



An Exemplary Leadership: The Ifon Orolu and Ifon Omima Conflict Resolution Process in South-West Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Servant-hood is the splendor of leadership as clearly seen in the case of Ifon Orolu and Ifon Omima both in Osun and Ondo states respectively, it is desirable to look at the examples given by their central authorities in peaceful resolution of conflicts that had lingered for thousands of years and had been settled for over a decade whereby the towns are thriving on politically, economically and socially. In view of this, this work will serve as an eye-opener to leaders that dialogue and peaceful resolution of differences is the best way as the towns under consideration will be thoroughly x-rayed on their exemplary conflict resolution process and the enviable results. The major sources of information were through few available books and oral interview from important personalities in the towns. It is apparent here that if peace education is well packaged for our learners there is tendency to have a society ridden of security threats and desirable development.

Keywords: Conflicts, Resolution, Exemplary, Dialogue, Amicable.

1. Introduction

This research work focused on symbiotic relationship between Ifon Orolu and Ifon Omima communities that are located in Osun and Ondo states respectively. Oral traditions revealed that their progenitors were siblings who separated because of succession disputes that they could not resolve amicably. However, in year 2002, the kings reconciled as brothers. Based on this historic development there is the need to look at their historical origin, the events that led to their separation, the process of reconciliation and the outcome of reconciliation. In addition, this work examines the administration of each town during separation and the similarities they share despite the separation. The major sources of information for this work are oral interviews and records in libraries, archives and palaces.

Ifon Orolu and Ifon Omima were formerly together at a place known as 'Ifon-Ile' or 'Ifon Ilamopo' but separated due to succession disputes that emanated from deviation from the usual tradition of having the first son, 'aremo' in Yorubaland as the automatic successor of the deceased king. Hence, the younger brother that was chosen in place of the elderly one decided to migrate from 'Ifon-Ile' or 'Ifon-Ilamopo'. For many centuries, the two towns were separated until late twentieth century that the present king of Ifon Omima, Oba Israel Adegoke Adeusi and the former king of Ifon Orolu, Oba Ilufoye Olatoye II (deceased), took reconciliation steps. Ifon Omima is the headquarters and seat of government of Ose Local Government Area of Ondo State, Nigeria. It is a junction town with two axes to Edo State and one to the rest of Ondo State. It lies at about the mid-point on the Federal Highway that connects Akure and Benin City. It is located on an elevated terrain; a view from the center of the town confirms the beauty of the surrounding. Ifon Omima is an ancient town with European settlement as divisional or district headquarters as far back as 1903. The town is blessed with a large landmass and large-scale production of both cash and food crops, which encouraged traders and workers. Hence, this has led to an explosion in the population of the town. Ifon Orolu emerged at different times in the same region between the

fourteenth and the sixteenth centuries. It is located north of Osun River, bounded by Ogbomoso to the north, Ikirun to the east, Ejigbo to the west, and Osogbo and Ede to the south. Ifon Orolu was located at different places though within the same region at different times. This led to the emergence of such settlements like Ifon Eega, Ifon Ere, Ifon Baale, and Ifon Osun at different times.

1.1. The Historical Origin of Ifon Orolu

How was Ifon Orolu founded? This question will easily excite a myriad of responses from Ifon elders. The researcher who insists on sampling as many of these responses as possible will find before him the picture of a well known story, distorted or exaggerated once in a while. Three traditions have been chosen in this chapter, which seems to summarize the popular belief of the Ifon people on how their homelands originated. A reconciliation of the three will provide the platform for the other discussion in the paper. The first tradition examined was written by the Adesoji, A.O. (2003:17-18), He claimed that the origin of Ifon is shrouded in legend and this has made it difficult to determine the exact period of their emergency. However, tradition in Ifon relates that the community emerged from a settlement founded by AladikunOlaosa surnamed Orolu otherwise known as AkogunErujeje, who was claimed to have been the first born of Obatala. Having lost in the contest for the royal stool at Ile-Ife following the death of *Oduduwa, Agboniregun*, the custodian of the Ifa oracle and a close associate of Obatala advised Akogun Erujeje to leave Ile-Ife. More so, the other elders envied him because of his closeness to Obalufon, the successor of Oduduwa and his possession of white beaded crown, a symbol of royalty that he inherited from his father. AladikunOlaosa was specifically advised to move in a particular direction until he reached a virgin land with abundant weaver birds (*eye Eega*) and mushrooms (*Olu*). AladikunOlaosa arrived at the place specified by the oracle on the northern side of a river called *Osun-Igbo* after some days' walk. The virgin nature of the land, coupled with the presence of weaver birds and mushrooms in abundance encouraged him to settle there. He consequently named the settlement *Ifon Eega*, that is, the place covered by mushrooms and inhabited by weaver birds. He also assumed the title *Olu-Ifon*, that is, Lord or king of Ifon, using it as the basis of his authority and the royalty, which he had inherited at Ile-Ife. At IfonEega, the *Orisa-nla* deity, who was brought from Ile-Ife, was established and worshipped. It was even claimed that the presence of the deity attracted groups of migrants, who with Aladikun's permission or set up camps in the vicinity of IfonEega.

