

## Religion among the Kambari People before and after the British Colonial Rule

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### Abstract

The research on which this paper is based is on the history of religious development among the Kambari people from the pre-colonial to date. It also examines the main contributing factors that had assisted in both preserving and in weakening the Kambari traditional religious practices, an event which later brought about remarkable cultural and religious changes among the people. Generally speaking, notwithstanding the acute shortage of documented sources the paper has been able through the use of oral data to bring into light the major structure and dynamics of the Kambari traditional religion and its interaction with Islam, Christianity and Western Education.

### Understanding African Traditional Religion

Religion is fundamental, and perhaps the most influential factor in the life of most Africans, yet the essential principles of the African traditional religion are too often unknown to foreigners who most often misinterpret the African worldview and beliefs. Since religion is central in the life of Kambari people, it cannot be studied in isolation. Its study has to go hand in hand with the study of the people. However, in order to direct the study to the rightful setting, the technical concept of African traditional religion needs to be properly understood. A study of the practitioners of the religion could then follow.

Normally, when we speak of African Traditional Religion, we simply mean the indigenous religious beliefs and practices of the Africans. According to Awolalu, African traditional religion is the religion which resulted from the sustaining faith held by the forefathers of the present Africans, and which is being practised today in various forms and shades by a very large number of Africans, including those who claim to be Muslims or Christians.<sup>1</sup> A close investigation of Africa and its societies by Foullah shows that religion is the root of African culture and is the principle that determines African life. Therefore, "traditional African religion is inseparable from the life of African".<sup>2 1</sup>

This paper presents the Kambari traditional religion and the beginning of its interaction with other religions.

Paganism is one of the most common words used in describing African traditional religion. Originally, a pagan was regarded as a person who was not a Jew, or a Christian or a Muslim.<sup>3</sup> This took a different meaning in relation to its application to Africa. It was used to refer to a people who had no religion as well. It needs to be understood that Africa has a religion. So describing the African traditional religion as paganism is to overlook or downgrade the African religious experience and to deny the religious heritage and abiding values of the Africans.<sup>4</sup>

### Geographical location and historical origin of the Kambari people

Regarding the history of the Kambari people, there has been incessant controversy among the indigenous scholars of History like Adamu and Nasko, which raises a fundamental question on the existence of

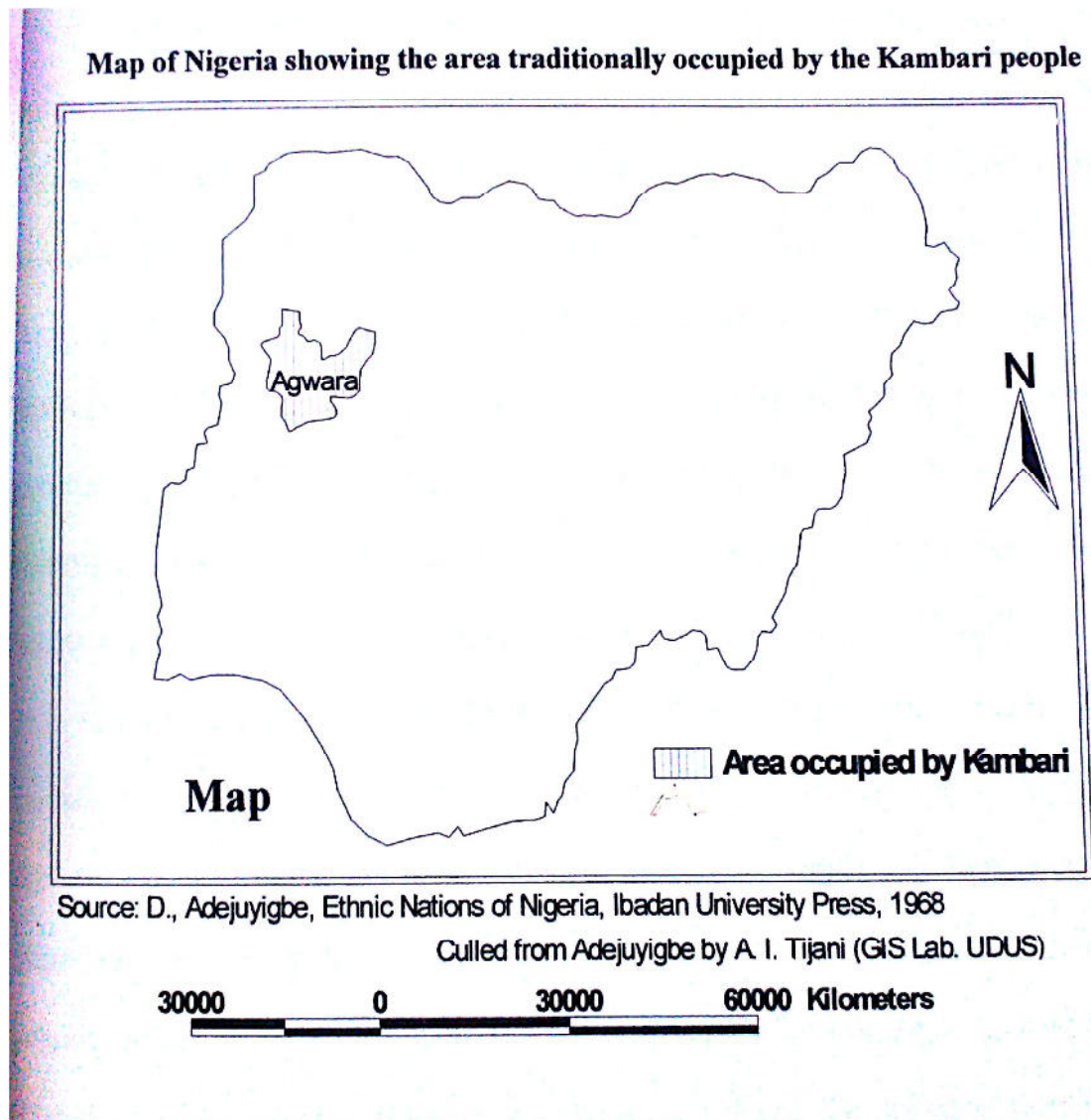
1 See: J. O. Awolalu, "What is African traditional Religion?", in *The Studies in Comparative Religion*, Vol. 10, No. 2, *Spring Journal*, 1976, p.1.

2 F. Leopold, "Traditional Beliefs and Practices Before and After the Colonial Period", Freetown, Evangelical College of Theology, 2009, p.1.

3 Awolalu, *Op.cit.* p.2.

4 Apart from paganism, some words such as animism, fetishism and polytheism are often being used in describing the African traditional religion. See: , *Ibid.*, p. 2. The peculiarity facing entire African religion is that, it is based on oral transmission, which is also not written on paper but in peoples' hearts, minds, oral history, rituals, shrines and religious functions. Moreover, it is not the religion of one hero, for it has no founders or reformers like Gautama the Buddha, Christ, or Muhammad. Similarly, it has no missionaries, or even the desire to propagate the religion, or to proselytize. However, the adherents are loyal worshippers and, probably because of this, Africans who have their roots in the indigenous religion, find it difficult to tell the history of its origin. See: Awolalu, *Op.cit.*, P. 2.

