

# ILORIN EMIRATE

IN

# Periscope



(A Compendium of Articles)

2015



Volume 1



Published by:

**ILORIN DESCENDANTS PROGRESSIVE  
UNION (IEDPU)  
2015**

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# Ilorin: Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow

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## Abstract

*This topic as presented for discussion by the Ilorin Emirate Descendants' Progressive Union IEDPU, is undoubtedly informative of the fact that Ilorin has transformed from what it used to be to what it is now. Thus, this paper recognizes this understanding by exploring the position of Ilorin Yesterday and Today, and along the line considers the factors of change. It also juxtaposes the two positions to mapping Ilorin's future. Using available literatures and oral interviews, this paper is of the opinion that the transformation of Ilorin has been largely double- edged; positive and negative with internal and external influences. While Ilorin cannot be written off among Nigerian communities, the transformation has eroded, to a large extent, significant aspects of the Emirate cherished cultural philosophies. However all hope is not lost, if conscious attempts are launched at glocalizing the Emirate system for a sustainable tomorrow.*

## Introduction

The topic of discussion, ordinarily looks very ambitious to a historian, because, to capture yesterday, today and tomorrow most effectively requires several years of intensive and extensive researches, of course by many experts ranging from historians, archaeologists, political scientists, economists, geographers, ethnographers, architects, Arabists, Islamists, culturalists, linguists and a host of other professionals. The output, expectedly, should be in volumes. Be that as it may, the use of the term is excusable because, the term Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow as a historical concept used to depict the gestational historicity of events, places, persons and societies has gained prominence not only among the humanists but also among the naturalists and scientists. In the field of education Professor C. O. Taiwo blazes the trail when he produced a book titled *Education: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, while James O Ojiakor also wrote a work titled *Nigeria: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, hence the legitimacy for the use of the title. Among other reasons, it allows for a Panoramic History (though short of details) of whatever subject under focus. Thus, it can be likened to a micro computer, which performs same functions as the large



computer does. For instance, a smart phone; as small as its size, might have the capacity to function most effectively like a laptop.

Furthermore, the research efforts of scholars on aspects of emirate history such as Abu Ikkoro(1912), Samuel Johnson (1921), Whitaker (1970), Dudley , Sulu Gambari, Safi Jimba, Al-ilory (1982, 1986) Adisa Onikokoro who died Sept. 2015, H.O Danmole (1980) LAK Jimoh (1994) G.T.O Gbadamosi (1978) Reichmuth, (1995) Hamzat AbdulRaheem (2013) Jawondo (2005), AbdulWahab Olumó (2015) Aliagan (2013) Saka Aliyu (2014) as well as opinion papers presented at different times by Justices M. M. A. Akanbi, S. M. A. Belgore, A. A. Ambali and a host of others provided a solid foundation for a takeoff. Given this background, rather than concentrating on the branches of the Ilorin Emirate History, the focus would rather be on the root and fruitions. That is, the focus will be on the philosophy and culture of Ilorin as a community, the operation of the cultural-philosophy, the changes and continuities, the consequences of it on both the Emirate and its people. 1

### **Ilorin Emirate: The Land and People**

It is a common knowledge that a state is a product of a nation. That is, the existence of people leads to the establishment of a state. Since Nigeria Independence, different nations, (major, i.e., Hausa, Yoruba, Ibo and, minor, i.e. Tiv, Idoma, Itsekiri, Isoko.) have always called for creation of a state of their own. In that manner were the pre-colonial independent states created either through mutual agreement or might, by the dominant groups. Ilorin Emirate as a polity was also created by a group of people both through agreement and might. Whitaker (1977) and Agboola (1996) are exhaustive in their discussions on the history of the evolution of states in Nigeria. Thus, there is nothing peculiar, which could lead to raising of dusts or awakening a dead dog. However, the land that is referred to as Ilorin was a natural phenomenon which was occupied at different time by itinerants and sojourners like the Baruba and the Yoruba respectively. The Fulani came in with a conglomerate of people from within and outside the Niger areas which included the Yoruba, Hausa, Nupe, Sudanese, and Malians etc. The group could be divided into two, the scholars who were for the spread of Islam and Islamic learning, and seekers of Islamic knowledge and/or security.

The culture of naming places, events and even people the world over took and still takes natural courses in spite of religious influences (Danmole, 2012:3). Natural phenomenon like water, hills, valleys, trees, moon, sun, and others in our physical environment as well as events emanating from



our social environment (positive or negative) and personalities of leaders in societies influenced what we do, the names we hear, bear and found in our societies (Gleave, 1963). As Ilorin was being habited, the established semi-autonomous settlements were known by different names which followed the natural courses. The Baruba settlement got its name from the Baruba race. There was Oloje the name gotten from Oje (Masquerade) meaning the Masqueraders, the Gambari derived from the stigmatization of the Gobirawa/hausa, the Oke-Sunna derived from the practice of Islam (Sunnah is the practice and approval of the prophet of Islam), the Fulani settlement derived from the name of Fulani race and the Idi-Ape means under Ape tree. It seems none of the Ape trees could be seen in that environment for now because of the physical development but the tree can still be seen within the municipal. These settlements no doubt were located at the different directions of Ilorin, the names they all used either consciously or unconsciously were products of nature. Efforts are ongoing by scholars to get to the root meanings of Ilorin names for documentation.

It is difficult for now to say with certainty which name came first, the sectional names (i.e. Baruba, Oloje, Gambari, Fulani, etc.), or the unitary name, Ilorin. Judging by common sense, both are possible. It is either that the unitary name; Ilorin existed before the sections were named or vice versa. But going by the theory of state formation, the people exists before the naming. Since the name came from the activities of the people and natural environment, I want to believe that sectional names preceded the unitary name, Ilorin in the same way Sokoto Caliphate which was formed in 1809 came to be the umbrella name for all the societies that had existed before the Caliphate though transformed into emirates.