The rapid growth of Ifon-Eega and the consequent shortage of land led to the relocation of the community to *Ifon-Ere* by Olufon Orisagbemi Akinsingbin, the second settlement derived its name from the marshy nature of the land. IfonEre was said to be a virile community characterized by devoted pursuit of religion and practice of politics with the development of a sound economy. The popularity of this settlement probably brought different groups of migrants into it. However, the wave of migration became greater at the third site of the settlement known as *Ifon Baale*. *Baale* according to tradition in Ifon was derived from nocturnal cultic meeting regularly held to review the affairs of the state. Among those groups that migrated to Ifon-Ere were the *Aaje*, who tradition claimed, came from Iwata near Ogbomoso, having lost the context for the throne. The group was subsequently incorporated, with its leader *Odogbonikekere* who was made the chief priest of *Orisa-nla* deity. In addition, tradition recounts that the *Akimo* group migrated from Ila where it had lost in a contest for the throne. Even though the group was heading for Oyo Ile, it was persuaded by the emissaries of the Olufon that they should stay in Ifon, having realized that some of them were blacksmiths. The importance of blacksmiths in African society as givers of life could have accounted for the pressure on the group to stay in IfonBaale. *Ikimo*, the settlement founded by this group on Ifonland became a foremost place before it was destroyed during the nineteenth century Yoruba wars. Tradition also recounts how the *Afin* group led by their leader, *Igbin Ajo* left Iwo Ate near Ife Odan because of an unsuccessful chieftaincy contest. Olufon Laojo Osatolu who made their leader a district head received him. With the evacuation of their settlement for an unknown reason, it became desolate. Their integration into Ifon was however concluded with the marriage of Olufon Laojo to Okusanna, one of the daughters of the *Afin*. In the same vein, it was claimed that the *Odofin*, *Ejemu* and *Isangbe* groups migrated into Ifon at different times. While the *Isangbe* group came from Oyo and settled briefly in Ilero in Oke-Ogbe, the *Odofin* and *Ejemu* groups were said to have left Ikoyi-Ile possibly at different times but arrived in Ifon at the time of Oba Oluyeyin towards the end of the eighteenth century. The *Odofin* group under the leadership of Majowoogbe was said to have left its original home having lost a chieftaincy contest and founded a settlement known as Gbere Odofin in remembrance of the title of their ancestors in Ikoyi-Ile. The desire by Olufon Oluyeyin to form a compact settlement that could withstand external invasions led to the disbandment of the Odofin village and their re-settlement within Ifon township with their leader taking the *Odofin* title.

It is worthy of note that one of the major reasons for the movement of different groups of migrants into Ifon Orolu was the expansionist activities of the Oyo empire in western Yoruba land, like the military exploits of Benin in the eastern Yoruba country as well as the menace of the Nupe and Bariba on northern Yoruba settlements. The location of Ifon Orolu in the south therefore encouraged the influence of immigrants. Even though the movement of these groups was not confirmed from their places of origin, there appears to be traces of these different groups even in Ifon Orolu presently. For instance, the Oluode compound comprising Kuti, Seku and Oluode families which claimed to have come from Iresa having lost in a chieftaincy contest. As warriors, the group also enjoyed hunting. The group was therefore settled on part of the land belonging to *Eleesi*, one of Olufon's principal chiefs and became Oluode Olufon. The group still hunt game for Olufon until the present day particularly during important festivals as a sign of appreciation.