Kambariland<sup>5</sup> as an independent kingdom. Kambariland or *Kasar Kambari* could be described as the territory which *Kambarawa* regarded as their traditional homeland to the exclusion of all others, just as the Hausa people regard Hausaland (*Kasar Hausa*), as theirs. Looking at matters in this way, one can say that there was Kambariland because up to the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a large territory which was occupied almost exclusively by the Kambari people. This territory is located on the eastern bank of the River Niger in the present Yauri and Kontagora Emirates. The only non-Kambari people living in the territory are Hausa people who were and are still concentrated in three towns only, namely Birnin Yauri, Agwara and Ngaski. Agwara ceased to be a Hausa town when the government of Maginga transferred to Ngaski in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the Hausa artisans and traders gradually followed. As shown on the map attached herewith, the territory stretched for more than fifty kilometres to the east of the River Niger.<sup>1</sup>



The geographical area that could be described as Kambariland is now in the present Yauri Emirate of Kebbi State and Kontagora Emirate of Niger State of Nigeria. Quite a number of Kambari are also found in the present Borgu Emirate of Niger State and Zuru Emirate of Kebbi State. But vast majority of Kambari as at present live in Niger State.

5 However, this claim for Kambariland is challenged by the tradition of origin of the parent stock of the Kambari people that is the Awunci, which says that they, the Awunci, were migrants from Mecca in Saudi Arabia who left that area when Mecca was conquered by the Muslim forces in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D. How long it took them to get to where they settled finally in the Yawuri area is not given in the tradition. So the Kambari were not the autochthons of the territory they now occupy. They were immigrants at one stage in the past. For more details about kambariland, see: Abubakar, Mansur "History of the Akimba group of the Kambari People to the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century", UDUS, M. A. History Dissertation, 2010, P. 11.

The origin of the word Kambari has not yet been investigated, but it is the name by which the people choose to identify themselves. It is noted that in their relations with other peoples like the Hausa, they call themselves Kambari, they categorised themselves in four groups, namely the Awunci (the Kambari of Ngaski District), Avadi (in Ibeto and Rijau Districts of Kontagora Emirate), Akimba (Wara and its environs), Ashingini or Agaushi (Auna District) and Ashen (the Kambari of Bussa District). Therefore, the word Kambari is a general name given to the people who speak various similar dialects called Kambarci. These people are now scattered all over the western section of the Nigeria's Middle belt.<sup>6</sup>

The Kambari groups are related to each other linguistically, that is having some similar words with small variations, and they also have many of the same ideas expressed by different words. Some do not understand one another but whenever they live together even for a short time they easily learn to understand one another. Other ways in which their groups are related include cultural practices, religion, trade and acceptance of a common given name by other language groups as Kambari. The Kambari relate to one another by using Hausa as a trade language but those living close to each other communicate in their various dialects with little modifications while those that live in a community highly dominated by a particular Kambari ethnic group, speak the most dominant dialect of the Kambari language of the area.<sup>7</sup>

With regard to the origin of the Kambari people, several writers and historians have given attention to it citing several traditions. The most widely acceptable tradition of Kambari origin even among the indigenous Kambari informants, is that of Adamu, which traced their origin from Mecca after a certain religious clash with the Holy Prophet over the use of the Holy mosque, an event if real, must have happened between 611 A.D. and 632

A.D.<sup>8</sup> On leaving Mecca they came along with one of their deities of worship called *Lata*, which by then was very prominent in the Ka'abah mosque. Subsequently, a division of the emigrants finally settled in the area that is presently called Ngaski District in Kebbi State. They built shrines for their deities in a grove, later called *Kurmin Lata*. *Lata* in the opinion of Adamu is still the principal deity of the Kambari living in that area. They also built three principal towns, namely Agwara their administrative headquarters, Macupa their commercial center and Sawuni the seat of their chief priest. The group of the Kambari said to have come from Arabia are the Awunci group. The other groups developed as splinters from the Awunci.<sup>9</sup> <sup>2</sup>

### **Kambari traditional religious beliefs and practices**

The dominant social institution that governed the affairs of the Kambari people was religion. Religion gives meaning and significance to their lives both in this world and the world to come.<sup>10</sup> About 80% of the Kambari live in rural areas with the substantial number who still adhered to African Traditional Religion. However, many of them are followers of Christianity and Islam. *Magiro* cult was widespread and practiced by the Kambari in Birnin Yauri, Kambuwa, Ngaski, Sakaba, Salka, Agwara and Wawa Districts. God, spirits and ancestors were the foundational elements of faith for the Kambari and were still the constitutive part of their lives. The most important deity which was conventionally worshiped by the Kambari was *Kameli*.<sup>11</sup> The Kambari in their traditional beliefs also worshiped in many places that include river banks, trunk of big trees, caves, animals, mountains and on hill tops. The same spots were also used for rituals, festivals, and prayers. In the beginning, the Kambari from all parts of Ngaski District used to gather at *Kamburra's* shrine which was a nettle tree at Kwanga on Foge Island.<sup>12</sup> In all ceremonies, *Bori*<sup>13</sup> dances, animal sacrifices and consumption of local beer called *maro* in Kambari language, are excessively practiced.<sup>3</sup>

6 M. Adamu, *The Rise and Fall of Hausa Rule in Yawuri and Maginga Kingdoms from about 1425 to 1913*, Zaria, Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd., 2014 (Forthcoming), pp.14-15.

7 Oral interview with Alhaji Attahiru Giwa, Wara Village Head (over 70 years), at Wara- 22/04/08, from 11:45a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

8 Adamu, *The Rise and Fall of Hausa.....*, pp.5 & 7.

9 *Ibid.*

10 See: H. D. Gunn and P. F. Conant, *Peoples of the Middle Niger Region: Northern Nigeria*, London, International African Institute, 1960, Pp.20-21.

11 *Kameli* means God in Kambari language. All Kambari believed in God, called *Esile-Uli* (white God). *Esile-Azuba* (God in the sky or heaven) among the Avadi, the Akimba and Agaushi had *Kameli* or *Kasheli*, *Osulo* in Agadi, and while in Mawunci is *Keshili*. According to their religious belief God does not deal or directly relate with people, but through intermediary efforts with smaller gods. These include gods of the whole community and of a family or individual. The religion itself is called *kutoni* (worship) or *kutoni-kalijani* (worship of gods) in Awunci or Muwanci dialect; *Emili* in Avadi, *Emoli* in Agadi and *Kameli* in Akimba and Agaushi dialects. It appears that the Kambari carry out their religious initiation rites in stages. That is initiation into family cults comes before the ones into community or general cults. The religious ceremonies were not elaborate; the chief Priest used to show the secrets of the religion to the youths and they must not reveal them. See more details in, The document of CAPRO Research Office, *Kingdom at war (An ethnic survey of Niger, Kebbi States and FCT)*, Kaduna, Baraka press ltd., 1995, PP. 121-122.

12 See: Gunn and Conant, *Op.cit.*, Pp.20-21.

Presently, the Kambari appeared to be one of the strictest adherents of African traditional religion in Nigeria, and in West Africa. Their major traditional religious beliefs and practices are discussed in the pages that follow.

