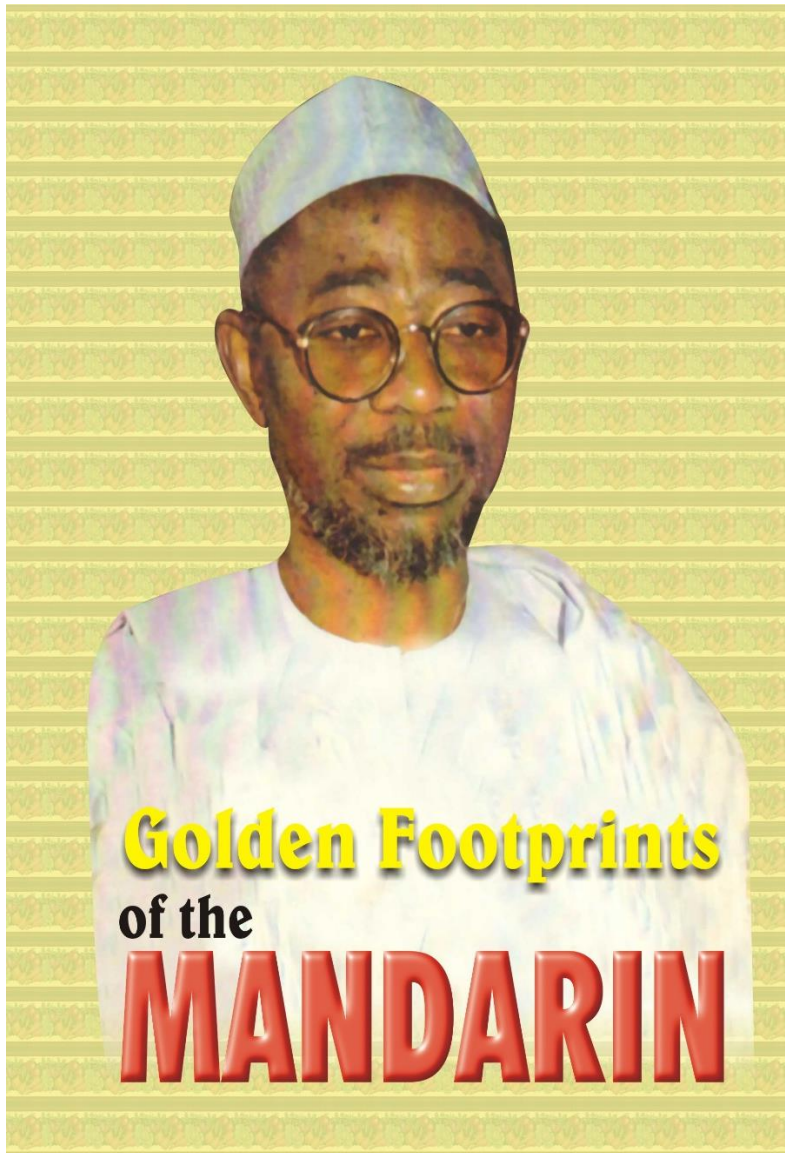




Golden Footprints of the Mandarin is a deep exploration of the philosophical depth of Abubakar Gimba to reflect his world views. It is also a celebration of his unique personality and resourcefulness as a person and as a writer. One may be a writer and be lacking in those sterling qualities that make one a person. A person, in Gimba's estimation, is a creation of the supreme being, Almighty Allah, who strives consciously to improve the life of his fellow human being. Gimba in the last fifty years, has dedicated himself to the service of God and humanity. And the content of this book (a collection of his interviews granted to newspapers over the years and the glowing tributes paid to him by friends and colleagues) is a testimony of the goodness of this gentle man.

...As long as Abubakar Gimba continue to write on theme that move him and which are reflective of his immediate cultural milieu, he will continue to be socially relevant. one only hopes that, with time, this social relevance will be extended to the whole world at large.