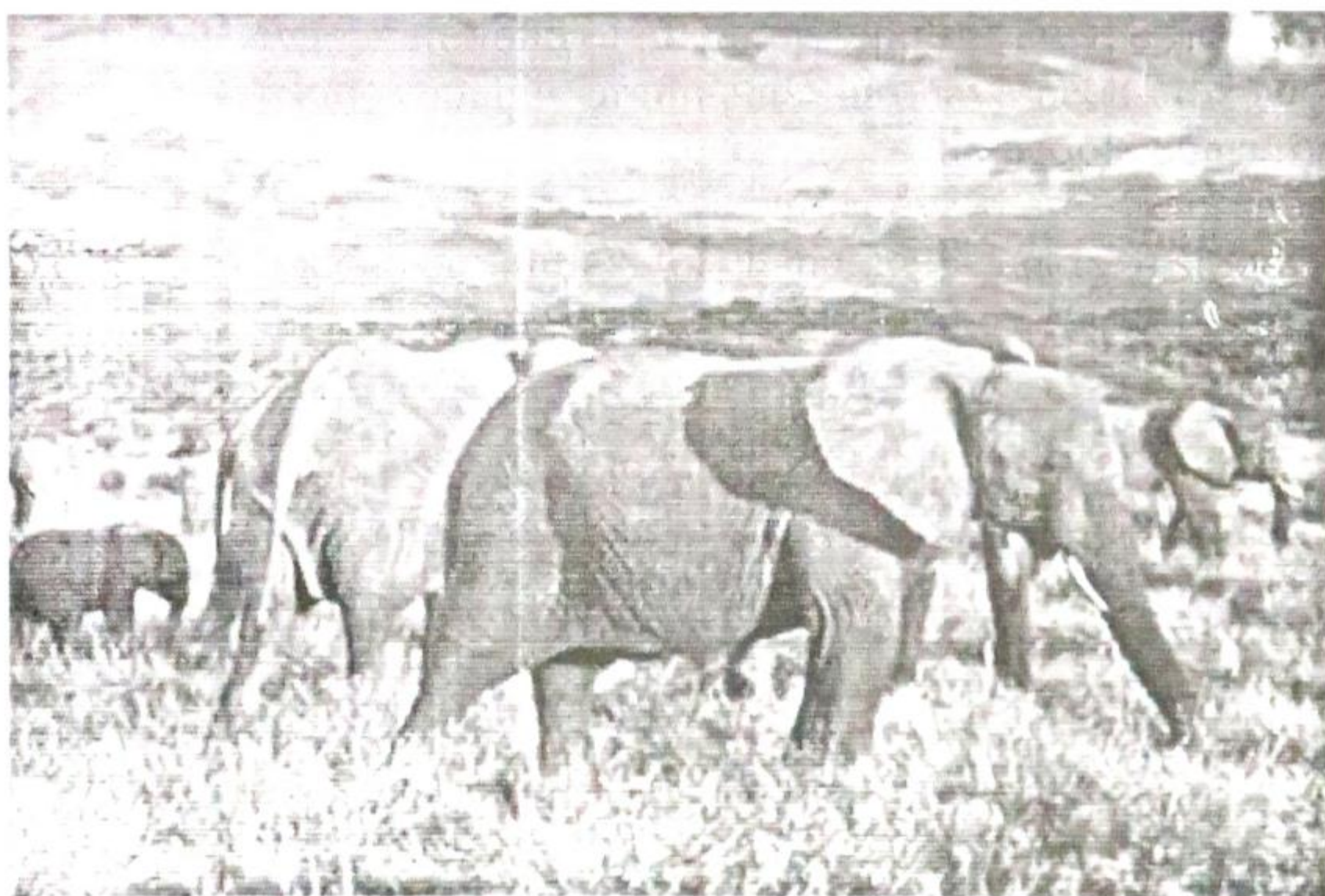
The origin of the nomenclature of the town Ilorin that turned emirate has engaged the attention of scholars in the same way the prominent personalities that brought Ilorin to lime light did. Here, I have avoided any argument for or against the stories of origins earlier advanced by authors including this writer, in this paper, rather, I am presenting them as the possibilities so far discovered. Other discoveries are expected as historians explored historical research/ data gathering tools on the origin of the name Ilorin. The first postulation is that the word was derived from Ilo-Irin (Sharpening of Iron) giving the stone at Ile Bamidele (now called Ile Ilorin) as a point of reference (see fig. 1). The second postulation states that it is Ilu-Erin (abode of Elephants) giving the Example of the name of a location called Oko Erin (see fig. 2). The third which is Ilu-Iro-ni, (town of alligator pepper) (see fig. 3) stems from the historical and linguistic evidences that



said the Baruba who were fond of alligator pepper were the first settler in Ilorin. Whatever the academic arguments that have been advanced and may be advanced, the name has come to stay as the people concerned are contented with hearing and bearing it. For now, there seems no cause whether religion, social or political for changing the name. It stood the test of the time past and the contemporary.