#### The *Lata* worship

*Lata* is the earliest deity of worship of the Kambari people. It is believed to have originated from the Middle East (specifically in Saudi Arabia). It is similar with the name of a prominent idol mentioned in the Glorious Qur'an 53:19, worshipped in Mecca and vicinity. At present, it was not yet clear if the *Lata* shrine found in the Kambari area of Ngaski District is similar to that of Mecca. However, what is widely known about the Kambari tradition of origin is that they originated from the area now called Saudi-Arabia. So the general conclusion was that, the Kambari came along with their *Lata* from the Middle East and formed its shrine at *Kurmin Lata*.<sup>14</sup> It is the greatest of all Kambari deities.<sup>15</sup>

The priest and chief custodian of *Lata* deity is called *Makwashi ma-Lata*.<sup>16</sup> The annual rite is normally held when guinea-corn begins to ripe. During the worships, prayers for good crops, hunting fortunes and numerous progeny were asked. According to many Kambari informants, in the early days there was no limited time for the consultation of *Lata* shrine. It used to be consulted on daily basis and when the need arose. However, for a couple of centuries to date, the worshippers mostly implore for rain during its scarcity. Ceremonies like *goge* musics used to take place inside the shrine, followed by several sacrifices like slaughtering of dogs and the blood poured on the laid-stone where the *Lata* was stuck.<sup>17</sup>

Gunn and Conant described *Lata* as a shrine of nettle-trees but what was found and confirmed at the *Lata* shrine was neither a nettle-tree nor even an idol as was conventionally expected, but a piece of black stone in colour. This casually corresponds to the existence of a "black stone" at the Ka'abah. According to *Lata* Chief Priest called Gamajere, the stone remained as the sacred sign to the worshippers which indicate the early positioning of the *Lata*. To him, *Lata* is said to have disappeared into the sky but it is also believed that it still listens and answers to their prayers. Kambari from very far away areas still used to carry out long journeys after harvest, in order to pay their religious tribute to *Lata*.<sup>18</sup>

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13 *Bori* is a traditional animistic religion of the Hausa people of West Africa, which involves spiritual possession that resides in physical things. The *Bori* as state religion in Hausaland is both an institution to control the spiritual forces, and the performance of ritual dance and *goge* music by which these spirits are controlled and by which illness is healed. See: "Bori Religion", in [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Bori\\_religion](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Talk:Bori_religion)., accessed 16/8/2011.

14 *Kurmi* is a Hausa word meaning a grove. In Kambari dialect it is called *Kutcu*. So, *Kurmin Lata* here refers to the grove where their deity "*Lata*" was housed.

15 In a group discussion with Gamajere Barashe (over 80 years), interviewed at Lata Village, 17/10/2013, time: 11:00-12:30 p.m.

16 The Chief Custodian is also sometime referred to as *Dadi*. See: Conant and Gunn, *Op.cit* , p.29

17 Gamajere....*Op.cit*.





Photograph showing the front and rear views of the remnant of Lata grove (Kurmin Lata )  
Photo by Mansur Abubakar 17/10/2013

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A Stone laid where the *Lata* deity was placed and still been worshipped  
by the kambari

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18 In discussion with Gamajere, *Op.cit.*



Photograph of the Chief Custodian of Lata Shrine

### The *Magiro* system<sup>1</sup>

The *magiro*, which according to Nasko<sup>19</sup> seems to have developed out of the spirit of the most ancient and perhaps most powerful religious cults of Hausaland (*Kasar Hausa*), and is often termed as greatest of all fetish (*kakan Tsafi*). The centre of this cult at Kwatarkwashi in the present Zamfara State was in a rock called *Dugai*. In the past, and to some extent up to now, the area was dominated by the *Maguzawa*.<sup>20</sup> The *Magiro* cult is believed to have spread amongst the Kambari tribes and who probably have now become the custodians of this religious practice. The Kambari found it useful because it helps to enforce discipline, especially amongst their women.<sup>21</sup>

The *Magiro* has now become a widespread cult in the Kambari territory but the practice has not been static. Some recent researches have shown that, almost all the Kambari have a variety of *magiro* except the Akimba. For instance, in Auna District, among the Agaushi and Ashen *Amomo* is their type of *magiro*, while in Ngaski, Wawa and Agwara Districts among the Awunci, there were varieties of *magiro* such as *Amomu*, *Awisu* (also pronounced as *Akwiso*) and *Agunu*. The Avadi of Salka District possessed *dodo* cult which is generally referred to as their type of *magiro* and in Birnin Yauri District among the *Agadi*, what is still in existence is *magiron makera*, mostly owned by private individuals worshipped in their houses. To them, the spirits of *magiron makera* have recognition only in a family setting and not in the community setting.<sup>22</sup>

At Makata'i village, two types of *magiro*; namely *Awiso* (*Agunuko*) and *Abara gimba* were found whose Chief Custodian, titled *Gata*, was one man called Magala Taji. The ceremonial rites used to take place

19 See, G. M. Nasko, *The Life of Kungulu and Madabe*, Kaduna, N.S.S., 1984, p. 38.

20 *Maguzawa* are Hausa people who still adhere to some of the tenets of the pre-Islamic traditional religions of the former Kano and Katsina kingdoms in northern Nigeria. Most of the *Mazuzawa* people are found in the rural areas in the Kano and Katsina areas. They are known to have facial scarification similar to early rulers of Kano and Katsina under the Katumbawa lineage. In terms of culture, there are only two major differences between Muslim Hausa and the *Maguzawa*: religion and social organization. See: Greenberg, Joseph Harold, *The Influence of Islam on a Sudanese Religion*, New York, monographs of the American Ethnological Society, 1946, Vol. 10, Pp. 1-2. Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maguzawa\\_Hausa\\_People](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maguzawa_Hausa_People), accessed- 23/3/2011.

21 In Nasko, *Op.cit.*

22 In a group interview with Magaji Ango et al. (over 100 years), interviewed at Kambu Village, 27/12/2012, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.



when the need arises such as during rain scarcity or imploring for heals during some widespread sicknesses. Among the sacrificial animals used are fowls, goats and dogs which are slaughtered and the blood is poured in the shrines. The worshippers normally consume *maro* excessively during their veneration and a little of it poured on the shrine. The ceremony is usually accompanied with *goge* music and *bori* dances mostly supplied by the Hausa.<sup>23</sup>



Photograph of *Magiro Agunu (Abara gimba)* at Makata'i Village

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23 In a group interview with Magaji Ango, *Op.cit.*



A photograph of *Magiro Awiso* at Makata'i  
Photo by Mansur Abubakar 17/10/2013



Photograph of *Magiro Agunu* deity at Macupa  
Photo by Mansur Abubakar 17/10/2013

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24 In discussion with Makwashi ma-Shende, Tammaha Cidawa (over 90 years), at Macupa, 17/10/2013, 9:00-10:00 a.m. Conant and Gunn have described the deity as a silk cotton tree. See: Conant, *Op.cit.*, p. 27.



