

ISHOKORI-ANAGUTA FESTIVAL OF ARTS, CULTURE AND SPIRITUALITY: TOWARDS NATIONAL COHESION AND SELF-PRESERVATION IN A CHALLENGING JOS-PLATEAU ENVIRONMENT

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ABSTRACT

In Nigeria, ethnic self-preservation is a necessity for most ethnic groups. However, not much is known about how the Anaguta people of Plateau State preserve their collective ethnic identity through their festival of arts, culture and spirituality. Through their annual *ishokori-anaguta*, the Anaguta people of Central Nigeria showcase and cherish their traditional arts, culture and spirituality. In this way they are able to preserve their ethnic identity in a cosmopolitan Jos environment and a globalised world laden with factors that can erode traditional cultural values, spirituality and ethnic identity.

KEYWORDS: *Ishokori-Anaguta Festival, National Cohesion, Self-Preservation, Challenging Jos Environment*

INTRODUCTION

The *Ishokori-Anaguta* festival is an annual celebration of the Anaguta Nation that showcase every kind of Anaguta cultural dance, ritual, and indigenous way of life. The Anaguta people possess a variety of rich cultural tradition and heritage. In other words *Ishokori-Anaguta* is the epitome of Anaguta culture through art, dance, history, music, ritual, myth and spirituality. The Festival *Ishokori* [pronounced, *Ishio-kori*] is the ‘mother’ of all festivals celebrated by the Anaguta nation. In defining the festival, ADA states that:

In effect, the renaming of the festival *Ishiokori Anaguta* is in its entirety [a] rooted form [of] the Anaguta vernacular, meaning Districts celebration and is reflected on all cultural activities and other festivities across villages and clans in Anaguta Nation (24).

At the centre of Anaguta *kultur* stands *Ishokori*, which encompasses and serves as a meeting point for all Anaguta festivals. Thus for the Anaguta:

Ishiokori is conceived to occupy the status of the umbrella festival for other notable festivities commonly celebrated within the families, villages, or regional perspectives and they include *Tisandaka* [Usandaka, sing], *Ubizu*, *Igani*, *Tima*, *Agau*, *Tikann*, *Tikunku*, etc which are in this concept considered to be components of the umbrella festival *Ishiokori Anagua* (24).

Describing the various forms of Anaguta festivals, Azomo and Kangpe mention *Tikang* (*Tikann*), which performed during the rainy season and assumes the form of prayers to

the gods for bumper harvest, *Mansu*, local wrestling and *Rigisau* performed for newly married couples (181).

Furthermore, the Anaguta ethnic group boast of other types of dances such as *Isharuwa* (found among the Nagohom, Rigiza and Andoho clans), and various women dance groups found in all the traditional five Anaguta clans. Other types of dances include *tirhætu* horn music, performed mostly for traditional rulers on special occasions, and *ipembu* (or *ipyambu*) a flute made from reed. One important traditional ceremony worth mentioning is the *rishendeakpwæ* (circumcision). This is performed on young boys between ages three and seven (181). Culture is of utmost importance, because there are no people without a culture.

In fact, culture is so intrinsically relevant to the Dutsche way of life and mentality such that the typical German academic approach to the arts and humanities is through *kultur*. Thus, what conforms to the Faculty of Arts in a typical German university is referred to as *Institute für Kulturwissenschaftliche*, that is, faculty for the science of culture, faculty for the scientific study of culture or faculty for the cultural sciences. This is so because culture in German scholarship is germane for understanding society; moreover, German ethnographers in no small measure, made their impact felt in the study of African religion and culture.

The creation of the pride of place for *kultur* and the entrenchment of cultural values in German scholarship was for instance established by the works of German ethnographers such as Friedrich Ratzel (1844-1904), Bernhard Ankermann (1859-1943), Paul Schebesta (1887-1967), Hermann Baumann (1902-1972), and other disciples of Wilhelm Schmidt (1868-1954) and his associate, Wilhelm Koppers (1886-1961) and the greatest scholar of them all, Leo Victor Frobenius (1873-1938). It was Friedrich Ratzel who developed the theory *kulturkreis*, Culture Cycle under the influence of Fritz Graebner (1877-1943), whose works in turn tremendously motivated Leo Frobenius. These scholars in their various capacities developed a systematic, three-prong culture-historical area-approach in the last decades of the 19th and the first few decades of the 20th century. This academic approach divided the globe into culture-areas and cultural artefacts collected through this approach mainly served museum purposes in the cities of colonial empires (Danfulani 1f).

Culture refers to human material and non-material substance production. However, ideas about this substance have shifted, over the course of time, roughly from E. B. Tylor's ideas "about custom" to Clifford Geertz's ideas about "meaning" and Max Weber's sense of *verstehen*, "understanding" (Appadurai 50f). Parry asserts that culture possesses the ability to generate the need for coherent human identity and the need to "locate and revive pristine pre-colonial cultures" (88ff).

For Hall, *Cultural identity* can be conceptualized and defined in terms of a unique common culture, creating a collective "one true self", which people with a shared common history and ancestry identify with. Cultural identities demonstrate the collective historical

experiences and cultural codes of a group as “one people” (110f). It reiterates the “stable, unchangeable and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of our actual history” (111). This should be devoid of the colonial colorations in which, “colonizers’ existence and identity rests primarily on their ability to maintain a highly racial colonial system that grants them all the profits, while stripping the non-whites of their rights and basic humanity” (Rabaka 113).

