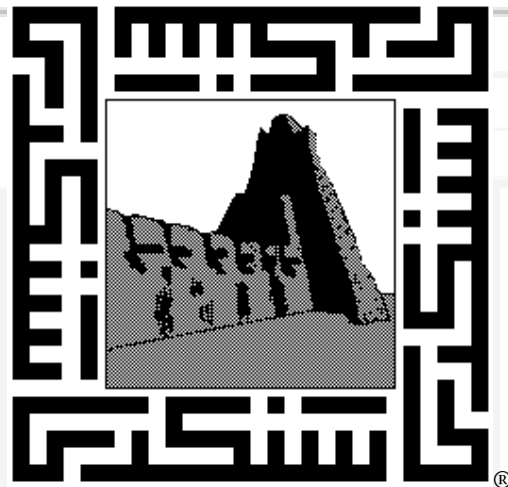


**SANKORE'**



**Institute of Islamic-African Studies International**

**'Mission Statement and Institutional  
Objectives'**

**Institute of Islamic-African  
Studies International**

**SANKORE'**



**Institute of Islamic - African Studies International**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ وَالصَّلَاةُ وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَأَلِهِ وَصَحْبِهِ وَسَلَّمَ

The **Sankore' Institute of Islamic-African Studies International (S.I.I.A.S.I)** is a non-profit, non-political educational institution founded for the sole purpose of researching into the educational, political, cultural and religious heritage of Islamic Africa. The primary area of concern is that part of Black Africa traditionally known as the *Bilad 's-Sudan* (The Lands of the Blacks). These lands include all the regions located south of the Sahara desert and north of the tropical jungles, between the Atlantic Ocean and the Red Sea. The purpose of the **S.I.I.A.S.I** is to elucidate and evidence the Islamic traditions which were born out of African nations such as Takrur, Songhay, Mali, Ghana, Kanem-Bornu, Wodai, Fur, Funj, Sokoto, Segu, Massina and the Mahdist kingdom of the Nile valley.

The name **SANKORE'** is taken from Black Africa's oldest educational institutions located in the ancient city of Timbuktu. In 15th century Timbuktu, in general, and the Sankore' University/Mosque complex, in particular, was the religious, scientific and literary center of the *Bilad's-Sudan*. The University of Sankore' was the intellectual magnet where pious scholars were drawn from all over the Muslim world.

In the mosque there lived and taught the *murabit*, a scholar who by his profound knowledge of the *shari`a*, his learning and the dignity of his personal life became a model to society. This devout and cultured group lived within or around the precincts of the Sankore' University/Mosque disseminating the teachings of al-Islam and providing the people of the government with highly sought after legal decisions. These scholar/notables were held in great esteem by both dignitaries and common people alike. Their knowledge astounded the most learned people of al-Islam. Because of them, pupils flocked to this university from all regions of the Muslim world.

To the government of Islamic Africa, the Sankore' University/Mosque supplied generations of administrators, judges and functionaries of the state. to the wider community, the university furnished teachers, men of religion, jurist and a class of merchants, notaries and clerks. There emerged within the vicinity of the Sankore' University/Mosque complex scholarly guilds who combined the teaching of *`ilm* with the transmission of professional vocation. There were the *Alfa* guild responsible for the transmission of the craft of scribe, tailoring and embroidery. There were the *Arma* guild responsible for the transmission tanning and leatherwork. There were the *Modibe'* guild responsible for the transmission of city planning, architecture, *masjid* construction and the important craft of grave digging (*malu*). They also supervised the *gabibi* guild of masons (*soro banna*), carpentry and smithing (*diamouasi*). Among these respected and venerated *modibe'* scholar/master builders was the erudite chief judge of Timbuktu, *al-Qadi* al-Aqib ibn Mahmud ibn Umar who built the Sankore' University/Mosque. He accomplished this with the financial assistance of a wealthy African women who left a generous endowment for the founding and building of the famous educational center. *Shaykh* Mahmud Ka`ti described the process and building codes utilized for the building of Sankore' in his Tareekh 'l-Fataash,