The second version was derived from one of the neighbouring towns of Ifon Orolu named Ilobu. The version on the emergence of Ifon Orolu was completely different from the one recounted above. Here, Ifon Osun the popular name at that era was founded by people from Ifon Sobe (now Ifon Omima) otherwise called Ifon-Ose near Owo in present day Ondo State, led by Olufon *Osalokun* at an unspecified period in the past. The tradition however admits that Olufon *Osalokun* was probably a powerful priest king whose original home was Ile-Ife but was exiled because of his greed and illicit criminal acts, which were not disclosed. More importantly because he was becoming more powerful than the Oba, this led to his movement together with his brother Sepeteri to Ifon-Ose or Ifon-Sobe from where they eventually came to Ilobu in order to escape from the war that came upon the settlement. The Olufon and his people were believed to have passed through the Erinle River where their enemies were washed away. At Ilobu, Laarosin the founder granted Olufon's request for refuge and settled him and his people at a place later named Akinnucompound, which was near the Olobu's palace. While in Ilobu, *Osalokun* participated in trade in *Obu-Otoy* (rock salt). However, later, Olufon *Osalokun* persuaded Olobu Laarosin to give him a separate land on which he could found his own settlement. Laarosin granted his request and settled him at a place called Ibale – meaning a place with thick forest, some fourteen kilometers from Ilobu town. The loneliness of Olufon *Osalokun* as well as his feeling of insecurity in the settlement made him to request Olobu Laarosin to move him nearer to Ibokun people at *Apiponroro*.

The migrant group from Ibokun near present day Ilesa had earlier settled at a place called *Apiponroro* because of the reddish nature of the earth surface. Tradition explains that the Ibokun people, having been threatened by war fled their settlement and sought refuge at Ilobu after crossing the Erinle River that separated Ilobu from Obokun. However, on one occasion during the traditional worship of the Olufon deity, otherwise known as Orisan'la or Orisa Olufon brought from Ifon Sobe by the Olufon, the white attire that was the customary dress for the worshippers was soiled due to the meshy nature of the ground occasioned by rainfall. This did not please Olufon who once again requested that another land, which was not covered with reddish earth, be granted to him. Olobu obliged him again and granted him a place now known as *Boosa* where the Olufon deity was planted and the palace of Olufon built there on. However, owing to the fact that the land on which the Olufon was eventually settled was originally part of the land granted to Obokun people, the Olobu decreed that no Olufon should be buried at *Boosa* but at Ibale, which was originally granted to Olufon. This, according to tradition, explains why all Olufon to date on their demise are buried at Ibale. Meanwhile, the meshy nature of *Apiponroro* where the Ibokun people stayed made it to be known as *Eleesi* – meaning the land that sticks to clothes particularly after rainfall. This was why the Ibokun people became *Eleesi* people and have the chieftaincy title of *Eleesi*. This probably explains why the *Eleesi* were regarded as earlier group of settlers whom Olufon met. Even though the *Eleesi* group should have been an independent group within Ifon Orolu, they appear to have been fully incorporated as one of the Olufon's principal chiefs and even a kingmaker. The name *Eleesi* was derived from '*Eleyin lo n si*' meaning that the palm nuts were being removed by the owner. This was because the migrants were involved in palm oil processing.

Even though, these traditions appear contradictory, certain deductions could be made from them. In the first place, different groups of migrants who arrived in the regions at different times inhabited Ifon Orolu. It appears however that the Olufon, because of his royal background, his possession of a crown and the powerful religious influence he wielded as seen in Orisa Olufon deity, equipped him to exercise leadership role on the other groups. This eventually resulted in their integration into a compact settlement. It seemed also that its relatively secure nature drew other groups into the settlement and this situation resulted in the movement to bigger sites at different times. However, going by the claim of migration from Ile-Ife around the twelfth century, which resulted in the emergence of different Yoruba settlements outside Ile-Ife. What is not certain is whether the migrants that founded Ifon Orolu left Ile-Ife also in the twelfth century. The story of migration could however be explained from two perspectives which though