Disrupting and shattering indigenous cultures triggers amongst all colonized peoples an inferiority complex. They position themselves in relation to the culture and the language of their colonizers, as Fanon says: “The more the colonized has assimilated the cultural values of the metropolis, the more he will have escaped the bush” (2). The “linguistic turn” of Claude Lévi-Strauss, which resonates with the “total social fact” of exchange of the Prague School Linguistics, corresponds with the circulation theory of and all rites of passages witnessed in African societies including the Anaguta. These very often include rites of passages of temporary cycle (calendarical rituals), life cycle/crisis rituals, crisis/conflict rituals and rituals of rebellions. These four categories of rites of passages or circulation and exchange ritual do not only overlap, but possess symbols and performative ritual processes that *transmit* meanings and actions of re-enactment and renewal (cf. Lee and LiPuma191ff).

Recent works indicate that “culture of circulation” is a cultural process and we can identify such paradigms within these structured circulation or passage rituals (192). Rites of passages and cultures of circulation are also reflected in Benedict Anderson’s accounts of nation, narration, and imagination, Jürgen Habermas’s position on public opinion and the public sphere; Arjun Appadurai’s conceptualizations of cultural flows and “-scapes” and Charles Taylor on the issue of self-reflexive creation of modern social imaginaries. Meanwhile, classic anthropological works on gifts and exchange by Marcel Mauss, Bronislaw Malinowski, and their updating by Pierre Bourdieu, Annette Weiner, and Jacques Derrida, as well as Marxist analyses of money and capital and the works of Postone and Harvey; and Lamle on humour and laughter have added much candour to the cultural circulation and rites of passages phenomenon.

For Idang, culture as it is usually understood, entails a totality of traits and characters that are peculiar to a people to the extent that it marks them out from other peoples or societies that is encapsulated in language, dressing, music, work, arts, religion, dancing and spirituality, among others (98). For Taylor, culture is a complex whole that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, customs or any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. It is people’s total way of life (Bello 189). Aziza asserts that:

Culture...refers to the totality of the pattern of behaviour of a particular group of people. It includes everything that makes them distinct from any other group of people for instance, their greeting habits, dressing, social norms and taboos, food,

songs and dance patterns, rites of passages from birth, through marriage to death, traditional occupations, religious as well as philosophical beliefs (31).

Ethnic/aboriginal societies on the Jos Plateau, and the world over including the Anaguta are associated to an ancestral homeland bequeath to them by their autochthonous forbearers. This is their own space marked by their peculiar cultural rituals, values and language, *Iguta*. In fact, for Gupta and Ferguson, “the distinctiveness of societies, nations and cultures is based upon a seemingly unproblematic division of space; not the fact that they occupy ‘naturally’ discontinuous spaces” (6), but a natural habitat. Thus, this space is a location called a homeland. In the case of the Anaguta, their homeland is today shared by Jos City (fondly called J-Town or the Tin City), which is dotted by many Federal institutions such the University of Jos, Federal College of Forestry, Federal Government College, NNPC, the Federal Secretariat, Federal Low-Cost Housing Estate, National Metallurgical Development Centre (NMDC), Nigerian Shippers’ Council (NSC), Jos University Teaching Hospital (JUTH) and many other such organizations sited all over Jos Town. This is aside from enormous state institutions sighted all over the traditional homeland of the Anaguta people.

These achievements notwithstanding, however, a great deal of the twin effects of the feverish process of globalisation and globalisation has blown across the Anaguta nation as has been the case with other ethnic nationalities across the globe. The Anaguta are participants in this global world engulfed by countless agents of globalisation. To this effect, economics owe their present appeal partly to the sense that it has as a discipline, has grasped the dynamics of circulation and changes that are galvanizing and driving globalisation—and thereby challenging traditional notions of cultural values, language, and ethnicity (Lee and Li Puma 191). The winds of change leave in their wake agents of *modernisation, globalisation and transnationalism*.

The process of modernisation results in the application of science and technology in Anaguta society, causing profound changes (especially in industrialisation, secularisation, urbanisation, migration, and mass communication). The process of *globalisation* on the other hand brings about global cramping in terms of time, space and location to the extent of which the world is experienced as a single place (such as visibility in politics, mass media, travel, tourism, and migration, which increasingly turns ones location and locality into a global village. It is truly in this sense that *Ishokori-Anaguta* is at once or simultaneously both a global and *glocal* event. *Transnationalisation*, however, conveys the process that establishes multi-stranded identity links, devoid of respecting national borders. The Anaguta have been profoundly influenced by these three streams of winds currently blowing across their nation and *Ishokori-Anaguta* is being used by the Iguta as the proper tool of producing and spreading its cultural values across the globe.

Storey pictures modernity as being characterized by cultural globalisation. In a nutshell, globalisation refers to relentless global flows of capital, commodities and communications across increasingly porous territorial boundaries (107). Haralambos and

Holborn articulate globalization as transnationalism and the shrinking of the globe into a village (which we may refer to as villagisation of the globe—glocalisation of the global, or on the other hand cosmopolitisation of the village). This process is accelerated by cheap travel, extensive migration and tourism, expansion of world trade, and the development of technology, satellite communicate, and advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and the internet. These technological strides and many other catalyst agents have shrunk the world by making contact between those from different and far flung cultures (by space and time) easier and more frequent (677). This makes it possible for us [the local] to encounter the global in the clothes we wear, the music we listen to, the television programs and films we watch (Storey 108), among many other appropriated cultural pieces.