### Kameli ka-Shende

*Shende* is a name of a tall and hug silk-cotton tree popularly known as *rimi* in Hausa and mostly found around Ngaski town, within the ancient settlement of the remains of old Macupa town. Macupa was one of the major old settlements of the Kambari of Maginga.<sup>24</sup> Recent researches have shown that the *Shende* shrine is still in its ancient position, mostly worshipped by the Awunci Kambari and environs. The Chief Priest is popularly known as *Makwashi-ma-Shende*, while the deity itself is called *Kameli ka-Shende* (the God of *Shende*). Usually, the annual ceremonial rites used to take place after millet harvest. Each family head used to bring fowls and local beer-*maro*. The fowls were sacrificed, and eaten there and the blood poured beneath the cavity of the shrine. This was followed by the offering of prayers imploring their god for good harvest and successful hunting expeditions.<sup>25</sup>

According to the reigning *Makwashi ma-Shende*, Tammaha, *Shende* deity is considered as a masculine while few others that surround it like *Kabori*, *Kakpa'ie* and *Maka'uou*, were feminine standing as *Shende's* wives. Therefore, it was a spiritual rule that *Shende* must be consulted firstly before proceeding to implore the blessings of his wives. The major blessings that the worshippers request from *Shende* were childbearing, peace and prosperity, as well as good health. For the case of child bearing, the barren woman would be sent to *Shende*, carrying a beer (*maro*) pot on her shoulder along with chickens. Prayers are normally offered after slaughtering the chickens requesting for childbearing.<sup>26</sup> Usually, the woman becomes pregnant after a while. On the day of her deliverance, the child is bathed with water, boiled with *Shende* leaves, and for this reason, the child bears the name *Shende*.<sup>27</sup> It is pertinent to note that *Shende* was a source of protection to the people of Macupa and is still a symbol of unity among the indigenous societies living in Ngaski District and environs. This is because, with the exclusion of Hausa-Muslims, the Fulani, Gungawa and Lopawa tribes also do visit and implore help from *Shende* from time to time.<sup>28</sup>



Jerega (*Makwashi Mashende*), the Chief Custodian of *Shende* Shrine  
Standing at *Shende* deity in Macupa Village  
Photo by Mansur Abubakar 17/10/2013

<sup>25</sup> Tammaha, *Op.cit.*

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> This was testified at old and new Dilli villages, where I found two Fulani children bearing the names *Shende*.

<sup>28</sup> In discussion with Tammaha and Labbo Bagaruwa (56 years) at Macupa Village, *Op.cit.*



Photograph of a tree where Shende Shrine is placed at Macupa

#### Kabori deity

According to Gunn and Conant, *Kabori* (also written as *Kabeari*), whose Chief Priest is called Maraiya, was a silk-cotton tree like *Shende*. Its purpose was unknown but the annual rite is in March.<sup>29</sup>

According to the present Chief Custodian of *Kabori* shrine, *Makwashi Ma-Kabori*, only good health and childbearing were implored from the *Kabori* deity. Sacrificial animals here are goats and fowls.<sup>30</sup>



Photograph of dilapidated *Kabori* Shrine at Macupa Village

Photo by Mansur Abubakar 17/10/2013

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#### Kakpa'ie

At the *Kakpa'ie* shrine, only good health is asked for. There was a gigantic spiritual silk-cotton tree beside the deity. The tree is believed to have survived for a couple of centuries. However, in 2010, the tree was cut down by a certain Hausa wood worker called Garba. He is the son of a prominent trader and politician called Alhaji Sodangi Ngaski. The case was about to create unrest but it was later resolved following the intervention of the

<sup>29</sup> Gunn and Conant, *Op.cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>30</sup> In discussion with *Makwashi Ma-Shende*, along with some *Kabori* worshippers at the shrine, *Op.cit.*



District Head of Ngaski, Alhaji Aliyu Ibrahim (1998 to date). The man repented for his wrong deed and was forgiven.<sup>31</sup>



Photograph of *Kakpa'ie* deity at Macupa  
Photo by Mansur Abubakar 17/10/2013

#### *Harakwai* and *Mutumin Bisa* deities

*Harakwai* and *Mutumin Bisa* are interrelated. The Kambari make clear distinction between the two deities. *Harakwai* is believed to have been the mother (*Uwar*) of *Mutumin Bisa*. During sacrificial offering, consultations to *Harakwai* come first before that to *Mutumin Bisa*. The sacrificial animals were some chicken and a ram, depending on one's ability. At least a sacrifice must be done, and the blood poured on the site. A pot of local wine is also to be presented. A variety of food is also taken to the shrine is sim-sim (locally called *ridi*). Wealth is what is often solicited from the two deities. Like *Shende*, the Lopawa and Gungawa also worship *Mutumin Bisa*. A similar deity was found at the entrance of Kwanga and Kalaria villages, where the settlers are mostly Kambari Akimba and Lopawa. Also, other deities of *Mutumin Bisa* were found at Gungun Tagwaye and Cupamini villages in the present Ngaski District.<sup>32</sup> <sup>2</sup>

31 In discussion with *Makwashi Ma-Shende*, along with some *Kabori* worshippers at the shrine, *Op.cit.*

32 In group discussion with Sakali Melevu Kefekum (over 80 years), discussion held at Ketaren Gidan Sakali, 17/10/2013, 3:00-4:00 p.m.





A photograph of Sakali, the Chief Custodian of *Mutumin Bisa* and *Harakwai* Shrines standing beside his deity at Magumi  
Photo Mansur Abubakar 17/10/2013



A photograph of Harakwai deity at Magumi  
Photo by Mansur Abubakar 17/10/2013



Dilapidated shrines of *Mutumin Bisa* at the entrance of Kwanga Village  
photo by Mansur Abubakar

### **The Kambari traditional religion from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century**

No society and no religion are static, as both changes gradually. Like other African societies, the Kambari people and their religion have undergone rapid changes in modern times, starting from the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century to date. The coming of colonial rule along with many of its influential forces in Kambari territory was seen as the real form of disorder that has affected the entire peoples' tradition and culture. It needs to be remembered that Islam predated Christianity in not only the area of study but in the whole of northern Nigeria.<sup>33</sup> However, many factors were responsible for the crumbling and disappearance, as well as changes, in the Kambari traditional religion and even their entire culture. Most of these forces that aided the cultural and religious changes among the Kambari were historical in nature, and therefore, have to be chronologically narrated to meet the historical demands as follows: <sup>1</sup>

### **The role of Hausa-Muslim settlements and their impact on undermining the Kambari traditional religion**

The intrusion of Islam into the Kambari territory could be dated back to the period between 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries when some Hausa-Muslim, mainly from Katsina Kingdom, came into the area and established their settlements within the defunct Maginga kingdom of the Kambari.<sup>34</sup> It was later that the Hausa people took control of the kingdom in the last quarter of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The control remained to date. However, the Hausa rulers did not encourage the spread of Islam among their subjects and this explains why the efforts made by some individuals turned out to be fruitless. The Kambari considered Islam as religion of Hausa people that was only aimed at assimilating them into Hausa community via language and culture. Many Kambari rejected Islam for more than a couple of centuries until in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century when some few Muslim associations began to penetrate the territory.<sup>35</sup> Nonetheless, the presence of the Hausa society in the area had produced some religious changes among the Kambari, though it appeared to have been Kambari-Muslims without its normal practices due to lack of proper Islamic religious knowledge. A lot of pagan practices have been retained and there were frequent relapses into paganism even among the Kambari Muslim converts until when some group of Hausa-Muslim migrant traders, seasonal farmers, artisans, clerics, diviners, itinerant haberdashers and many others began to frequent the area and finally established their permanent presence there. Most Muslim traders took dual roles of trading, spreading Islam and educating people. Since then, the glory of Islam began to see real light in

33 See: E. Ade Odumuyiwa, "The Place of Christianity, Islam and African Religion in Nigerian Society", in D. Razaq, Abubakre et al (eds.), *Studies in Religious Understanding in Nigeria: Islam, Christianity and African Religion*, Ilorin, Nigerian Association for the Study of Religions, 1993, Pp. 316-317.