appear different but point towards the same conclusion. One is that, Aladikun Olaosa having left Ile-Ife did not settle at Ifon – Eega directly but first settled at Adikun (which according to Robin Law was situated 45 miles southwest of Oyo Ile) but had to leave due to the unfavourable condition of the settlement particularly the hegemonic struggle of Oyo which affected it. Consequently, Aladikun migrated until he got to Ifon-Eega. This position is corroborated by the similarity in the dialect of the Oyo and Ifon Orolu people. The second perspective is based on Akinjogbin's findings regarding the fourth wave of migration from Ile Ife. For instance, it was during this wave that Ooni *Obalufon Alayemore*, having been driven out by Oranmiyan, his uncle, left Ile-Ife to live around present day Ido-Osun between Edo and Osogbo followed by a large number of people. He later migrated to the Ekiti land where he stayed at Ilara and from there he went back to Ife to succeed Oranmiyan. Meanwhile, many of his fellow refugees remained in their places of refuge and their descendants continued to be the rulers of Ifon Orolu among other places. Even though Ido-Osun was founded in the nineteenth century, it is possible that a group of migrants once lived there before moving to another location.

Whichever perspective is considered, it is clear that there were migrations to Ifon. In addition, certain places such as Boosa and Ibale or Baale were identified by the tradition. There seems to be a converging point of the two traditions on these places. For instance, Boosa was the groove of Orisa Olufon and was directly opposite the Olufon's palace. This in essence means that both the groove and the palace could have been located around the same area. For Baale or Ibale, it was a thick or virgin forest in Ilobu tradition, whereas in Ifon tradition, it was the third site where nocturnal cultic meetings (*Iba alaale*) were held regularly to review the affairs of the state. In other words, the site could have been a virgin or thick forest conquered before settlement could be established there.

1.2. Historical Origin of Ifon Omima

The historical account on Ifon Omima was derived from few books and oral interviews with the present Olufon of Ifon Omima, His Royal Highness Oba Israel Adegoke Adeusi (I) J.P. The account explained that the Ifon had their origin at Ile-Ife and from there migrated to *Ifanlamopo*, where they settled and lived peacefully for many years. They brought with them three *Sesefifun* (beaded Crowns), one *Okikan* crown, and one *Orikogbofo* beaded crown which gave their king the right to wear a crown. Of all these crowns, *Okikan* is the most important. On getting to Ifan'lamopo there was succession dispute based on the perverted custom of choosing the eldest son as the next in the line of succession to the stool, the royal family and the king-maker elected the junior brother and made him king. This action created two warring factions led by the two brothers, and trouble reigned supreme. The senior brother would not submit to the junior brother and neither would he pay him homage or obeisance, he would not be sanctified until he was made king. Later, the chiefs and elders met to arrange a settlement, and a decision was reached that they all should abandon Ifan'lamopo, and that the crowns be shared, so that both contestants could go and settle somewhere else with their followers.

It was confirmed that the people of Ifon Omima migrated from Ile-Ife, the cradle of Yoruba people. The Olufon in turn had two sons who contested for the throne after his death. The Arawa invariably crowned the elder son as the Olufon. The younger brother then left the town in protest with his supporters to found Ifon Ilobu or Ifon Orolu (termed Ifon Ilobu because of the geographical closeness to a town called Ilobu) about twelve kilometers to Osogbo. The senior brother then sent the chief war minister known as '*Sepeteri*' to go with his warriors and bring back the people for the fear that they might launch a surprise attack on Ifon-Ilamopo. The Olufon instructed Sepeteri to ensure that his younger brother was not killed and Sepeteri sworn to the promise. On their way, he realized that this journey would most certainly cost him his life since there was no way he could guarantee the life of the Olufon's younger brother. He therefore went to settle in the place still known today as Sepeteri. Meanwhile, the Olufon expected his War Minister in vain and feared that he had teamed up with his younger brother to attack him. The Olufon therefore moved with his people and settled at the place called '*Imese Atare*', now in present day Ifon Omima's Forest Reserve. They had to migrate from there to the present site of Ifon Omima because the place was unfavourable due to bad occurrences like low farm productivity, incessant death of both youth and adults among others.