Haralambos and Holborn clearly assert that post-modernism and post-modernisation, like secularisation and globalisation before are processes of human societal development and progression. Secularism questions and reject God, globalization galvanizes a process of economic transnationalism as already painted immediately above, post-modernism puts everything to scepticism, scientism and human reason. Post-modernism as a process, therefore, would expose culture to scepticism and human reason; no doubt throw overboard as useless or unreasonable huge aspects of our culture that is deemed not measuring up to human reason. Modern culture is characterized by differentiation (separating out of different parts of society—economic, political, social and cultural spheres becoming increasingly distinct from one another), rationalization (with the onset of technological influences, say when music is increasingly influenced by harmonic rationalization) and commodification—in which involves culture being products being turned into commodities that can be bought and sold (667).

On the other hand, post-modernization reverses the process of modernization, since it was the intensification of these processes that gave birth to post-modernization. Thus, differentiation, rationalization and post-modernization are superseded by hyper-differentiation, hyper-commodification and hyper-rationalization. Culture possesses a social origin in terms of primitive classification systems that derive from social structure—structuralism according to Emile Durkheim, while Karl Marx believed that culture had a material origin in human labour or human productive activity and capacity (667).

FESTIVAL AS RITUAL AND COMMUNITAS

In celebrating *Ishokori-Anaguta*, the Anaguta nation is demonstrating the power of festival performance as ritual or a series of rituals. A festival is a combination of several rituals that are captured in the process of performance. Catherine Bell defines ritual as a sequence of activities involving gestures, words, and objects, performed in a sequestered place, and performed according to set sequence. Rituals may be prescribed by the traditions of a community, including a religious community. Rituals are characterized

but not defined by formalism, traditionalism, invariance, rule-governance, sacral symbolism, and performance (138f).

Rituals are performed to redress and ameliorate anomalous situations in society because they are vehicles through which social, political, economic, religious and spiritual conflicts are transformed. It is against this backdrop that Turner states that:

Ritual is prescribed formal behaviour...having reference to beliefs and mystical beings or powers.; a stereotyped sequence of activity involving gestures, words, objects, performed in sequestered place and designed to influence preternatural entities or forces on behalf of the actors' goals and Interests (19, *The Drums of...*15 and *Symbols in African*183).

Concerning rituals, Turner further stated that:

Rituals are mechanisms of reducing, excluding or resolving social conflict in society. A ritual is a social functional drama introduced as a device to look beneath the surface of social regularities into the hidden contradictions and eruptions of conflict in Ndembu social structure...they are processional in form (*The Drums of...*89, cf. Danfulani, Pebbles and Deities133).

Ritual is a means of communicating with the divine in order that the life situation of humans may be changed for the better (Ray 78). Ritual is a means of communicating with the divine in order that the life situation of humans may be changed for the better. Ritual is a means of communicating with the divine in order that the life situation of humans may be changed for the better. For rituals represent a transitional period in the life of an individual or group, sacred status is attained during this time after leaving and before being re-incorporated into the profane. However, it was Victor Turner who was ultimately responsible for resurrecting the concept and highlighting its universal relevance to a much wider audience (Abrahams167).

In advancing a comprehensive taxonomy of rituals, Bell posits that "categorization develops a dizzying momentum of its own" (69). The plethora of "ritual types" demonstrates difficulty in identifying either the centre or boundary of ritual (Grimes8). According to Bell:

Distinctions are routinely drawn between ritual studies and liturgies, religious ritual and secular ritual, ritual and ceremonial, secular ritual and secular ceremony, political ritual and civic ceremonial, private ritual and collective ritual, rites of rebellion and rites of solidarity, dramatic performance and ritual performance, the formality of games (in play and organized sports) and the formality of ritual, ritual and festival, festival and holiday, and so on. As distinctions and categories proliferate, scholars begin to talk in rather elaborate circles. For example, Monica Wilson set up an important early model by distinguishing ritual from ceremonial. Goody subsequently recast Wilson's distinction by placing ritual within a more widely embracing understanding of ceremonial. Gluckman, in turn, took Goody's

revision of Wilson's categories and inverted it to make ceremonial a subset of ritual (69).

For Bell, one has to break free of the entrenched tendency to define ritual either as a distinct and autonomous set of activities or as an aspect of all human activity (70, *Ritual: Perspectives and* 138ff). Ritual is “the expressive, symbolical or communicative aspect” of action in general. Though Morris has made a similar contrast in comparing how Durkheim and Leach each approach ritual or symbolic action (220), Turner states that rather than being not just as a mechanism of redress, ritual is processual in itself. He emphasized that “ritual is not just a response to society’s needs but involves humanly meaningful action” (4; Deflem 22). For Jack Goody, ritual is a “global construct” in favour of a revitalizing “paradigm shift” (27, 29, 34-35). As seen in rituals of rebellion, ritual seeks to enforce enhanced *communitas* (Turner, 138). Thus, *Ishokori-Anaguta* festival is performed as a communal event under the leadership and guidance of the *Ujah Anaguta*, that is, the sacred king of the Anaguta nation to reinforce, re-enact and enrich cultural *asabiyya*, solidarity and renew the *Eguta* spirit of *communitas*.

According to Catherine Bell, Victor W. Turner, initially describes ritual as the affirmation of communal unity in contrast to the frictions, constraints, and competitiveness of social life and organisation. Ritual performance affords a creative ‘antistructure’ that is distinguished from the rigid maintenance of social orders, hierarchies, and traditional forms. Bell states that he subsequently portrayed rituals as embodying aspects of both structure and antistructure, describing rituals as those special, paradigmatic activities that mediate or orchestrate the necessary and opposing demands of both *communitas* and formalized social order (20-21; cf. MacAloon 3).