34 Maginga Kingdom was a Kambari chieftaincy, which was coined after the name of their deity also called Maginga that existed long before the establishment of Hausa rule in the area. See: Adamu, *Rise and Fall....*p.7.

the region as some considerable number of Kambari people were drawn to Islam.<sup>36</sup>

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Oral source show that Islam had existed among the Kambari Awunci of old Agwara, the parent-stock of all the Kambari sub-cultural groups. Agwara was the first founded and oldest town of the Kambari. The town was blessed with some few indigenous Muslims and immigrant Muslim *Mallams* who took the great task of spreading Islam among the Kambari people.<sup>37</sup> Infiltration of Islamic influences was no doubt plausible among the Kambari and their neighbouring tribes of Gungawa and Lopawa. Religious changes among the Kambari was noticeable. During my fieldwork, I discovered that there was hardly a Kambari settlement where the message of Islam had not reached. In most of the Kambari villages and towns I visited, it was observed that Muslim *Mallams* have already established several Qur'anic and *Islamiyyah* schools, thereby spreading Islamic civilisation among the Kambari.<sup>2</sup>

### **The impact of Nagwamatse slave raids on Kambari traditional religion**

Undoubtedly, the era of the Nagwamatse family (1864-1901) of Kontagora, was one of the most disturbed periods in Kambari history, and indeed the most exhausting. The Kontagora slave raiding continued up to the time of the British conquest when Nagwamatse was defeated by the British army in 1902.<sup>38</sup> Some recent oral traditions however indicate that the prime factor for the early Kambari disintegration and migrations was the Umaru Nagwamatse's (1864-1876) raiding manners over the vast Kambari population who were mostly the Avadi, Awunci, Agaushi and Akimba people. It is a fact that Umaru and his sons Abubakar Modibbo and Ibrahim Nagwamatse (1883-1902) of Kontagora raided the Kambari towns for slaves and booty, and also burnt their settlements, including shrines and crops. Evidence show that shortly after he became leader, Ibrahim Nagwamatse had launched series of attacks on Ngaski, Makawa, Salka, Mamba, Anaba, Auna, Sabon Birnin Jindane, Shagwa and Wara.<sup>39</sup> The Kambari informants were of the view that, just like the Nagwamatse era was blamed for not having played any role of fighting Jihad and spreading Islam in the Kambari territory, it also brought about serious setbacks to the progress of the Kambari traditional religious settings in the sense that the era succeeded in destroying the Kambari and their general lifestyle. The region was depopulated as many Kambarawa in the neighbourhood fled to Bussa side of the River Niger and never returned to date.<sup>40</sup><sup>3</sup>

This action led to the dispersal of vast Kambari communities and eventually made them to undertake series of widespread migrations to different communities in the present day Niger State and even beyond, and at different times. Consequently, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, many Kambari settlements such as Agwara, Macupa, Sawuni, Gwazali, Dakamala, Wara, Kure, and Libata were almost empty leaving the shrines of their traditional deities behind. The destinations of many Kambari were unknown but some that later returned home during and after colonial rule were said to have appeared as practicing Muslims and Christians.<sup>41</sup> This shows that they had contacts either with Islamic or Christian faiths during their absence.

### **Effect of the 1968 Kainji Dam Resettlement Exercise on Kambari Traditional Religion**

Following the resettlement of vast tribes to new environment in 1968, most people living on the western and eastern banks of River Niger like the Gungawa, Laru, Lopawa, Busawa, including the majority of Kambari Akimba were faced with setbacks in their traditional religious aspects. Most of their traditional religious sites were swallowed up<sup>4</sup>by water. Some of such sites can only be seen when the water draws back in the dry season.

35 Among the early Muslim associations that came into the Kambari territory were *Jama'atu Nasril Islam, Izalatil Bid'a wa Iqamatus sunnah*, Islamic Education Trust (I.E.T.) and later, Muslim Students' Society (M.S.S.), *Fityanul Islam* etc, discussion with Lumamu, *Op.cit.*

36 See: Abubakar, *Op.cit.*, p.121.

37 In group interview with Malam Abubakar Barau, (Ngaski Village Head, over 70 years), at Ngaski, 22/4/2013, 9:30-12:00 p.m.

38 O. Charles, *The Making of Northern Nigeria*, London, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., Frank Cass and Co. Ltd., 1965, Pp. 122-123.

39 See: Adamu, "A Hausa Government in Decline: Yawuri in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century", M. A. History Dissertation, Zaria, ABU., 1968, p. 262. Adamu added that even Modibbo had launched attacks on Kambu and Anaba, and Ibrahim too raided Makwando, Mafonge, Kadabo, Shagwa, Auna, Wara, Majinga and Mazabo and also attacked the Kambarawa stronghold of Macupa where he met great resistance, he later captured it losing his brother Dangaladiman Dogon Gwari in the battle. Pp. 265-267. Also, in discussion with Magala Taji. He added that Umaru Nagwamatse was killed at Anaba and buried at Mamba. He was shot in the neck with a poisoned arrow.

40 See: O. Temple, *Notes on the Tribes, Provinces, Emirates and States of the Northern Provinces of Nigeria*, Temple, C.L.(ed.), 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., London, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd, 1965, p.202. Also in B. Hamilton, *Gazetteer of Kontagora Province*, Frank Cass, London, 1959, Para 41, p. 30.

41 In a group discussion with Alhaji Hassan Majidadi Libata (aged over 100 years), interviewed at his residence Libata town, 21/10/2008, time- 10:00-11:00 a.m. Also see: In a group discussion at Shagwa village with Mal. Audu Dan Gado Dan Malam Bawa (over 100 years), 26/8/2012, time- 1:00-3:00 p.m.

42 For more details about the resettlement, see: "Kainji Dam and the people": *The Story of the Dam – its Economic and Social Significance to the people of Nigeria*, Lagos, Nigerian National Press, 1969, pp. 37-39. During the resettlement the



For instance, little has been discovered about the site of Kambari deity of “Maginga” that was said to have been destroyed by the River Niger.<sup>42</sup> Moreover, the Kambari of Akimba and Awunci who considered farming as their main occupation have finally fled their new settlements moving eastwards beyond Niger State in search of vast farming land. Along the way, they were believed to have established contacts with new societies that later influenced their religion. Some of the Kambari who fled became non-religious, but wandering in bushes as they had no deities to worship. So when early Christian missionaries reached them in the beginning of the 1970s, they easily became submissive to the new faith.<sup>43</sup>

The concepts of social justice in traditional Africa created under a new Islamic Empire of Sokoto, which rendered the non-Muslims in Yauri, Zuru, Kontagora and Borgu Emirates with *Dhimmi*<sup>44</sup> status was another major factor that helped in retaining and sustaining traditional religions of the Kambari and other vast non-Muslim tribes in these emirates. The non-Muslims enjoyed privileges and protection as well as religious freedom under such an Islamic system. This has explained why the Kambari become among the last non-Muslim tribes to accept Islam lately in Nigeria.<sup>45</sup>

### **The role of modernism in changing the Kambari traditional religion: The coming of Christianity and Western Education in Kambari territory**

A major factor that contributed in bringing remarkable cultural and, foremost, religious changes among the Kambari was the role of modernisation, mostly brought in during colonial era in Nigeria. The influential forces of modernisation comprised of the introduction and role of Western education and the coming of Christianity, which served as by-products of Western customs. Describing Christianity as a modern agent of civilisation, does not negate the supremacy of Islam being the earliest and widely known religion to have eliminated most African primitivisms.<sup>1</sup>

The first social effect of colonial rule in Nigeria was the introduction and spread of Christianity.<sup>46</sup> Apart from churches, Western secular schools emerged as culture-modeling centres where Western European cultures were protected and transformed. In colonial Africa, Christianity was spread mostly through Western education. In some parts of Africa some children were reported to have accepted Christian faith from Westernized Christian oriented school teachers who served as agents of Christian evangelism.<sup>47</sup> The case was entirely different in Kambari territory because most of the Christian-oriented elementary schools opened in the territory played greater role of spreading Islam among the Kambari and neighbouring tribes, instead of spreading Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Evidences show

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first batch commenced on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1968, followed by the second batch on 14<sup>th</sup> May 1968 and finally on 6<sup>th</sup> June 1968. Thus resettlement was completed.