2. Separation of Ifon Omima and Ifon Orolu

According to the interview held with Oba Israel Adegoke Adeusi (I) J.P., he emphasized vividly that succession dispute to the Olufon throne at Ifan'lamopo led to the separation. Here the usual tradition of having the eldest son as the heir apparent (*aremo*) to the throne was denied the opportunity of ascending the throne while the younger brother was installed in place of the elder brother that was contrary to

Yoruba tradition. Consequently, there were factions and divisions between the chiefs and the people of Ifon. In essence, the younger brother proclaimed as the ruler was advised to leave the town and he left in annoyance since his elder brother insisted that he would not allow justice to be perverted. Later on, the elder brother sent out an expedition led by the chief warrior to look for his younger brother who left in annoyance but all the efforts proved abortive for the warriors that had taken an oath of laying down their lives if the lost younger brother was not found. The chief warrior diverted and founded Ifon Sepeteri – the third Ifon town in present day's Oyo State instead of coming back to Ifan'lamopo and faced the consequences of the oath sworn before his departure. Since this period which data was not specifically given, Ifon people had been living apart. The elder brother left Ifan'lamopo (an inhabitable place now in Osun State) for various locations before the present day's Ifon Omima while the younger brother too who had first left settled in various places like Ifon Eega, Ifon Ere and so on before the present location at Ifon Orolu.

3. The European Intervention in Ifon Orolu and Ifon Omima

Various archival sources revealed the European intervention in the affairs of Ifon people. For instance, during the colonial period, government had taken keen interest in the problem of land acquisition in Orolu and made investigation to get details of the historical circumstances under which each community came to settle in the area. In 1918, the District Officer Ibadan, after enquiries and a thorough analysis of the submissions of both Ifon and Ilobu elders to the Resident of Oyo Province, that the boundary between Ifon and Ilobu should be the *Oponmolu* stream. He was annoyed at the Ilobu's persistence of claiming to have right over parcels of land that was not their own. The Senior Resident of Oyo Province in a strongly worded memorandum insisted that *'the boundary between them (i.e. Ifon and Ilobu) shall be the old wall and the Ilobu – Oba road to the Oponmolu, and that Osolo's land belong to Ifon.'* The issue really had never been the traditional ownership of land but on the extent of the area allocated to Ilobu by the Olufon. In 1924, the colonial government fixed a boundary, which was done by the Senior Resident of Oyo Province, Captain William Ross who concluded intensive investigation, and he ascertained the boundary and gave the decision ruling that:

*Osolo's farm belongs to the Olufon and it should be within his boundary.
The boundary (between Ifon and Ilobu) is the old wall to the point where it cuts the Ilobu-Oba Roads and from there the Ilobu-Oba Road to the point where it intersects the river Opamololu, which river shall be the boundary to its confluence with the river Erinle...*

This demarcation, which came to be recognized as "The Ross Boundary", was satisfactory to all parties and in 1941; the Olufon of Ifon engaged the services of one Mr. Gilbert, a Licensed Surveyor, clearly demarcate the boundary with pillars. For about thirty years there was no dispute over the boundary thus demarcated, indicating an acceptance by all parties concerned. However, in 1953, the Ilobu people instituted suit No.4/53 at the Ikirun Native Court. This court gave judgement based on a boundary that was significantly different from the Ross Boundary. The Olufon appealed against this judgement to the Osun Divisional Appeal Court in suit No. S.21/55. The appeal was allowed but a different boundary was established. The Olobu appealed to the District Officer's Suit in No. 9/1955, The Court dismissed the appeal of the Olobu and amended the judgement of the Osun Divisional Court of Appeal to read that the Boundary should be according to the Ross Boundary established in 1924. Again, the Olobu appealed to the Resident's Court of Appeal in Appeal No. 9/1959. This again dismissed the Olobu's appeal. The court found that the Olobu had accepted the Ross Boundary and held that the Ross Boundary having been accepted by both parties since 1924 was the only acceptable boundary between Ifon and Ilobu. The judgement of D.M.Elliot, Acting Resident, Ibadan Province on Monday 22nd August, 1955 reads in part:.