“Al-Qadi Aqib made the pilgrimage . . . in the year 989 he began building the Sankore’ mosque, may Allah be merciful to him. I was informed by one of the *shaykhs*, ‘When he made the pilgrimage and prepared to take leave to return to Timbuktu, he took authorization from the attendants of the noble Kaaba to delineate the measurement of the Kaaba in length and breadth. They gave him permission and he measured it with a long cord measuring the length and breadth by marking these on the cord. He then brought this cord back to Timbuktu to serve as proportions. When he was ready to build the Sankore’ Mosque, he unrolled the cord and delineated the exact breadth he wanted to build by placing four pegs planted on the corners of the four directions. Thus the inner court of the mosque had the exact dimensions of the Kaaba. It is not deficient or excessive to it in any way.

In short, the products of this religious and educational institution became the leaders of society in all its spheres of activity. The Sankore’ University was the symbol of the spirit of the society, the guardian of its morals and the formulator of its hopes and aspirations.

The **Sankore’ Institute of Islamic-African Studies International** was first conceived December 15, 1985, in the Republic of Sudan as the result of conversations between the present Sultan of Maiurno al-Hajj Abu Bakr ibn Muhammad ibn Bello Maiurno ibn Attahiru ibn Ahmad Zuruku ibn Abu Bakr Attiku ibn Shehu Uthman Dan Fodio, our *shaykh*, *Imam* Muhammad al-Amin ibn Adam Karagh, Ahmad Abideen Hassan and the founding director **Muhammad Shareef**. The *sultan* gave written authorization and commissioned **S.I.I.A.S.I** to collect the Arabic and Ajami manuscripts of the Sokoto Caliphate from northern Nigeria and convey them to the town of Maiurno in order to be edited and republished to provide capital for the public amenities and the general welfare of the people. As a result trips were made to Chad, Northern Nigeria, Mali to collect and copy old manuscripts relevant to the Islamic heritage of the *Bilad ‘s-Sudan*. Later the *Sultan* al-Hajj Abu Bakr and the *Imam* Muhammad al-Amin gave written authorization for **S.I.I.A.S.I** to translate these works into English and disseminate these works among the Muslims of the United States.

To date **S.I.I.A.S.I** has collected 487 Arabic manuscripts and 23 Ajami manuscripts (Fulbe’, Hausa, Wolof and Mande’). Of these, more than 17 have been translated and published by the institute. Classes utilizing the works published by the institute have been established in the cities of Houston, Atlanta, Compton, Los Angeles and Oakland. Presently in two correctional institutions in California the **S.I.I.A.S.I** curriculum is being taught to some 400 Muslim inmates.

Our teacher, the late *Waziri* of Sokoto, Junayd ibn Muhammad al-Bukhari once said, “*Knowledge is universal and eternal but it has a social and cultural stamp. It also has a purpose and a commitment to a particular world view. It therefore cannot be neutral.*” History has shown that African Muslims around the world have been branded and stamped with a social and cultural stamp which not their own. The world view that they now share is completely alien to them. *Waziri* Junayd also said in his book called Nayl ‘l-Arab Fi Istifsa’i ‘n-Nasab

Studies International

مَنْ لَمْ يُخْبِرْ أَوْلَادَهُ أَجْدَادَهُ      فَقَدْ ضَيَّعَ وِلْدَهُ وَآذَى نَسْلَهُ  
وَضَرَّ بِنَجْلِهِ يَوْمَ وَفَاتِهِ

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَعْتَنِ بِنَسَبِهِ      فَقَدْ تَحَيَّرَ عَقْلُهُ

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَغْبَا بِأَصْلِهِ      فَقَدْ ذَهَبَ ذَهْنُهُ

وَمَنْ تَهَاوَنَ بِمَخْتَدِهِ      فَقَدْ أَشْتَدَّتْ سَفَاهَتُهُ

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَدْرِ أَسْلَهُ      فَقَدْ عَظُمَتْ حِمَاقَتُهُ

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَكْتَرِتْ بِأَزْمَتِهِ      فَقَدْ فَسَدَ رَأْيُهُ

وَمَنْ جَهَلَ أَصْلَهُ      فَقَدْ عَدِمَ نُهَيْتَهُ

وَمَنْ لَمْ يَدْرِ مُنْبَتَهُ      فَقَدْ سَقَطَتْ كُرْمَتُهُ

“Whoever does not inform his children of his grandfathers Then has destroyed his child,  
marred his descendants, And injured his offspring the day he dies.