43 In group discussion with Dan Gado, *Op.cit.* It is pertinent to note that the resettlement had helped in accelerating social interaction as contacts have been precipitated among the Kambari Islanders and other societies of different ideological and cultural orientations and some villages that had 37 percent of their people listed as Muslims before the resettlement later claimed to be almost 100 percent Muslims. See: Salamone A. Frank, “Becoming Hausa: Ethnic Identity Change and its Implications for the study of ethnic Pluralism and Stratification”, in the *Journal of International African Institute*, vol. 45, No. 4, 1995, p. 415.

44 *Dhimmi* derived from Arabic word. Here, it refers to the Prophet Muhammad’s charter or even agreement reached with the non-Muslims in the 6th year of his migration at Medinah. The Prophet granted to them a pact which is a monument of enlightenment toleration, ensuring them the right of religious practices, protection of life and properties, fairness and justice. In return, the non-Muslims living under such an Islamic government must never plan any treacherous plan against the Muslims. For more detailed information, see: A. Rahim, *Islamic History*, Lagos, Islamic publication Bureau, 1987, p.34.

45 R.A. Adeleye, *Power and Diplomacy in Northern Nigeria, 1804-1906: The Sokoto Caliphate and its Enemies*, London, Longman Group Ltd., 1971. P. 73.

46 See: E. P. T. Crampton, “Relations Between the British Administration, the Missions and the Emirs” in *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, London, Macmillan Ltd., 1975, Pp. 45-46.

47 In northern Nigeria, such evangelical efforts at schools during colonial period was carried out and encouraged by Reverend Dr. G. P. Bargery who originally appeared as C.M.S. missionary agent. He retired for health reasons, but later came back as a Government Superintendent of Education where he monitored the posting of Christian teachers in government schools and encouraged them to spread the gospel messages to their pupils. Bargery was a well known Hausa scholar and after his retirement from government, he worked on a new translation of the Hausa New Testament. See: Crampton, *Op.cit.*, p. 124. In the 1950s, St. Paul’s Secondary School Wusasa became one of the leading schools in the North where it appeared as a major missionary base, used in reaching the Pagan Hausa Maguzawa students and their parents in Zaria Emirate. See, *Ibid.*, Pp. 133-134. Also, see the case of Late Yusuf K. Lule son of Abdullahi Kironde, the former Principal of Makerere College in Uganda who converted at Kings College Buddo, or had to leave the school. As a result of that, the Kabaka of Buganda, Sir Daudi Chwa had to intervene, giving order to the Headmaster at Buddo not to try to convert Prince Badru Kakungulu and others who were mostly Muslims and traditionalists. For more detailed information, see: A. B. Kasozi, *The Spread of Islam in Uganda*, Nairobi, Oxford University Press, p. 102. Also for more information about the

that most of the pioneering school teachers and their Headmasters were Muslims who succeeded in transforming their Islamic faith into the hearts and minds of their Kambari pupils.<sup>48</sup> Perhaps that arrangement was made in order to sustain a cordial relationship between the British government and northern Emirs so as to ease colonization and more over, to avoid incessant confrontation with the already established Islamic order under the auspices of the defunct Sokoto Caliphate, in the non-Muslim areas. So the British introduced Native courts in order to protect the Caliphate interest and to respect the traditional values of non-Muslims. This protected the supremacy of the Kambari traditional religion and enhanced its sustainability.<sup>49</sup>

Kambari Christian converts were first drawn, particularly through the enormous efforts of various foreign Christian denominations such as United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA), Evangelical Church of Africa (ECWA), Roman Catholic Mission, Assemblies of God, Cherubim and Seraphim, Baptist, SUM-CRC, COCIN, Deeper Life, that frequent the area in between 1960s and 1970s. Further evangelical efforts were made by some missionary gospel schools opened in every part of the area, primarily aimed at winning converts among the Kambari.<sup>50</sup>

The role of Western Education in precipitating changes in the Kambari traditional religion and culture is no doubt plausible in the area but cannot be over-emphasised. Western education had some shortcomings in Agwara Local Government Area of Borgu Emirate and in Birnin Yauri District of Yauri Emirate. It has been analysed that apart from the elementary school opened at Duga and Agwara during colonial rule in the 1950s, no much emphasis was given to its progress especially after the departure. The whole area still suffered from its poor state of social amenities such as lack of electricity, pipe borne water, road network, communication facilities, hospitals and schools. Most remote communities in Niger State were educationally marginalised by the government. The recent educational development in area can be credited to the activities of some modern Christian missionaries like Society of African Mission (SMA) and Our Lady of Apostles (OLA). For instance, in the area of education, it was not until in 2004 when St. Mary's Private Nursery and Primary school, along with St. John's dispensary were opened at Papiri village. Similarly, as an extension of this school, there is St. Mary's Private (Catholic) Secondary School Papiri, founded on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 2010.<sup>51</sup> That gives educational opportunity to thousands of Kambari living around the area. Presently, there was hardly a Kambari major town without a Western school.<sup>3</sup>

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spread of Western Education in East Africa, see: J. C. Ssekamwa and S. M. E. Lugumba, *History of Education in East Africa*, Kampala, Makerere University Press, 1985.

<sup>48</sup> For instance, in 1946, an Elementary School was established in Wara and Akimba enrolment began. The pioneering Headmaster Malam Bawa Makaman Yauri and all the pioneering staff were Muslims who helped immensely in the spread of Islam among the Kambari pupils. For more information about the list of the staff and first batch of the Kambari intake, see: Abubakar, *Op.cit.*, Pp. 137-138. Also in 1957, a Primary School was opened at Birnin Yauri and enrolment of the Kambari began in January 1958. Those first intake embraced Islam through their Arabic teachers like Malam Adamu Karofi, Malam Umbaru Bahago Birnin Yauri, Malam Muhammadu Dantanin, Late Aliyu Uban Maginga (He became the first Imam of Jum'at mosque of Birnin Yauri), Malam Abubakar Muhammadu Nayari Birnin Yauri, Alhaji Garba Makera and Malam Sallau Abbas. Most were indigenous Kambari of Agadi group who accepted Islam earlier on. In discussion with Alhaji Aliyu Lumamu (63 years), interviewed in his house, Kambu Village, 13/8/2012, time- 11:00- 1:30 p.m. Similar school was opened at Auna in the 1950s. In 1976, Primary School was established at Shahini village, where a certain Arabic teacher called Malam Arabi succeeded in converting the Avadi and Agaushi pupils to Islam.

