



# ILE ISE EJIJOBBE IFA TEMPLE

## NEWSLETTER

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*The place where Yoruba culture and spirituality is practiced*

### **Ifa brings the spirit of cooperation among African people**



*The Ifa Shrine – the Ile Ise Ejiogbe Ifa Temple community giving honor and respect to Ifa and other Orisa*

### **IFA brings the African community together**

On September 30, 2001 Ile Ise Ejiogbe Ifa Temple celebrated the beginning of its 2001-2002 festival season with its first ever Ifa Festival. That Sunday afternoon, the festival began outside of the Ile Ise Ejiogbe Ifa Temple in Washington, DC where members of the Ifa Temple and the community gathered in excitement and anticipation around the Ifa Oke Orere (mound of Ifa for Ifa's staff) as many people had never seen an Ifa Orere. As master drummers Mustapha Ogunbayo Aloyinlapa and Akan priestess Olufunmilayo beat rhythms to Ifa, Chief If'Alade Babaegbe Omoawo Ajampo and Mama Tunde Akinyele, Chief Priest and Priestess of Ile Ise Ejiogbe Ifa Temple respectively, led the community in prayer to Ifa. After a month marred by tragedy, Chief If'Alade prayed for the protection of the community, the celebration of life, and a renewed commitment in the community to the spirit of cooperation in order to bring blessings to everyone.

*"Orere Damindi, Orere Damindi, Orere Damindi kin l'aiku, Orere Damindi, Orere Damindi ka l'aiku." "Ifa Orere unbind me, please grant me long life. Ifa Orere unbind us. Please grant us all long life".*

Awo Olufemi Adekun, Ifa Priest and Chief Assisting Priest of Ile Ise Ejiogbe Ifa Temple, led everyone in this new song sent from Ile Ife that asks Ifa to unleash the power in his staff to uplift the community. *Orere Damindi*. Drums beat and hands clapped while prayers for Ire (good luck), Ogbon (wisdom), Omode (children), Owo (money) and other blessings rang out across the yard of the Ifa Temple calling upon the power of Ifa, the Orisa, and the African Ancestors to improve the lives of those in our community.

Chief If'Alade, led a procession of energized festival guests inside the Ifa Temple to continue to uplift the Orisa and each other. As Mama Tunde Akinyele, began the Calling of Orisa, the spirit of renewal, rebirth, release and recovery filled the room as men, women and children prayed, danced and sang



*Festival guest gathered around the Ifa Oke Orere*

to the Orisa. Master drummer Mustapha Ogunbayo Aloyinlapa lead a core of drummers including Olufunmilayo, Baba Joseph Soh Ngwa, and Yumi Steve Hooks in songs that elevated the spirits of both people and Orisa. Once again the spirit quickly took hold of Awo Kola as he demanded that all salute Esu properly -- there is no progress without Esu! As the spiritual energy flowed through the room, people taken with spirit came out in front of Ifa's shrine to honor the Orisa in their own fashion – intense foot stomping by Awo Kola, powerful dance uplifting Osun by Mama Tunde, and the synchronized movements of Mama Fasoke Adekun and Mama Wande dancing in unison with arms raised to the ceiling. The energy escalated so rapidly that Chief If'Alade had to put Iyerusun powder on many people just to cool their heads. Everyone was being uplifted by the energy and spirit of the Orisa.

Once things calmed, Chief If'Alade delivered messages from Ifa. Ifa, who provides humanity with the wisdom and knowledge to resolve life's difficulties, revealed that the purpose of the festival was to focus on collective destiny, and coming together to work as a community. Festival attendees were advised to uplift one another and were reminded that through Ifa they will be protected. Ase!

Ifa came to promote cooperation among African people in all communities. For this Ifa Festival, Ifa brought people from Delaware, Maryland and Washington, DC together in the spirit of cooperation.

As old acquaintances were renewed, new relationships were created. Commitments to continue coming together were made. The spirit of Ifa flourishes.



*The spirit of Ifa guides the creation of new relationships*

## The Story of IFA

At the beginning of time, Ifa was in the heavens with Olodumare, the Great Creator. When Olodumare created human beings, Ifa was there as the witness and recorder of the fate of each human being that Olodumare created. As such, Ifa gained the knowledge of the purpose and destiny of every human being.

When human beings come to the earth, they come through the birth canal of their mothers. As humans enter this world, they "forget" what purpose Olodumare has given to them for their time on earth, and they arrive without any direction or guidance that can help them. So, Olodumare sent Ifa down to earth to help human beings and to guide them toward their destinies. When Ifa walked the earth, he was known as Orunmila, so he is often referred to by either name.

Orunmila lived in Ile Ife and spent much of his time helping human beings. His many children became important members of the community and heads of different villages. One day, there was to be a celebration in honor of Orunmila for all the help and guidance he had given to the people of Ile Ife. How their luck then changed from bad to good! At this celebration, one of Orunmila's children arrived wearing the exact same cloth as Orunmila. What disrespect! It was then that Orunmila knew it was time for him to return to heaven. He left the village and climbed up into a palm tree. He climbed and climbed until he reached heaven.

Once Orunmila returned to heaven, all the bad things in life began to happen to the people on earth. Things like hunger, disease, sickness, poverty, and fighting changed the fortunes of many people from good to bad.

