

From here to **TIMBUKTU**

Timbuktu Educational Foundation Quarterly Newsletter



TIMBUKTU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION
WWW.TIMBUKTUFOUNDATION.ORG

From here to **TIMBUKTU NEWSLETTER**

Thousands of ancient manuscripts in the vicinity of Timbuktu, Mali (West Africa) on the verge of being lost... Help preserve an African & World legacy, an academic & spiritual legacy for our children.

These manuscripts represent a turning point in the history of Africa and its people. During the 14th century, Timbuktu flourished as the greatest academic and commercial center in Africa even before the European Renaissance.

The books of Timbuktu cover diverse subjects

such as mathematics, chemistry, physics, optics, astronomy, medicine, Islamic Sciences & traditions, history, geography, government legislation, jurisprudence...

The brittle condition of the manuscripts; the pages disintegrating easily like ashes, termites, other insects, weather, piracy of the manuscripts, and selling of these treasures to tourist for food money pose a serious threat to the future of the manuscripts of Timbuktu.



Manuscripts on Astronomy



Brittle condition of the manuscripts

Letter From the President

Greetings! It is with much excitement that we are finally able to send you the first issue of our newsletter. Through it, we hope to share with our supporters the many projects TIMBUKTU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION (TEF) has initiated, while at the same time offer some information that would bring all of us

closer to understanding and appreciating the contributions of the many scholars from the African continent. We are looking forward to gradually improving on the quality and extent of this newsletter, thus we welcome your comments and sug-

gestions at any time. We also encourage everyone to visit our website at www.timbuktufoundation.org for a more detailed version of the foundation's progress and development.

Musa Balde

Inside this issue:

Current Programs	2
The Real "Lion Story"	2
Washington D. C. 's Smithsonian Folklife Festival	3
Continuation of Smithsonian Article	4

MISSION STATEMENT

To resurrect to its rightful place in the annals of world history, the important intellectual contributions of Early African scholars (dating back to the 9th Century). TEF is committed to PRESERVING, RESTORING & PROMOTING their legacy through various educational programs & exhibitions.

Current Programs:

- **Timbuktu Literacy Program** -- With the increasing rate of illiteracy among school children, especially those in the inner cities, TEF is launching a pilot of its *Timbuktu Literacy After-school Program*. By utilizing the African methodology of teaching and learning and applying the concepts to the current curriculum used in the school system, TEF hopes to improve students' academic performance and success. Several schools in the Oakland and San Francisco school districts have expressed interest in utilizing this program
- **Timbuktu Educational Exchange Program** -- Classical Arabic Language classes taught by Prof. Yacoub Haroun, doctoral candidate originally from Ghana, West Africa. Prof. Haroun was trained in the classical African methodology that was used in the University of Timbuktu. The decaying manuscripts from the libraries of Timbuktu and the surrounding regions were mostly written in the Classical Arabic Language. The mode of instruction from the famous learning centers of West Africa were in Arabic. There are also volumes of books that were written in the African languages of Fulani, Songhay etc. TEF hopes to offer several African language classes in the future.
- **"Back To Africa Tour"** -- a two-week cultural tour set for January 2004. We are looking forward to sending our first delegation from the United States to the country of Mali, West Africa to experience first hand the wealth and diversity of the legacy of these early African scholars.
- **Oakland, California's 2nd upcoming Annual Fund-raising Dinner/Workshop: "Preserving the Past For Future Success: Save-A-Manuscript Awareness Campaign"** -- Since the launching of the awareness

The Real "Lion Story"

(Current Programs continued)

campaign on Sept. 14, 2002, TIMBUKTU EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION has given more than 80 presentations to schools, college campuses, churches, community events and educational conferences across the nation. TEF delineates the important contributions of the scholars of the University of Timbuktu in the annals of world history and the lack of resources for the successful preservation of the thousands of decaying volumes of manuscripts.

Mark your calendars and save the date for our 2nd Annual Fund-raising Dinner in early November, 2003.

Back in Africa, we didn't have television, so at night time, we used to sit around the story teller who used to tell us about tales of this and that...

This particular incident is about a father relating a story to his son. The father always told his son that the lion IS the King of the Forest. Each time the story was told to the son, it was demonstrated that the lion indeed, was the King of the Forest.

The son naturally believed in the story, until he grew up and went away to school, and learned from the Western Education System. There to his amazement and delight, he found that they too, have books that told stories about the Lion in the forest. Every time he read those stories, however, the lion was always killed in this and that manner...and sometimes, in the most ridiculous way. So one day, he asked his teacher why is the Lion always being killed by...the hunter, the hyenas, by the wolves, etc. The teacher confirmed that this was the way life was;



that the lion was **not** the King of the Forest.

This new revelation created an unsettling confusion in the young man's mind. He went to his father and said, "Father, I am confused".

He said, "My son, what are you confused about?" "Father, you always told me that the Lion is King of the Forest, but now every story that I read at school, and even my teacher tells me that this is not so". "Well, my son, don't be confused...the reason that the story that you read have a different ending is, because the Lion does not know how to write stories. Until the lion learns how to write stories, it will be portrayed otherwise. **This is the situation of our people !**

Washington D.C. Smithsonian Folklife Festival (June 25-29 & July 2-6)

In cooperation with the Malian and American Governments TEF played a major role in hosting some of the high officials of the government of Mali, and made this summer's Smithsonian Folklife Festival, a success. This year's event highlighted Mali as one of the featured cultures in the festival, the other two being -- the American region of Appalachia and United Kingdom's Scotland.

