

SOCIETY OF YOUNG NIGERIAN WRITERS

**ARTICLES, ESSAYS AND E-BOOKS ON DANIEL
OLORUNFEMI FAGUNWA**



FORTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER, FAGUNWA'S LEGACY LIVES

Igbo Olodumare(1949), *Ireke Onibudo* (1949), *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmole* (1950),

Irinkerindo Ninu Igbo Elegbeje,

(1954) and *Aditu Olodumare* (1961). To students of Yoruba literature, all these

publications share one thing in common. They were authored by Daniel Olorunfemi

Fagunwa, a renowned writer, poet and author of famous Yoruba classics, who is

described as a great legend in Yoruba literary world.

The second annual D.O. Fagunwa Memorial lecture will hold on December 5 at the

Premier Hotel, Ibadan. This year's lecture titled "The universality of D.O. Fagunwa" will

have Prof Olaoye Abioye, a renowned professor of French Studies from Olabisi

Onabanjo University, Ago Iwoye, Ogun State, Nigeria, as the guest speaker.

Fagunwa is most revered for his Yoruba novels that depict the richness of Yoruba

language, culture and values. He died forty-five years ago, leaving behind a legacy. In

fact, he had notable Yoruba literature books written in "Ijinle Yoruba" living afterhim.

They are never-forgotten and must-to-be-read for all students in the old Western

Region, Nigeria. *Igbo Olodumare* was published in 1949. *Ireke Onibudo* which closely took

after the first publication was also published in 1949, followed by *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo*

Irunmole 1950, *Irinkerindo Ninu Igbo Elegbeje*, 1954, *Aditu Olodumare*, 1961 and a few less

popular ones like *Taiwo* and *Kehinde* series.

Descendants of the late Fagunwa launched

The D.O. Fagunwa Foundation last year. It is a foundation focusing on the development of Yoruba language and literature, Yoruba culture in all schools through the use of books. It has a Board of Trustees and Advisory Board headed by Mrs. Ibikunle Sijiwola, (nee Fagunwa) as the chairman; Chief Olu Falomo, Chairman Organizing Committee, Memorial Lectures and Ms Diwura Fagunwa, Director/Secretary, D.O. Fagunwa Foundation.

Delivering her speech, Mrs Sijuwola said the aims and objectives of the foundation are: to encourage the translation of the late D.O. Fagunwa books to other languages for a wider readership and to encourage other writers to aspire in a similar manner; to hold an annual event in form of lectures, symposium, inter-collegiate competitions and awards; also to immortalise Fagunwa's name through the provision of a cultural centre that will house a multipurpose hall, library for languages and the foundation's secretariat.

Her words: "We want to even go a step further to see that the use of the indigenous language as contained in Section 2, Paragraph 14C, Page 12 of the National Policy on Education is developed in Yoruba land. Efforts are being intensified by the Foundation to see that more attention is given to the teaching of indigenous language in Nigerian schools beginning from the kindergarten, primary and secondary schools including tertiary institutions.

"For instance, in Nigeria today, you will find German School, French, Spanish, and British Schools etc. This is because they don't want to lose their indigenous language. But it is not the same for Nigerians in the UK, USA, Germany and so on. You can never find a school named specifically after Nigeria to promote any of her indigenous language."

Chief Olu Falomo, in his address, said the foundation is trying to build a solid foundation in Nigeria and other parts of the world that neglected their duty to promote ours indigenous language.

"Our language is dying. We should revive it."

He recounted his early days in school: "I was taught in Yoruba language in my early days in school. I could not speak English until I was in Standard Two. It really helped me because what you learn in your early ages lasts so long. But today, our children can not speak our mother language" he said.

Answering questions from journalists, Falomo commended Prof Wole Soyinka who translated one of Fagunwa's books, *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmole* to English and a stage play. Also Prof Olaoye Abioye has translated two books of the legend, *Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmole* and *Igbo Olodumare* into French, distributed them in French countries and Canada.