Without Orunmila they did not know how to change their luck back to good. Orunmila's children went to the palm tree and begged Orunmila to return to earth, but he refused.

Olodumare needed him to stay in heaven and so he stayed. From the bottom of the palm tree, his children continued to plead for his help. Orunmila, being very compassionate, decided he would help the people, but he told them he would not return to earth. Instead he gave his children sixteen palm nuts and taught many of them how to use the palm nuts in order

to consult him on the issues of life and to get answers to their questions. In this way, Orunmila continued to do the work of Olodumare in providing human beings information to help them move closer to their destinies.

Orunmila taught his children divination with the Ikin (sixteen palm nuts). For thousands of years, Ifa Priests have maintained this traditional practice of communicating with the divine spirit of Orunmila in order to help human beings find their purpose while here on earth and to help them with the daily challenges in life that they face. In this way, the divine spirit of Ifa, the life of Orunmila and the practice of consulting the divine spirit of Orunmila for daily guidance have all come together as the traditional practice of Ifa worship.

Ifa has given all human beings a way to deal with the daily challenges of life and the struggles we all face.

As the witness to fate, Orunmila possesses the knowledge to help every human being change their luck from bad to good and to bring them the good things in life that are part of their destiny. Ifa transforms poverty to prosperity, turns sickness into good health, extends short life into long life, and changes losses into victories. It is Ifa who provides us these things. It is Ifa who guides us through life. It is Ifa who helps us move closer to the destiny granted to us by Olodumare.

Ifa is the daily practice of living one's life in accordance with the word of Olodumare, the Great Creator.

## Ile Ise Ejiogbe Ifa Temple Meets the World

From August 5-12, the Ile Ise Ejiogbe Ifa Temple sponsored Alade Osinnido Akinyele and Awo Olufemi Adekun to attend the World Wide Orisa Conference in Ile Ife, Nigeria (the cradle of Yoruba civilization) on the famous campus of Obafemi Awolowo University. Since the first conference was held in Ile Ife back in 1980, seven other conferences have been held around the world. This was the ninth conference held by the World Wide Orisa Conference Organization over a period of 21 years. The theme of this year's conference was "The Time Is Ripe".

Alade Osinnido and Awo Olufemi attended the conference as delegates sent by the Ifa Temple to observe and present the Executive Board (Wanda Abimbola, Chief Ifayemi, and Chief Fatunmise) of the conference with a rich portfolio of pictures, articles and stories highlighting the events Ifa Temple's 2000-2001 festival season. This Orisa conference was the first attended by representatives of the Ifa Temple, and allowed the Ifa Temple an opportunity to interact with other worshippers and practitioners of the Orisa. The Executive Board gave high marks of approval to the Ifa Temple and encouraged the Ifa Temple to "keep up the good work".

Many attended the conference from the Americas, Europe, and other African countries sharing and discussing their view of Orisa tradition. Several seminars were held where participants presented papers on the history, culture, and beliefs of the Orisa tradition. One of the highlights of the conference was, at the beginning of each seminar,

traditional dancers and singers performed dances and songs from the Orisa tradition. Many of the popular Orisa such as Obatala, Sango, Ogun and Ifa generated great interest and discussion about what drums, songs, and dances were appropriate in worshipping these Orisa. With this in mind, the conference illuminated the varying ceremonial practices of Orisa around the world and how Orisa worship is traditionally practiced in Nigeria.

The World Wide Orisa Conference closed its official business in Ile Ife with a business meeting of all the delegates attending the conference. In the business meeting, the delegates elected new officers for the World Wide Orisa Conference organization and adopted new policy for the next conference, which is to be held in Havana, Cuba in 2003. After the elections and other business, the delegates proceeded on to Osogbo for the Osun Festival and then to Oyo for the closing celebration.

## Ifa Crowns the Alade



*Ifa jigi jigi,  
Ifa ma gboro kan  
Won ni wa joye ile so mi.*

Mighty Ifa is heard everywhere. The Ifa priest with the most money is not always the priest that is honored. I rejoice because Ifa has granted me a title.

This orin Ifa (song of Ifa) describes the experience of many Ifa priests called to do the work of Ifa. On Alade Osinnido Akinyele's most recent trip to Ile Ife, the title of Chief Priest If'Alade Babaegbe Omoawo Ajampo was bestowed upon him. Alade is a traditional title he received in acknowledgement of being a spiritual leader in both Africa and America. His continual leadership, dedication and faith led to his new elevation and acknowledgement as Chief.

Alade has been a practitioner of Ifa worship since 1990. In 1992 he was initiated as a Babalawo in Ile Ife, Nigeria into the Royal House of Awosemo by Babalawo Eyinsile Awosemo, Chief If'Alade's spiritual father. Since that time, he has diligently and faithfully followed the word of Ifa and has dedicated his life to uplifting African people to a righteous relationship with Olodumare, the Great Creator.

The title Chief If'Alade Babaegbe Omoawo Ajampo literally translates as *'the chief priest who carries the crown of Ifa is the father of the society of children of secrets in the village of Ajampo.'* Ajampo is a village outside of Ile Ife that was established by Babalawo Eyinsele Awosemo for the training of Ifa Priests and Babalawos. The young Ifa priests and Babalawos (omoawo) in Ajampo have elected Alade as their Chief, which means he now carries the responsibility of their training and well being as priests.

