

CHILAYYA DISCOVERS

KEBBI

Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu



Foreword by Prof. Tijjani Bande

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Mustapha Bulama
Victor Olupese

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Table of contents

Dedication	06
Preface	07
Foreword	08
Acknowledgement	10

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Table of contents

Section One - Chilayya discovers Kebbi	13
Yauri beginnings	14
The trip to Alela	28
A Stop over at Rugar Fulani	48
The plains of Birnin Kebbi	52
Argungu: our destination	61
Gwandu, the Sanctuary Learning	76
The Return to Yauri	80
Section two - Learning about Kebbi	89
1. Governors of Kebbi State	90
2. Old Ulaira and Foge Islands	91
3. Yauri Boat Regatta	92
4. Uholo Festival	94
5. Borgu	96
6. Isgogo Slave Market	98
7. Girmache Shrine	100
8. Argungu Fishing Festival	102
9. Kanta Museum	104
10. Huttungo Festival	106
11. Surame	108
12. Tomb of Abdullahi Fodio	110
13. Kings of Gwandu	112
14. Kings of Kabbawa	113
15. Kings of Kabbawa at Argungu	114
16. Kings of Yauri	115
17. Kings of Zuru	116
18. Principal rivers of Kebbi	118
19. Glossary	120

Dedication

This book is dedicated to the good people of Kebbi, in particular the women-folk. I document this journey for our children to learn, cherish and love their heritage.

Preface

Knowledge is like a baobab tree,
No one can encompass it with their hands
- African Proverb

This book is a narrative to explore and display the history, geography, cultures, and arts of the diverse indigenous ethnic groups inhabiting the present-day emirates of Kebbi state, namely- Gwandu, Yauri, Zuru (then called Azguru) and Argungu. I aim to demonstrate the state's motto as a land of equity. We do this whilst showcasing its wealth of culture and history.

By writing in an easy-to-digest format, I hope to give indigenes and visitors a clear vision of Kebbi that cuts across identity, geographic setting, and the evolution of its values, norms, festivals, monuments, occupations, and architecture. These antecedents led to the forging of peace and unity in diversity, promoting consciousness about eco-diversity, inspiring industriousness in youths, and re-emphasizing the locally established security architecture. For instance, readers will discover how far back the structure and governance of fishing in Argungu has been ecologically friendly, equitable, and inclusive.

The book is set in the 1800s, predating colonial times, and primarily targets the younger generation and those seeking insight into the history of Kebbi. We have used illustrations to depict our principal character's journey as she traverses the Emirates. This will balance the influence of popular culture, gradually displacing many aspects of our rich heritage.

The six separate but integral chapters are united by a single thread, which ties all of them together. Chilayya's adventure begins in Yauri. She moves to Alela, a stop-over at Rugar Fulani, and arrives at the plains of Birnin Kebbi and the fishing town of Argungu. In Gwandu, she discovers a sanctuary of knowledge and learning before she finally returns to Yauri.

Though a fictional journey, the tale is based on real places and events. It will enrich the available literature on the history and sociology of the diverse ethnic groups of modern-day Kebbi state. It is a veritable reading material with a creative format. I, therefore, hope that it is used as a valuable educational resource and entertainment for tourists, students, researchers, policy-makers, culture administrators, and casual readers alike.

Dr. Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu
Author
November, 2023

Foreword

I am delighted to contribute a Foreword to this important, even timely, book: *CHILAYYA DISCOVERS KEBBI*. It is a historical novel set in present-day Kebbi State. Through the eyes, ears, and insightful ruminations of a young Chilayya as she traverses various parts of Kebbi, the reader is immersed in a bit of the history, culture, traditions, festivals, and means of sustenance of the people. The values and norms that underpin all these are also subtly brought out. Some of these are industry and self-reliance, hospitality and solidarity, involvement of all in communal affairs, and respect for knowledge.

We should admit that this is not an “innocent”, idle book of fiction. Indeed, the tantalizing account of dazzling costumes and dances connected to various festivals can get tourists eager to show up. This is good for the name and economy of Kebbi. I suspect, nonetheless, that there is a nobler objective to the undertaking: to sketch the widths and depths of filial, commercial, cultural, educational, and other relations of the people of Argungu, Gwandu, Kabbi, and Zuru. It is a Kebbi story. It is also a Nigerian story. It is about unity, a key ingredient for national development. It, therefore, merits being on bookshelves in our homes and libraries.

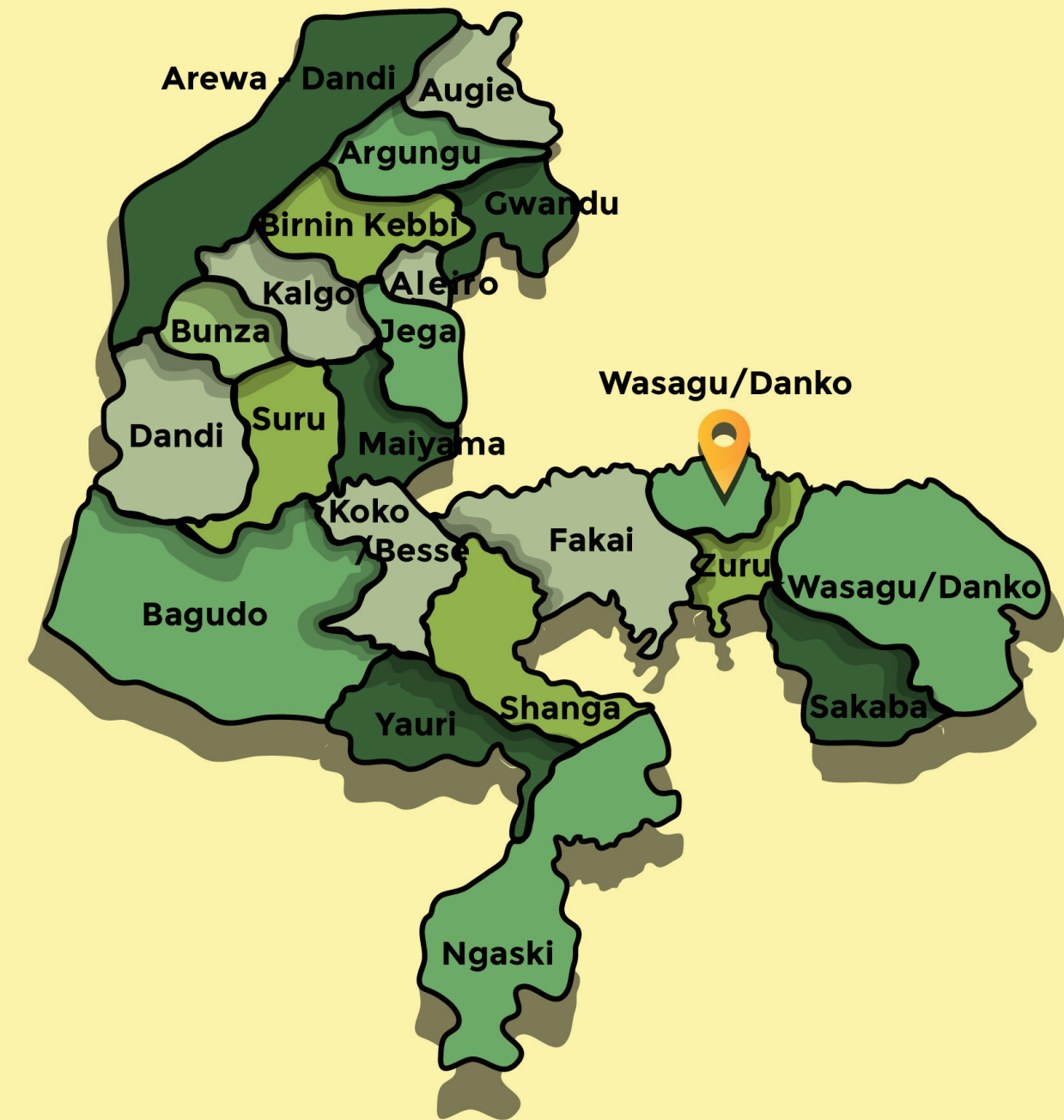
This is a story from a medical practitioner and administrator with national and International experience. It is one that the story-teller hidden in the doctor is well-placed to offer. The author is, after all, from a significant “political family” and married to a prominent political figure.

It is my ardent hope that many young people, especially women, and girls, are inspired by the author’s example to excel in whatever positive ventures take their fancy.

Dr. Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu is deserving of our appreciation.

Prof. Tijjani Muhammad-Bande, GCON,
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
of Nigeria to the United Nations, New York

Map of Kebbi State, Nigeria



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

When I conceived the idea of writing this book, I first broached the concept with my husband, the Governor of Kebbi State (2015–2023), H.E. Senator Abubakar Atiku Bagudu. He encouraged me through the journey, sharing his invaluable suggestions and support, which were truly appreciated.

During the eight years I played the supportive role of Mother of the State, I enjoyed a very cordial relationship with our four Royal fathers. Through the relationships, I was stimulated to learn more. This project coalesced ideas from the four emirates of Kebbi State. I acknowledge the support of our Royal Fathers, who authorized their palace historians and staff to grant interviews. They are His Royal Highness, the Emir of Gwandu, Alhaji Muhammadu Iliyasu-Bashar; His Royal Highness, the Emir of Argungu, Alhaji Samaila Mohammed Mera; His Royal Highness, the Emir of Zuru, Major-General (Retd.) Muhammadu Sani Sami (Sami Gomo II); and His Royal Highness, the Emir of Yauri, Dr. Muhammadu Zayyanu Abdullahi. I am indeed grateful to them for their unalloyed cooperation. This book revolves around them. I thank them for their support.

Also worthy of commendation are members of my research team who, at the height of banditry in North-West Nigeria, agreed to traverse the nooks and crannies of the Kebbi Emirates to document and photograph the historic and rare stories contained in this coffee-table work. They are: Dr. Suleiman Haruna, Dr. Haruna Penni, Abiodun Kassim, and Zainab Kassim.

Some made the work of the research team easier wherever they went. In Yauri Emirate, I owe my gratitude to Rev. Father Apollos Hassan Agamalafiya for supplying information on the culture of the Gungawa people; the Secretary of Yauri Emirate Palace; the Cultural Officer

of Yauri Local Government Council, who gave access to some archaeological artifacts; and an archaeological document titled “The Living Past.”

In Alela Emirate, I appreciate the role played by Zuru Emirate Development S functionaries, Mr. Dauda Sule Chonoko and Haruna Chonoko; A. R. Augi; Amos Kibiya Bawa, the aged Girmache Priests, Sarkin Gabas of Isgogo, Mallam Umar Abdullahi, and Nassah Turba on Pani Zuem Gorge and culture.

A word of appreciation also goes to Sarkin Yamman Gwandu for his support, the staff of Kebbi State History and Culture Bureau and the Kebbi State Ministry of Information, and members of staff, Office of the First Lady of Kebbi State, especially Mallam Mukhtar Bagudo, my liaison on the research team.

To the curators of the Argungu Kanta Museum who gave access to their ancient artifacts, the Argungu Emir’s Palace Historian, Alhaji Yakubu L. Ibrahim Bagaye (Walkilan Kabbi), and Prince Mustapha Samaila Mera of Argungu Palace, I have the greatest admiration for them; likewise, to the custodians of the Matan Fada River, the arena of the Argungu fishing festival. To all who contributed to the success of this work, whether directly or indirectly, thank you.

