

SOCIETY OF YOUNG NIGERIAN WRITERS

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



My adventure to Igbo Olodumare

Boldly written on the blue –painted cement brick signpost is *EYI NI ONA ILU IGBO OLODUMARE NI IBI TI IGBIN TI TOBI JU IJAPA LO*, with the drawing of a snail bigger than a tortoise

The road is rough and bushy. Call it a thick forest , you are correct .While one can hear the whispering rustle of tree leaves , the birds sing. .Animal like squirrel are seen with their beautiful bushy tails were climbing the trees, some crossing the bush paths and one also hears the sound of snakes hissing .Once in a while one can see very few people commuting between Oke Igbo and Igbo Olodumare.

The junction has been taken over by weeds , it was originally designed like a round about while the school’s sign post reads Fagunwa Memorial High school, Igbo Olodumare , Oke Igbo, Ondo state, stands conspicuously facing the T junction, The school premises has been taken over by weeds , may be because of the long vacation or because this is Igbo Olodumare

All the houses dating back to not less than 100 years have mud walls. Inside some of them one can still see bamboo racks used as local cabinet, in fact they reminds one of one of Fagunwa’s books describing the environment.

The late Daniel Fgunwa was undoubtedly the greatest novelist in Yoruba language that ever lived .In all , he published five books before his death in 1963.Two of them had been translated

into English .Nobel laureate Wole Soyinka translated Ogboju Ode Ninu Igbo Irunmole as the Forest of a Thousand Deamons, while a journalist Dapo Adeniyi translated Irinkerindo Ninu Igbo Elegbeje as Expedition to the Mount of Thought .However , one of his famous books is Igbo Olodumare set in this idyll village.....

The road to Oke Langbodo was rough, and hilly and narrow , it was about 20minutes okada as this reporter was climbing over 76steps that lead to the base of the mountain his heart was pounding, and was panting like a tired dog who had ran about 200 kilometres per hour., and sitting majestically is the mighty rock like royalty unperturbedThe forest was full of cocoa, iroko , teak and mahogany trees, and no matter how strong and healthy one is , you will pant like a hunter's dog while climbing the staircase of which the late Governor of Ondo state , Chief Adebayo Adefarati constructed making the place a tourist centre.

The environment was as silent as the graveyard. According to the monarch of the community ,His Highness Oba Nathaniel Oluwayemi Iyiola, this was the late Fagunwa's favourite spot .''This is where the late Fagunwa came in those days to spend five, six days with his files clutched by his side'

At the base of the rock was the sculpture of Baba Onirungbon Yeuke , a fictional character from Fagunwá's Igbo Olodumare with his legendary long beard and pot, smoking his pipe.

There is the belief that strange animals still inhabit in the forest as the monarch said , the area is isolated , it is a no go area due to the presence of dangerous animals’’we still have Ojola Ibinu[the mythical giant man-eating python with human head of Fagunwa’s book] in this area and it comes out once in three years’’ .Asked whether the snake has human head as it was told in Fagunwa’s creative writing , the royal father said it could be possible.

‘‘Yes, it is possible for the kind of ojola is as big as you can imagine you see his chest and neck you will know what I am talking about. It comes out twice and spent time on the flat rock. Now the rain will not allow anybody to go to the top for it is slippery ‘’, the royal father said . According to him, he used to see a strange man , an elf sort of , in the area in the 1930s before and during the period Fagunwa did the writing.

On the death of Fagunwa, his wife Madam Elizabeth Fagunwa said ‘‘we were in Ibadan when we heard the news of his death. ’’James, his driver of my husband came to tell us how it happened.

According to Madam Fagunwa , the driver drove him to the river bank to take a canoe across on his way to Ilorin to visit a friend .. he was about to enter a wooden canoe when he fell into the river.

Another version said he died while watching birds as they flew and unfortunately dived into the river of Bida in the present Niger state, according to his first cousin High Chief [Sir]Israel Akinrinola Olowu ..However, when his body was recovered it was brought to Oke Igbo for burial.

Due to some arguments over it ;some said his corpse was not recovered and not buried , however ,one of the then officiating members at his funeral service in 1963,Venerable C.G Wemida said his remains was brought to St.Luke's Anglican church where he was buried. He added that he did not open the coffin , he said he did not for his duty was to pray for the corpse only. When this reporter went to the cathedral, he met the Vicar in charge who brought out the register burial in the Parish dated 1915-date , and on page 35, and the entry on the page was No 279 bearing the name of D.O Fagunwa , date and burial was 10-12-63,4PM, with the signatures of about 18 ministers of God accompany the record.

Again , this reporter went to the cemetery where he was buried to see the tomb.