However, if Lewis has been the most cautious of those who invoke ritual as performance, then Turner was certainly one of the most enthusiastic (8, 22, 33-34, 38). Yet MacAloon maintains that Turner retains his earlier theory of ritual as the transformational dialectic of structure and *antistructure* (or organisation and *communitas*). MacAloon stresses that he thus retains the meaning of ritual fundamentally within the framework of his early perspective since for him; it is a vehicle for unfolding social dramas (3, Turner 30, *Schism and Continuity* 93, Bell 41). Social dramas are embodied in ritual, where they have paradigmatic functions that make clear the deepest values of the culture. In Turner’s view, such paradigmatic functions also serve to provide the outsider with a “limited area of transparency in the otherwise opaque surface of regular, uneventful social life” (*From Ritual to* 82; *Schism and Continuity* 93). This is the same “window of ritual” evoked by Geertz (89; cf. Bell 41; Bell *Ritual: Perspectives and* 138ff).

SPIRITUALITY AND NATIONAL COHESION

The Iguta speakers of the Jos Plateau are a deeply spiritual people. Spirituality involves the recognition of a feeling, sense or belief that there is something greater than self, something more to the human being than sensory experience, and the greater whole

of which we are part is cosmic or divine in nature. It refers to an *erlebnis* of the sacred dimension that reflects the deepest values and meaning of human life. Spirituality is an individual's search for the ultimate or sacred meaning and purpose in life. It goes beyond religious and cultural boundaries since it is characterized by faith, a quest for a sense of connection with others, and a transcendence of self, resulting in a sense of inner peace and well-being.

A process and an outcome of instilling and enabling citizens to have a sense as well as a feeling of nostalgia (*stöhlzine*) that they are members of one nation, engaged in a common enterprise and facing shared challenges. This is also reflected in the act or state of sticking together in unity, giving rise to political stability, economic growth and business development. National cohesion and integration implies unity, equity or equality, freedom, egalitarianism, democracy, just and peaceful society, marked by absence of war, enjoying social justice and the rule of law. It helps to cultivate in members of a community shared values, challenges and opportunities.

SELF-PRESERVATION AND CHALLENGING ENVIRONMENT

Being the first law of nature, self-preservation refers to the protection of one-self from destruction, harm, or death, especially regarded as a basic instinct in humans and animals. It is a natural or instinctive tendency to act so as to preserve one's own existence. It is therefore a behaviour or set of behaviours that ensures the survival of an organism, which is universal among all living organisms. It refers to self-defence or self-protection.

Located on the high Jos Plateau, which stands at an average elevation of 4,200 feet (1,280 meters); with the surrounding high plains often exceeding 3,200 feet (Preece and Goetz, *Encyclopedia Britannica*), the Anaguta environment is challenging. It is just as most of the Jos Plateau, which is rocky, hilly, stony and mountainous (Danfulani, *Pebbles and Deities*23). It has so many steep gradients ascending up into higher ground and slopes descending downwards into the plains and valleys. However, this is what gives the Jos Plateau its scenic beauty, temperate climate and the strong allure it has for magnetizing tourists.

THE ANAGUTA OF THE JOS PLATEAU

A number of scholars have explicitly shown that the Anaguta are historically indigenous to Jos, together with the Berom and the Afizare (Jarawa, Izere), (see Plotnicov30ff, Freund77, Bill Freund 32f, Steed17, Danfulani and Fwatshak243f, Abioro 29, 31; Ikpome, et al., 4, and Dusu and Oni 182-83). The Anaguta people are predominantly found in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State. The Anaguta chiefdom consists of the larger section of the present Jos North Local Government Area, with a paramount head known as the *UjahAnaguta*. The chiefdom is divided into five major clans, namely: Nabor, Andoho, Rigiza, Targwong, and Nagohom, each with a

district head. The dialect the Anaguta people speak is *Iguta*. Commenting on the population of Anaguta, Meek says that by 1971, the population was about three thousand two hundred and eighty-two persons (185; cf. Azomo and Kangpe180).

Today, the population is more than this, even though there is no accurate record of Anaguta demography. One of the prominent Anaguta areas known locally and internationally is the famous Naraguta (a Hausa synonym/mispronunciation for Anaguta). This area is known for its Hausa pottery and leather works. Though these professions are phasing out, yet there are some few clusters of the pottery and leather work ongoing. The area is also home to the prestigious University of Jos, especially the Old and Naraguta Campuses (Azomo and Kangpe180).

Location

Jos, the capital of Plateau State is the most important city of the Anaguta, though traditionally shared with the Berom and Afisare as already observed above. Plotnicov describes Jos as a city situated on a plateau with undulating hills averaging over 1,243 meters (4,000 feet) above sea level (28; Bingel, 3f). Steed states that by 2001, Jos metropolis had over 500,000 inhabitants. It enjoys an unusually temperate climate (17). The area occupied by Jos was known to the Afisare as *Guash*, meaning a small hill village (Nengel 99), and *Jot*, to the Berom. *Jot* denotes a natural water spring (Nyam 39; ACCDA 4).Ujzoshi

The Anaguta are horticultural and they live in the rugged hills of the Jos Plateau with their neighbours the Anaboze (Boze, Bujji), Jere, Lemoro, Berom, Afisare (Izare), and Bache (Rukuba), among many others. Indicative of their religious life is the presence of totem pole towers that are found all over Northern Nigeria (Diamond 31), and as a matter of fact amongst most hunting and agrarian communities throughout the world, including the many ethnic aboriginal groups of North American Indians such as the hunting Wind River Shoshoni, horticultural Zuni and the Pueblos (Hultkrantz 1987; *The religion of...* 69). Hardly associated with *chilem*, totems, the pole deity in Mupun and Mwaghavul indigenous religions of the Jos Plateau represents *Kum Lu*, the Compound deity or *Kum Kam*, the Stick deity.

