



A historic step... An open letter to the African Diaspora

On August 26th 2012 The Kingdom of Oyotunji African Village celebrated Odun Obatala and the 53rd Anniversary of Oba (King) Osejeman Adebalu Adefunmi I's initiation into the African traditional religion of the Yoruba. This momentous occasion also marked 53 years of the birth of the traditional Yoruba community in North America. Our beloved Father, King Osejeman Adefunmi, was the first of the Africans born in America to "*lay claim to the legacy of his ancestors through initiation into the priesthood of Obatala*".¹ Obatala is the deity of creative energy, knowledge, patience and wisdom. Obatala, he who was sent to the world by Olodumare to form humans after the earth had been made wide and firm.

On August 26th 1959, Oba (King) Osejeman Adebalu Adefunmi I, this priest of Obatala began his task to recreate for us, we African descendants, an African consciousness. Utilizing the knowledge and wisdom of our ancestors taught us what it means to be African and formulated the foundation for African Cultural Restoration. Oba Wo Aja (the that went through the roof) was among the first of the Africans born in America who returned to the priesthood of Orunmila, the deity of destiny; therefore would not be no surprised that there are now millions of adherents and practitioners of the ancient customs and spiritual traditions of the Yoruba, that has reached countless African Studies Departments in universities and graduates who specialize in Yoruba Studies.

On August 26th, 1959, a holy day, after hundreds of years of disconnect, our ancestors and the deities of Africa were finally given a place of respectful veneration and worship in the form of a native son and commenced a turning point for we as a people; the beginning of true freedom. We descendants of Africa and the divine Mother (the Mother who birthed humanity), now had an opportunity to completely rid ourselves of the trauma and retentions of slavery, in all its insidious forms; physical, mental, and spiritual! The real emancipation.

There's more...

Twenty-two years later, and eleven years after the establishment of Oyotunji Village, King Adefunmi while traveling to Ife, Nigeria to attend and present at the first World Orisa Congress in the modern era. *June 5th, 1981[,] at the palace of African King Okunade Sijuwade Olubuse II, The Oni of Ife, marked the first time a non-nigerian was crowned a traditional Yoruba king.*²

Today...

We sit as the 2nd generation to a modern Dynasty, per the ancient Dahomean Aladahounou Throne and as the Paramount Ruler for the Yoruba people of North America. The Oba, in traditional African culture, "*stands alone in the hierarchy of mortals. Within the [cosmos], he has no equal. As the royal head of-the [Kingdom], the Oba has a place in what historians describe, as "a sophisticated administrative system with a substantial spiritual component"...* The Oba is a god man or the god on the human world". According to High Priest Osemwegie Ebohon, Benin, oral tradition says that the Oba has a divine essence and so is the godhead of his people.³ To deny this is to deny the destiny of African Cultural Restoration and therefore deny Ifa. We ARE the great father; aware of the intense reality that the collective consciousness of our people is within our hands to either elevate or degenerate.

Today and every day forward We chose to elevate...

After seven years as the King of the Yoruba North America, We have had an opportunity to learn, observe, teach and lead. We have had difficult moments with battling the African American post-slavery syndrome trauma that is innately in each of us. Much of which still tells us it is correct and okay to practice the religion of our ancestors, devoid of its culture. The trauma that leads us to believe that the careless, mishandlings of the Royal institution, that birthed the opportunity for us to be merely introduced to our ancient customs in the Americas, and that paying the highest regard to Obaship is not necessary.

As your Sovereign, H.R.M Oba Adejuyigbe Egundjobi Alladahonu Oyewole Adefunmi II, Oloyotunji of Oyotunji Village USA, KING OF THE YORUBA DIASPORA OF THE AMERICAS AND DESCENDANT OF H.R.H Oba Ofuntola Osejeman Adelabu Adefunmi I, We Hereby Declare and Proclaim that from this day forward, August 26th (Twenty-

From the Office of HIS ROYAL MAJESTY
Oba Adejuyigbe Egundjobi Alladahonu Oyewole Adefunmi II
Oloyotunji of Oyotunji Village USA

Sixth) is a National Holiday for all Yoruba Diaspora, celebrating and elevating the legacy of the Father of The African Cultural Restoration Movement. We have not and will never stray away from the blueprint set forth by our ancestors. If we intend to sustain and even fortify our traditions, we must begin to not only recognize, but internalize that our culture is more than stones in pots, readings, flashy agbadas and geles and weekly bembes. Our ancestors left us the highest level of technology available to humanity! It Is Our Birthright! The ONLY way we will be able to take full advantage of this science is by living the culture. AFRICAN CULTURAL RESTORATION IS THE KEY.

A historic step...

Beginning with a three-pronged approach, empowering cultural leaders, infrastructure building and the reinstatement of women to their ancient prominence, the Kingdom of Oyotunji African Village and the North American Throne is intent on fulfilling its eminent role in ensuring our culture is practiced to the best of our ability and portrayed on a global level.

On August 26th, 2012 we took a historic step and began our trek with instating an ancient ancestral title; that of HRM's Crown Kpojito. The Kpojito is a Title that is bestowed upon an individual that has a proven track record of practicing and sustaining to the highest levels the customs of our ancient tradition. She ensures cultural, social and financial progression, infrastructure building and expansion of the Yoruba North American Crown, the Oyotunji African Village Throne and Kingdom as well as the constituents and organizations that fall underneath the umbrella of the before mentioned.

This Title is an ode to the ancient, primordial mothers and to my direct Dahomean lineage and will be formally bestowed upon . we, Her Excellency Igbo Iyalase Oloye Aina Olomo on King's Day, October 6-7, 2012.

Empowering young cultural leaders...

Our culture says that an elder can remove a gourd from the shelf but it takes a child to remove its contents. We say this to say that an innovative approach whereby we begin to empower young leaders in our communities. We ask elders to create forums to share the knowledge and experiences of the bygone so that young leaders may have a 'clear' reference to pull from. As we see it all elders must travel with and surround themselves with the following generation. As we know young pond fronds grow larger than old pond fronds. Those who want to be leaders in your community we'll get behind you. This of course benefits us all.

Infrastructure building...

We see organizational infrastructure as a key piece in forward progression. Relationships in our eyes are the core to moving forward together. But not just making relationships but maintaining them so that we can sustain productivity in our communities. Capacity building was the focus of the past Pan-African Grassroots Assembly so that we can begin to trust one another as we do our sacred work. You can help in this effort by supporting our local temples and shrines. So as we see it is genuine relationships that turn into solid relations that give us the unity and respect for going forward.

As a result of the Pan-African Grassroots Assembly, we developed the capacity to restructure and reformulate the ATA Board of Directors.

On forward, our daily work will be to strengthen our mutual interdependence as opposed to separatism. The Oba loves his communities, his people and continues to rededicate himself to the crown.