

“It is now Zuru’s Turn” History Repeating Itself

His Royal Highness

Malam Muhammadu Sani Dantudu Gomo Zuru Development’s First Champions

The historical epitaph of Sani Dantudu has never been captured correctly in the annals of the history of Zuru. The mystery circumventing the birth, struggles and leadership of Malam Muhammadu Sani Dantudu remained a guiding light for the sacrifice of leadership in the Zuru Territory as a whole today. From birth, Sani was prepared and guided by God to champion the struggles of Zuru. Prince Sani Dantudu, eldest son to Andi Gomo was captured as a little boy during the raids of the Torankawa and taken into slavery in Jega. While growing up in slavery, he received Islamic education. Having secured his freedom after some time, Sani returned to Dabai where he was recognised and received by the populace with acclamation of “the lost son found”.¹³³ The exposure of Sani was an added experience which gave him an edge over his contemporaries. The exposure also prepared the young Prince for the eventualities of leadership when the time came. He was appointed Head of Dabai District in 1931 and elevated to the status of Second Class Chief. In 1945, he was appointed Chief of Zuru Federation (Division). In 1955, the Premier of Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello, the Sardaunan Sokoto confirmed the appointment of HRH Malam Muhammadu Sani Dantudu as a Second Class Chief.¹³⁴

In the 1958 Annual Report, series of allegations were levelled against Dantudu Gomo.¹³⁵ He was indicted in the 1959 Annual Report which led the Government to set up an Enquiry into the allegations.¹³⁶ The Enquiry Report recommended that he should resign his appointment honourably, which he accepted and did in 1960. What were the allegations? What led to the allegations?

This is where history short changed Zuru and Malam Dantudu. The truth is, the phrase “It is now Zuru’s turn”, was the creation of Malam Dantudu Gomo. In fact, in the heat of his allegations, the 1958 Annual Report states that “Sarkin Dabai is very keen to see Zuru progress and catch up with his rival, Kontagora”.¹³⁷ The Report further states that “It is not that he disliked the people of Kontagora, it is a deep rooted feeling that Zuru has been without a leader and without proper communication with the Centre, for too long. Kontagora has had all the attention: *it is now Zuru’s turn*”.¹³⁸ That seemed to have been the crime of Malam Dantudu Gomo – the love of championing Zuru’s cause and nothing else! What was the allegation levelled against him? “Noting that he had ambition to become in all respect,

an Emir and relegate the other Chiefs to the status of District Heads.” This sounds like “Caesar’s ambition”. Simply because, “Sarkin Dabai has become a champion of his people’s cause and as such is a popular Chief”, the Report affirmed. It was also testified in the Report that, “His position is a difficult one and he realised it”. HRH, Malam Muhammadu Sani Dantudu Gomo remained focused to the cause of Zuru up to the time of abdicating his ancestral crown in 1960.¹³⁹

Dantudu Gomo was banished on house arrest in Minna, where he eventually



died. The resultant punitive measure meted on Dantudu Gomo culminated in a leadership vacuum on the stool of the Paramount Chief. The internal wrangling about who should succeed Dantudu Gomo lasted for almost four years despite the intervention of the Premier of Northern Nigeria. This was as a result of the inability of the Chiefs of the Zuru Federation to agree on who should be the paramount Chief of Zuru amongst themselves.

**Malam Muhammadu Sani Dantudu Gomo
Emir of Zuru
1945-1960**

(Zuru Development’s first Champion)

Malam Sani Dantudu was the first to coin the phrase “It is now Zuru’s turn” in 1958 and he paid dearly for standing for Zuru when he was forced to resign as the Paramount Chief of Zuru Federation in 1960.

When Muhammadu Sani Dantudu was selected by referendum conducted through District and Village Councils in 1955, it was made quite clear that future successions were not to be hereditary.¹⁴⁰ The reason given then was that “the Dakkarawa are in the majority, it is probable that the paramount Chief will usually be drawn from that tribe”.

The Chiefs had at least two meetings with the Hon. Premier – on the 12th May 1961 and 4th August 1961 without coming to a consensus.¹⁴¹ Another meeting had to be reconvened in Kaduna by the Premier on 20th April, 1964 where the Chiefs were given the last chance to present the name of one of them to be appointed as Chief of Zuru. It took the direct assault of Alhaji Ali Akilu, the Secretary to the Premier to the Chiefs before a consensus was reached. He asserted that “it was disgraceful for the Chiefs had failed to make up their minds as to who should be paramount Chief, after nearly three years”.¹⁴² He further stressed that

The Chiefs would wish the Government to decide the matter for them, and appoint anyone it thought fit. This was contrary to custom and practice all over the Region. At no time, and in no place, in the Region had a Chief ever been appointed and imposed on the people by Government without the consent of the people. Government had placed the responsibility of nominating a Chief of Zuru on the shoulders of the five Chiefs, and it would not be pleasing to the Government for the Chiefs to fail to agree on a name.¹⁴³

He implored the Chiefs to live up to the responsibility given to them by Government and produce a name. At that juncture, the Chiefs requested for time to consider among themselves. Afterwards, Sarkin Wasagu, Malam Musa Muhammadu came out and presented their consensus decision of nominating Marafan Dabai, Malam Usman Danga as Chief of Zuru. Each of the Chiefs was then consulted for their independent decision. They were later asked to individually put it in writing that they personally agreed on the matter and would on no account raise dissenting voices on the decision in the future. This was commended and an appeal to those who have not been successful to be patient until it pleased God to give them their own chance. HRH, Alhaji Usman Danga was thus appointed the Emir of Zuru on July 31st, 1964.¹⁴⁴

Zuru's First Wise men

**The District Chiefs accorded recognition as members
of the Regional House of Chiefs in Kaduna in 1956.**

The Chief of Dabai as the Chairman.



**Mal. Musa Muhammadu
District Head of Wasagu**

**Muhammadu Gaida
District Head of Fakai**

**M. Muhammadu Magurwa
District Head of Sakaba**

**Mal. Adamu Gado
District Head of Danko**

The District Heads of Zuru Federation who decisively brought an end to the leadership vacuum of the Paramount Chief of Zuru by the removal of Malam Dantudu Gomo. They collectively endorsed Malam Usman Danga, the Marafan Dabai as the Paramount Chief amongst themselves, as the Chairman of Chiefs of Zuru Division in 1964.¹⁴⁶

U.S. Machika, History of Zuruland and Its People, pp.333-340