The Ross Boundary has remained unchallenged for over thirty years and has been accepted by both sides until recently that changes occurred. The plaintiff i.e. (the Olobu) has brought a highly speculative action in the hope of obtaining additional land. He has little or no idea of any other boundary.

Inference could be made here that the European had successfully intervened and minimized struggle on land acquisition within Orolu community having considered Ifon Orolu and Ilobu communities. While considering various archival records on Owo and Ifon Districts, it could be seen also how the European intervened in settling farmland disputes, marital problems and crises between the king and the chiefs.

The Olufon Orolu has always been recognized everywhere as a principal potentate in this region, this informed the uneasy relationship between the Olufon on one hand, and the Olubadan on the other hand

during the nineteenth century as well as during the colonial period. In the nineteenth century, Ibadan established its lordship over a large part of Yorubaland. In fact, an Ibadan *Ajele* (political agent) was stationed in Ifon and remained there until about 1894. Following the establishment of British rule, he was withdrawn. Nevertheless, during this period, the traditional system of administration of Ifon was not tampered with. In the same vein, the successive Alaafin insisted that the Olufon being a crowned ruler could not be subjected to a Baale as the Olubadan affairs was, and must be allowed to conduct the affairs of his kingdom in accordance with traditions. It is well known in historical literature that during the colonial period, the administrative machinery put in place by the British was not acceptable to the people of Ifon, Ilobu and Erin because it was found to be a deviation on traditional conventions. The creation of a District in which the Olufon would be subjected to Ataoja, who was then a Baale, was found disgusting, not only in Ifon but also all over Yorubaland. The attempt was strongly resisted and neighbouring people like the Ilobu and Erin while acknowledging the pre-eminence of the Olufon; rejected the idea of the "Ataoja and Council" even though the Olufon was always placed next to the Ataoja on the list of precedence. In fact, throughout the ancient and up till the colonial period, the Olufon was the only crowned ruler in the District.¹⁵ This was what led to the establishment of a Native Court (Grade D) at Ilobu for the three settlements at Ilobu, Erin and Ifon. The Olufon was the president of the court until 1934 when separate courts (also 'Grade D') were established at Erin and Ifon. Then membership of the Ifon court was the Olufon, the *Eesa*, the *Aaje* the *Ooye* and the *Eleesi*. The colonial Intelligence Reports severally described the Olufon as of the same status as the Elejigbo (Ogiyan) of Ejigbo. Throughout the colonial period, therefore, Ifon ran its affairs without interference from Osogbo or Ibadan. The traditional council of chiefs under the Olufon continued to function and to administer the town, often reported directly to the Divisional Officer in Ibadan and thus bypassed the Osogbo District Council. For instance, the Ibadan court had appellate jurisdiction over cases decided by the Olufon, and serious cases were taken directly to Ibadan. The Osogbo Council in fact, accepted that it could not have a supervisory role over the Olufon and his council of chiefs and this corrected the anomaly in which the Olufon (a crowned ruler) was to be subordinate to the Ataoja.

The history during the period of British administration may generally be described as peaceful. Some exceptional events of importance which have occurred could be seen when the Owaof Owo was appointed in 1913 and the people under Owo Division were dissatisfied; this led to internal strife in Owo town itself and its repercussions were felt until 1928. The troubles resulted in the banishment of several title holders of Owo by the colonial rulers. Not until 1934 was the last banished chief was allowed to return and a normal state of affairs were finally re-established.

In considering more cordial relationship between the British administrators and the Ifon people, the enthroned Olowo of Owo suggested the peaceful settlement of affairs in Owo District, he stressed that "*You should please understand that though many of these chiefs are illiterates, no Olowo can override them without unpleasant consequences...A wise man will learn from past history...I did not visit England to learn autocracy but more democracy*".

The peaceful coexistence between the British and the Ifon Omima people could be seen further in Mr. Michael Adekunle Ajasin's remark after a meeting held on Wednesday the 20th December, 1950 at the Owo No. 1 Court Hall at 12.30 p.m. on the proposed amalgamation of Ifon and Sobe Group Areas within Owo District. The meeting was between the Owo District Native Authority Council and the British Resident, Ondo Province, Akure. Mr. M. A. Ajasin who was unanimously appointed the Resident and the District Officer for all efforts made to make the re-organized Council a success. He further appreciated the British ways of government in that everybody was allowed freedom of speech especially in such Council he commented further that the Russian, German and other European Colonies did not enjoy such privilege.