Dr. Zainab Bagudu-Shinkafi
Abuja.
November, 2023

Chilayya Discovers Kebbi

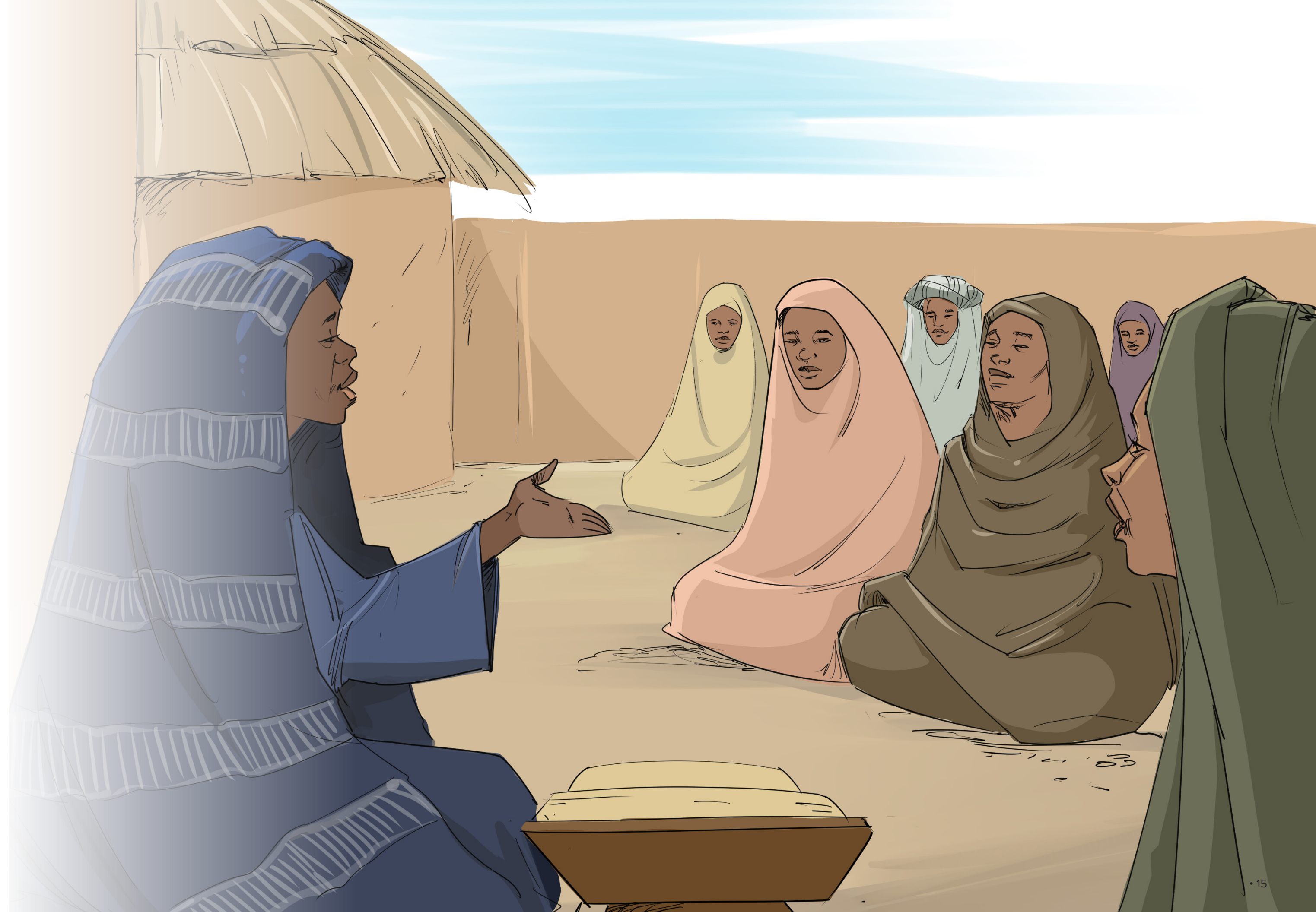
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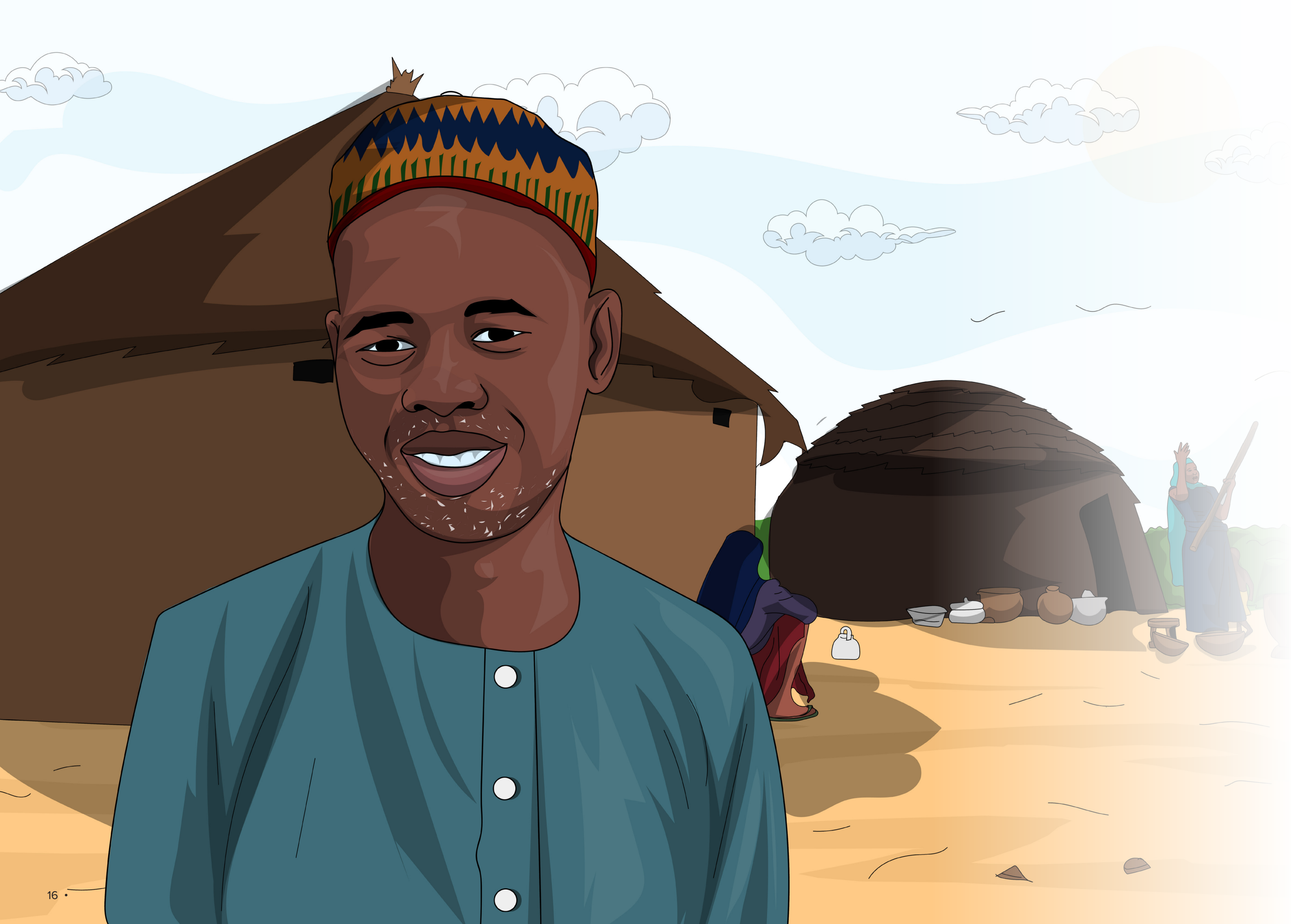
YAURI BEGINNINGS

“Do not tell me how educated you are, tell me how much you travelled”

- Prophet Mohammed (PBUH)

My name is *Chilayya*, and I am the daughter of Abu and Fatima. I am a medicine woman. I attend to women and have been taught by many learned people from far and near. My formative years truly helped shape my life and career. I was born and bred in the land of Kebbi. My father always reminded us, his children, not to forget our roots; this is why he ensured we always received some cultural training even while we attended formal school.





Our training started in Yauri, which used to be called Ireshe Ubino, founded by the Reshe or the Gungawa. Built like Vikings, the people were expert warriors who constructed nine-foot-thick defence walls to protect the town.

During the rainy season, everyone- male, female, young, and old- went to the farm to tend the crops. My mother inherited large farms from her late father, so she paid labourers to till the land. My father also had farms. I would accompany my mother to work with the labourers, but I also made time to work in the garden within our courtyard. My father would go hunting when the rains were over; we had a variety of animals in the forest, from bandicoots to deer.

I went with my mother to fish, mostly for the family's consumption but sometimes to sell.

Even though I am the daughter of a merchant, I come from a long line of blacksmiths dating back to the time of Kanta's army at Gungu, where my ancestors played a major role in smelting the weapons. The ancestors believed that good weapons had their souls and could help a man in his quest for success.

One day, I went to Arora Akami (River Niger) and sat on its banks, facing the distant embankment; and as I sat, I began to reflect. It was the historic island of Ikum, where our ancestors isolated themselves for over 30 years, becoming inaccessible to marauding invaders until they became strong enough to emerge, like a butterfly from a cocoon.



I remembered stories of other communities like Ulaira, down the river, famed for their arts and crafts, and Foge, the island of beautiful birds and animals.

A partridge flew overhead and beyond me, breaking my thoughts, and it occurred to me that soaring above everything, it must know what those of us who cannot fly do not know. I wondered what the bird could tell us about Foge, Ulaira, and Ikum.

At this moment, it struck me- "Knowledge will always provide answers, but one must seek it first."

As a girl, I am protected behind a garrison of love, community, familiar faces, and places; I had the freedom to tread whichever path I wanted across my father's land. Despite my freedom of movement at home, I still felt caged in Yauri; my mind wondered what girls my age did in places where the terrain was different.

I had been told that this town had been the centre of the world since the time of Jerabana, its first king, and harboured boundless treasures. Here,

the grass is greener, the food is heavenly, and solutions abound for every problem that the human experience might throw at you. I understood that I had to play my part in connecting the ancestral chain running through generations of my ancestors before me down to descendants after me.

I ended my ruminations and returned home.

One market day, as I watched a show by animal tamers who were showing their prowess in controlling their menagerie of hyenas, baboons, and crocodiles, I wondered where they caught these animals, how they fed them, and how they spent their itinerant life from market to market living off their animal-training skills. No one did this in Yauri.

Market days brought life to the town; merchants came to either buy or sell, bringing colourful splendour from different places I never knew existed. They brought their energy and incomprehensible chatter. Merchants would usually find hosts in the town who provided them with a place of rest and nourishment, and when they were ready to depart (usually after two weeks to one month), they left a token gift behind for their host family.



During these trips, some merchants would get married and raise children, who they eventually brought along during subsequent cycles; this created additional bonds and extended ties across the land.

My father often played host to some of these merchants. On one occasion, he instructed me to run their errands. These merchants had many marks on their faces and told me they were Kabbawa. I heard them talking animatedly about an upcoming festival in their town called Kashin ruwa, where fish bigger than men were caught. They spoke of dorinar ruwa, (hippopotamuses), which used to roam our waters here but have not been seen in a long time; or have they all moved to the Rima River? They also had crocodiles and other water animals. I became interested in going to this Kabbawa town, which they told me is called Argungu.

My father, being a merchant, also travelled with them whenever he had enough to sell. His primary wares were metal ingots, which he formed in his furnace or procured from other blacksmiths. He had amassed many metal ingots that he was sure to trade for a profit.



Usually, my father retired to our chambers after the evening prayer; if he did not have guests, he would eat with us, and we had a chance to enjoy some chitchat. One evening, he came with some good news. He often joined the merchant's caravan to Argungu. One day, he lit up excitement in the compound, announcing that he planned to take his family along on this trip. I was too young when they went on the last trip, and my recollection was faint. This time, I would accompany my parents.

The time soon came. Preparation for the trip typically involved arranging clothing, food, and water but also included lectures on how to behave on journeys across foreign lands. My mother had been on this journey before and had told us enchanting stories of the diversity of cultures along the merchant's route. Now, I would experience it first-hand.

To prepare me further, mama told me that guava leaves would prevent diarrhoea, while lemon grass would release the bowels in times of constipation. She advised me to respect the people in the caravan and learn from them, respect the different cultures I am bound to meet, and be prudent in my behaviour.

She had prepared me for the trip like any mother would; a bag made of jute containing essentials for personal hygiene, dried fruits, fish, and meat to provide snacks in-between meals, a colourful blanket to protect me during the cold nights, and a few sets of clothes, as well as a copy of the Holy Quran, which I would read before I go to sleep and immediately after my morning supplications. As is the norm, on the eve of our departure,

I accompanied my mother to her relatives to bid them goodbye and seek their forgiveness for any known or unknown act we might have committed.