- Dr. Wale Okediran

... At 50, Gimba has made a grand entry into his autumn season and as it has been with those before him, this is far from the age of retirement, It is actually the beginning of another spring or the season of renewal that will be further enriched by the experiences he has gathered over the years.

--Layiwola Adeniji



Printed by Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd.,
P.M.B. 1094 Samaru, Zaria, Nigeria. Tel: 08065949711.
E-mail: abupresslimited2005@yahoo.co.uk ;
Website: www.abupress.org



Golden Footprints of the MANDARIN

(A collection of interviews with
Abubakar Gimba and essays in his honour)

Edited by
Ezekiel Fajenyo and Sina Oladeinde

Dedication

*To Almighty Allah who has continued to guide the
footprints of our Mandarin and to all those who
desire goodness in others.*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgements are made to the following:

Independent Communication Network Limited, publishers of *The News* weekly magazine, for permission to reprint "The Future Is Here", an interview with Abubakar Gimba, conducted by Onyema Omenuwa, *The News* Vol. 13 No.21, 29 November, 1999, pp. 45- 46.

New Nigerian Newspaper, for permission to reprint "I'm not a Feminist", an interview with Abubakar Gimba conducted by Sunday Ode for "The Write Stuff." *New Nigerian*, Saturday March 5, 1986, p. 10.

New Nigerian Newspaper, for permission to reprint "Nigerian Writers can't live on writing — Abubakar Gimba," an interview conducted by Dr. Sani Abba Aliyu for "The Write Stuff: *New Nigerian*, Friday, February 28, 1997, p. 10.

Nigerian Tribune newspaper, for permission to reprint "Nigerians don't read — Gimba", an interview conducted by Sina Oladeinde for Arts and Reviews, *Nigerian Tribune*, Tuesday, 7 September, 1999, pp. 26- 27.

"Why Abubakar handed over — Gimba", an interview conducted by Sina Oladeinde, *Nigerian Tribune*, Saturday, 11 September, 1999, p. 2.

Vanguard newspaper, for permission to reprint "Prize is not a federal character thing in terms of quality — Abubakar Gimba", an interview published in 'Arts and Book Review', *Vanguard*, Thursday November 4, 1999, p. 33.

Weekend Concord newspaper, for permission to reprint "Hausa Writers Are More Widely Read Than Chinua Achebe Among Hausas — Says Abubakar Gimba," an interview conducted by Dayo Aiyetan for 'Arts,' *Weekend Concord*, Saturday, February 8, 1992, p. 5.

for 'Arts,' *Weekend Concord*, Saturday, February 8, 1992, p. 5.

Weekend Concord newspaper, for permission to reprint "Our Leaders Aren't As Powerful As We Think... conversation with Abubakar Gimba," an interview conducted by Kunle Ajibade for 'Arts *Weekend Concord*, Saturday, December 22, 1990, p. 7.

Scarlet Communication (Nig.) Ltd., publishers of *This Weekend* newspaper, for permission to reprint "Government Should Brainstorm On Unemployment", special interview with Abubakar Gimba conducted by Ezekiel Fajenyo, *This Weekend*, Saturday, 18th September, 1999, pp. 8- 9.

WAKE JOURNAL for permission to reprint "Writers Are Free Here," an interview with Abubakar Gimba, conducted by Ezekiel Fajenyo and Olu Osunde, Vol. 1, No. 1, July, 1996, pp. 1, 8 - 9.

Okome Onookome (ed) "ASE: Journal of Contemporary Poetry: Focus on Abubakar Gimba", Vol. 1, No.2, (April), Rains, 1992.

Special gratitude to Abubakar Gimba, Dr Wale Okediran, Layiwola Adeniji, Mallam Isiaka Aliagan, Sani Mahmood, the late Eddy Ayo Ojo, Abdullahi Ahmed, Hamza Kamardeen, Abdullahi Galadima, Bala D. Kuta, Mrs. Rahmat Oladeinde, Ibrahim Sheme, Kunle Shittu, Philomena Ojile, and Mrs. Funke Fajenyo, for concerted efforts to make this dream a reality.

