

BRIEF: BY BRO. JUSTICE GBEMI COKER

REPRODUCED FOR CIRCULATION BY THE JIBOLU-TAIWO SECRETARIAT

At the last Central Executive Committee Meeting held on 13th May 2000 here at Kemta house, I proposed an amendment to the Jibolu-Taiwo Family Constitution. The Constitution was made over half a century ago and has never been amended to the best of my knowledge. The proposed amendment was the need for an addition, to define persons who are or could be considered members of Jibolu-Taiwo Family.

In this regard, some recent events have set me on the need. At the time the Constitution was written, membership of the Jibolu-Taiwo was small and all embracing. Its members and their relationship were with Sarah-Taiwo known to every member and never in doubt. There was no discrimination. Its membership has now become very large and its members cannot be recognized or known to us all. Hence the need arose for the decision over two decades ago to produce or create what is now known as "Jibolu-Taiwo Family Tree". Unfortunately, this decision has not been implemented for more reasons than one and time is running against its successful implementation. First, those who possessed accurate knowledge of the genealogy and or descent of its members are practically all dead. Also, written records of them are now no longer available. I remember the existence of a large Jibolu-Taiwo Family Bible. In it were written names of every child of our illustrious grandfather, Isaac Olufusibi, with dates of birth and deaths. I have no knowledge who has it or where it was kept now. I last saw it, if I remember rightly, with either the late Oluwo Abner Coker or Oluwaji Coker (late) of Jimoh Lane, Lagos. His late father was A. Isiba Soyode Coker. One of his sons is Kehinde Coker. One of his grandsons, Olatunde Coker, lately of U.T.C. Cafeteria. Similar records may exist at the Kemta House and at Ogbe.

But on other important reason why the Family Tree has not been possible is the difficulty in the Family Tree where the position or class of persons whose ancestors were not nuclear or blood descendants of out ancestral mother, Sarah-Taiwo, but whose ancestors were either extended members of Sarah-Taiwo family and descendants members of any of the tree houses who had identified with and accepted as members of Jibolu-Taiwo Family. A clear example was Chief Ogunrombi of Kemta house. He was the father of Mrs. Bunmi Dawodu and another lady popularly called Oyinbo. I remember he also had a son, who died while he was a student at the C.M.S. Grammar School, Lagos. Our late cousin, Folorunso Thomas, brother of former head of Jibolu-Taiwo lived with him at 33, Princess Street when he came to Lagos after leaving Abeokuta Grammar School to seek for employment. Chief Ogunrombi attended Jibolu-Taiwo Family Meetings and was well known and recognized by all the members of the Family around 1938 till he returned finally to Abeokuta. We regarded ourselves as members of the same family. His children and descendants in the United States and elsewhere regarded us as same family. Another example was Chief Adebiyi Majekodunmi. He founded and was President of Jibolu-Taiwo Investment Committee. His mother was a relation of Sarah-Taiwo. Aderupoko, our great grandfather, gave her in marriage to Chief Majekodunmi of Ikereku (Abeokuta Oke Ona). His attachment to the Jibolu-Taiwo Family was very strong from his early childhood. He donated an electric organ to Methodist Church Itesi

in 1972. Our forefathers, elders of Jibolu-Taiwo Family strongly supported his desire and persuaded his father to send him to the United Kingdom to read Law when his late father decided to support only his half brother Dr. Majekodunmi of Okeono Lodge, Yaba to study medicine but was reluctant to give similar support to their nephew.

There is also the case of members of the Jibolu-Taiwo at Bakatari. We all remember the late Chief Bolumole Coker. All of us including the villagers at Bakatari regarded him and those other persons bearing the same surname: Coker, as members of the same family. This was made clear during the attempt of the Family to settle the dispute amongst two warring factions concerning Bakatari boundary dispute with Oyo State. During our investigation, both Bakatari and Abeokuta, both sides and all the witnesses admitted both warring sides were members of the same Jibolu-Taiwo Family. Another very potent example is the membership of the late Alake of Egbaland, Oba Oyebade Lipede. He was a very valuable member and Patron of Jibolu-Taiwo Family. Further still, are descendants of Lashore who initially bore the surname 'Coker'. They have always been recognized as very valuable members of the Itesi House of the Family. They own houses and live within the Family Compound. Their financial and moral contribution cannot be qualified. One of his descendants lately, won the first prize at the Children's rally quiz on the Family History. Some recent events have made me to cogitate on the issue "who are the members of Jibolu-Taiwo Family?" Some two years ago, a female member of the Jibolu-Taiwo Family resident in London came home (Lagos) for her engagement to a young man, similarly resident in the United Kingdom. I knew both of her parents. Prior to the ceremony, some of her sisters who I did not know before the time visited me and introduced themselves. There was one of them who handled the preparation for the engagement ceremony. I later asked her why she was not attending family meetings regularly. Sometime last year, she accompanied the sister again to my residence in Lagos. I questioned her again why she still failed to attend family meetings. To my surprise, her reply was "we are not regarded or recognized as members of Jibolu-Taiwo Family". Ofcourse, I knew the reason. Her grandfather and her father and late father's sibling regarded themselves during their lifetime till death as members of the family. And all of the descendants are still accepted as members of Jibolu-Taiwo Family.

We have always regarded all the members of household at Kemta, Ogbe and Itesi as one same Jibolu-Taiwo Family, irrespective of whether or not he/she is a nuclear descendant of Jibolu-Taiwo Family. Our fathers and we all, regard them as members of a great and illustrious family. The family has always been all embracing. There was however some embarrassing gossips, which should be deprecated and not encouraged.

In other to give certainty to the fact and to reassure those who are not blood or biological descendants of Sarah-Taiwo, our ancestral mother, it is necessary to amend the Constitution by defining membership of Jibolu-Taiwo Family to include not only nuclear descendants of Sarah-Taiwo but descendants of such other persons who had from time immemorial, identify themselves as members, recognized and accepted as members of Jibolu-Taiwo Family

If my explanation and suggestion is accepted, the Committee may decide to present this proposal as recommendation to the forthcoming Annual Re-Union or at a later Re-Union Anniversary for approval.

Prayers:

Membership should be defined to include descendants of:

- (a) Nuclear descendants of Sarah-Taiwo, the mother and founding mother of the Jibolu-Taiwo Family.
- (b) Recognized members of her extended family, who identify with the Family (i.e. The Erunwon sub-branch of Itesi) and
- (c) Recognised members of the household of any of the Three Houses (Kemta, Ogbe and Itesi) who identify with the Jibolu-Taiwo)

Signed

CHIEF GBEMI COKER

8th July, 2000.