**Fig. 1. Okuta Ilorin as it stands at Ile Bamidele now called Ile Ilorin.**



**Fig. 2. Elephant(s) which were said to have been hunted for in Ilorin**





**Alligator pepper which the baruba were found**

As for the personalities that have shaped the course of history of Ilorin Emirate, scholars have concentrated largely on the political and religious persons at the expense of those who have made Ilorin shine in the areas of economy and culture. The reason for this may not be unconnected with the focus of the authors and or political gains or that the personalities overshadowed the others. Danmole agreed with earlier scholars that Afonja, Solagheru and al- Shalih were prominent personalities in Ilorin of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The work of Jimba (1997) Jimba and Salihu (2012) and those of Na'Allah have X-ray other salient personalities in both religious and social realms respectively. For some household names in business, see Ann O' Hear, Yinka banwo and others. The ethnic conglomeration of Ilorin and the ethno-religious skirmishes are some of the issues engaged by AbdulWahab Lanre Olumo in his book *'Managing ethno-Religious politics in Ilorin Emirate, thus no need be labouring the issue here*. The uniqueness of Ilorin, stems in part, from its cosmopolitan and pluralistic composition which gives it a distinctive identity. At this juncture, it must be said that the issue of who was the first or the second or the last, or who contributed the most or who should be the leader among the personalities or the ethnic groups as it characterized the history of the great leaders of Mali Empire; Sundiata and Mansa Musa, should be a forgone issue in the Emirate. The said personalities had come, contributed their bit and they are being remembered for the roles they played. Justice Mustapha Akanbi noted the legacy bequeathed on to us by our progenitors when he wrote:



The earliest generation, our ancestors, were very proud, determined, courageous, disciplined, religious, honest, and contented people... seasoned administrators, valiant warriors... and very distinguished Islamic scholars whose piety, erudition and scholarship brought honour and glory to the fatherland (and)... earned them the respect of friends and foes alike. ...our forefathers were humane and human. They were kind, generous and just. They know what is love and to be loved...what is pity and to be pitied. They were not selfish. They lived for others (and) themselves, their neighbours' problems were their problems, they were their brothers' keepers. Wealth was secondary to them. Good name, family pride, and their honour matter most 1996:2-4

Given the above, what do we have to contribute as individuals and as Ilorin community to the betterment of the people, the Ilorin Emirate community, Nigeria, Islam and Muslims should be our almost concern. After all, as observed by Professor I. O. Oloyede at the public presentation of the book on Ilorin Ulama, 'all the people of Ilorin (and by extension Nigeria) are strangers or settlers but with different dates of settlement'. Ilorin is neither North nor South but drew and continues to draw the best parts (people and culture) of each to make it Ilorin, the name by which the place and people are known and addressed. It is however documented that the political structure of the emirate was unique at start because it was all inclusive and not exclusive. And till date, this seems to be one of the secrets of the continual existence and externally over tasked peaceful co-existence. Thus, the all inclusiveness should be seen as an unending process and not a product, and should be continually renewed to give more rooms for the fledging authorities, if our peaceful co-existence should be continual.

### **Change and Continuity in Ilorin Emirate**

It is important to impress upon my listeners/readers that every society and individual has a life span which has been socio-psychologically categorized into three – the Morning period, the afternoon period and the evening period, which the Yorubas codify as (Igba Owuro, Igba Osan and Igba Ale). The psychologists categorized it into Infancy, Adolescence and Adulthood. Drawing from the above, no society, however, simple or complex is static. Quite a number of factors are usually responsible for this change. It could be internal and/or external. Among the factors of socio-political and religio-economic change in Africa, Nigeria inclusive was European scramble for and partition of Africa in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century which culminated into colonialism. Other factors are civil and military rules



and of recent globalization. In Nigeria, Historians have come to the reality of periodizing Nigeria political era into pre-colonial (Before 1900) colonial (1900-1960) and post colonial (1960-Date). In the same vain the Emirate existence can be Periodized into 3; Pre-Emirate (before 1823) Old Emirate 1823-1897, Modern Emirate (1900-1960-to date) eras. My categorization akins with that of Nigeria which started from Niger areas to Nigeria and modern Nigeria, as well as Ghana which transformed from Old Ghana, Gold Coast to Ghana.

Like other societies in Nigeria, Ilorin was hard hit by colonialism, Military and Civil rules. All these alter the course of the history of Ilorin Emirate as the scale of power was unbalance and the Emirate Council; the symbol of the unity of the Emirate was tore apart through divide and rule, which eroded the power of the Emir and the Council. The power of the Emir and his Council, which passed on to the Colonialists was transferred to successive authorities till date. Thus, as the Yoruba would say '*Esuo ti Padida oun le Aja*. Those who should take instruction are the one issuing instructions by virtue of their political positions.

Part of the negative influence of colonial administration on the Emirate is the veto determination of Emirate boundary which was reduced to Odo-Otun and the subsequent excisions of other communities from the Emirate through the colonial and post independence administrative restructuring through creation of provinces, divisions, local governments and states respectively. See. L.A.K. Jimoh 1994, and C.O.O. Agboola, 1996) for details. The five local governments i.e. Asa, Moro, Ilorin –West, South and East that make up the Emirate now, seems not working effectively with the Emirate Council because of various internal and external reasons chief of which is their unholy extra-political Mandate – Allegiance to political god-Father(s) and Selfishness. Because of information gap or acclaimed information mismanagement, on the part of the Emirate Council, some emirate indigenes at the interiors and abroad that lacked information about Emirate administration, perhaps because of exclusive nature of the traditional administration, often yield to incitement from external forces causing occasional crushable loud voices at home and in the media.