#### **List of Kambari converts at Shahini Primary School**

Zamani Madaji renamed Abdullahi Umar. He is now a Captain in the Nigerian Army

Abara Magaji was renamed Musa Abara

Aslada (Hausa meaning, *aikin Allah*) took the name Labaran Musa. Also an Army officer.

Sambo who was renamed Adamu Umar.

In discussion with Abdullahi Saleh (Agaushi, 38 years) at Sokoto, 12/10/2013, 10:00-11:00 a.m. This effort was emphasized by Sir Ahmadu Bello Sardauna who was said to have become a celebrated Muslim leader that championed the course of the Kambari conversion, following his Islamic mission in the area, starting from 1956 when he attended the installation ceremony of Emir of Yauri Muhammadu Tukur (1955-1995). Sardauna's evangelical mission continued till his death in 1966. In discussion with Lumamu, *op.cit.*

<sup>49</sup> See: Crampton, "Lugard and his Promise to the Emirs", *op.cit.*, Pp. 46-47. The British made little modification where under the new system Native and Customary Courts were established in each district. Native Courts, Grade 'A' to 'D' were built in some areas of the Kambari to administer and protect their religious matters, judiciously. For instance, in 1912 Kontagora had grade B, Rijau had grade C in 1916 while in 1906, Kumbashi had grade D. Also in 1917 Kiama and Bussa had grade B and in 1918, Ibelu, Aliyara and Wawa had grade C. Similarly, between 1912 and 1914, Ngaski had grade A and C. See Blake, *para* 20. Also for more information about the existence and roles of such Native Courts in the area of our study, see: A.H.M. Kirk-Greene (ed.), *Gazetteers of Northern Province of Nigeria*, Vol. I, revised ed., London, Frank Cass Publishers, 1972, p.5.

<sup>50</sup> See detailed in discussions held with Reverend Wakaso Mamman (Avadi 49 years), interviewed at his house in Salka town, 26/4/2013, 3:00-4:45 p.m.

<sup>51</sup> See: Sr. Dunka M. Felicia et al. "History of the Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Apostles", in *the History of the Society of African Mission in Papiri*, 2008, Pp. 1-3.

### List of Official Christian Mission Schools/ Institutes operating in Kambari Territory as in 2014

1	UMCA Vernacular (Hausa) Bible School, Salka	1951
2	Advanced Bible School, Tungan Magajiya	1953
3	Warari Bible School, Warari	1955
4	Dry Season Bible School, Galla/Kwana	1957
5	Guffanti Egbema Home Mission Field, Guffanti	1971
6	Our Lady of Apostles (OLA) Girls Hostel, Papiri	1978
7	ECWA Theological Training Institute, Pisabu	1997
8	St. Mary's Private Nursery and Primary School, Papiri	2004
9	St. Mary's Private Secondary School, Papiri	2004

These schools have succeeded in training and producing indigenous Kambari Christian community, among who are also indigenous evangelists that comprised of Pastors, Church Deputy Superintendants (CDS), preachers, Reverends and many others who also still play enormous role of evangelical missions among their tribesmates.<sup>52</sup>

### Position of religion among the Kambari after the British colonial rule

It is pertinent to know that the impact of Islamic and Christian missions as well as Western education among the Kambari was still very limited in the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These forces of changes were mostly thriving in some major Kambari towns and villages, where the majority of the people, abruptly torn from their traditional cultures, were most responsive to their teachings. Such are found elsewhere, in some villages such as Kambuwa, Gadan Uduku, Dan Maraya, Takali, Tungan Tankwa, Shagiya, Filin Jirgi, Tungan Boka and Falu, in Binin Yauri District and, in Wara, Libata, Karoliya, Langwan, Guguwa, Farin Ruwa, Ntade, Abuta, in Ngaski District. In Auna District, there are places like Auna, Shafini, Shagwa, Tungan Jika, Sabon Garin Sarkpa, Gurai, etc. Many Kambari societies remained attached to their traditional religion in some remote areas. Among the remnant of Kambari villages with a large number of staunch adherents of traditional religions in Yauri Emirate are Bambiri, Tungan Baleri, Zakin Rawa, Baduku, and Kambu in Birnin Yauri District. Ngaski District also has similar people, in places like Macupa, Makata'i, Ntade, Mara'a, Ketaren Gidan Sakali, Lata and Gidan Kwano, among many others. The Akimba and Ashen as well as few among the Agaushi seem to have no remnants of the adherents of Kambari traditional religion.<sup>53</sup>

### Significance of traditional religious belief system to the Kambari

Numerous evidences gathered from the previous discussions on the Kambari religious aspects show that African traditional religion is still a force to reckon with among the Kambari people. In particular, it still has influential elements which attached so much importance to its veneration.

First and foremost, the Kambari traditional worshippers gain a lot of spiritual significance from the *Ukushi*<sup>54</sup> (life after death) concept, which gives recognition and draws consciousness to Man-God relationship. According to Melevu Sakali, the remembrance of *Ukushi* provides the Kambari with moral values by which to live in this world. So, their religion gives celebrities to life. For instance, it shows people their limitation, that life is short and temporal, hence the need to depend on the Creator, *Kameli* (god).<sup>55</sup>

Those involved in wicked acts such as murder, stealing and witchcraft among others are tried before the deities to determine the victims through their spiritual powers. Therefore, their religion regulates their human attitudes such as crimes and other social vices in their society.<sup>56</sup> No wonder the Kambari adhere to their traditional belief system. It is a known secret amongst them that no crime went undetected using the powers of their traditional deities.<sup>2</sup>

52 In discussion with Rev. Wakaso, *Op.cit.*

53 This summary were extracted from the various interviews and discussions held with the indigenous Kambari people, following the researcher's visitations to their various villages and towns. The Village Head of Kambu, Malam Umbaru Wakili was the only Muslim in the village. He used to pray along with his family in his house.

54 *Ukushi* can also be compared with the Hereafter or even paradise. Meaning that the Kambari believe in life after death, where the good would be rewarded and the wicked punished. According to their religious belief, when a person died his soul would go immediately to a special place called *Ukushi*, to meet its predeceased relations for the continuation of life. For details, see, Kirk-Green, *Op.cit.*, p. 7.

55 In discussion with Melevu Sakali, *Op.cit.*

56 *Ibid.*

57 Temple, *Op.cit.*, p.201.

58 Some places I met without dispensaries in Birnin Yauri District were Falu, Tungan Tankwa, Kambu, Bambiri, Tungan Baleri, Zakin Rawa and Baduku among many others. In Ngaski District there were places like Macupa, Lata, Mara'a, Kadabo, Gidan Sakali, Makata'i, Ntade, etc. In Agwara District, there were villages like Fasa Tullu, Tungan Daudu, Unguwar Cingali, Agwata, Busurun, Burukutu, Bakatara, Zamalo, Pisa, Magujiri (Tungan Gandiga), Unguwar Goge, etc.