The Anaguta live in a numinous landscape. In the 19th century the Anaguta lived in five hilltop settlements, *upana*, surrounding the pleasant, hidden beautiful valley, which they refer to as Amanza (meaning the place of meeting, which has now been shortened to Maza) also called Neal's valley by ordinance survey maps, after an early but unsuccessful tin prospector. The Anaguta settled on hills in places such as Andigwong, Rigiza, Andoho, Anagohom, and Anabor (which are all former hill settlements). They farm their crops in Maza and on plains north of Jos in areas now known as Hwoll, Babale and Kunga. But with the "descent from the hills" when most people of central Nigeria gradually abandoned their hilltop homes, the people settled in more modern areas such as Kunga, Babale, Akabong (meaning where we receive them), Ukadum, Tilden-Fulani, Gwongand

many other areas. Today, most Anaguta are Christians (Isichei37). The Anaguta are still suffering from extreme pressure on their ancestral lands especially from the continuous expansion of Jos metropolis.

According to Stanley Diamond, the Anaguta found refuge in invisibility and secretiveness during the colonial situation. They lived on the edge of an expanding city and retreated into private spaces. This for Diamond describes the rather symbolic expression of elusiveness, the belief in “a warrior’s supreme gift to become invisible in moments of crisis” (*The Anaguta of*, 432). When contemporary Anaguta describe decline, they do so in terms of a sealed container which has lost its capacity to leak:

The Anaguta were a basket of water.

But now the white man has filled them,

They have become a pot of water,

A pot of water that does not leak.

Anaguta mini ma gere

Unasara ma rumzou anu

Ana tashi mini[mu] koso

Mini ma[mu] koso ko banu susu wu

(Diamond *The Anaguta of*...432).

The Anaguta displayed a profoundly ambiguous attitude to the outside world. Their inherited culture stresses elusiveness and invisibility, described as a picture of decline by Diamond (*The Anaguta of*... 432).

Today, the Anaguta are justly proud of their traditional culture: Their music and dancing are superb (a dance troupe of flutists who play and dance simultaneously, an orchestra of eight or eleven antelope or gazelle horn trumpets, each of a different size and pitch). The Anaguta remained unconquered by the powerful emirate of Bauchi and even their fierce horsemen of the Bache (Isichei36).

Etymology of Anaguta

According to Isichei, the Anaguta, whose name means “people of the bow” are an ethno-linguistic group that live on the north and east of the modern city of Jos and capital of Plateau State in central Nigeria (35). According to the ADA,

The name Anaguta is derived from two Iguta words: Anah meaning “owner”, while Utah means “bow”. Therefore the full meaning of Anaguta is “The owners of the Bow”...The language of the Anaguta is call Iguta; which is spoken by all Anaguta with minor variations as a result of dialectical differences (21).

The Anaguta are governed by the *Ujah of Anaguta*, His Royal Majesty, Johnson Jauro Magaji II, who is a first class chief and current Chairman of the Jos North Traditional Council of Plateau State in Nigeria. In his PhD thesis, Collet also referred to them as “the people of the bow”. Ateka states that the Anaboze (Buji) who are their immediate northern neighbours refer to them as Anaguta, meaning the people of Reguta.

The Bache (Rukuba) and Irigwe call them Baguto and Igatu, respectively. For the Bache, it means “the people with facial marks” in Kiche (their language), which the Anaguta glaringly possess. The Berom and Aten of Ganawuri refer to the Anaguta as Begwong (Wogwong sing.). This means “the people of Gwong”. The Afizere call them Afu-Gwong, depicting the same meaning (2f).

History of Origin of the Anaguta

Even though Temple states that the origin of the people is uncertain(8), the elders narrate that the Anaguta emerged from a cave located beyond the Jarawa/Shere Hills, in a place called Akotom, making them one of the autochthonous ethnic groups on the Jos Plateau (ADA 21). They were said to have intermarried in those days with the Jarawa people. The Jarawa are now referred to as the Afisare or Izere. The Iguta are different from the Jarawa, but they wear similar tribal tattoo markings to the Afisare. The people we spoke with believe that the Iguta were the first group to welcome the Fulani and the Hausa into the Jos area. Isichei compares archaeological, anthropological, and linguistic evidence to the traditions from several of the local tribes, as well as those of the Anaguta. The evidence only provides clarity going back a few generations (36). It is possible that the Anaguta have been in their present location since the nineteenth century and moved there from the plains on the west side of Jos (Decker, et al. 8).

But concerning short migration history to their present settlements, the Anaguta possess five different versions according to their five traditional clans. The first version, which comes from the Anagohom clan asserts with confidence that no human being can tell the real history of the Anaguta people. However, the little knowledge they received concerning this germane issue is from their ancestors who stated that they were found on the hills close to where they live now. A second version from the Andoho/Zangam clan states that they just appeared from a hill. A third version from the Anabor clan traces Anaguta origin from a forest called Upimpim close to where they live now. In a fourth story, the Andirigizah clan reports that they just appeared in their present lands and did not migrate from any place. They added that they are the original owners of Jos, even though the Berom and Afisare (Jarawa or Izere) claim joint ownership with them. But a fifth version supports a claim by the Andigwong clan that they came from a mountainous area called Akaton (Kandutse, Hausa for ‘the top of the mountain’). The Andigwong clan had settled in Tajir-Uwoho and Nagrim before coming to Akaton. The Andigwong clan further stated that they came from the hill behind their present settlement known as Guntum (Decker, et al. 8).

These claims are in line with an oral tradition, which relates that a very long time ago, the ancestor of the Anaguta known as ‘Uguta’, emerged out of a cave in a place called ‘Akotom’, around the Shere hills (East of Gwong village). The legend has it that the foremost ‘Uguta’ came out with *Uta*, a bow and *Uwha*, a wife (Ateka 3).