Furthermore, it is a common saying that Ilorin is peaceful because it is second to none in resemblance in nature and activities to the two holy cities of Mecca and Medina. This opinion has been turned a fact as it is being acted, written and waxed into records continually. True to the statement, apart from the internal skirmishes and occasional external empty threats from detractors, Ilorin has not witnessed any uncontrollable religious,



ethnic or political uprising as experienced by other communities north and south of Nigeria. Thus, Ilorin played host to displaced persons; indigenes and non-indigenes. Ilorin returnees could easily be recognized by their stereotype names. i.e Iya or Baba/Alhaji or Alhaja Ghana, Jos, Kaduna, Kano, Maiduguri, Makurdi, Eko, Oyo, Ibadan, Iresi, Iseyin, Gusau, Onisha, etc. One is not saying that all persons that bear or answer to those names were brought back by crises but they are certainly returnees. This is a good evidence to corroborate the fact that Ilorin people since the earliest time traversed the earth as enjoined by Islam. This counters' the popular believe among some non-indigenes that Ilorin people are a set of lazy individuals perhaps judging from the present situation where people troop out to line up at politicians houses for money instead of going about their duties. It is important to note that Money Politics is the order of the day in Nigeria, it is not peculiar to Ilorin or Kwara State.

The non-indigenes who formed the bulk of the new settlers bought land, built houses, and began a new life outside of the control of the Emirate authority and without any recourse to emirate cultural philosophy, but the modern philosophy which is a merge of their home and earlier place(s) of sojourn. This same principle applied to the indigenous returnees most of whom are usually modern in their thought and deeds with little or no respect for Ilorin ways of doing things which they considered obsolete.

### **The Failure of the State**

Ilorin Emirate is an important factor in the political decision of Kwara state since its establishment because of her natural and human endowments. The Emir of Ilorin is the Chairman of the Kwara State Council of Chiefs and Obas, the Emirate local governments have about 52% or more of the population in Kwara, and political god-Fathers have always come from Ilorin Emirate since the First Republic whether in government or among the opposition groups. History has not forgotten the likes of Alhaji Edun, Alhaji Saadu Ayinla Alanamu (A. K. A. Gbogboiwe), Alhaji Adebimpe and Alhaji Sule Maito etc. However, because of the phenomenon of failed state which is rampant in Africa, Nigeria and its constituent parts are not insulated from it. Other local governments outside of the emirate in Kwara State blame the Emirate for non-performance of the state political office holders. The Emirate authority as the symbol, receives insults and batons here and there within and without. The chief of the subjects of discussions in the book of Barrister Iyiola Agogun Oyedepo titled '*Letter to the Emir*' is on this. Like other commentators, his work also felt short of the understanding of the realities. If they have all availed themselves the oral and written history of power politics within and between traditional



institutions and the political authorities in Ilorin, Offa, Kano, Sokoto, and others, perhaps the story would not have been the same. Among other texts, the work of Professor A.M Yakubu on *the Emirs and Military Rule in Nigeria* will be of help to them all. I am also aware that the late Ado Bayero, and the current Alafin Oba Lamidi Adeyemi granted interviews respectively where they discussed their plights in office at the face of the successive Nigerian governments. The reality of the relationship of the Emirate authority and the State seems not better than that of the colonial/military era; Master-Servant relationship. It is an *Abraka Dabra* Relationship, the more you look not only the less you see and understand but the more you get confused. Take for instance during the electioneering campaigns particularly from 2003, the name and offices of the Emir of Ilorin were dragged into the campaigns and in a derogatory manner as they used the modern protocol to arrange them. You, I and almost all of us and almost all the time heard on the radio, and television advertisements like:

Baba wa Olushola Saraki  
Oga wa Bukola Saraki  
Oba wa Obalu Ilorin  
Gbogbo Abenu gan inu PDP Kwara  
Eje kasowopo gbe Fatai wole  
Ala anu Mekunu ni  
PDP, Power  
PDP, Oloyeeeee .  
Onarebu Atunwa loni ma- ke tan-tan-tan.

Again that was not enough, when the elections were over we heard

Baba wa Olushola Saraki  
Oga wa Bukola Saraki  
Oba wa Obalu Ilorin  
Eyin Agba agba PDP  
Adupe lowoyin ooooo  
Fun afowo sowopo yin  
Tefi Ibo gbe Fatai wo le koro.  
PDP, Power  
PDP, Oloyeeeee.  
Onarebu Sulemon Maja loni kiyin oooooo.



The same thing goes for appointments into political offices. As recent as October 2015, when His Excellency Alhaji AbdulFatai Ahmed sent his nominees to the Assembly for screening as Commissioners, we heard over the radio and television, advertisements, thanking the political and the emirate authorities for the nomination of candidates. These and some other relevance seeking moves of the political office holders and seekers through the use of the name and offices of the emir no doubt informed the unwarranted suspicions and insults. Imagine when the Emir or the Emirate Council has important occasions which may be beneficial, the masses hardly hear this on the radio and television but only in the Emir's Jumaat Mosque, one out of many mosques in the emirate. Can this not be stopped? Should it not be stopped? No, I believe it can stop. I hereby call on relevant authorities to stop this.

### **Land use System**

Another important factor that has ushered in negative tendencies into the Emirate is the indiscriminate use of land. The Emirate authority, used to be the permitting authority on the use of land. Thus, there was control over who used and what was to be done on the land. Today, the authority has passed on to the government, which acquired land for government interest but sometimes converted such land to personal use. LAK Jimoh exhaustively discussed in his book *"Ilorin: The Journey Sofar"* the encounter of Emir Sulu Karnani Gambari with military governments in Kwara State. I also understand that quite a number of cases between Kwara State government and Ilorin families on land are pending in courts. The little power over land that resides with the traditional authority is misused for quest for money. In all the cases, land are allocated to the highest bidder not minding his/her personality or the purpose for which the land has been acquired. Quite a number of locations in the emirate are said to have been identified now for nefarious activities like 419, spiritual killing, religion fanaticism to say a little and the least, consequent upon non- challant allocation of lands.

At this juncture, I wish to appreciate the efforts of the IEDPU in this direction for taking steps to right the wrongs and preventing further encroachments on Ilorin lands and further damage to the psychology and emotion of Ilorin people. Since the open presentation of the IEDPU position on the issue of land by the former President, Justice Saka Yusuf at the 2014 National Conference, the public became more informed and academia are turning their search light to that direction (Ishola 2015).