Travel day arrived, and we joined the caravan. My father introduced us to Madugu, the leader. I engaged him immediately, asking which cities we would come across en route and what languages they spoke. He said we would pass through many lands, including the Alela country. He said we would then journey northward to their land, Argungu, from where they would procure other items for another journey back to the south, where Yauri was located.

I was excited beyond words!

THE TRIP TO ALELA

"Wherever you go, go with
all your heart"

- Confucius

We arrived at Zuru (our ancestors called it Azuguru), a town in Alela territory, after a two-day journey from Yauri. I observed that Alela had an undulating landscape of hills, plains, and valleys.





The Boabab tree, also known as the tree of life, the leaves we use to make Kuka soup, grew in abundance here; the Boabab also produces medicines for flu and toothaches. As we got closer to the town, I saw some villages on hilltops, surrounded by walls and guarded by sentries.

The merchants knew their way around and headed straight to Kondo's house, their regular host.

Within the town, the natives built circular huts with thatched roofs in a compound of four or more huts. I heard these thatched roofs are replaced periodically. The courtyard also housed a granary and hearth.

At Kondo's home, the men were received and led to his guest area. The ladies, including my mother and myself, were led to the inner chambers, where we met his wife, Azura, grinding some grains on a stone slab. She welcomed us and led us to a mat spread near her hut. She presented drinking water, sat with my mother and me, and asked about Yauri and our journey.

After a while, we were presented with food: their main staple, diga, served with jabjabi soup, well garnished with bush meat. The food was served in wooden containers. Afterward, she showed us where to sleep, provided us with sleeping materials, and left us to rest. My father had his meal with Kondo and other male merchants.

The next morning, I woke to cockcrows, bird chirps, and a donkey braying. I stepped outside to inhale the morning breeze. Just like our massive river, Arora Akami, which provided a beautiful spectacle in the morning at Yauri, the hills at Zuru seem like a mosaic for the sunrise.



This enchanting image remains etched in my memory to this day. Then, I saw groups of people with their farm tools hanging from their shoulders, headed to their farms, some women with their babies strapped around their backs, and young children carrying bags, probably containing their lunch. Azura provided breakfast, which we ate.

“I saw teenage boys dressed in nothing but loincloths; why are they dressed that way?” I asked Azura.



She said they were members of the Golmo Brigade. The Alela culture dictates that young men approved to marry a maiden must render farm service to their father for seven years. This process begins with their initiation into the Golmo brigade, where, apart from farm work, they are subjected to rigorous military training. At the end of the seventh year, the wedding takes place.

Like in Yauri, I thought women were valued in these parts. The people of Yauri also have Apuno, a bridal service similar to the Golmo, but ours is not as regimented and is of continuous service to the in-laws for life.

After breakfast, I learnt from Azura that the people of Alela territory are called the Lelna, and their language is C'lela, even though in Yauri, the Lelna people were referred to as Dakarkari. She said this was a nickname for their bravery in successfully warding off their attackers.

Lelna people, she continued, traced their origins to ancestors who left the Middle East and settled in Katsina, Zamfara, Sokoto, and Kebbi territories.

Muhammadu Kanta later heard of their warlike nature and engaged them for his military adventures, and they served him creditably.

“I think you and your mother should go to Peni, where you can witness the Uholo festival; a Golmo class will be graduating. “My younger brother Zome will take you there.” Azura offered.

The donkey ride to Peni was tough as we passed through such difficult terrain. I reckoned the natives stayed in such fortresses to increase their chances of protection from aggressors. When we got to Peni, the natives were in a festive mood. Everywhere I went, I saw natives with elaborate tattoos. I saw different designs for men and women and asked what they meant. Zome told me that these facial marks identify clan members and indicate the different occupational lineages in the communities. He informed me that their women also make designs to add to their beauty and adornment. However, he pointed out that body scarification is more elaborate with females and that the Lelna also have their teeth carved to enhance their beauty.



I enjoyed the dance of the maidens, which encompassed such colour and camaraderie. Each maiden was celebrating her graduation into a housewife, just like her groom was celebrating his graduation into manhood. While the young men were learning how to provide for their brides and protect them, the brides were also learning how to manage their homes and take care of their husbands. It was a day well spent.

On our way back, at Rumu, I saw a peculiar stone image, which the natives called Tadud Wawanta, and which I was told was of a virgin girl

who, as the myth went, was chased by slave raiders as she returned from the market; as they closed in on her, she prayed and was instantly transformed into stone. The marks I saw were said to be cuts by the slave raiders. I was told that to commemorate the sad event, nursing mothers besieged the stone to honour and remember the sacrifice of the young girl.

On the third day, I told my mother I wanted to walk around town. My mother told me not to go too far. I asked Zome to direct me to the market square, which he did. I sauntered towards the market, taking in the subtle beauties of the language, the architecture, and the sense of environmental sanitation. I noticed that the sedimentary hills provided ready-made



slates used as building blocks for the walls of some homes. It was here I met a maiden with beautiful marks on her face. I looked at her and waved; she glanced at me and waved back with a smile. We introduced ourselves. Her name was Gotname.

She became curious and asked where I came from, and I told her. I asked what her name meant, and she said, 'Here I am.' She told me that in their culture, children are named according to the circumstances of their birth or after ancestors and gods, while some are given pet names. I asked her to tell me about things around the town, but she declined, saying, "I am running an errand for my mother; can we meet another time?" To be sure, I insisted that she showed me where she lived so that I could visit her later, and she agreed.

The next morning was Isgogo market day, and I went to the market with my father. Isgogo market was big and had assorted goods from other towns like Katsina, Zaria, and Kano.



It seemed the market for metal implements here was big and attracted most of those visiting the market; my father bought some implements that are only produced by Zogne blacksmiths to sell to his final destination, in addition to his ingots from Yauri.



Huge silk cotton trees seemed to stand watch as people milled around the market. The officials knew our Ayari and welcomed us. We were at the market the whole day because other team members seemed very engaged with different customers in different parts of the market. Finally, our camels and donkeys were fully loaded and ready to return to Zuru. We would rest for one more day before continuing our long journey.

On the morning of the next day, as part of our sightseeing routine, Zome took me and my mother to the Girmache grove to see the amazing swampy mangrove vegetation with huge trees that had exposed roots. I became visibly anxious when I saw so many crocodiles just roaming around the place.

“Don’t worry; you are on safe ground,” said the chief priest of the sanctuary. “How did you raise so many crocodiles?” I asked.

The chief priest told me how the place became a shrine.



“A native,” he said, “transformed into a crocodile and slipped into the pond to be saved from pursuing marauders. His spirit continued to help people, and they visited the grove with various gifts of livestock to the crocodiles in remembrance of his sacrifice and to make requests, which they believed were usually granted.”

On our way back to town, I remembered I had promised to meet Gotname so she could take me on a tour; I had to keep that promise. I told my parents and was given permission. I met Gotname, and she took me around town. She took me to the various market sections, where I saw the work of the weavers, blacksmiths, woodcarvers, and potters. She showed me the town square, where youths gather to perform various festivals.

A STOP OVER AT RUGAR FULANI

“Where the cattle stand
together, the lion lies down
hungry”

- Anonymous

Another memorable part of our journey to Argungu was stopping at a Fulani settlement known as Ruga. It was not a regular resting place for the ayari, but we were delayed because one of the merchants took ill; he was treated by one of the Gungawa native healers traveling with us. I watched in awe as the man mixed and cooked herbs. This was the first time I realised the medicinal value of the Dogonyaro (neem) leaves. It grew in abundance across our lands. In the years to come, as I trained to be a healer, I found that neem tree leaves have many uses. It has antiseptic properties, expels worms, clears the chest when inhaled in steam, and is a fantastic skin and hair oil.

While the patient was being treated, we made ourselves home and settled for the evening. It was always safer to stay with people than to set up camp in the wilderness.



Ardo, the chief, had received us warmly. He was wearing a hat he called a *tengade*. The women were led indoors and received by his family. His daughter was my age, and we got along quite well. We were supplied with calabashes of *fura da nono*, the local gruel made from millet and milk. The calabashes were beautifully engraved and covered with well-knitted *mbeedu* (woven straw covers). More people trooped in to welcome and engage us on our journey. It was a memorable stop-over indeed, and where, I believe, the seeds of my future career as a healer were sown.

I saw over a hundred cows in the *garke* (cow pen), all white. The Ardo said these types are called *akuji*, the most common cows in these parts, but the Fulani also rear other types, like the *jallonke* and the *fellata*. There were many breeds.

After our meal, Bingel, my friend, took me to her grandmother, who told us stories about their ancestors. She said even though they move around frequently, they have remained in these parts for centuries. The men till the land and herd their cows, while the women and girls sell the

milk in the town. She said, "Our people settle and graze their livestock wherever the pasture is green and move on when the need arises." This herding practice often leads to distant journeys across several lands, irrespective of the dangers.

I asked her how they live peacefully wherever they travel, and she told me that the Fulani are peaceful people because they are guided by the *Pulaaku* (code of behaviour), which includes *munyal* (discipline), *gacce* (modesty), *hakkile* (wisdom), and *sagata* (courage).

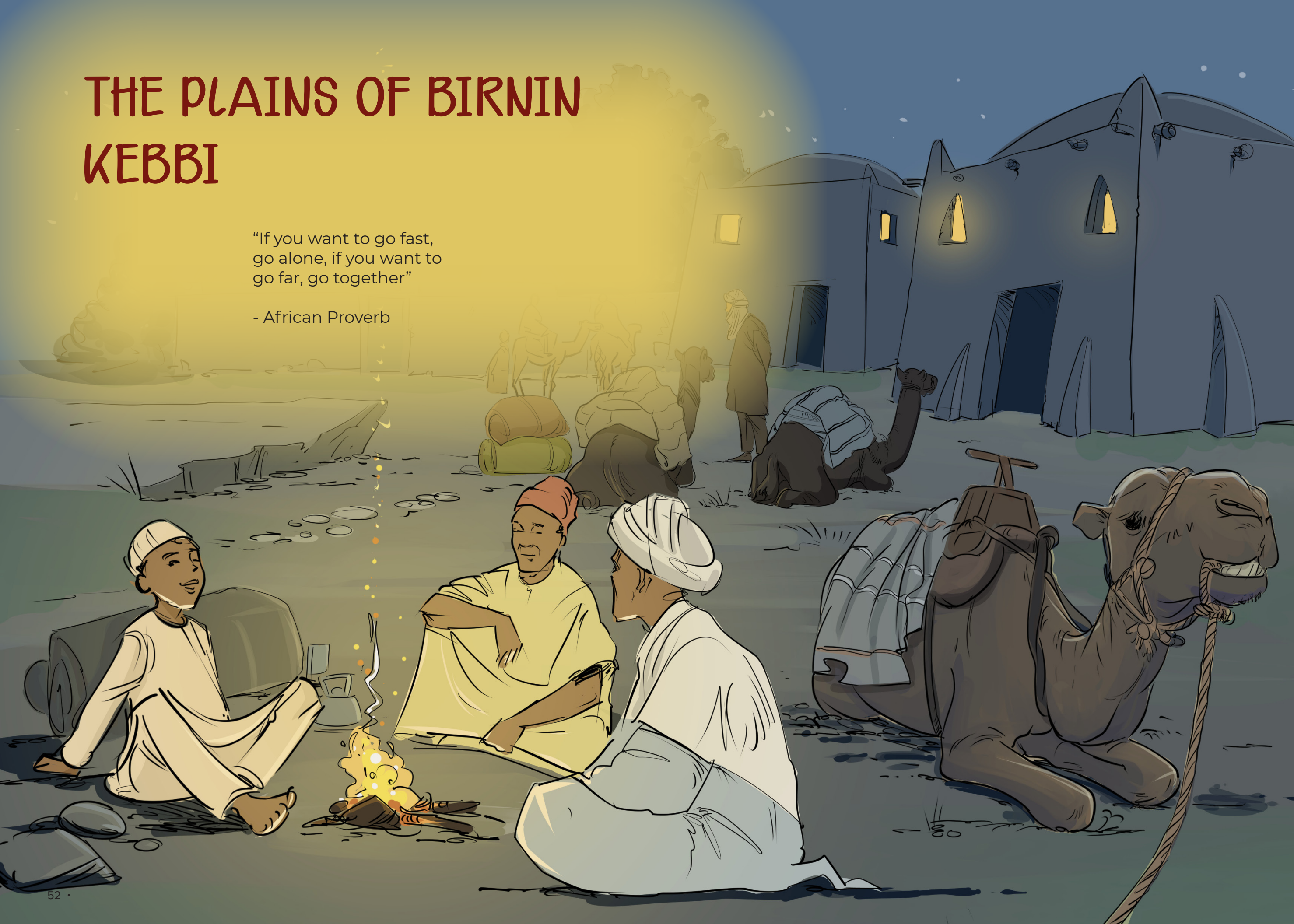
"For now," she said, "whenever the dry season sets in, we move the herd southward for green pasture until the next rainy season. When we return to Ruga after the long sojourn, we celebrate with a get-together called *Huttungo*, to rejoice over life and good health. We talk about distant lands, our extended families, and friends that we met during our sojourn."

