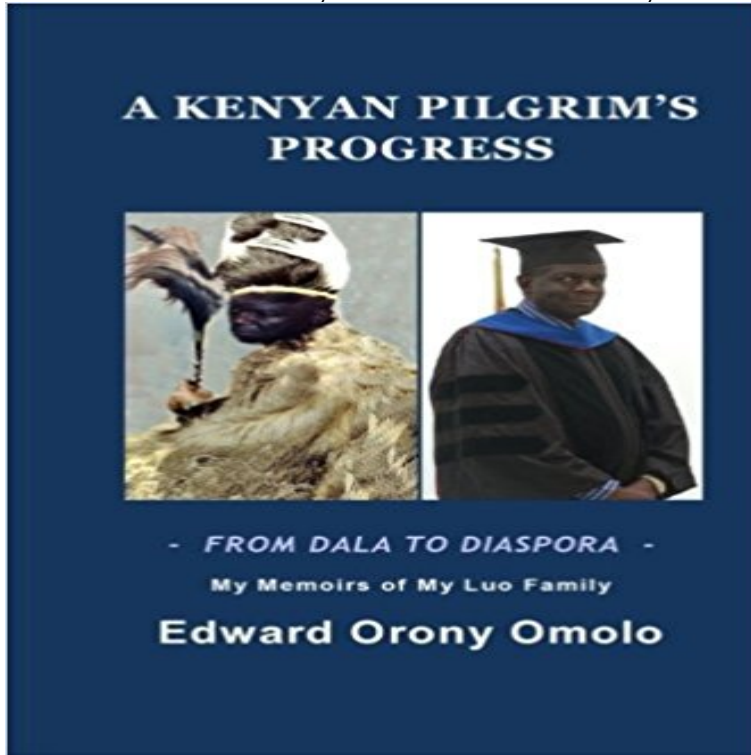


A KENYAN PILGRIMS PROGRESS-FROM DALA TO DIASPORA-My Memoirs Of My Luo Family



In A KENYAN PILGRIMS PROGRESS - FROM DALA TO DIASPORA - is a wonderful book replete with excellent pictures, combines life history, myth, Luo history and culture. A KENYAN PILGRIMS PROGRESS - FROM DALA TO DIASPORA is a wonderful contribution to Luo literature. It was against my parents principles to talk about adversity, the book deals with that subject, providing the memoirs title, setting the tone for everything that follows. In the book is a chronicle of changing cultural paradigms which exposes fearlessly and dramatically the life experiences of the writer and his relatives since 1800s, the book not only captures historic moments, but also preserves a peoples literature as, most of the works on Luo culture have been written by non-Luo scholars who, who made interpretations, drew conclusions and made claims using their alien cultural lenses. I wanted to participate from the inside, For example, the authors grandfather and father both were born out of levirate unions (Ter) and then his mothers were involved in levirate unions after the death of his father, so he has seen it all The author adds that his life, in the United States also motivated him to write these cultural memoirs. I got a chance to live in the western world, and I saw how every group that had emigrated to the US loved their culture, be it the Hispanics, Chinese, (East) Indians, or Italians, etc. The book is an encyclopedia of Luo cultural exemplars regarding birth, naming of children, growth, and passage of rights (initiation), marriage, starting a home, death, burials, and levirate relationships (wife inheritance). Every culture has merits and demerits, says the author. It makes no sense to abandon ones culture on account of its demerits. Thats throwing out the baby with the bath water. Based on my experiences within my own family, I have tried to illuminate both good

and bad features in both cultures through the interaction of two very different cultures, a veritable clash of traditional (DALA) and modern civilizations (DIASPORA). The result - a transitional hybrid of norms and self-determination within the old culture on the one hand, as well as an acknowledgement of that transformation, albeit somewhat reluctantly, and mellowing of western attitudes and condescension on the other hand, each hand learning and benefiting from the other. Bridging the gap between tradition and modernity with a symbolic cross-cultural handshake signals a cultural coming together. That is the macro-theme of these memoirs. The micro-theme is very personal. How a pressure-cooker environment of transition deeply impacted the author personally throughout every aspect of his life constitutes his confessions as he reveals his ups and downs, his failures and successes, his sadness and his joys. Within the span of merely a century, from his grandfather and grandmother to his father and mother and to him and his children, the author has experienced a transformation that the western first world has taken well over two millennia to achieve. Author jokingly noted, I suppose you could conclude that the westerners just are slow learners. But that would be ungracious and unjust, as notwithstanding the stress and anguish of the transformation experience, I am so grateful for that encounter of African and European (principally British) cultures, starting in the early 1900s with my grandfathers generation until today. We both have learned from one another and are much the better for it. In each generation the reader will witness the increments of this accelerating transformation. A fascinating question, yet to be answered, will be the implications for the author's own children, the next generation, as all but one of his five sons were born in the USA, and all live in the USA. In the final chapter, the next generation will leave with the reader a hint of an answer to that question.

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