Whoever does not make use of his ancestry, Then he has muddled his reason

Whoever is not concerned with his descent, Then he has lost his mind.

Whoever neglects his origin, Then his stupidity has become critical

Whoever does not cause his ancestry to be abundant Then his incompetence has become  
great.

Whoever is ignorant of his lineage Then his intellect has dissipated.

Whoever does not increase his place of descent, Then he has abolished his honor.”

Although this searing poem was originally composed more than 500 years ago, it accurately describes the psychosis suffered by Africans the world over, especially the Africans in the United States and the western hemisphere. The above poem by our Muslim ancestors foretold our sickness and the work of the **Sankore' Institute of Islamic-African Studies International** will help (Allah willing) calculate the cure. The overall aims of the institute is to rediscover the authentic purpose, commitment and particular world view of Islamic Africa and to revive the learning which gave it its unique social and cultural stamp. In short, the **Sankore' Institute** is, with the help of Allah ta`ala, preserving and extending the intellectual heritage of the ancient **Sankore' University/Mosque** of the 15th century - making this legacy viable for the electronic age for the Muslims of Africa, America and the world.

وَبِاللَّهِ التَّوْفِيقُ

Muhammad Shareef

Institute of Islamic-African  
Studies International

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## Objectives

The objectives of the Sankore' Institute of Islamic-African Studies International:

I. To collect Arabic and Ajami manuscripts written by African Muslim scholars and situate these manuscripts in a central archive in the town of Maiurno, Sudan and in the United States of America. There exist more than 800,000 extant Arabic and Ajami manuscripts in Islamic Africa. These manuscripts are presently located in university libraries, government records and private collections throughout Africa. The main countries where they are accumulated are: Nigeria, Senegal, Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Chad, Cameroon, Morocco and the Republic of Sudan. These manuscripts would be stored in the archives of the Sankore' Institute by computer and microfilm storing systems. They would be arranged according to:

- a. Region, subject and author.
- b. Subject and author.
- c. Author and subject.

II Research into and unearth extant Arabic manuscripts written by enslaved African Muslims kept in private and public archives in the United States, Central and South America as well as the Islands of the Caribbean. To purchase and or copy the said manuscripts for the same purpose mentioned in the above clause I.

III. Translate these manuscripts into English and publish those which the associates of the Sankore' Institute consider appropriate. The translations would be accomplished by:

- a. Members of the Sankore' Institute
- b. Employing non-members
- c. Publishing unpublished university dissertations.

IV. Market the published books to African Americans (Muslim and non-Muslim), American Islamic studies departments, African studies departments, Middle Eastern studies departments, masjid, Islamic centers, Islamic book stores, Afro-centric book stores, Middle Eastern universities and libraries, African universities and libraries and to African countries (Muslim and non-Muslim).

V. Compile and copy Arabic manuscripts on digital computerized format. Develop software to archive, edit and preserve these manuscripts. Develop user friendly interactive computer software designed to archive the Arabic manuscripts into a CD ROM encyclopedia and concordance of revised and corrected Arabic manuscript library called *The Sankore' Encyclopedia of Islamic-African Manuscripts*. This CD will be marketed

throughout the world to universities, libraries, computer stores and the international academic community.

VI. Establish and sponsor an annual Sankore' Conference on Islamic-African Civilization. To be held annually at the University of California at Berkeley. This conference will invite leading African Muslim scholars both traditional and academic as well as Middle Eastern and Western Muslim scholars to present papers and lectures concerning diverse subjects and topics on Islamic-African Civilization. The Institute will invite a keynote speaker to either commence or conclude the said yearly conference.

VII. Publish an annual bulletin of collected papers and lectures submitted during the annual Sankore' Conference on Islamic-African Civilization called The Bulletin of the Sankore' Institute of Islamic-African Studies. This bulletin will be marketed in accordance with the above clause IV. The proceeds from the sell of the bulletin will go towards the cost of the yearly conference mentioned in the above clause VI.