### **The family structure/ pattern**

The settlement pattern of Ilorin is a critical reflection of her principle of brotherhood and not the absence of the knowledge of house planning. Houses were built interconnectedly in such a way that one can move from one compound through to twenty compounds before one crossed a road. As it is seen today, in spite of modern roads, someone going to Ita-Adu from Popo Igbona area, or from Agbarere to Oja tuntun or from Ita Ogunbo to Abemi or from Eruda to Adabata, from Gambari to Emir's road, from Alore to Alagbado, from Ita-Ahmadu to Adabata and from Ita-Ahmadu to Isale koto, to Gambari, needed no transport. This applied to all the core areas of Ilorin. Furthermore, in a compound, upto the recent past one found complex families of about at least three generations. They all shared ideas, knowledge, skills and properties. They looked after one another socially, politically, culturally and more importantly health wise. Knowledge and skills possessed by one was for the common good of all. Pots of herbs (Agbo, and Agunmu, for elders and youths, women and children) for all known common diseases and illnesses in the family were prepared and used. As they shared joy so also their sorrow. In most compounds, the occupants were of diverse origins as there were 'the *Ansar*' and 'the *Muhajirun*'. They both lived together in harmony with each party recognizing and respecting settlement agreements. A critical look at the settlement pattern within a family compound may show either time of settlement or origins. Land and room spaces were shared according to needs of individuals and not on superiority and greed. Thus, the well- to-do in the families took good care of the less privileged with the later keeping and protecting lives and properties of their benefactors. Today, advanced education, economic prosperity and political empowerment have all combined to pull down this wall. Instead of leaving together as 'Ansar and Muhajirun' most members of the Muhajirun in most families try to alter the course of the history of families because they have 'arrived'. Quite a number of cases are before the Emirate Council and the law Courts over inherited rooms, land, mosques, and even sharing of inheritance.

### **The use Oriki (Eulogy/ cognomen)**

As part of the attachment to descendance, every family in Ilorin has cognomen (Oriki) and from the general oriki individuals are given specific ones. There is no gainsaying in the statement that the use of these orikis had profound effect on the psyche of both the singer and the praised. The Ilorins of Yesterday used the Oriki to remind their off springs of the "son of whom" they were, which made them conform to the norms and culture of the Ilorin society. Among several other cognomens, we have, the Ojes,



Rekes, Manlewas, Opos i.e Alabi, Akanbi, Adisa Opo, Olomu, Iresa, Majojus, Laderins etc. these Oriki were usually sang by elders to acknowledge greetings from a younger one or their children or wards. It is largely a persuasive tool used to appeal to ones sense of forgiveness, philanthrophism and decorum. As words, it could also be used to stir, nourish and admonish individuals. The origin of Oriki is tracable to many factors parts of which are acquired and/or hereditary. Since it is an oral genre, it shares the weaknesses of oral traditions. Thus, attempts at using it to establish the origins of people and families in Ilorin have not been largely successful. Imaging, the 9<sup>th</sup> Emir of Ilorin an undoubted descendant of Sheikh Alimi accepted, beard and popularized the Opos. His popular oriki was Alabi Opo. However, this showed a demonstration of large heartedness of the Alhaji Dr. Sulu Karnaini Gambari, Alabi Opo, Aiyelabo the 2<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Iyawo Saara**

The essence of marriage for an individual is to receive love and reproduce self in multiple. However, to a society, marriage is an instrument of peace and peaceful co-existence. The principle of nature and nurture stipulates that every normal human being must have sex urge at one time or the other and if there is no legal means of meeting the urge the alternative is illegality. Illegal sexual satisfaction breeds conflict and confusion. Ilorin because of its social and spiritual inclinations was quick in understanding this, and means were opened to legally meet the nature. One of such means was the institution of Iyawo Sara. That is 'a gift of wife', which literarily translated to 'a dowry free wife'. I make bold to say that anyone who is age 40 and above here are products of Iyawo Sara. Apart from the fact that the bride dowry was free, it was used as an integration mechanism, to unite the constituent parts as well as the classes in the Ilorin society. The royals, the Ulama, Guilds etc. consummate marriages among and between themselves to build a strong, united, and sustainable Ilorin society.

This marked the beginning of group and or mass wedding usually organized by families in Ilorin. The marriages organized by Emir Sulu Gamabari, Sheikh Kamaludeen Al-Adabiy and a host of others are good examples and the products are blessed. One is not denying the fact some of the consummated marriages under Iyawo Sara did not last, for reasons of psycho-emotional, socio-political and economic miss-merge, however, the system was largely acclaimed successful, because it achieved beyond doubt, the reason of united society. By the 80s, some western educated non-indigenes who were envious of the system began to chest the system and the practitioners. Some social critiques from among the western



educated indigenes and abroad educated Islamic Scholars also condemned the act in totality because of their outward and poor assessment of the system. Among other reasons, they claimed, it was anti-social, enslaving and thus infringing on the principles of human rights. It was believed that the couples usually do not know one another before they were married. This is not, to a certain extent true.