The Editors

Ezekiel Fajenyo was Editor-in-Chief with Scarlet Communications Ltd., Minna, Nigeria. A former Secretary-General of the Association of Nigerian Authors (Niger State Chapter), he has published *Night Of The Godmothers* (1990), *The Bandaged Candles* (1994), *Virtues of a Crowned Head* (1991) and *The Writings of Abubakar Gimba* (1995). His poems have appeared in *For Ken, For Nigeria* (1995), *Dancesteps of Dawn* (1997), *Gems Out of Africa* (1999) and *Abuja Acolytes* (2001) and his stories in *Through Laughter and Tears* (1993), *Dancesteps of the Eagles* (1996) and *Unique Madmen and Other Stories* (2001).

He has also been a Secretary and Media Consultant in Abuja. Honoured by ANA Abuja Chapter for his outstanding contribution to literature. His works in the press include *The Challenge of Culture Development In Nigeria*; and *New Directions In Contemporary Nigeria Literature*.

His poetry anthologies with publishers include *Garlands For Law-Bakers*, *Songs of An Excursionist*, *Letter To Deathday* and *Blood and Birth and other Poems*.

He loves reading, writing and photography.

SINA OLADEINDE is an Assistant Editor, Arts and Reviews with *Nigeria Tribune* newspaper. His published works include *Eyes of Darkness* (1998) and *Reading Empowers* (co-Editor) (1997). One of his plays, *The Magic Circle* won the 1993 NYSC Drama Competition.

The seasoned journalist who is also a research scholar in the Media and Dramatic Studies enjoys reading and travelling.

Preface

There is so much to say about Abubakar Gimba. Is it his astonishing literary output, his humaneness or his strong conviction and belief in justice and truth? There are many sides to this remarkable personality that endear him to people.

That he is getting this worthy attention and praises from friends, his younger friends especially, shows how deeply involved he is in other people's lives and how strongly committed he is to the cause of truth and social orders. What else can one say about his man whose outlook defies easy definition. He is what you call him and whatever you choose to call him will importantly define your own personality. Such is the nature of Abubakar Gimba.

His exemplary lifestyle and the ample doses of goodness he dishes out regularly are some of the attributes that rarify him. Even his most ardent critics have had to concede the fact of his incumbent on truth and commitment to a better society.

The intention of the editors before was to compile the thoughts of this illustrious citizen which he expressed through media interviews over the years. But the overwhelming responses from his friends and admirers, who felt that they ought to make the world know about how and what they feel about this admirable man, compelled this legion of tributes.

And indeed, Gimba is worthy of every praise given to him. He deserves all the encomiums. And more so, as one celebrates one's 50th birthday once in a life time, the Mandarin certainly deserves no less than "votes of stones" he is getting from his friends.

This is the feeling of all those who make this compilation of tributes and interviews a reality.

These tributes and interviews should assist any reader of Gimba's works to know the kind of factors, which influence the direction of his

thoughts, feelings and consequently, writing. Also, they should help to clarify some of the issues, which constitute the subject matter and themes in his works and more importantly to allow people a peep into the undefinable sterling qualities of his personality.

They should help in interpreting Gimba as a man, thinker, freedom - fighter, philosopher, and 'a writer with a cause'. They should also assist in explaining Nigerian literature, particularly from the North. It is hoped that the book would serve these, and related, functions.

Ezekiel Fajenyo and Sina Oladeinde

Introduction

The man Abubakar Gimba

Born on March 10, 1952 in Nassarawa, an ancient Nupe -speaking community in Lapai Local Government Area of Niger State, Nigeria, Abubakar Gimba received his education at Gulu Junior Primary School (1959 -62), Lapai Senior Primary School (1963 -64) and Government College, Keffi (1965 -69), where he sat for his West African School Certificate Examination.