In the morning, we said our goodbyes and continued on our journey. On the third day, we arrived at Birnin Kebbi, the biggest and most developed town in the whole region.

THE PLAINS OF BIRNIN KEBBI

"If you want to go fast,
go alone, if you want to
go far, go together"

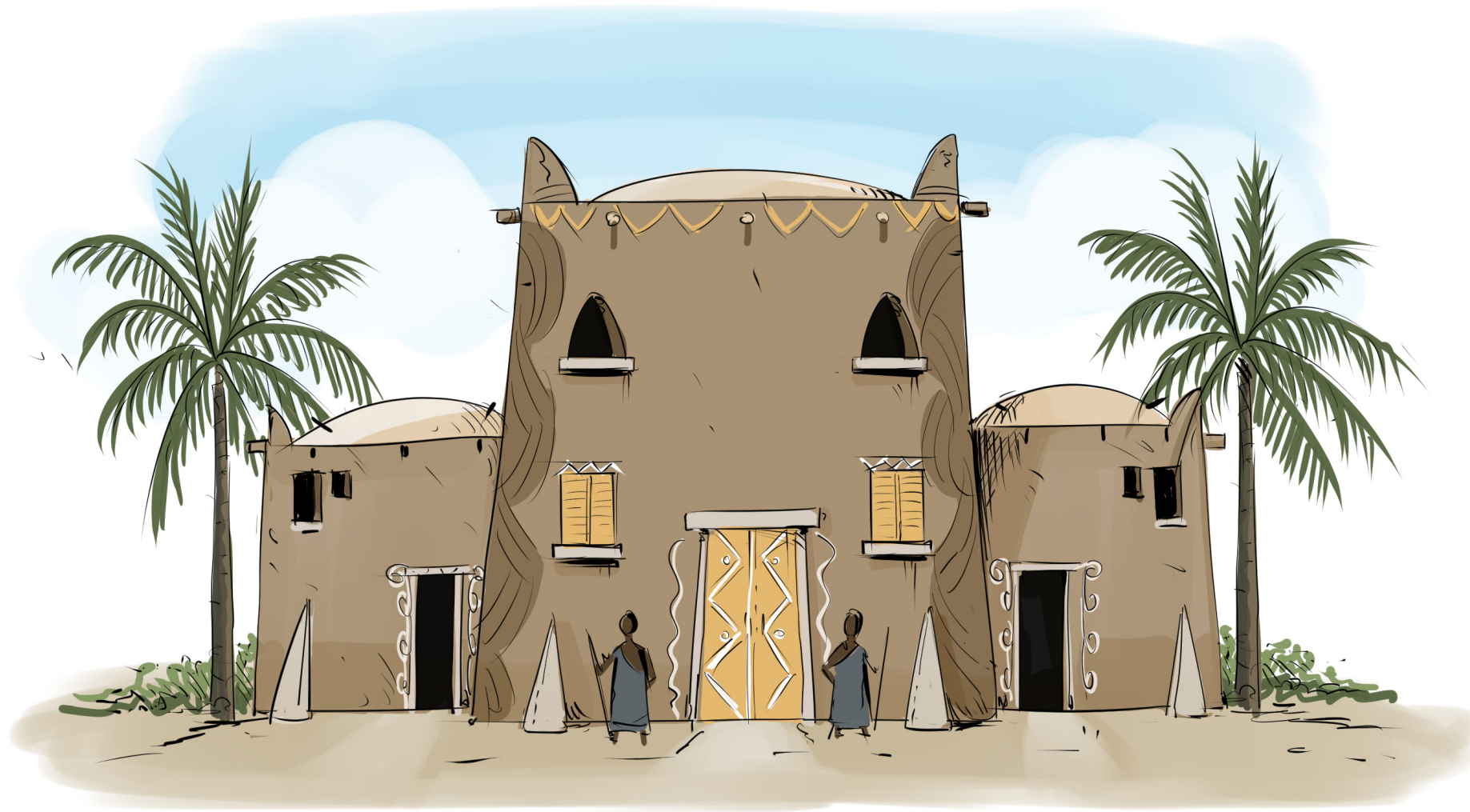
- African Proverb



We arrived at Birnin Kebbi after five days of travel with the loaded animals. The tradition of hosting merchant caravans was universal.

We were warmly welcomed and hosted everywhere we went with food, drinks, and accommodations. In return, we presented them with token gifts when leaving.

Birnin Kebbi is a major city. This is evident from the imposing buildings, the hustle and bustle and the exciting vibe. For the traveling merchants, this was their heaven on earth, even though the journey had not ended. We got to our base, offloaded the camels, and retired to rest.



It was there I gathered that Muhammadu Kanta established the Kebbi Empire. In Yauri, I have been told many of our people came to join the army of Kanta and never returned home. Yawurawa was also one of those who constructed the famous capital of Surame, from where Kanta and

many other Kebbi kings reigned.

At Gungu, Kanta's army was cosmopolitan, with soldiers of various ethnic stocks: Kabbawa, Reshe, Ariwa, Lelna, and Zabarmawa. They all supported him in winning many battles. Barely a year after establishing his empire, Kanta moved to Surame, where he ruled for thirty-eight years. Legend has it that, at one time, Kanta returned from an expedition to find that his second wife, Mukola, had left him. She was a beautiful maiden he married from Azbin, and loved her very much. She left because she was tired of living in a military garrison and had repeatedly requested him to build a city to serve as his capital. He eventually granted her request and built a capital at Surame as a testimony of his love.

The city had seven concentric stone and clay walls, a moat, and a gleaming two-storey palace, said to be polished with shea butter. Legend has it that the city was built by over ten thousand architects, planners, builders, and artisans from all over the Kebbi Empire, and over 8,000 men formed a four-mile chain to the Rima River, transferring water from one hand to the other, up until the construction site.

Surame had its day in the sun for 184 years, and when its glory days ended, Sarki Tomo moved the headquarters to Birnin Kebbi, which remained the empire's capital for another hundred years.

What a great tale of gallantry intertwined with a love story!

By morning, Madugu passed information around the camp that the animals needed to rest and the team members also needed to transact business; we would, therefore, remain here for some days. So, I had some time to

myself.

I went to see their jetty. the river here is not half as big as the one at Yauri. I wondered if any river in the world was as big as ours!

The river here was also open to boat traffic. I saw the ferries loading and unloading passengers and goods from both ends. There were many women among them engaged in brisk business.

At the jetty, I saw camels coming from the land of Berbers, carrying



huge panniers of salt; the merchants sold the wares they had brought and bought goods to take back home with them. These camels could carry three times what donkeys carry and endure long journeys with relative ease.

In this city, I did not see idle women. Every woman had something to sustain herself. Some ran their garken dabbobi, pens for goats, sheep, and chickens. Others processed sought-after raw materials like Shea Butter, groundnut cake, locust beans, cloth and mat weaving, and pottery. Some maintain farms for rainy and dry season agriculture.

On my way, I passed a huge house that was being constructed. The masons were very proficient at their jobs. They must have travelled far across the Songhai and learned modern architecture. Many of the houses here were embroidered with beautiful artwork.

They used clay mixed with a special kind of dry grass to make tubala - the building blocks- moving the dry blocks to the building spot and



handing them over to lay on the walls. I saw how they were arranged, straightened, matted with sticky clay, and levelled. The art of throwing the tubala and sticky clay to the magini, who are up on the ladder, is a spectacle to behold. I was excited and eager to see how embossed artistic designs were made on the walls.

My father had visited a shopkeeper who sold textiles from the North. The titled men and the elders were quickly getting used to these fabrics, so he ordered various types of Alkyabba, Zabuni, and Jallabiya, to satisfy the market in Yauri and its neighbouring settlements. He also ordered embroidery for royal horses. Many people were appointed to royal positions, and they desired these things. The dealer has very little in stock and promised to restock within a week, during which time my father will return for the purchase on our journey back to Yauri.

After six days at Birnin Kebbi, with the camels having rested and refreshed, the caravan moved on to Argungu, our final destination.

ARGUNGU: OUR DESTINATION

“It is not only the hare; the tortoise also arrives at the destination”

- Nigerian Proverb

The caravan arrived in Argungu after dusk, having left Birnin Kebbi immediately before the break of dawn. After exchanging a few words, the merchants parted ways at the entrance to the town, and everyone left for their various destinations. My family followed Madugu, the caravan leader, to his home; he was to be our host.



In the morning, I came out to witness the sunrise across the river, which looked brazen, and without anything to challenge it, it prepared itself to unleash a hostile day.

The Madugu introduced us to his family. He had a son, Walkila, who was slightly older than I and ran the business when his father travelled. The next day, I accompanied him to inform the major dealers that our parents had brought the awaited merchandise.

Moments later, the home was a beehive – haggling for best prices - and within hours, most of the goods had been transferred from seller to buyer. What remained went to the store. This is because the Azbin and the Berbers would come for them sometime during the following few weeks.

When the bustle subsided, I had a chance to learn more about Argungu. Walkila said Argungu became prominent as the capital when Birnin Kebbi was abandoned.

Argungu people were predominantly farmers and fishermen. They farmed during the rainy season and fished during the dry season. During the wet season, they produced an assortment of agricultural products like cowpeas, millet, groundnuts, vegetables, and Gum Arabic because the area has alluvial farmland due to the flooding of Gulbin Rima (Rima River). The area was also well-known for its trade in cows' hides and sheep's skins.

Apart from Kabbawa, Argungu was populated by the Gungawa, who inhabited the islands. These Gungawa, though they spoke our language, had lost their connection to Yauri other than the shared riverine lifestyle.



In these parts, they were famous for medicine; patients went to them for treatment, while apprentices went to them to learn. I remembered it was one of these doctors who treated the patient on our way here.

The Ariwa were also inhabitants of Argungu, living in small-unwalled compounds scattered at considerable distances from each other within fertile valleys.

In Argungu, I heard that the fishing festival marks the end of farming and the beginning of the fishing season. In other lands, I heard that after the rainy season, young men travel outside their enclave for *chi-rani* and women for *aikatau*, where they embark on odd jobs to raise money before the rainy season returns. This has good and bad sides, as these travels sometimes bring negative influences into the community. In Argungu, things were different; everyone was engaged all year round.

On arrival, I could see the majestic body of water popularly known as *Arora* in *Yauri*.

My father called on *Sarkin Ruwa*, his old friend, who was the custodian and protector of the body of water. He told us the story of the river and its creatures, sharing with pride that *Kashin ruwa* (fishing festival) had centuries of tradition, and its practice has been linked to the blessings enjoyed by the town. As a result, he said, people from far and wide, rich and princely, want to visit Argungu to see this beautiful side of fishing.

“I am happy you will get to witness this event first-hand,” he said, “as it is due to begin in a few days.” He added that the fishing period is strictly regulated, and we must appease the gods. I thought this regulated period was so kind and conservative to the environment.