### **Self/Public discipline**

Up to the 70s child upbringing was a collective responsibility of not only the nuclear and extended families but also all the members of a certain quarters / area, ward and the entire Ilorin community. This was made possible because, they had all, participated in the processes that culminated into your, mine and our births. For instance, getting a wife for an adult male was collectively done; the couple got their family life started under the watchful, kind-hearted, philanthropic, selfless elders who intervened at every critical point. It is important here to state that honey moon was not alien to Ilorin marriage system but the purposes looked different from that of today. For one or two months or even more, couples were kept at a close range. Their activities were closely monitored. Their love affairs were spied should there be any biological, psychological or physical problems arising from love play. The groom's family constantly asked the groom, questions but not the wife because she may be shy. On the 8<sup>th</sup> day of the marriage, the wife went to her family on visitation where the elders from her family sat her down to recount her experiences. If it was a normal type, they got relieved and laugh over it. If any problem, the two families set out to solve the problems with the cooperation of the couple. Thus, hardly do we see early marriage separation for any problem, because the problems were shared by all.

If there was misunderstanding or conflict, to sustain the marriage and put Satan to shame, the culprit was disciplined. If it was the wife, the parents or their representative came to the husband family house to discipline the wife by flogging her before others. The same punishment of strokes of cane went for a husband who was found faulty. He will be made to prostrate before the elders in the open and given the disgrace. Usually this punishment was resulted to, when a husband was unkind to his wife by beating her or insulting her parents and vice versa. The offences of the wife usually include starving the husband of sex and food as well as refusal to render house chores.

It is important to state here that because the marriages were arranged by the elders within and outside the family, all hands were on deck to maintain and sustain the marriage. It is interesting to note that new couples in Ilorin



of then, usually lacked nothing within the first to three years of their marriages. Shelter, food, security, cash, clothes were continually extended to them. The Igba Iyawo that the wife brought from her house was a product of the great partnership which usually started between the girl and the mother, the extended family, later by friends, well wishers and the groom's family. The items contributed included, cooking utensils, raw food etc.

Today, the Ilorin family structure as largely collapsed due to modernity. The elders are separated from the youth like the lepers are separated from the generality; the only connection probably is now during ceremonies and annual religious festivals. We recognize that economic factors which separate even couples now, talk much of the family members. That is, those in government jobs who had to go on transfer or whose jobs are located outside the emirate or even Kwara state. However, we all know that desire for "freedom" and not needs led many out of the family houses. We are all living witnesses to both the negative and the positive consequences of this act now. Many family houses are rented out to people whose acts contradict the name of the family houses on the one hand. And on the other hand, family members outside of the family house act in ways inimical to the names and philosophy of their progenitors.

### **Ilorin Scholars**

Ilorin during the first and second generations of scholars led by Sheikh Attahiru Solagberu and Sheikh al Salih (Alimi) respectively was undoubtedly a haven of knowledge. However, the glory of Ilorin Islamically, became felt far and beyond its borders, during the Emirate era. The sojourn of foreign scholars, their activities as well as the emergence of indigenous scholars and their contributions in the spread of Islamic knowledge within and outside the emirate have been captured in literature, no need repeating such here. At this juncture, it is important to stress here that till this period, Ilorin is not lagging behind in Islamic learning and proselytization. Prof Z.I Oseni in his contribution to the book titled ***Ilorin: Centre of learning*** edited by Prof Shehu Jimoh captured the tremendous increase in the number of Ilorin scholars in the field of Arabic and Islamic learning, preaching and teaching which compared to none at least within its north central geo-political zone. Other recent works that buttress this fact and established the presence of Ilorin scholars outside Ilorin are those of Aliagan Imam and Rafiu Adebayo as presented in the book titled ***Ilorin as a Beacon of Learning and Culture in West Africa***.

However, the reality today, is that there is a paradigm shift in philosophy.



While the philosophy of the early scholars was faith based and their activities were FISABILILAH (for the Cause of Allah), most modern ill-fated scholars based theirs on self enrichment and their activities are FISABILI-NAIRA (for the accumulation of money). Although most often, the nefarious scholars either of Ilorin extraction or Ilorin related or settled, are sometimes denied by pristine scholars whose number is insignificant, by saying they are half-baked Muslim scholars or that they are herbalists. The reality remains that they are known and addressed as Mallams whether they are half-baked or full baked or not baked at all. It is sad to note that issues of spiritual killings, 419 syndicates, which we hear from afar, are now dwelling with us. Thus, enviable Islamic titles like Sheikh corrupted to Shehu, Mukadam, Khalipha have been defaced by the public as Shege, Mukadaru and Ale-egba respectively given the attitude of the nefarious mallams. Though the society remained a leading frontier emirate but just like before the establishment of the Emirate and in the villages surrounding Ilorin in the 60 to 70s, there are offerings that are associated with syncretic practices on our major roads, streets junctions, farmland, roundabout, backyards, etc. Worst still, is the cannibalistic attitude which the general news, radio, television, internet news have associated with the emirate through the activities of the half baked Muslim/Islamic scholars and other agents of spiritualism. This is reversing the 20<sup>th</sup> century efforts of the Makondoro scholars who cleared every nooks and crannies of Ilorin and by extension south western Nigeria of syncretism.

I am also informed that most household are now stores of alcoholic drinks as majority of the young Alfas in conjunction with Iya/Baba Alaagbo now used it for preparing herbs and concoctions. The young Okada riders too seem to have forgotten the economic and social conditions that turned them from artisans and or graduate to Okada riders to make ends meet. I understand most of them are now drunkards. Wonderful, this is suffering and smiling. In this situation, how can our prayers be accepted as ever before? The relentless activities of Ilorin scholars at spreading Islam and Islamic scholarship both within and outside the emirate as also introduced some uneasiness in the religious sphere of the Emirate. Islamic scholarship as we all know it was like apprenticeship at the beginning. There were known families for the art from whom many others learnt. However, with the uncontrolled spread of Islamic education because it is faith based and less capital intensive, the new crop of scholars now fight tooth and nail for inclusion in the activities of the established scholars, thus, becoming thorns in the flesh of their masters.