Language

Linguistic data reflects the antiquity of the settlement of the Anaguta. Iguta (Eguta), which is the language of the Anaguta, is spoken by approximately 10,000 to 12,000 Anaguta people who are traditionally and loosely organized in five clans. Isichei states that Hoffman lists Iguta together with the Northern Jos group, a subsection of the Plateau Bantu branch of the Benue-Congo family of languages. According to them, its closest linguistic relatives are languages spoken by their immediate northern neighbours—the Bujji (Boze or Anaboze), Jere, Ribina, and the Chokobo and Limoro and the Afizare (Izere), (36).

Iguta, together with Izere (Afizare), Irigwe and their Jika cousins of Southern Kaduna, belong to the Bantu subgroup of the Benue-Congo. These are the Chawai, Marwa, Atyap, Nimzon, Kagoro (Gorok), Kagoma, Kaningkong, Abisi, Ribam, and Kurama, among many others and the Tiv. Iguta also has links with languages of Southern Africa, among them the Shona (Mashona) of Metabele Land of Zimbabwe, the Zulu (isiZulu), Swati (isiSwati or siSwati), Xhosa (isiXhosa), Nguni, Sotho (Sesotho), Setswana, Vhavenda (Venda), Tonga (Tsonga, Shangana), Ndebele, Tswana, Hottentot, and the Kung/San or bush men of Southern Africa. History states that Bantu-speakers actually migrated from West Africa, precisely the region that gave birth to the Nok culture of Nigeria to other parts of Africa.

However, more recent works, which are a description of sociolinguistic surveys conducted among the Iguta [nar]-speaking communities in Jos North Local Government Area of Plateau State, in Central Nigeria. Decker, et al., classify Iguta as a Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Kainji, Eastern, Northern Jos, Jera language (11). According to Decker, et al., Eberhard made the same confirmation (11). But, rather than use the Jera label, Blench refers to the group as the North-central cluster. However, Blench cautions that very little data exists on East Kainji languages, and the relationships are not well understood (23).

Decker, et al., is of the opinion that the Jera, or North-central cluster or East Kainji languages, which also include Iguta are for the most part small endangered languages, with some of them already extinct. Furthermore, the largest of the Jera group of languages are Jere, Sanga, and Lemoro which are located north of Jos along the border between Plateau and Bauchi States. Others include Janji, Gyem, and Tunzui. While Gyem and Tunzui are located east of Jere in Bauchi State, Janji is found to the northwest of Jos in Kaduna State, west of Jere. Three more languages, Sheni, Izora, and Kudo-Camo were reported decades ago to have only 6 to 42 speakers. There are most likely no more speakers today (11).

Languages belonging to the Tera group that are already dead include Sheni, which was spoken in Kaduna State north of Jos, Izora, which was spoken in Bauchi State, just north of Jos and Kudo-Camo, which was the northernmost of the Jera languages, spoken in north-western Bauchi State. Meanwhile, Gamo-Ningi, Lere, and Shau are extinct Jera

languages. Iguta is the southernmost of the Jera languages. The geographically closest Jera language to Iguta is Jere. Jere has a dialect referred to as Buji or Boze (Anaboze) (11). Stanley Diamond who based his accounts of the Anaguta from a fieldwork conducted in the 1950s already described the Anaguta and their culture as an endangered species, which is expressed thus in Iguta: *Anaguta mini ma gere*, meaning, “The Anaguta are a basket of water” (*The Anaguta of...*363ff). This implies that Iguta as a language is threatened with language death. The fact that such threat exists implies that the Anaguta nation have the solemn duty of doing everything possible to stop Iguta from dying.

JOS AND THE ADVENT OF COMMERCIAL TIN MINING

“Jos is often referred to as [the] ‘Tin City’, and without the importance of the tin industry, the city would hardly have gained its size and position, which it now enjoys” (Steed 18). This reiterates the fact that Jos was founded as a tin mining city by the British at the beginning of the 20th century. Already by the end of the 19th century, the British were anxious to trace the source of tin straws showing up in Ibi, a town located on the banks of the Benue River (Bingel 13). It was at Ibi that the British had gotten hints from Hausa traders about the presence of tin ore, black gold’ on the Jos Plateau. This prompted the Royal Niger Company (RNC) in London to send out an expeditionary force under Sir Richard Temple, a political officer, to tour and map out the Jos Plateau in 1899 (11).

The team traced the mineral to Badiko in the present Bauchi State, through George Nicholas in 1902. Subsequently, the RNC sponsored Second Lieutenant Colonel H.W. Laws on a second Tin Expedition in 1903, to investigate the source of the tin straws showing up at Ibi. Using the reports (Vignette) made by Nicholas, his research confirmed the presence of tin ore in commercial quantities, which he traced to the high Jos Plateau Mountains (Laws 105ff; Nengel, 59). On reaching the high Jos Plateau Mountains, Col. Laws made Naraguta, which was home to a section of the Anaguta people his official headquarters (Nengel 59).

This led the British to set up a permanent mining camp at Naraguta village, which is located towards the north of the present Jos Township (Plotnicov 33, cf. Bingel 3-4). This is how the British established a tin mining camp in Anaguta land. The British then moved in with the RWAFF to occupy and ‘pacify’ the Jos Plateau area between 1905 and 1909 (NAK 39; NAK 40 and SNP 190). The British had conquered the whole of Jos area, including the lands of the Bache (Rukuba), Anaguta, Berom, Afisare (Jarawa) and the entire Jos Plateau, bringing it under firm colonial control by 1920. This was a feat that the Muslim *jihadists* under YakubuDati the flag bearer of Bauchi and his son Ibrahim failed to achieve (Bingel 1, Mangyvat 69, Umaru 50).