My excitement had me visiting the riverside every day, watching the river birds and insects dancing their dance of predator and prey. I heard frogs and toads croaking their baritone songs. I even saw a tortoise in his solemn, unhurried chore. All this was beautiful, but I was most excited to see the legendary fish as big as men since I had never seen fish that size despite having a bigger river in *Yauri*.



On the festival day, Madugu took me and my family to the northern end of the town. He informed us that the section of the river where the festival was held was closed for the year. Fishing was only allowed in other sections of the river throughout the dry season. Due to this strict control placed on fishing, some families would migrate to the Northeast, where their rulers were not as strict.

During the festival, many spectators lined up along the riverbank; fishermen were there with their gourds and nets, and musicians were rending the air with music and fanfare.

Thousands of fishermen charged into the river, their skin glistening in the sun. The waters provided a level playing ground where every man had an equal chance of winning. Homa, the chief of the fishermen, went around in his canoe, supervising the fishermen. The musicians also followed the fishermen in roving canoes, singing songs of praise and encouragement. Soon, the fishermen began to surface with huge catches. When the festival was over, I saw various types of fish I had never seen in Yauri. The bigger catches were lined up for the Emir and other dignitaries to judge, and a winner was selected. Indeed, some were bigger than some men, but not all men. The winner was praised, and a song was composed in his honour. Most of the dignitaries, including Madugu, paid to purchase some of the other prize catches. We came home with fish that had been prepared, marinated, and roasted especially for us.

After resting for a few days, my father informed Madugu that he had to travel back to Birnin Kebbi to collect some fabrics he ordered from Morocco, which took two weeks to be delivered. Madugu informed him that our return journey would be in six months, so there was more than enough time. He disclosed that he, too, would be travelling to other locations while we were gone.

While chatting that night, Walkila suggested that my father travel back to Birnin Kebbi by boat to savour the environment. My father thought it was a good idea and agreed. Birnin Kebbi was a major port along the river, and I was delighted as I had always enjoyed being on the river or beside it, either fishing or simply meditating.

My father paid for three spots on the boat, and we settled down for the half-day journey. Experience has taught me to keep something to chew in situations like this. I had, therefore, brought chuku (cheese), dry date fruits, and water, all of which I shared with my parents.

The journey offered an opportunity for silent reflection.

As we glided on the river, passing one island after another, we beheld beautiful vegetation—thick groves that looked inaccessible. It was that period when the rains had subsided so the sun could extend its rays to all corners of the earth and warm the air. The river, in turn, neutralized this heat by spreading a persistent cool breeze. I could feel the heat of the sun on my head and the coolness of the breeze on my body.

We also passed several villages, and most looked similar to ours - circular huts, thatched roofs, suspended barns, animal pens, and houses walled with corn stalks. I had often asked myself why village people did not build houses like those in the city: houses with rectangular walls and angles

with flat roofs enhanced with azara - beams made from the Palmyra palm and adorned with indararo. The indararo, or roof drain, helps guide rainwater into containers.



I also noticed that many villagers were fishermen, just like my people. I noticed many of their fish-drying techniques.

I saw millet and rice farms spread everywhere, with people moving around them, checking the heaps of harvested grain. Millet was a staple food crop in those parts. Used to make tuwo, dawo, and kunu, it was a very useful crop for domestic and income-generating purposes. I saw some passengers dozing off and thought I should do the same, but this beautiful interplay between climate, vegetation, and water completely spellbound me. The orange sun, the blue skies, the whiteness of the sparse clouds, the greenery of the riverbank, and the slightly muddy waters all made for a most remarkable sight.

There was another girl on the boat with her mother; her name was Hauwa. I enjoyed her companionship. She told me they were not from these parts but from Timbuktu. Many years ago, her father had come to study at Gwandu, where he met and married her mother. She and her family visited every year to connect with their maternal relations.

I wondered how they covered the distance between Gwandu and Timbuktu, and she said they always travelled by boat. She revealed to me that Gao used to be the headquarters of the former Songhai empire. There were regular movements on the river routes, and Gao relied heavily on the supply of boats called Kanta from Kebbi. The western journey from Gao to Timbuktu was also through these boats. As the years went on, such cross-regional marriages became common.

Hauwa told me that after Birnin Kebbi, where we will part ways, the journey will take them to Gwamba, the shipping hub. According to her father, the Batonu, also known as Borgawa, populated Gwamba and many other cities after Birnin Kebbi. They are the most populous tribe in the kingdom of Borgu. Illo is the biggest Borgu city in these parts, and I have heard that they have other great cities like Nikki and Bussa, which are far off.

Surprisingly, despite the distance between the three sister cities, they have retained their fraternity, and security is not a problem. At

Gwamba, we will disembark to join a bigger boat, Kanta, on our way to our destination.

“We would stop over for two days at Niamey to get some provisions for my father and then proceed to Gao to spend a few more days before taking another boat to Timbuktu; we will be home in a few days,” she informed me confidently.

“If you have a chance, one day, take some time to visit Illo; it is close to Gwamba and is a place of great history, trade, and culture. Their people are skilled in many arts, they are brave and were said to have fought and defeated many kingdoms during their heyday.”

Her mother, who had been chatting with mine, invited us to visit Timbuktu, promising to grant us the royal treatment. “Try to locate my compound,” Hauwa’s mother encouraged.

We discussed issues until the journey’s end at the Birnin Kebbi jetty. Many boats loaded passengers and cargo for different destinations and canoes

with fishing nets and gourds. Once we alighted from the boat, I could see all kinds of fish being traded and how they were dried and prepared for people from long distances to buy them.

We went to the dealer’s home, who welcomed and fed us. The goods my father was waiting for had arrived. My father had made good sales of his ingots and implements at Argungu and now had enough money to buy more items. So, we stayed a few days, purchasing more items that had been brought from the land of the Arabs and the Berbers as they would fetch a good profit at Yauri.

My father had promised to take me to the historic city of Gwandu, where he usually stayed for some months after conducting his business. It was the tradition that merchants would visit Gwandu for some months to study under selected scholars and to pray for Sheikh Abdullahi Fodio at his Mausoleum.

GWANDU, THE SANCTUARY OF LEARNING

“Knowledge is better than wealth;
you have to look after wealth, but
knowledge looks after you”

- African Proverb

The stories I heard of Gwandu were entwined around the teachings of Islam and the Jihad of Usman Dan Fodio. The town was renowned for its robust scholarship system. If anyone desired answers to the questions of life, there was always a scholar to provide knowledge, wisdom, and insight.

The spread of knowledge stands Gwandu out among other towns. I heard that this town had many women scholars as they were allowed to learn and teach here. The practice of kulle (purdah), which restricted women from leaving their husbands' houses, was not encouraged, and women were permitted to seek knowledge and share it outside the home. This was justified by the imperative of bringing them out of ignorance and

wrongful practices, and as mothers, they were considered to play an instrumental role in raising righteous children.

No one impeded a woman's right to go out to obtain her livelihood or to acquire knowledge; this was justified by the fact that, in matters of religion, everyone is responsible for what he or she does in their lifetime.

In Gwandu, Nana Asma'u, daughter of Shehu dan Fodio, established the 'yan taru women's education system, an organisation of itinerant women teachers of other women. The women not only spread Islam but also supported those in need, incorporating refugees and captives and channelling their interests and needs through a representative of the Jihad community's values.

Through this organisation, Nana Asma'u made working for the community desirable and honourable. Asma'u relied on the title, Jaji, to designate the women assigned to leadership roles in the organisation. This model eventually spread to many cities.

The journey to Gwandu lasted the whole day. Daily contingents were traveling to and from both towns, and I even enjoyed a horse ride as some horses were being delivered to a dealer in Gwandu. We had a stop-over at Dagere to perform prayers and have a meal. We arrived at Gwandu very late, and my family went straight to our host's home, who received us warmly and gave us a place beside his compound, where we lived for the duration of our stay.

The next morning, my father prepared the quarters, purchasing foodstuff and provisions for our use. During this stay, he too will host people who will visit him because of his status as a person of influence visiting from Yauri.

My mother and I enrolled at a school administered by a Jaji; she had attended the same school during her previous visits. I attended the children's section, while my mother attended the adult section. On our first day, we met many women sharing perspectives on the virtues of



raising young girls into educated wives and mothers and the need for women to have a means of livelihood. The camaraderie between women, even when meeting for the first time, is heart-warming.

When we were not at school, my mother took me to visit a female herbalist who had been taught by our people, the Gungawa, and was thus happy to return the favour. My mother had learnt so much from her over the years, and now she was excited to introduce me. I joined the fray and learnt so much about common and uncommon diseases. She remarked that I had shown a keen interest in the field and that if I returned during the next few years, I would become a great medicine woman. She encouraged my mother to continue my training when we returned home.

In the four months that we stayed at Gwandu, I learnt so much about the history of Islam, the rules of worship, and the principles of social relations, as well as about useful medicine and herbs. My mother had been here many times before as a semi-scholar and herbalist. During our trip, the Jaji advised her to open a school at Yauri to enlighten other women and girls.

We enjoyed our stay at Gwandu, with my father learning from the sheikh while my mother and I learnt at Jaji's school.

THE RETURN TO YAURI

“He who returns from a journey is not the same as he who left”

- Chinese proverb.

After the time spent at Gwandu, I was a changed person. I became more interested in religion and medicine. My family returned to Argungu, made the necessary purchases from the Azbin merchants, and procured local products we would sell at Yauri.

When the time came, we joined the ayari back to Yauri, but we went through Birnin Kebbi, where our camels were loaded with Moroccan merchandise. Our journey back to Yauri took eight days.

We arrived on the outskirts of Yauri and began seeing green and expansive farms, donkeys feeding, and farmers tending



their crops; the pathway was decorated on the opposite side by the large body of the Yauri River, Arora Akami, with spots of fishermen's canoes gliding across.

Yes, I am home!

At the entrance of the town, the ayari stopped, and the elders shook hands before everyone took different forks to their settlements. We strutted gently, saw people moving around, giving the caravan a long stare, and then moving on. I observed a few waves of welcome, though.

When we got to our settlement, my family was received with jubilation and ululation. We dismounted and exchanged hugs. The animals were led away, and goods were offloaded at the shed.

My uncles and aunts rushed in with their spouses and children, and our neighbours too.

There was much chatter about how I had grown into a beautiful young woman.

Some goats were prepared for a family barbecue, and there was much food and merriment; men were around my father, women were around my mother, and the girls around me chattered and asked whether I found a suitor on my trip.

They believed that I would be the cynosure among the young men of Yauri. By late afternoon, the reception was in full gear, and my parents presented tsaraba (gifts) to all who came. My father also planned to visit the chief and report his return, which would be done the next morning.

It was dark when the guests left, and then we had the compound to ourselves. There would be no cooking tonight as the guests brought so much food. We would eat and rest our tired bones.

To me, the journey was an eye-opener. I learnt many things about our history, culture, trading, architecture, fashion, and environment. I understood that the most important part of our history is the connection between our various tribes. For example, I got to know that the blacksmith clans in Alela known as Zogne, were descended from Yauri people, who went there to take advantage of tamarite or iron ore and became acculturated by their hosts. In reality, we are one people.

I also learnt that Gungu, the name given to the Reshe people by Kabbawa, was the name of the first military base of Kanta, and later the armoury manned by the Reshe blacksmiths. To the Kabbawa, Gungu means an assembly, a group as in gungun mayaka, meaning a battalion of soldiers. So, when a commander gives the order 'Ar Gungu!' he is charging soldiers to action. That was how the name of Argungu came about. Our common ancestry with Argungu is linked to our mutual bond with water. While they celebrate fishing at Argungu, Yauri people celebrate Regatta, a display of marine capabilities. Regatta, or rigata, came from Reshe, meaning 'beat them to it.'

Another point of unity among the people was environmental conservation. Girmache Grove, Kainji Lake, and Argungu's unique fishing practices all point to the widespread practice of environmental conservation. In many parts of the Kebbi Empire, crocodiles, hippopotamuses, waterbucks, and manatees have been protected for centuries. Fishing rights are reserved in many rivers, river transport is common for long distances, and boat and canoe building was big business.