The Kambari attribute all illness to supernatural causes.<sup>57</sup> Their healing power during sickness is also determined by their traditional religious belief system, mostly performed through the practices of *Bori* fetish dances and witch doctors' (*Bokaye*) intervention with the aid of evil spirits (*Aljannu*). Despite the existence of modern health services, the Kambari are yet to feel the impact of such modern health facilities. Hence, they have been forced to heavily rely on their traditional healing method. The reason for this is not far fetch as government has neglected most of the Kambari people living in remote settlements by not providing them with even dispensaries. During my research visits, I found many villages in Ngaski, Birnin Yauri, Agwara, Wawa and Kaiama Districts without dispensaries.<sup>58</sup>

The Kambari religion accords the adherents with a number of economic benefits. Key factors such as birth, initiation, thriving harvest, puberty, marriage, death and funeral are given more attention under such a religious belief. Their belief is such that valuable concerns of the individual remain its part and parcel which in turn, is maintained through sacrifices in different forms. Variety of grains, food, animals and presentation of pots of *maro* (local beer) for excessive consumption by the worshippers, during their religious services are constant. In their religious rules, no food or meat of sacrificial animal is allowed to be taken outside the shrine, either by the priest or fellow worshippers, but nowadays some priests were fond of doing so for their own personal benefit.<sup>59</sup>

Whatever we say, and judging from their own perspectives, the Kambari traditional belief system with its retinue of princely priests and shrines, have served the Kambari communities in their spectre of needs; a brain box of Kambari cultural outlooks, which helps to define their relationship with forces of nature and the outside world. It embodies the Kambari's unwritten codes of existence which to this day is still adhered to by a number of the people.<sup>1</sup>

## Conclusion

In the Kambari territory, Western education has become an overwhelmingly threatening factor influencing the totality of Kambari traditions and culture. Western education is at the increase in the area. However, the influential roles of Islam and Christianity must be credited as the greatest forces behind cultural and religious changes of the Kambari ethnic group. Today, the belief in one God as preached by Islam and Christianity is widely in the increase among the Kambari. There was increasing number of the evangelical activities of some vibrant Muslim organisations like *Fityanul Islam*, *Jama'atu Nasril Islam*, Islamic Education Trust (IET), *Izalatul Bid'a Wa Ikamatus-Sunnah*, Muslim Students' Society (MSS), Federation of Muslim Women Associations of Nigeria (FOMWAN) and Muslim Sisters' Organisation (MSO) in the area. And on the other hand, the increasing flow of vast Christian denominations like Winners Chapel (Living Faith Church), Apostolic Church, Assemblies of God Church, Lords Chosen Church, Deeper Life Church is becoming prevalent in all areas of the Kambari. In a critical analysis, considering the work force of the new religions in the area, traditional religions will no doubt give way to either of the two major religions.

The Kambari customs of wearing loin cloth (Hausa *Walki*), use of facial marks, polygamy, stealing and eloping with other man's wife, witchcrafts, fetish and many others have almost faded away. However, efforts have been taking place towards cultural revivalism among the Kambari people. There is an organized Kambari Union called All Kambari Progressive Association (AKAPA), established in 2011 at Salka town of Magama Local Government Area of Niger State, where its maiden annual festival was held. According to the District Head of Salka, Alhaji Muhammadu Dogo Bawa Salka, the festival was aimed at the restoration of the Kambari cultural heritage in terms of cultural dances, extension of a hand of friendship to a fellow Kambari man anywhere in the world.<sup>60</sup>

However, as shows in the table below, there were a considerable number of Kambari people who still adhered to their traditional religious practices.<sup>2</sup>

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In Shanga District: Zanji, Debe, Binuwa, Kasoshi, and also in Wawa District there were Tungan Alasan, Woko, Luman Sante, Tungan malam, Tungan bako of Borgu.

59 Gamajere Barashi, *Op.cit.*

60 M. A. Hamagam, "In Kambariland, eloping with another man's wife is Bravery", in Travel & Leisure, *Weekend Magazine*, Saturday, January 11, 2014, P. 22.

**List of some of the Kambari adherents of traditional religion as in 2014**

S/No.	Names	Place
1	Magaji Ango (Agadi): Chief Custodian of <i>magiro makera</i> cult	Kambu
2	Ganau Abara (Agadi, alias Auta): Chief of <i>magiro makera</i>	Kambu
3	Buki (Agadi)	Kambu
4	Ga Allah (Agadi)	Kambu
5	Fada (Agadi)	Kambu
6	Mai Samari (Agadi): Also Chief of <i>magiro</i> fetish	Kambu
7	Kwasau (Agadi): He owned his personal <i>magiro</i> in his house	Kambu
8	Ndekule Mai Shanu (Awunci)	Guguwa
9	Shirikan Makaho (Awunci)	Guguwa
10	Chibuwa Ajibeto (Awunci)	Guguwa
11	Babuneshi (Awunci)	Guguwa
12	Bawa Machukudi (Awunci)	Guguwa
13	Tarmasu Bawa (Awunci)	Guguwa
14	Magaji Dosu (Awunci)	Agara-Iwen
15	Tarmasu Dosu (Awunci): Magaji's wife	Agara-Iwen
16	Maginga Kashimi (Awunci)	Agara-Iwen
17	Magaji Makawa (Awunci)	Agara-Iwen
18	Agwadi Alaji (Awunci)	Agara-Iwen
19	Rigima (Awunci)	Ripolo
20	Bahago (Awunci)	Ripolo
21	Arziki (Awunci)	Ripolo
22	Agulu (Awunci)	Ripolo
23	Late Asawuta (Agaushi)	Shagwa
24	Late Adamu (Agaushi)	Shagwa
25	Maisamari Baban Yara (Awunci):	Tungan Dutsi
26	Kyahukun (Awunci)	Kya'un
27	Magaji (Avadi)	Kuvu
28	Auta (Avadi)	Kuvu
29	Saura (Avadi)	Kuvu
30	Jatau (Avadi)	Kuvu
31	Kurma (Avadi)	Kuvu
32	Makwashi (Avadi)	Kuvu
33	Majirya (Awunci)	Ntade
34	Tammaha Cidawa (Awunci): Chief Custodian (Popularly known as Jerega)of Makwashi Mashende shrine at Macupa village	Macupa
35	Umaru Bawa (Awunci)	Macupa
36	Magala Taji Na Gidan Mangi (Gata)and his household(Awunci): Chief Custodian of Magiro Awiso (Popularly known as Agunuko) and Abara Gimba	Rafin Macupa-Makata'i
37	Sale Abokin Sarki (Awunci)	Rafin Macupa-Makata'i
38	Muhammadu Magala (Awunci)	Rafin Macupa-Makata'i
39	Mairiga (Awunci): Chief Custodian of Kakpa'i shrine at Macupa village	Macupa
40	Gamajere Barashi (Awunci) and his entire family: Chief Custodian of <i>Lata</i> shrine	Lata
41	Sakali Melevu Kefekum (Awunci) and his wife: Chief Custodian of <i>Harakwai</i> and <i>Mutumun Bisa</i> shrines at Ketaren Gidan Sakali	Magumi
42	Makwashi Kabori Gajere Uban Abela (Awunci): Chief Custodian of Kabori shrine	Gidan Kwanu
43	Ganau Dan Gidan Sarangu (Awunci): Chief Custodian of Maka'uw shrine	Macupa

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61 The list of some of the Kambari traditional religious practitioners have been extracted from the various interviews and discussions held with the indigenous Kambari people, following the researcher's visits to their various villages and towns.