Tin began to be mined on industrial commercial quantities around Naraguta by Europeans circa 1905. Due to the influx of European tin miners, the headquarters of the Central Province of British Nigeria Protectorate was established in Jos. Under British administration, many traditional practices of the Anaguta were forbidden (Isichei, *On*

Being Invisible, 549–550). The Anaguta were traditionally farmers and resisted involvement with tin mining because of its ritual and spiritual value. In fact, this was true of all Jos Plateau ethnic nationalities and for the same reasons. The Mwaghavul and Mupun would additionally argue against mining *shwol*, iron because they also refer to it as money/coinage. The British, therefore, brought Hausa-Fulani Muslim labourers onto the Jos Plateau from Sokoto, Kano, Katsina, Lere, Zaria, and Bauchi, among other areas to carry out work in the tin mines for meagre pay (Freund 77, Fwatshak 72).

However, when the British introduced the sterling as the coinage, together with the poll-tax, the Anaguta and the entire Jos Plateau communities had to become involved in the market economy, which further altered many indigenous practices. Through these changes the Anaguta lost Naraguta as a settlement, and the hegemony of the English began to exert great influence on the Anaguta (Decker, et al. 8). It was the presence of tin and the need for economic migrant-labour, together with administrators that eventually attracted the Urhobo, Hausa-Fulani, Yoruba, Igbos Bini and other ethnic nationalities from all over Nigeria to Jos. People from other ethnic groups on the Jos Plateau were not left out because of the need to raise capital for the *kwatka*, poll-tax. This is because money, in the form of the pound sterling was indeed scarce.

Initially, the Jos Plateau ethnic groups came only as temporary economic migrant labourers who left the tin mines after earning enough money to pay the poll tax. But Hausa-Fulani colons started to emerge on the Jos Plateau in association with the tin mines at, among others places, Naraguta, Dilimi, Gana Ropp, Ganan-Daji, Dorowan Babuje, Gwol (Barkin-Ladi), Bukuru, Gindin-Akwati, Kuru, Heipang, and Kasa, among numerous others, where they continually settled in large numbers (Gonyok100ff). C.G. Ames, a British colonial administrator on the Jos Plateau, confirms this when he asserts that the influx of Hausa-Fulani Muslims took place during the establishment of the British protectorate (309).

SOME SACRED SHRINES AND TOURISM SITES

Aga, Zang and Bala state correctly that the northern part of the Plateau State is mostly rocky and the area contains within its environs chains of hills and many captivating rock formations. Its picturesque landscape ranges from bare rocks and artificial hillocks and deep gorges from years of tin mining in Jos (574: Anon 21f).

According to Isichei, the hill that lends its name to the modern suburb known as Dogon Dutse (the Tall Stone—*Rishari Rutura*) was home to an ancestral leopard. There are many shrines marked by a stone obelisk marked by a separated stone. One stands at the modern by-pass east of Jos. It is called *Rishari Rutura* (the stone that stands), similar to the huge runic stones of Gotland Islands of the Scandinavia and it a ritual place shared with the Berom. The fall or leaning of the stone to one side presages calamity. Early in 1985, Anaguta and Berom elders held a ritual during which they offered five goats to *Rishari Rutura* because “it wanted to fall, something had annoyed it” (37).

Perhaps the most sacred site is the grove, known as *upimpim* (*upeinpein*), situated near Anabor. There is another known as *upana*, which have a number of groves linked to *upimpim*. Likewise, the precipitous rocky hill, Akatom (*Kotom*), near Lamingo dam, which is referred to as the first Anaguta home possesses ritual caves, which elders still visit (Isichei37). Meanwhile, Aga, Zang and Bala have observed that:

Some of the hidden geotourism potentials lie within the Anaguta enclaves. Most of these Anaguta enclaves are situated within the Neils Valley of the Younger Granites of the Jos Plateau...These enclaves are inhabited by the five clans of the Anaguta Chieftdom which are comprised of Anabor, Andoho, Anagohom, Andugom, and Andirgiza. The study area is comprised of Mazah [Younger Granite Complex where the Mazah water spring derives its source], Dogon Dutse [Rishari Utura], and Rizaḥ [located close to the Rifin Jaki Ring Dyke along Bauchi road and has a water spring whose source is from a fractured aquifer on the Younger Granite. The Rizaḥ River is also structurally controlled]. These three areas have water springs and a unique rock structure that are of significance to geotourism and are waiting to be developed and explored by visitors (574).

RELIGION AND COSMOLOGY

According to Diamond (31),Anaguta indigenous philosophy viewsthe earth as a tilted square, an inclined, equilateral platform, descending from the “south” towards the “north”. The Iguta words,*āžā* [*nāžā*] (meaning up, north) and *nā'yīmā* (meaning down, south) point to these cardinal points, respectively.

According to Diamond, the Anaguta recognize one God, equated with the sun, the word for sun and God being the same, ,*Uwen* [*Uwiyen*] even though the sun is merely a manifestation of God, since God is not the sun. The Anaguta indigenously demonstrate belief in a High God, *Uwen* (33), symbolized by and perhaps formerly identified with the sun. Isichei asserts that all Anaguta are under the control of one God. Very typical of Bantu speaking groups, their cosmology comprises three categories or tiers of beings: God, ancestors and the free spirits. The Anaguta spirit world is made up of the ancestral spirits, headed by *ushuhu* (*jankai*); spirits of the grove, *andugubishi* and the audible spirits of the night, *andiri* [*anaburr*] (39).