Farming was seasonal in most places, with the farmers in riverine areas enjoying year-round farming through their Fadama or wetlands. The rainy season enabled the growth of many food and cash crops. Once the season ended, people concentrated on fishing and hunting, while others went for chi-rani. Other trades - weaving, dying, iron smelting, masonry, processing of hides and skins, etc - also kept people busy throughout the year.

Regarding security, all the places seemed to have the same model. They engaged the youths all year round to prevent them from falling into

idleness. They also ensured that undesirable elements were prevented from having a local host in every town he visited. Those who are not businessmen register their presence with Mai anguwa (ward head), who would accommodate and feed them while monitoring them for any signs of criminal activity.

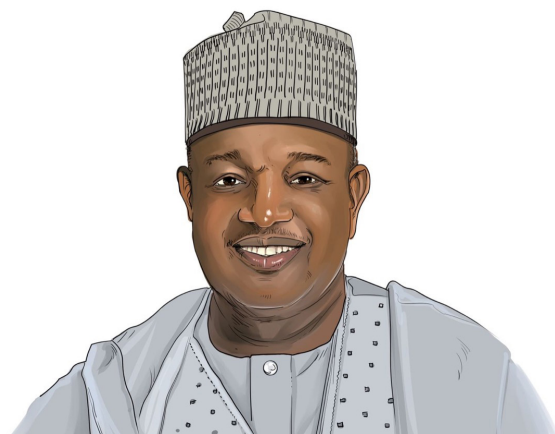
Over the years, we repeated such journeys, branching off to Gwandu for scholarship and reconnecting with old friends. That was how I became a student of knowledge and eventually a scholar and sought-after herbalist renowned for identifying and treating many illnesses.

LEARNING ABOUT KEBBI

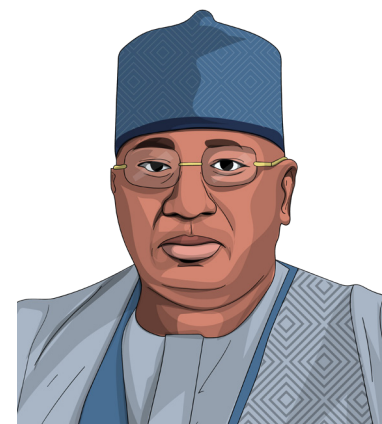


Governors of Kebbi State

Name	Title	Took Office	Left Office
Patrick Aziza	Administrator	28 August 1991	January 1992
Abubakar Musa	Governor	January 1992	November 1993
Salihu Tunde Bello	Administrator	9 December 1993	22 August 1996
John Ubah	Administrator	22 August 1996	August 1998
Samaila Bature Chamah	Administrator	August 1998	May 1999
Adamu Aliero	Governor	29 May 1999	29 May 2007
Usman S. N. Dakingari	Governor	29 May 2007	29 May 2015
Aminu Musa Habib Jega	Acting Governor	24 February 2012	25 May 2012
Usman S. N. Dakingari	Governor	29 May 2012	29 May 2015
Abubakar Atiku Bagudu	Governor	29 May 2015	29 May 2023
Dr. Nasiru Idris	Governor	29 May 2023	

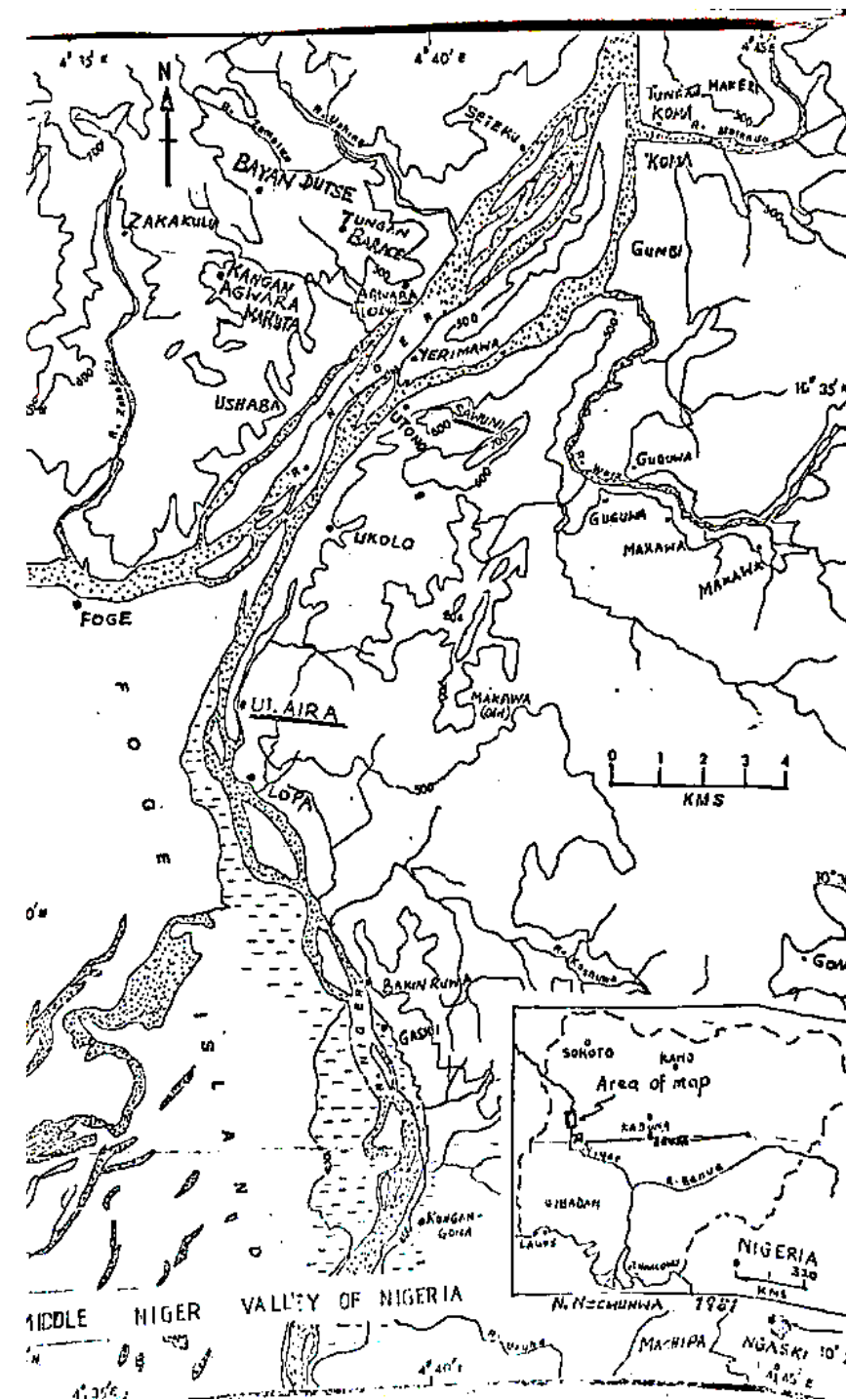


Abubakar Atiku Bagudu
Governor,
29 May 2015 - 29 May, 2023



Dr. Nasiru Idris
Incumbent
Governor

Old Ulaira and Foge Islands, Yauri



Old Ulaira

Old Ulaira was the site of a historic settlement situated on the east bank of the Niger River and populated by Kambari people. It was discovered and excavated in 1980, and an exhibition of the discoveries followed in 1981. Items displayed include stone objects, pottery, materials, iron objects, ornamentals, terra cotta figurines, and other miscellaneous objects.

The Foge Islands

The Foge Islands are located approximately 45km upstream of the Kainji Reservoir; it consists of the main island of Foge and two smaller islands. The island area provides an important breeding ground for various species of flora and fauna, as well as 180 species of birds. The Foge Islands were added to the Ramsar Convention's list of wetlands of international importance. It is considered a biodiversity hotspot and a significant wetland in the Sudan ecoregion.

Yauri Boat Regatta

Regatta is a Reshe word meaning marine war. It is celebrated at Yauri every year in March as a display of naval strength. It involves displays of cultural dances, music, wrestling, acrobatics, traditional magic shows, water sports, boats, and canoes. The Regatta also serves as a training exercise for upcoming Gungu warriors. Jirgin Amarya (bride's boat) is an aspect of the Regatta Festival where wealth, power, and influence are displayed during wedding ceremonies. The bride and her entourage are escorted in beautifully decorated Jirgin Amarya, accompanied by traditional music.



Uholo Festival

The Uholo festival is held annually within the Zuru Emirate for three days around December. During the annual celebrations, mature boys are initiated into manhood, and mature girls are initiated into womanhood.

Traditionally, it is used to celebrate the end of the 7-year Golmo training for young men who have now qualified for marriage. Part of the Uholo festivities involves the groom and bride's families organizing a feast.

Their virgin brides perform Uholo, a dance ceremony called Dato, for the departing Golmo graduates. There are many dances, wrestling, art exhibitions, music, and craft displays in Zuru villages during this period, which everybody looks forward to. During the event, communities display their potential in agricultural production. There are cultural dances, traditional wrestling, traditional crafts, and others.





Borgu

A large swathe of the old Borgu Kingdom is in Kebbi State. The people of Illo, Bagudo, Lolo, and many others traced their history to Borgu.

There are two versions of the history of Borgu, and both are linked to the legend of Kisra. On one account, Kisra was said to be a Persian king who suffered a military defeat in Egypt to a Byzantine army and was forced to remain in Africa. His army migrated into the Niger River region, eventually settling in the Borgu area. The second narrative mentions that Kisra was a traditional Mecca worshipper who refused to accept Islam and migrated with his followers to Africa. After sojourning first in Borno and later in Karishen (in Zuru Division), Kisra finally settled at Koko (Gwandu).

Legend states that Kisra's three sons, Woru, Sabi, and Bio, continued the migration. After crossing the River Niger, they got to Gunji - others believed it was at Swalla, where they parted from one another to found the cities of Bussa, Nikki, and Illo. The people of Karissen, an Acipu city east of Yauri, also named Kisra's grandson, Damasa, as their king.

Isgogo Slave Market

Isgogo market accelerated contacts between Zuru and Hausa-Muslim traders who came mostly from Kebbi, Katsina, Kano, and Zamfara with kola nuts, natron, cloth, and salt and purchased Shea-butter, locust bean cake, tobacco, iron ore, and honey. Subsequently, Isgogo was found favourable for the upkeep and trading of slaves because of its location in a valley surrounded by hills.

Today, the perimeter of the market fence is reconstructed with stone bricks. There are archaeological relics and artefacts made from iron, mud, stone, and wood, as well as bones, fossils, shell, and glass. Two gigantic silk cotton trees still stand in the market, along with two huts and the tomb of a white slave marketer. The market, however, came to a close at the abolition of slavery and reverted to dealing in agricultural products such as groundnuts, hides/skin, cotton, livestock, Shea Butter, etc.