On the other hand, some of the havocs done by the British in Owo Division could be seen in transfer of Jagba and Sobe Districts to Owo Division in Ondo Province and these people traced their origin to Benin with full allegiance to Oba of Benin. They had common heritage and culture with Benin People in terms of language, customs, traditions, and institutions. In essence, the Jagba and Sobe people had little or nothing in common with the Yoruba people. Barrister Omo Eboh further expressed in his letter that:

In 1927, the Ose River on Owo/Benin road was adopted as the boundary delimiting the spheres of influence of the residents of Ondo Province... for administrative convenience... Consequently, this had worked considerable hardship on the people of Benin stock who are on the Ifon side of Ose River and particularly on the inhabitants of both Sobe and Jagba... This act has divided the homogenous people

into two separate groups with one group being placed with a people to who they are altogether foreign... and unfamiliar.

4. Reconciliation Process

Ifon Orolu and Ifon Omima reconciled based on the zeal that Oba Israel Adegoke Adeusi I had since his ascension to the throne on 7th November, 1997. He had the vision, thirst and desire that he should reconcile with his younger brother which he had not been in good terms with for over a century. At the peak of this conception, he shared the vision with his chiefs in a meeting; some embraced the idea while some kicked against it because it was forbidden for both kings to see each other not to talk of embracing each other or having discussion together. Hence, those that were indifferent to the vision were scared of negative or bad premonition that could befall their community. Being a man of positive mind, the king sent delegates on 12th June, 2002 with fear to Oroluland and alas! The penultimate king embraced the proposal to reconcile by allowing the Omima's delegates to sit down in his palace and a formal day of reconciliation was fixed whereby the elder brother would visit and reconcile with his younger brother just like the history of Esau and Jacob in the Bible. Fortunately, the date fixed was the period of annual Odun Ade's festival in Oroluland and many prominent kings from other Yoruba land could not wait to attend the prominent historical event on August 5th and 6th, 2002. Over five hundred people came from Ifon Omima, they were first received at Osogbo town and migrated to Ifon Orolu with music, songs and talking drums that encouraged them to move ahead and made the day a historic one indeed!. One of the songs rendered to encourage them was '*Wole, wole, ile baba omo, ki i ba omo leru, o ya wole wole.*'

Shortly after the official meeting at Orolu, the parting groove was visited with some traditional atonement at '*Ifon-Ibale*' or '*Ifan'lamopo*' which is inhabitable now. Here prayers, atonement and sacrifices were made to avert the evil curses pronounced on both towns peradventure they reconcile. Since then, tremendous progress witnessed by both towns has been testifying that the prayers offered were answered. After the reconciliation, Ifon Omima had her annual festival, Obaloro festival and delegates from Oroluland attended the festival. For instance, the Ataoja of Osogbo, Olufon of Ifon Orolu, Oluwo of Iwo, Olokuku of Okuku among nine prominent rulers from Osun state and they stayed for two days to show that they were interested in the permanent reconciliation, since then, both communities had witnessed remarkable peace, unity of purpose, great development and achievement in all spheres of life.

5. The Benefit of Reconciliation

It is noteworthy that when there is peace among people definitely improvement, advancement and progress would follow. The case of Ifon Orolu and Ifon Omima are not exceptional in the sense that the fear of unknown, threat of calamities that might befall the people were eradicated and the two communities were able to plan together and have unity of purpose concerning the development of their people and their communities. Above all, the two communities had some things in common like the 'Odun Ade' in Orolu land known as 'Obaloro' festival in Ifon Omima. Moreso, 'Ade Sese Efun' (White beaded crown) is unique and symbolic between the two towns because this crown was inherited directly from their common ancestor 'Obatala' and during festivals and ceremonies of these towns, the crown is usually worn and the kings usually dress in white apparel like 'Obatala' during the 'Odun Ade' and 'Obaloro' festivals. In essence, most traditional and cultural adornment of the kings is usually 'white' starting from the crowns to the shoes.