Between 1970 -71, he was at the School of Basic Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, after which he proceeded to pursue Bachelor of Science in Economics in the same institution (1971 - 74). For a Master of Arts (M.A) degree in Economics, he was at the University of Cincinnati, Ohio, U.S.A., between 1976- 77.

Shortly before going for his Master's degree programme in America, he had done the National Youth Service Corps (N.Y.S.C.) programme at the South Eastern State (as it was then called) as a teacher in Salvation Army Secondary School, Akai Ubium, after which he joined the civil service in the Department of Finance and Economic Planning. But immediately after obtaining the M. A. degree, he re-joined the Economic Planning Department of the newly created Niger State.

In the service, he performed in different categories, with exceptional brilliance and attested dedication. He was Planning Officer, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Niger State (1975 -76); Economic Planner, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, Niger State and later Chief Planning Officer between 1977 and 1979.

Between 1979- 80, he was Director of Planning, Governor's Office, Niger State, and later Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development, Niger State between 1981 -83. Between September - December, 1983, he attended University of Bedford's Project Planning Course. As Permanent Secretary, he served in the Department of Planning and Budget, Office of the Military Governor, Niger State (1983-87); and the Cabinet Office, Niger State (January -March, 1987).

Gimba was a member, Governing Council, Niger State College of Education, Minna; and of the Governing Council, Zungeru College of Advanced Studies. He is equally a member of the Board of Directors, Bank of the North Limited; and was Chairman, Steering Committee, Niger State Printing and Publishing Company Limited (publishers of "Weekly Newline") and member, Board of Governors, School of Agriculture, Mokwa. He retired from active service of Niger State in March, 1987.

In 1988, Gimba was appointed Executive Director of Union Bank of Nigeria Plc., and later moved in 1993 to United Bank for Africa Plc. (U.B.A.) in similar capacity. He has been, since 1997, Chairman of CONCERN Foundation (CF), a non-governmental, humanitarian body in Niger State and of Savannah Transport Services, Minna.

Between 1990 to-date, Gimba has effectively participated in a number of programmes and projects aimed at adding spice to national development. In 1990, he was a member of the Nigerian delegation led by the then Federal Ministry of Finance that toured Malaysia and Indonesia (a business tour with top government officials and members of Chambers of Commerce) for two weeks. Between 1991- 1995, he was a board member, Niger State Trust Fund. In October, 1991, he was elected Vice President, Association of Nigerian Authors (A.N.A.), and in April, 1994, he was a member of the Board of Trustees, Nigerian Book Foundation (N.B.F.). And in 1996, he became a member of the Assessment and Implementation Committee of the Ahmadu Bello University (A.B.U.) Zaria, as well as Chairman, University Disciplinary Committee, A.B.U., Zaria.

In 1997, he became National President, Association of Nigerian Authors. Between July, 1998 and May 29, 1999, he was a member of Programmes Implementation Monitoring Committee, an advisory body

to the then Head of State, General Abdulsalami Alhaji Abubakar.

In the area of creative writing, Gimba has written and published the following novels: *Trail of Sacrifice* (1985); *Witnesses To Tears* (1986); *Innocent Victims* (1988); *Sunset for a Mandarin* (1991); *Sacred Apples* (1997) and *Footprints* (1998), and a book of poetry, *Inner Rumbings* (2000), which won the Delta Poetry Prize for that year and *This Land of Ours* (2001). *Sacred Apples* has been republished under the title *Golden Apple* by Vantage Press, Inc., New York, in 1997. A collection of his past essays and journalistic contributions has appeared as *Once Upon A Reed* (1999). He is still actively involved in writing, and in general promotion of works by Nigerian writers. The engagingly sensitive writer, author, administrator, and economist certainly has a good future as a creative artist. Indeed he attended the year 2000 Session of the International Programme of the University of Iowa, Iowa City in the U.S.A. where he interacted and exchanged functional ideas with many world figures in creative arts.

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