Girmache Shrine

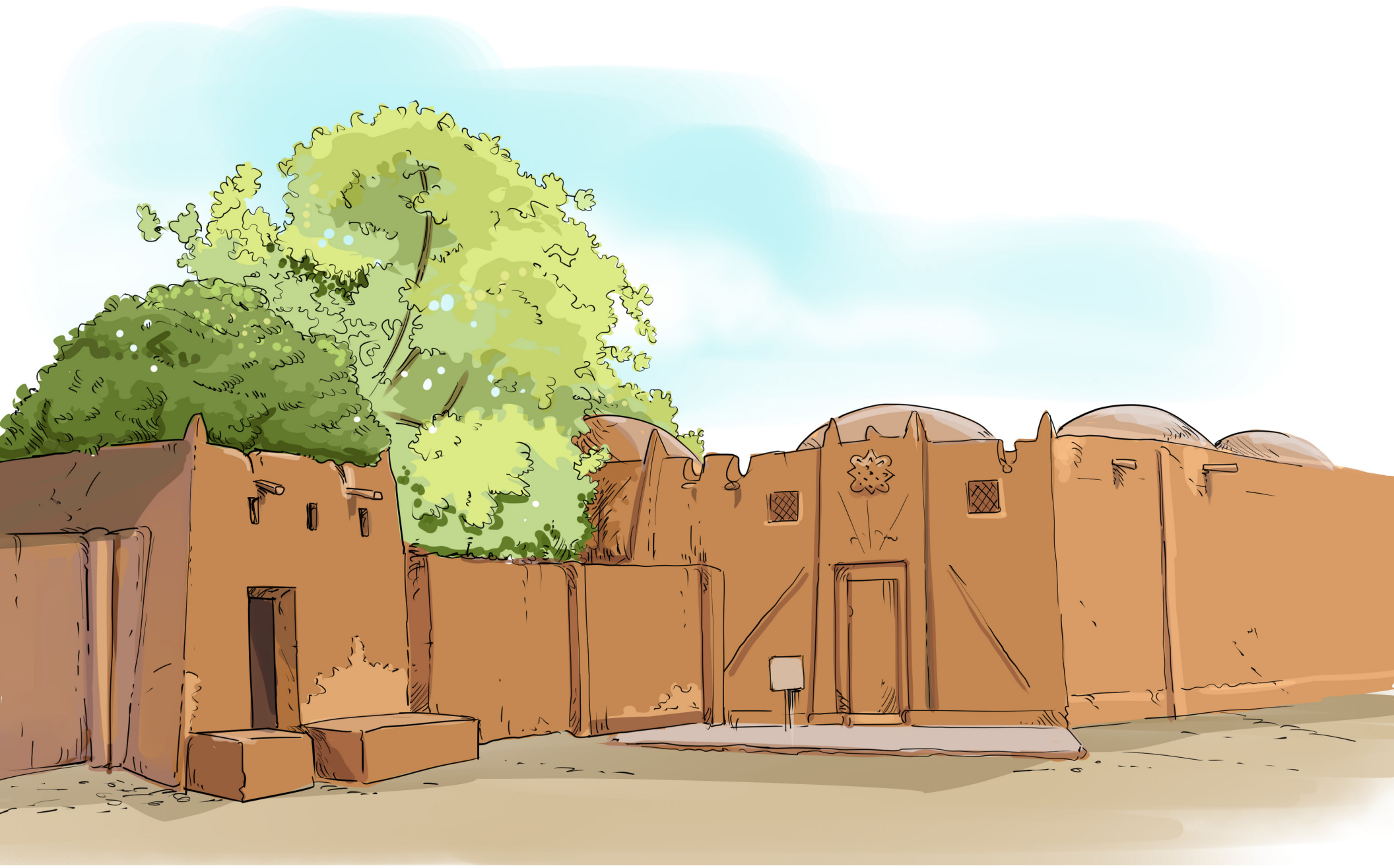
The Girmache shrine is in the Zuru local government of Kebbi State. The shrine is a grove because thick trees and water inhabited by crocodiles dominate the area, and local people come around to offer sacrifices to the gods of the shrine. Tourists also visit the area due to its lush vegetation. Legend has it that marauders pursued a warrior; he prayed to the gods of the land for protection and slipped into the pond for safety.

Argungu Fishing Festival

The Argungu International Fishing Festival is a natural attraction in Kebbi State and a travel destination. The yearly event attracts people from all over Nigeria and beyond, and it is a four-day cultural event that comes to a head with the fishing festival in the Matan Fada River, where any fisherman who catches the biggest fish is rewarded. The fishermen are given only one hour to come up with the biggest catch of the season, and nearly a thousand men jump into the river with their gourds and nets to fish after the gun signal. Apart from the fishing festival, the annual event also features musical, cultural, and sporting events.

source: Wikipedia





Kanta Museum

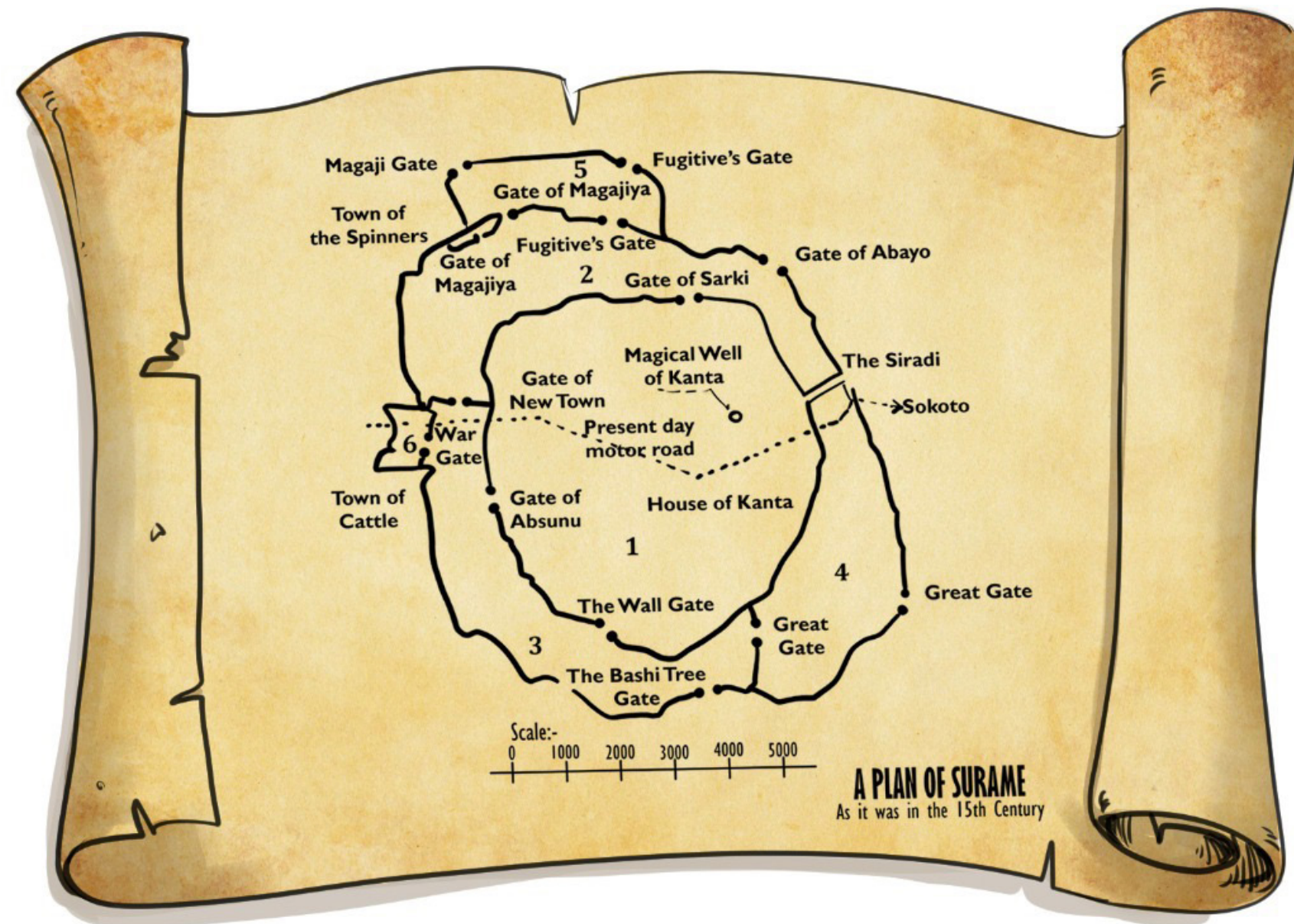
The palace of Emir of Argungu Yakubu Nabame, the great warrior. It served as the Palace from around 1831 to about 1942, but it was converted and named Kanta Museum in 1958. It displays a vital part of Kebbi's history, oral tradition, artifacts, art, and information on the wars of Kebbi. It stands out for its rich portrayal of the beauty and tradition embedded in traditional handicrafts.

The museum provides a window into Kebbi's brave historical past, humble beginnings, and how she has progressed. Visitors can walk through time and see the process of developing and preserving embroidery and metalwork in the Kingdom of Kebbi. The Kanta Museum is located in Argungu and is close to the main market.

Hottungo Festival

The Fulani cultural festival, Hottungo, celebrates the rich Fulani heritage. It plays host to Fulani from Nigeria, Niger, Benin Republic and Burkina Faso. The festival features women's home decoration, camel racing, sheep fattening, cattle fattening, archery, and cultural entertainment. The festival is also a celebration of the safe return of pastoralists and their livestock from the southern parts of the country and other areas. Kebbi pastoralists, especially sheep rearers (Udawa), usually pass through neighbouring countries for better grazing.





Surame

The ancient city of Surame is a Nigerian national monument. It was created in the 16th Century by Muhammadu Kanta Sarkin Kebbi. Covering an area of 19 km, the site includes the foundation remains of human settlements, walls, wells, and potsherds. Defensive walls were created from stone and mortar immediately around the settlements, as well as ditches dug around the greater area and filled in with thorny bushes as a defensive means. The ancient Kingdom of Surame had its prime between the 15th and 16th centuries and was abandoned in about 1700 when the capital moved to Kebbi. Surame was declared an ancient national monument on 15 August 1964 and was added to the UNESCO World Heritage Tentative List on October 8, 2007.

Tomb of Abdullahi Fodio

Sheikh Abdullahi Fodio was the brother of Sheikh Usman Dan Fodio, the great scholar and warrior of the 9th century. He became the first Emir of Gwandu (1809 – 1829), leading for 20 years. Sheikh Abdullahi was buried in Gwandu at his death, and his tomb has remained a tourist attraction since then. Sheikh Abdullahi participated in the jihad, which led to the establishment of the Sokoto caliphate. He ruled Gwandu and superintended the rest of the western flank of the Sokoto caliphate until his death. His descendants continue to rule the town until today.



Kings of Gwandu

Abdullahi Dan Fodio Muhammadu	1809 – 1829
Abdullahi Halilu Abdullahi	1829 – 1833
Haliru Abdullahi	1833 – 1858
Aliyu Abdullahi	1858 – 1860
Abdulkadir Abdullahi	1860 - 1864
Mustapha Muhammadu	1864 – 1868
Hanafi Halilu	1868 - 1875
Maliki Muhammadu	1875 – 1876
Umaru Halilu	1876 – 1888
Abdullahi Bayero Muhammadu	1888 – 1897
Abdullahi Bayero Aliyu	1897 – 1898
Muhammadu Aliyu	1898 - 1903
Haliru Abdulkadir	1903 – 1906
Muhammad Bashar Haliru	1906 – 1915
Usman Haliru	1915 – 1918
Yahaya Haliru	1918 – 1938
Haruna Rashid Muhammad	1938 – 1954
Bashar Almustapha Jakolo	1954 – 1995
Haruna Muhammad Iliyasu	1995 – 2005
Bashar	2005 - date



Muhammadu Iliyasu Bashar
Emir of Gwandu

Kings of Kabbawa

Gungu
Magaji Kulayi
Magaji Sakai
Magaji Gimba
Magaji Makata
Magaji Kotam or Kotai

Surame

	1515 - 1561
1. Muhammadu Kanta	1561 - 1596
2. Ahmadu dan Kanta	1596 - 1619
3. Dauda dan Ahmadu	1619 - 1621
4. Ibrahimu dan Kanta	1621 - 1636
5. Suleimanu dan Dauda	1636 - 1649
6. Muhammadu dan Ahmadu	1649 - 1660
7. Maliki dan Ibrahimu	1660 - 1674
8. Umaru Giwa dan Muhammadu	1674 - 1676
9. Muhammadu Kaye dan Suleimana	1676 - 1684
10. Ibrahimu dan Muhammadu Kaye	1684 - 1686
11. Muhammadu Nasifawa I dan Umaru Giwa	1686 - 1698
12. Ahmadu dan Umaru Giwa	1698 – 1700
13. Tomo dan Ibrahim (at Surame)	1700 – 1702
(at Birnin Kebbi)	1702 - 1717
14. Muhammadu Nasifawa dan Umaru Giwa	1717 - 1750
15. Samaila Tagandu dan Muhammadu Nasifawa I	1750 - 1754
16. Muhammadu Dangiwa dan Nasifawa II	1754 - 1755
17. Abdullahi Toga I dan Samaila	1755 - 1803
18. Suleiman dan Abdullahi Toga I	1803 - 1803
19. Abubakar Ukar dan Suleiman	1803- 1805
20. Muhammadu Hodi dan Suleiman	(1805 - 1827 underground at Kimba)