Diamond further underscores the point that God *Uwen* who is the creator of humans, spirits, and all things, moves endlessly from morning to evening along the track of time, and time unlike space, does not have a stop. In Anaguta cosmology, there is a named position on the inclined platform, which constitutes the Anaguta earth where space and time intersects. This happens at the centre of the world, where the Anaguta live, which is called *rishari-ātārsī*, meaning the centre stone or the centre of the sun, God, that is noon or midday, connoting a temporal time (33).

Ātārsī means centre, or middle, in the spatial sense and is therefore named *ātārsīuwen*, the earth of God or the centre of the sun. Time for the Anaguta, flows pass

the permanent central position occupied by them since they live at a place called noon, which is located at the centre of the world, the only point where space and time intersect (33). This indeed is a sophisticated philosophical discourse liken to Yoruba myth of Ile-Ife and the Dogon *adunotal*, the egg world, being the centre of the universe.

Isichei writes that the ancestors in Anaguta cosmography are symbolized as masks spirits, especially the *ushuhu*, represented by *ujankai* [the masquerade red headed beads] which constitutes a male secret cult, found in virtually all masking societies in Nigeria (39). The *andugubishi* are powerful spirits, which inhabit the sacred grove of *Upimpim* near Anabor (Nabor). This is how an interviewee of Isichei described it:

There is a grove and a shrine for worship, near Anabor, called Upeinpein. These were the spirits which made Anaguta strong and famous... There is a grove at the hill where the spirits live, under the ground. Those who can see saw them. The brothers of the spirits on that hill live at Rukubo. When the Anaguta were going to meet their enemies, the Rukuba [Bache], my father used to say, as they went on their way to fight, they would hear cries of the spirits. You would look around and see no-one (40).

Andugubishi are also found in the other *upana*. Since they are activated in times of crises, they also referred to as war spirits. The *andiri* [*anaburr*] are audible spirits that manifest themselves as invisible spirits, heard only in the night through ventriloquism, guised in a blend of Iguta and Hausa, needing an interpreter. These nocturnal voices are heard when their authority is questioned, in the process of ritual performance, during crises times and when their advice is sought concerning sickness where witchcraft is suspected (40).

CONCLUSION

The emergence of *Ishokori-Anaguta* was initiated by the critical stake holders of Anaguta tradition, and received the blessing and endorsement of the paramount ruler, HRM *Ujah* Anaguta, *Pozoh* Johnson Jauro Magaji II. This was done to evaluate its present status towards accommodating all other Anaguta festivals and their attendant rites. Seizing the opportunity for mainstreaming all Anaguta indigenous ceremonies into *Ishokori*, thus culminating into the mother of all Anaguta festivals, will make *Ishokori* to serve as a springboard for galvanizing unity and solidarity *asabiyya* and development in Anaguta land (ADA, 24). *Ishokori* will forever remain a symbol of Anaguta pride, feeling of nostalgia (*stöhlzine*), patriotism and culture.

Since *Ishokori-Anaguta* is to be held annually, if the festival is sustained and staged according to an exact time table, it will no doubt help to boost tourism on the Jos Plateau, especially in Jos (J-town). When put together with those of other ethnic nationalities, tourism will return to Plateau State, whose official motto is “the home of peace and tourism”. For this to happen, the peace, which Plateau State was known for, prior to 14th September, 2001, must be returned and sustained through deliberate efforts by all stakeholders on the Jos Plateau.

The celebration of *Ishokori-Anaguta*, which is Anaguta Festival of Arts, Culture and Spirituality, no doubt demonstrates and showcases the whole gamut of Anaguta *kulturwissenschaft*, or cultural sciences and heritage studies. It exhibits the great value of Anaguta *kultur*, culture for the enhancement of museum studies, and the development of Plateau State tourism and hospitality industry. *Ishokori-Anaguta* is a rich haven and germane resource for scholars and lovers of Museum and heritage studies.

Tourism sites according to Aga, Zang and Bala include three sites comprising of two water springs and a unique rock outcrop also known as *Usharu Utura*, all which are areas located within the Anaguta enclaves of the Jos Plateau have great geotourism potentials comparable to other famous places in Nigeria. The water springs are currently underutilized, being currently used merely for domestic purposes and the unique rock is poorly preserved. They assert further in the abstract of their work that:

Ignorance and availability of other known geotourist sites on the Jos Plateau may be responsible for the neglect. Public enlightenment and preservation of these areas through public and private sector partnership is therefore recommended (574).

It is of great import for us to identify, document and protect all Anaguta indigenous sites, shrines and monuments as a rich cultural heritage for the Anaguta nation and her posterity, including Anaguta sons and daughters yet unborn. This should naturally lead to the establishment of an Anaguta Study and research unit in the Centre of Africana studies being established in the University of Jos, which will be a hub for the study of the religion, culture, and spirituality of the indigenous peoples of the Jos Plateau.

Furthermore, the Anaguta core values, among them their peaceful, open, hospitable, warm and welcoming disposition to strangers, should be identified and harnessed towards nation building and towards galvanizing development from below as advocated by Claude Ake (96). This will naturally lead to economic growth that will translate into a type of development that is oriented towards raising the income and productivity of the poor. It will consequently promote a sustainable use of scarce natural resources and the environment, since it is people centred and will provide people with a better quality of life (Efemini 4).

Finally, this study believes that through the annual celebration of *Ishokori-Anaguta* festival, sole Anaguta cultural artefacts and products will be identified for local mass production for national and international consumption as patented goods for boosting commercial activities and industry. This will no doubt place the Anaguta nation in a position to compete as equals on the global market.

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