The U.S. Library of Congress, the Smithsonian and the Malian Government invited TEF to host a delegation of officials comprising of the Mayor of the city of Timbuktu, Ibrahima Mohammed, the President of the Regional Assembly of Timbuktu who is also the Minister of Territorial

Administration, Mohamed AgLindibla and lastly, the Imam (religious leader) of the Grande Mosque of Djingarey-Ber, Imam Abderrahmane Ben Essayouti. During their almost week-long visit to the Nation's capital, TEF helped plan, coordinated meetings and dinners for these esteemed guests.

The Malian delegation was particularly encouraged with how TEF has brought about public awareness regarding the plight of the thousands of volumes of endangered manuscripts and the need

for their preservation. Through TEF's nation-wide "PRESERVE THE MANUSCRIPT AWARENESS CAMPAIGN: Reviving the Past For Future Success", the Malian officials expressed that the strategy can significantly contribute not only to the preservation effort but it can also serve as a bridge that would bring about understanding and unity to African and people world wide. This approach will also resolve the problem of the failing education system in the US and the worldwide by introducing an alternative method of learning based on traditional African teaching methodology.



Malian Delegation of Imams, Scholars and High officials at the PeaceCorps reception

At this year's Folklife Festival, the Malian people joined their peers from the American and European continent to celebrate the living traditional culture of their respective countries. Over one hundred artist and artisans representing over 30 categories were present during the event. Being key participants at this event was very exciting for TEF and

the Malians in general because it provided an opportunity to capitalize extensively on the ongoing effort to educate the American people about Africa, Mali and Timbuktu. For many people in the West, Timbuktu has always been

seen as a mythical place - many are unaware that Timbuktu IS AN ACTUAL PLACE. For those that do know that such a place exist, they do not know the city's actual location. With the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Timbuktu became a living reality for

many Americans. A miniature scale of Timbuktu was recreated in a corner of Washington D.C.'s mall area to give those in attendance a feel and flavor of this historically rich city. Malian scholars, officials, press and a variety of ethnic groups (the Songhay, Tuareg, Fulani just to name a few) and their cultural, traditional diversities were represented. At the festival there were daily programs of

music, songs, dances, arts, crafts, storytelling and other types of performances.

The Malian government made the event all the more successful with Pres. General Amadou Toumani Toure (ATT) presiding over the opening day ceremonies. At this time, Mr. Balde', president and co-founder of TEF, had several meetings with the

Malian president. Pres. Toure 's tremendous encouragement, guidance and support affirmed that TEF's initiative to save the endangered manuscripts and promote their intellectual legacy is long overdue. The President also expressed his sincere appreciation to TEF for graciously hosting the high officials of Mali during their week sojourn in Washington D.C. Mr. Daniel O'C Hamilton, 2nd

Continuation of Smithsonian Article

Secretary and Vice-consul, Director of Cultural and Public Affairs was equally honored and excited to be present at the Festival, he represented the U.S. Ambassador to Mali. Mr. Daniels who also met with TEF's president, Mr. Musa Balde, personally conveyed the US Government's recognition and appreciation to TEF for being available for the Malian delegation, who were honored guests of the United States Embassy. During this momentous occasion, Mr. Balde was introduced to several key figures from other international organizations working in the African continent; most expressed great interest in joining the efforts in protecting the manuscripts from immediate physical threats. TEF received tremendous encouragement from

them saying that "this project will be the solution to many critical problems in Mali and the rest of Africa".

TEF's collaborative work with the Library of Congress has been under way since June 16th. An exhibit and workshops on the Manuscript of Timbuktu at the Library of Congress is currently on display at the African and Middle Eastern Division of the library until mid-September. The Office of scholarly Programs of the Library of Congress featured Mr. Abdel K. Haidara, Curator of The Mamma Haidara Memorial Library in Timbuktu, Mali. TEF was invited to represent and discuss the efforts to preserve the desert libraries. This gained TEF significant exposure in spreading its mission nation-wide. (reprinted from TEF website)



Musa Balde - CEO Of Timbuktu Foundation with the President of Mali, General Amadou Toumani Toure (ATT)

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Timbuktu Educational Foundation, is a non profit organization. Contributions are tax deductible

WE ARE ON THE WEB!

WWW.TIMBUKTUFOUNDATION.ORG

Join Us !!! Help Us !!!

There are many ways to be a part of TEF's growing family. The success of our mission rests largely on your contribution and participation. You can help us by:

1. Becoming a monthly donor of \$10 or more.
2. Making a one time contribution.
3. Making a donation –in-kind for school supplies, office equipment.
4. Volunteering your time and expertise to the foundation.
5. Buying ad space in this newsletter.

Yes, I am more than willing to help !!!

Name: _____
Address _____

City: _____
State/ZIP _____
Phone (area code) _____
Email _____

I am sending you: (amount) _____ /
Or I am automatically depositing to TEF
account: Bank of America :01478-16625
Alameda Main, 1500 Park St. Alameda, CA 94501 Tel (510)649-6600

Note : you can also donate by credit card by calling TEF Main office@ (510)748-9033

"Historical legacy of ancient Africa and of Africans in America is one of originating life, civilization, scientific and spiritual knowledge, and a spirit of resistance against oppression". -- Oba T'Shaka: THE ART OF LEADERSHIP, p.180.

NEXT ISSUE:

- Timbuktu, Mali: What is it? Where is it and Why?
- TEF's Second Field Study Report: Timbuktu, Djenné and Mopti
- TEF Video Documentary Project
- Recommended Reading

I am interested in volunteering :Please send us a letter of intent- purpose.