSTEM

The choice of an Oba in Yorubaland is mostly based on age and prominence in the ancestral tree of the town (i.e. family of the founder), and each has a number of royal families among which the Oba is chosen. The number of families entitled to kinship is fixed by tradition. In Ibadan of the 19th century after Lagelu’s dynasty had been displaced, there were co-founders and there is no single family that can claim to be founder of the present or third Ibadan. Hence, all established pre-colonial family lineages are entitled to become the Olubadan of Ibadanland. In the republican arrangement which is quite different from Yoruba kingship system, Ibadan established two lines: Olubadan Line and Balogun Line to the stool of Olubadan starting from the lowest rung of the ladder, which is Jagun Chieftaincies.

However, Ibadan still maintain an indirect link with Ile-Ife through Labosinde, an Ife Chief, whose dynasty is installing all Olubadans and High Chiefs, by Oluwo (Afobaje) of Ibadanland. Therefore, the ancestor of Oluwo of Iwo has no business or authority picking a Baale or Olubadan for Ibadan in the history of the two cities.

IBADAN EMPIRE: 1864 -1893

During the Fulani and other wars in Yorubaland referred to by the Oluwo of Iwoland, Ibadan became the heaven of warriors and the key events of Yoruba race revolved around the strongest towns that emerged, that is, Ibadan under Basorun Oluyole and Ijaiye under Kurunmi, the Are Ona Kakanfo. In 1840A.D, Ibadan army checkmated

the Fulani invasion of the Yorubaland at Osogbo, this halted the advance of the Fulani Jihad into Yorubaland and shattered Fulani's dreams of Yoruba conquest for a while.

Thus, after the conquest of Ijaiye (1859-1862) by the Ibadan army under the effective command of Balogun Ibikunle, during the reign of Baale Olugbode, Ibadan consequently emerged as an empire in Yorubaland.

By 1870A.D. Ibadan had established the largest empire in the 19th century in Yorubaland, comprising most Oyo Yoruba towns and villages, and areas in the north east (Toyin Falola, 1989 pg. 11). With the revolt of Ekiti and Ijesha people which led to Ekiti-Parapo (Kiriji) war for 16 years, the British Government intervened in 1893, and Yorubaland came under the British Protectorate.

Thus, Ibadan empire was by far stronger than the Old Oyo Empire by 1893 when the British took over the administration of Yorubaland, according to Dr. J.A. Atanda (1979 pg. 44). This explained why they granted to Ibadan, by the Agreement of 1893, the internal administration of what remained of Alafin's territories which was later amended.

In what was gazetted as No. 17 of 1904, the list of towns under the administration of Ibadan were 86 in number and it included among others: Iwo, Ogbomosho, Ede, Osogbo, Ejigbo, Ikirun, Ile-Ogbo, Igbo-Ora, Eruwa. Kuta, Lalupon, Ijaiye, Iroko, Iddo (now Iddo-Osun), Ogbagba, Inisa, Iwo-Oke (now in conflict with Iwo), and others. Most importantly, Otun Bale, Ddada Opadare was the overlord of Oluwo of Iwo, Oba Mohammed Lamuye I.

Furthermore, in 1914 when Old Oyo Province was revived, and the capital was transferred from Ibadan to Oyo town, Ibadan became a Division with the headquarters at Ibadan. According to the Native Authority Ordinance of 1916 by Lord Lugard, Oyo Province was sub-divided into three Divisions: Ife, Ibadan and Oyo divisions.

Ibadan division between 1914 and 1931 was sub-divided into twelve Districts for administrative purposes of which Iwo was one headed by Oluwo of Iwo. Others were Gbongan, Ikire, Eruwa, Igboora, Osogbo, Ede, Ejigbo, Ogbomosho, Ikirun and Okuku Districts headed by respective Obas.

In 1934, Ibadan Division was established as a Native Authority independent on the Alaafin as published in the supplement to the Nigeria Gazette Extraordinary, No. 17 of 3 April 1934 pp. I and II splitting Oyo Province into independent Native Authorities into five: Oyo, Ibadan, Ife, Ilesa and Ila.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Benito Mussolini in October 2, 1925 said: “Certainly there would be history without wars, but it would be a much different history than what we know. By and large it is war which has shaped the boundaries of today’s nations. Often it is war which overthrows one ruler and puts another ruler in power or unseats one form of government and replaces it with another”.

The case of Ibadan history is not different or new. Alaafin Onigbogi moved to Gbere in Ibariba Kingdom, his mother’s home town, as a result of invasion of the Tapa people. Egungunoju, Ofinran’s son took the Oyo kingdom’s seat of administration to Igboho. Owu was displaced from Ogboro area by Alaafin Sango to Owu Ipole. The Owu around Ibadan is Owu Ogbere. All these movement of seats of power were as a result of war which continued in the 19th century as a result of Owu wars and Fulani invasion of the northern part of Old Oyo Empire.

The defeat of Owu an important Yoruba sub-group between 1821-1825 made them flee taking refuge in Abeokuta and Ijebuland, Owu-Kuta, Owu-Ikija, Ibadan and Oyo territories. Today, the Owu form substantial communities in various parts of Yorubaland. In all these places, they have managed to preserve their identity and cultural distinctiveness.

However, the present day territories of the Yoruba sub-groups generally relate to their kingdoms of the pre-colonial period in the 19th century, they coincide neither with them nor with their present political boundaries.

With Oluwo, Oba Abdulrasheed Akanbi’s claim of supremacy over Ibadan, there is need for the Kabiyesi to understand that he has not consulted the elders of Iwo on the evolutionary accounts of Yoruba past history, hence he would not have been committing historical blunders not based on sound logics.

The Oluwo of Iwo should learn from humility and unity imitative of the Ooni of Ife, Oba Adeyeye Enitan Ogunwusi, Ojaja II. His historical perspectives of Ibadanland would truncate the unity initiative on the alter of ego-tripping which has been the cause of Yoruba disunity among the Yoruba traditional rulers