6. Challenges During Reconciliation

In the process of reconciliation, there were diverse challenges especially on the part of Oba Israel Adegoke Adeusi (I). It took him many years after his enthronement before he could boldly divulge the vision to the chiefs which was accepted by few and majority kicked against the idea. Moreover, at the point of sending delegates to Ifon Orolu which some of the chiefs volunteered to do, the crew went with fear of unknown and on getting to the town, the king was not met even though the delegates were well received with their plans and proposals. All these steps were financially demanding, psychologically threatening, time consuming before the final trip was made to Ifon Orolu, and the reconciliation was concluded. Despite all the odds, the people were able to conquer due to determination and love for peace and unity.

7. Summary and Conclusion

This study has vividly exposed a hidden aspect of human relationship which is having positive attitudes and response to inter-community clashes and disputes. The case of Ifon Omima and Ifon Orolu

are not new and not exceptional in Yoruba nation but most leaders and followers lack vision, unity of purpose, determination to take risk regardless of ancestral curses and invocations, these people could not resolve issues amicably through dialogue except violent means. Succession disputes had been a serious venom plaguing our society since Yoruba nation had been created still the vice is still on increase starting from family position to societal political post, perversion of justice is still on the increase, however, an individual in the society could change the course of history if well determined despite all odds and oppositions.

The traditions of origin of the two towns are transferred in various versions but the most important issue is that the two towns were siblings who separated based on perverted judgement and succession dispute. Also, they both claimed Ile-Ife as their ancestral home with Obatala as their primogenitor; this is in relation with one of the oral tradition of Yoruba's origin. Consequently, some festivals and mode of dressing of their kings during the festive periods testifies that the peoples of Ifon Orolu and Ifon Omima are true descendants of Obatala. In the course of separation, both communities had witnessed a tremendous growth and development. First, they have been able to imbibe some cultural activities of their neighbourhood. For example, Ifon Orolu people speak pure Yoruba related to the Osogbo people while Ifon Omima has synonymous dialect with Owo and Benin people because of their new geographical locations. More so the mode of dressing; types of food taken by these people had been influenced by their environment. Second, the communities had been able to acquire more lands in their newly settled area, for instance, Ifon Orolu settled at various places like Ifon Baale, Ifon Eega and so on before the people finally settled at their present location, same is applicable to Ifon Omima according to Oral tradition, interview and records of books. Third, there had been political development too, Ifon Orolu played a prominent role in Irepodun Local government of Osun State while Ifon Omima is headquarter of Ose Local Government in Ondo State. Economically, the communities had witnessed growth too for instance; most agricultural products of the towns are sold within and outside the towns in their rotational market centres and this had attracted traders in the neighbourhood and from other states like Oyo, Kwara, Edo and Ekiti States. Industrially, the communities are not left out; apart from local craft industries, some moribund companies had been in existence like Ifon Ceramic Industry at Ifon Omima.

On the other hand, despite the separation, yet the people had some things in common like individual and quarters' name since they had the same source at Ile-Ife. The nature of their new locations' soil are same too, hence, they have been able to produce some crops like cassava, yam, cocoyam among others. The qualities of 'Garri' cassava grain from these towns are noted to be first class among their neighbourhood. The political administrative structures are synonymous too except that the numbers of people in council in one town could be more than the other town. For example the role of 'Eesa' in Ifon Orolu is the same as the role of 'Ojomo' in Ifon Omima. The annual 'Odun Ade' in Ifon Orolu is the same as 'Obaloro' festival in Ifon Omima whereby crowns were displayed most especially the ancient crowns. In terms of using beads, both towns are noted for using white beads and the two kings wear "Ade sese Efun" white beaded crown inherited from Obatala, their primogenitor. Both kings are well recognized in their communities because they are 'Crowned Kings'. Most of their traditional and cultural wears are whites too. Ifon Orolu and Ifon Omima are great towns that had made a remarkable landmark in Yoruba history, having separated for over a century yet their descendants still deemed it fit to reconcile, hence other towns could follow suit and learn from the epochal foundation laid by these communities.

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