Some have constituted themselves into Islamic intellectual terror group.



criticizing without decorum, documented or oral submissions of their masters outside of the social milieu as well as the contexts that informed the submissions. Some are challenging the descendants of their masters on the domination of Islamic positions like Imam, Ladani, Mufasir etc just because they are now learned and they wanted to be given consideration in the positions. This has led to conflicts and crises leading to death, permanent physical disabilities and which left mosques and Islamic organizations divided permanently. Today, less is done on Islamic propagation but much is done on avoidable arguments, crises and conflicts,

### **Commerce & Industries**

The pre-colonial, colonial and post colonial economy of Ilorin has been documented to a large extent by scholars such as Ann 'O Hear (1983) Olaoye (1992 & 1999) Gavin (1977) Banwo (1998) Alabi (1983) Bahir Ibrahim (2014) Danmole (2012), LAK Jimoh (1994) etc The summary of their works is that Ilorin economic prosperity was based on Commerce and Industries. Some locally made materials like pots, leather, ropes etc as well as food and cash crops were sold at both local and international markets. The Local markets included but not limited to the Emir's and Baloguns' markets which were located at the outside spaces in front of their Fadas while the Gambari and Pakata markets were international, where, all manners of articles of trade and merchants were found.

In addition to the active participation of the Ilorins in the production of the articles of trade, they also served as middlemen (Baale) for the long distance traders by providing not only patronage and lodging as reported by Danmole but also securing of lives and property of the traders. Ilorin's engagement in long distance trade to Lagos, Kano, Kaduna, Maiduguri, Onisha, Port-Harcourt and host of others within and outside Nigeria particularly North Africa, Middle East and even Europe through the 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present millennium must be mentioned. However, the question as posed by Professor Na'Allah is 'what is the degree of prosperity recorded by Ilorin people over the years? Why awaiting extensive research and report on this, some scholars are of the opinion that the pre-colonial economy of Ilorin made Ilorin people and authority wealthy through middlemanship and tax collection respectively (Danmole 2012, O Hear 1983, Gavin 1977). The same applicable during the colonial era as many Ilorin men and women served as agents of the Multi-national corporations that were purchasing local resources like Cocoa seeds, Cashew nuts, hide and skin, palm oil etc.

Many of such people became wealthy as evident in their life styles. Their houses' styles significantly differ from the general houses in their environs.



They imported building styles, materials and builders from major cities like Lagos, Kano, Kaduna etc. They were about the first set of people that introduced storey building and royal bungalows in Ilorin town. From the 1980s, the numbers of the merchants' class have been on the decline and by now I think what is left of the class is just mere references. Liberalization of Nigeria economy is one of the external causative factors. It is a common knowledge that liberalization and globalization have done more harm than good to the Third World economies and cultures but the political class has done more harm than globalization and/or liberalization.

### **Socio-Economic Integration**

The social integration of the Ilorin people also led to economic integration and development. The nature of Ilorin brought together not only every manner of people but also their livelihood. There were potters, smiths, cloth and basket weavers. Potters who made different types of domestic and industrial earth wares, the gold and blacksmiths, shear butter producers, wood carvers, mud house builders, embroidery designers, soap makers, hide and skin producers, tie and dye producers. All of these, which started as a tribe, clan and family businesses became spread to every interested families, nooks and crannies of the emirate through marriage, friendship, and apprenticeship, a consequence of social integration.

Through the aforementioned trades, Ilorin became a haven of industry recognized by people from the north and south of Nigeria. As Ilorin attracted buyers far and wide so also Ilorin merchants travelled with their articles far and wide within and outside the shores of Nigeria. Upto the close of the twentieth century, a number of the names of Ilorin areas, and personalities rang bell regarding production and sales of these products and their prosperity was not in doubt. Wherever, Ilorin travelled to, these trades were practiced. Ilorin people in Ijebuland, Ibadan, Isehin, Ojuelegba, Ogba, Mushin, Oshodi, Agege and even Ghana, Ivory Coast and Benin Republic, were prominent cloth weavers (Aso Oke producers).

It must be emphasized that the traditional political structures, the colonial, as well as the military government structures supported the growth of these trades as they were not in any way inimical to peace. In fact, the above government relied on the business class when raising funds for projects for the common good. However, with the institution of democracy and particularly the Second Republic, the politician lured the business class into partisan politics for the sake of their hard earned prosperity and popularity. Rather than the politicians designing political structure to boost their economy, the business tycoons were disarmed as money became a



major political instrument. We are all living witnesses to those Ilorin business tycoons destroyed through this means. No wonder that the illustrious sons and daughters of Ilorin who managed to remain in the business world today kept aloof of Ilorin politics at the detriment of the downtrodden masses. Many others in trade and commerce, manufacturing and construction industries particularly within the state played politics for survival and not of development.

As the Ilorin leaders and youth abandoned their arts and crafts for politics, the political circle became saturated as everyone went there to look for money by all means even if they could contribute little as thugs and frontiers to looters among the political office holders. It may interest us to note that the vacuum created in the Arts and Crafts industries have been filled by sojourners /new settlers and are doing excellently well in them. Now the story of “it was ours” occupied our lips while our children became labourers or at best apprentices in their workshops, what a pity.