Kings of Kabbawa at Argungu

Samaila dan Suleimana	1827 - 1831 underground
Founded Argungu	1831 – 1831
Kingless interval of 38 years	1831 - 1849
Yakubu Nabame dan Samaila	1849 - 1854
Yusuf Mainasara. Dan Samaila	1854 - 1859
Muhammadu Baare dan Yakubu	1859 - 1860
Abdullahi Toga dan Samaila	1860 -1883
Sama (Ismaila) dan yakubu	1883-1915
(Appointed first grade Emir of Argungu in 1900)	1915 - 1920
Suleimanu Dan Yakubu Nabame Muhammadu dan sama	1920 - 1934
Muhammadu Sani dan Muhammadu Sama	1934 - 1942
Samaila Fari	1942 - 1953
Muhammadu Shehe dan Muhammadu Sama	1953 - 1959
Muhammadu Mera dan Muhammadu Sani	1959 - 1996
Samaila dan Muhammadu Mera	1996 - To date



Samaila dan Muahmmadu Mera
Emir of Argungu

Kings of Yauri

Tafiraulu Dynasty

Tafiraulu 1st	1411 – 1433
Kamuwa 2nd	1433 – 1456
Buyangu 3rd	1456 – 1480
Sakatu 4th	1480 – 1505
Yawuri 5th	1505 – 1531
Kisagari 6th	1531 – 1560

Jerabana Dynasty

Jerabana 7th	1560 – 1572
Gimba 8th	1572 – 1600
Lafiya 9th	1600 – 1601
Kasafaugi 10th	1601 – 1602
Jerabana II - 11th	1602 – 1663
Gimba II 12th	1663 – 1665
Kasagurbi 13th	1665 - 1665
Kana 14th	1665 – 1666
Janrina 15th	1666 – 1670
Dutsi 16th	1670 – 1674
Lafiya 17th	1674 – 1675
Kada 18th	1675 – 1689
Ibrahim Gandi 19th	1689 – 1709
Dan Ibrahim 20th	1709 – 1714
Mahammadu 21st	1714 – 1723
Lafiya 22nd	1723 – 1745
Yarazu 23rd	1745 – 1745
Umaru Gandi 24th	1745 – 1745
Suleimana 25th	1745 – 1770

Alu Lafiya 26th	1770 – 1773
Ahmadu Jerabana 27th	1773 – 1790
Shaaibu Madara 28th	1790 - 1790
Mustafa Gazari 29th	1790 – 1793
Muhammad A. D. Ayi 30th	1793 – 1838
Ibrahim D. Sarki 31st	1838 - 1844
Jibrin gajeren Sarki 32nd	1844 - 1853
Abubakar Jatau 33rd	1853 - 1858
Suleiman Dan Ado 34th	1859 - 1879
Yakubu 35th	1879 - 1880
Abdullahi Gallo 36th	1880 - 1890
Abdullahi 37th	1890 - 1904
Jibrin Abarshi 38th	1904 – 1915
Aliyu D. Abdullahi (regent)	1915 - 1923
Abdullahi 39th	1923 - 1955
Muhammad Tukur 40th	1955 - 1981
Shuaibu Y. Abarshi 41st	1981 - 1999
Muhammad Z. Abdullahi 42nd	1999 - To date



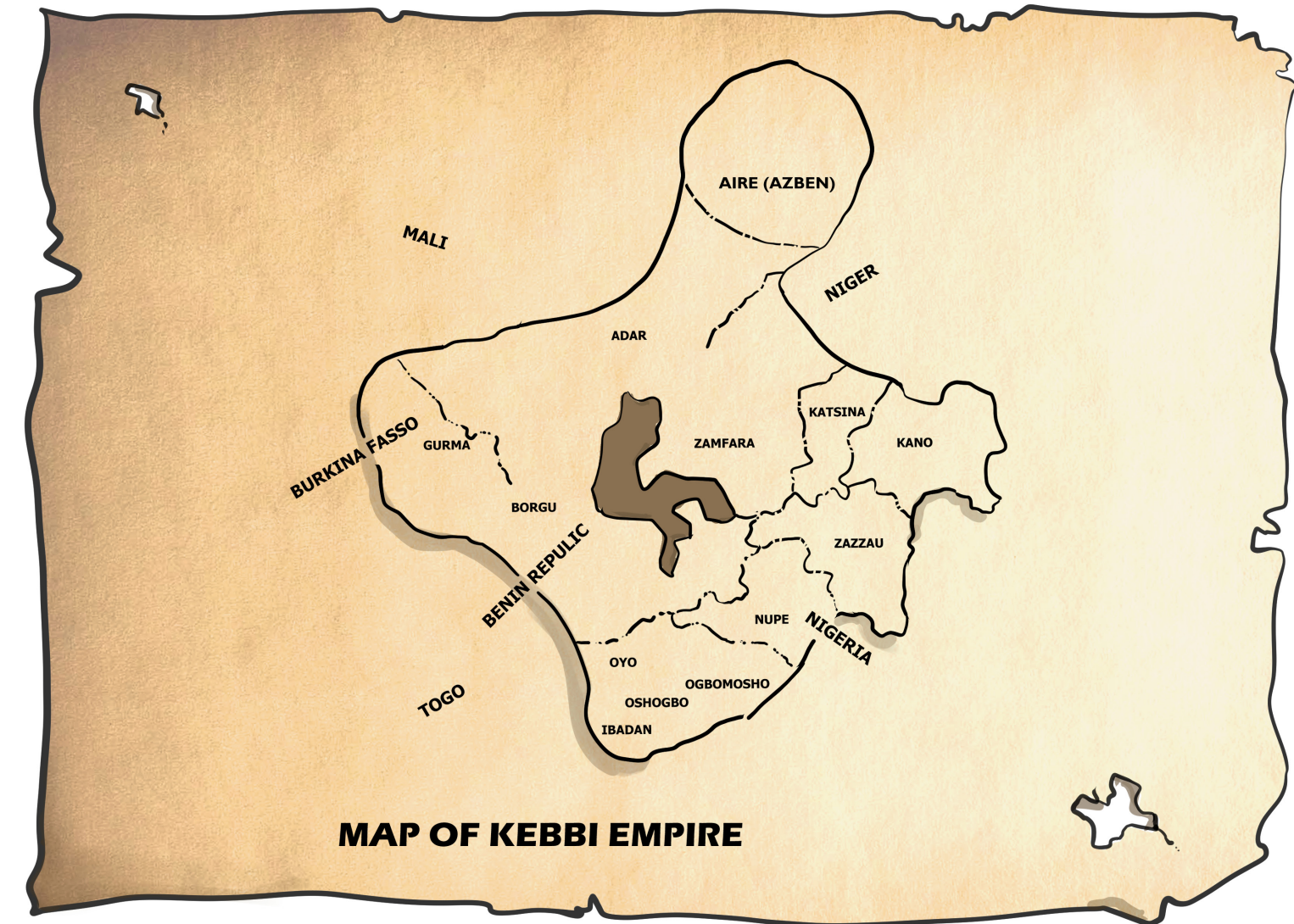
Dr. Muhammad Z. Abdullahi
Emir of Yauri

Kings of Zuru

1st King of Zuru - HRH Bogoji Gomo	1795 - 1803
2nd King of Zuru - HRH Zadna Gomo	1809 - 1857
3rd Emir/Chief of Zuru - HRH Yage Gomo	1859 - 1891
4th King of Zuru - HRH Nenge Gomo	1893 - 1891
5th King of Zuru - HRH Andi Gomo	1913 - 1915
6th King of Zuru - HRH Gambo Gomo	1915 - 1925
7th King of Zuru - HRH Bahago Gomo	1925 - 1927
8th King of Zuru - HRH Sami Gomo 1	1928 - 1945
9th King of Zuru - HRH Dantudu Gomo	1946 - 1960
10th Emir of Zuru - HRH Usman Danga Gomo	1964 - 1995
11th Emir of Zuru - HRH Muhammadu Sani Sami II	1995 - To date



HRH Muhammadu Sani Sami II
Emir of Zuru



Principal Rivers of Kebbi State

River Niger is the principal river in West Africa extending about 4,180 kilometres. Its drainage basin has an area of 2,117,700 km². Its source is in the guinea highlands near Sierra Leone border and runs through Guinea, Mali, Niger, Benin and Nigeria. It passes through Kebbi state and connects with River Sokoto, its tributary which is joined by rivers Ka, Rima and Zamfara. The abundance of rivers in Kebbi state provides great opportunity for irrigated farming, fishing and riverine travel and tourism.



GLOSSARY

Aikatau	-	Paid labour	Kabbawa (Hausa)	-	Hausa sub-tribe located in Kebbi kingdom
Alela (Lelna)	-	Zuru territory	Kashin ruwa	-	Popular fishing festival at Argungu
Apuno (Reshe)	-	Bridal farm service by Reshe groom	Kulle (Hausa)	-	Purdah
Ardo (Fulani)	-	Chief of Rugar Fulani	Kunu	-	drink made from millet and corn
Ayari (Hausa)	-	Merchant caravan	Madugu (Hausa)	-	Caravan team leader
Azara	-	Roofing beams	Magini (Hausa)	-	Builder
Azuguru (Lelna)	-	Zuru	Mai Anguwa (Hausa)	-	Ward or village head
Chi-rani (Hausa)	-	travelling outside the village for paid labour	Mbeedu (Fulani)	-	Colourful calabash covers made from straw
Chuku	-	Cheese	Reshe, Tsureshe	-	Native name for Gungawa
Dakarkari (Hausa)	-	Lelna, a Hausa coinage	Rigatta (Regatta)	-	Popular boating competition at Yauri
Dawo	-	Food made from millet	Rima River	-	Tributary of River Niger which passes through Argungu
Diga (Lelna)	-	Corn dough	Ruga	-	Fulani herder's temporary camps
Dorinar ruwa (Hausa)	-	Hippopotamus	Sarki (Hausa)	-	Chief
Fura da nono	-	Local gruel made from a mixture of millet and milk	Sarkin Ruwa (Hausa)	-	River priest
Garken dabbobi (Hausa)	-	Animal pen	Tengade (Fulani)	-	Sun-shade hat
Girmache (Lelna)	-	Crocodile shrine	Tubala (Hausa)	-	Mud bricks
Golmo (Lelna)	-	Bridal farm service by Lelna young suitors	Tuwo (Hausa)	-	Pudding made from millet, rice, corn or sorghum.
Gungawa (Hausa)	-	Reshe ethnic group	Uholo (Lelna)	-	Harvest/Golmo graduation festival
Gungu (Hausa)	-	Kanta's armoury, garrison and former Kebbi kingdom Headquarters	Walki (Hausa)	-	Loin cloth
Homa (Hausa)	-	The chief of the fishermen at Argungu	Yantaru	-	Women Movement in Gwandu
Huttungo Festival	-	Fulani herdsmen annual festival	Zogne (Lelna)	-	Blacksmithing clan
Indararo	-	Roof drain			
Isgogo (Lelna)	-	Town hosting ancient slave market			
Jabjabi (Lelna)	-	Vegetable soup			

ABOUT THE BOOK

Chilayya is the protagonist in this fascinating historical novel. She tells her Yauri Madrassa students about her adventures as a youth, narrating how she was privileged to follow her parents on a merchant's caravan that periodically visits Argungu, travelling through exciting places en route to the destination, including Zuru, Birnin Kebbi, and Gwandu. The trips allowed her to learn about the festivals, monuments, geography, environment, language, customs, and historical origins of the diverse peoples of what is today Kebbi State. She also picked invaluable skills along the way.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



This work has revealed Zainab Shinkafi-Bagudu as a master storyteller who, while running her humanitarian mission across Kebbi state, observed that young people are missing out on their fascinating heritage; this stimulated her to document her experiences in a beautifully illustrated story for their benefit.

She hopes that through this work, youths, who are its primary targets, will be inspired to ask about their heritage and learn the salient values of hard work, environmental consciousness, a sense of responsibility, and the strength of character to shun evil and do what is right.

The author is a Pediatric Consultant and Founder/ Chief Executive Officer of Medicaid Diagnostic Laboratories and Medicaid Cancer Foundation based in Abuja. She is a two-term First Lady of Kebbi State.

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