### **Age grade societies**

The significance of peer grouping cannot be over emphasized. Psychologists and others in the field of human behavior have made us to understand the role of peer grouping as a necessary tool in the development processes of a human. Ilorin children or people upto the 70s had age grade or grouping, which continued to transform from simple to complex as they grew from childhood to adulthood. They started from sand play ( Ere Yepe) where different kind of adult activities were role played, to wrestling/singing group, iyami loilo group, to Epaokuta/Okoto playing group, to Wowo (born fire), self help, group to women chasing group, etc. Moving together with peers to families and friend during festivals is a memorable event (Ikiri Odun). At adult, social clubs replaced all the aforementioned. The clubs included but not limited to Egbe Iwajowa, Irepodun, Binukonu, Somidoloro, Bomodeoku, etc. where issues of members and societal welfares were considered. Till date, in some quarters in Ilorin, the positions some individuals held in the clubs became their names; Giwa, Banki, Alase, Finer, Oloriegbe, Alasose, etc. Close to the above are the ward development associations which wither by day. Today all these have largely disappeared with all their immeasurable benefits. They have been replaced by westernized social / night clubs where they dine and wine, social media friendship where their minutest details are revealed without caution. The effect is the increasing in security of individual and the society.

The cultural and material philosophies of Ilorin were not hidden as they



were reflected in their thoughts, deeds and names. They do not mind whose toes are trampled upon as they wrote their thoughts boldly on the walls of their houses and later automobiles. They were the guiding principles by which the elders measured their behaviours and relationship with others. Take the alias of our grandparents for instance as well as the names they gave to their pet animals. Toluwa lase, Eyi owu kawi, Omu lyadun, Ola Egbon, Oruko rere, Banuso, fiwa foni wa, Alarape, Anibi niran, eni abire, Omoluabi, Afisuru, Majale, Iwalesin, Bosere, Asajehun, etc. A critical look at the motto of some of the Emirate schools may also suffice in our reflection. Majada Wajada meaning no struggle no success is the motto of Government Secondary School Ilorin, dignity of labour for United Primary School, Education for unity and progress for Ilorin Comprehensive High School, make hay while the sun shine for Government High School, education for strength and unity for College of Arabic and Islamic Studies, gladly learning and gladly teaching for Ilorin Teachers' College now Sheikh AbdulKadir etc. These laudable philosophies have largely been reduced to slates and print, as the youth are not working it out but are working in opposite direction. It may interest you to know that some graduates of Madrasa are thugs, what an irony. Other philosophies in the trashes are 'Semin in bio logun Ore' (dialogue among friends) 'Alase fisun' (reporting wrong doing/doers) These and other similar ones have been replaced with "Setie kin se temi Owoo ki di owoo lorun "Kowa de nasa" "Konko – Jabele, Kaluku Lomin Setire" Meaning individualism. This was made worse by the mass movement of the elite to GRA as well as artificial famine engendered by the political class.

### **Transforming the Emirate**

It will be antithetical and progress to beginning to clamour for a re-enactment of the past, even, if the present is not the best. Moreso, quite a number of internal and external factors will militate against total reversal. Thus, while one believes that there is largely nothing new in the world today but the past which had undergone modification, there is also the need to modify the present for the future.

The power of the mind and of the dream cannot be over emphasized as they often lead to unprecedented successes. Since the dream of the great men and women came to pass, I thought it wise, to say my dream about our dear emirate. As the Yoruba says; Aba ki pe di ase, ojo nki je ki ada', meaning, suggestions could be a solution but fear, often prevent the presentation. A dream can be realized, if presented and pursued. Since I am an interested party and an ordinary player in the affairs of the emirate, I am



optimistic that, if my dream is said, the key emirate players will assist to make my dream a reality.

I saw an emirate where the ruler and the ruled shun individual interests for collective goal and primordial identities for the Islamic identity which is holistic.

I saw an emirate that is strengthened by the unity of its various segments and strata wherein the illustrious sons and daughters who are in the Guinness Book of who-is-who in Nigeria came together to give back to the emirate the honour bestowed on them. I mean the coming together of the political, the business, the spiritual and the social as well as other salient classes to collectively project and promote the image of the emirate for political, social, economic and spiritual upliftment of the emirate and its people.

I saw an emirate whose authority was, much more, than the Ottoman authority (which cut across land and sea borders and races) by coordinating its authorities over the new settlers who are spread over the land without control and whose freedom could constitute future threat I saw an Emirate Council whose subjects are equal before the law and customs of the land, a Council which shun partisan politics, and admired its entire subjects regardless of their socio-political and economic backgrounds or leaning.

I saw an emirate whose spiritual class is upright and determined to say the words of the holy books even if they were against them or their blood.

I saw an emirate which fashioned its future development plan on her cultural philosophy and strictly monitor interference as done by China which made her a developing economy in spite her 300 billion plus population.

I saw an emirate whose political class shun corruption and became a shining example in Nigeria and Africa as a whole

I saw an Emirate whose political class was genuinely concerned about the plight of the masses and who with the Emirate Council and the IEDPU developed a development plan for the upliftment of the emirate and its people.

I saw an emirate where the subjects cooperate with leaders by being very obedient, patient, law abiding and being brothers and public property keepers

I saw an Emirate Descendant Progressive Union that is an umbrella union for other organizations in the emirate by providing leadership, direction and drawing tributes and taxes for its duties than competing with them in the provision of social amenities in the nooks and crannies of the emirate.



I saw an IEDPU Council that is populated by experienced, illustrious, foresighted indigenes and not opportunity seekers for fear of corruption  
I saw a strong, powerful, purposeful and reliable IEDPU Council whose impact is felt, loud voice heard and members' sheldomly seen.

### **Conclusion**

I thank the almighty ALLAH for the gift of my life and those other favours of His, which qualified me to present this paper here today. I appreciate the IEDPU for giving me the opportunity to interact with men and women of honour through this lecture. More importantly, I thank all my listeners for their patience. What I have said here is by no means perfect but one of those opinions that could be challenged and modified either by me or any other person. I have not also exonerated myself from the issues raised, I however take responsibility for my errors in an attempt to contribute my quota to the development of the emirate. I sincerely thank you all for listening/reading. God bless Nigeria, Ilorin Emirate and all of us, amin.

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