VIII. Rent booths and stalls for the purpose of selling the products of the Sankore' Institute and for opening up new markets at:

- a. Bazaars
- b. Lectures
- c. Conferences
- d. Eid prayers
- e. Other.

IX. Sponsor trips to different African Muslim countries for members of the Sankore' Institute in order to:

- a. Collect manuscripts
- b. Open new markets for the products of the Institute.
- c. Contact with African Muslim scholars, *shaykhs* and university academicians.

X. Make a video and slide film library of life among African Muslims. This would include documentation of their educational, religious, social and economic life. This archive will be used for the following:

- a. Use in the Sankore' Institute's library by members and scholarly visitors
- b. Sold to schools, libraries, universities and individuals in accordance with the above clause IV.
- c. Presented during the annual Sankore' Conference on Islamic-African Civilization.

XI. Establish an endowment for the purpose of allocating funds towards selected villages in Islamic Africa which have played a historical role in the spread and dissemination of Islam in Black Africa. This fund will be expended as:

- a. Grants and awards to traditional Quran schools and *madaris*
- b. Restoring and renovating important historical edifices of antiquity; such as *masajid* and *madaris*
- c. Bequest for orphanages where African Muslim boys and girls study the Quran and the fundamentals of Islamic jurisprudence.
- d. Founding archives and supporting existing ones wherein the manuscripts and written legacies of the people can be preserved for future use.

e. Development programs utilizing intermediate technologies to be transferred to selected Muslim towns and villages of historical and cultural importance with the aim of improving the planning of streets, agriculture, animal husbandry, and health and food production of the people. In order to realize this, the Sankore' Institute will recruit young volunteers from among the professionals of the African American Muslim communities and the expatriate Muslim communities in the US. These young doctors, nurses, agronomists, engineers, etc., will spend at least six months to a year in the said Muslim villages developing programs to improve the overall condition of the people. Congruent to this these young professionals will have the opportunity of learning Arabic and Islamic sciences in the most traditional way possible. This exchange will prove of immense benefit for both the Muslims in Africa and the Muslims of the United States.

XII. Assisting other institutions in establishing a traditional Islamic school wherein the knowledge and sciences generated by both the Sankore' Institute can be taught to Muslim adults as well as Muslim children in the United States.

XIII. Establish weekend adult educational classes to teach African American Muslims as well as others the books produced by the Sankore' Institute as mentioned in the above clause III. These classes will include the sciences of:

- a. *tawheed* (theology)
- b. Arabic
- c. *fiqh* (jurisprudence)
- d. *tasawwuf* (the perfection of character and the purification of the heart)
- e. *wilayat* (government)
- f. *tareekh* (historiography)
- g. *tijaarah* (commerce)

Diplomas (*ijaaza*) will be given to those who successfully finish these courses and texts.

XIV. Develop and establish a correspondence course to allow incarcerated Muslims in the state and federal correctional institutions in the United States to learn all the sciences mentioned in the above clause XIII. In addition to this, the Sankore' Institute will develop and engender policies which assist the correctional institutions in accommodating the religious needs of the Muslim inmate populations and to assist the Muslim inmate population in their legitimate grievances against the correctional institutions. In order to accomplish this, the Sankore' Institute will act as consultant to the United Nation's Islamic Human Right Commission, the Urgency Section of the Commission On Human Rights and the International Human Rights Association of American Minorities regarding the rights, protection and legitimate grievances of Muslim inmate population in federal and state correctional institutions in the United States.

XV. Sponsor members to make the pilgrimage (*al-hajj*) to the Two Sacred Mosque in Mecca and Madina and a tour of select African Muslim countries.

XVI. Sponsor exchange programs where Muslims students from Africa can come to the USA for advance study and where African American Muslim students can go to African Muslim countries to study. To accomplish this, the Sankore' Institute will seek accreditation from select universities in Muslim Africa and the United States.

XVII. Establish a center called *Masjid Sankore'* which would house a *masjid*, academy, and Library in order to discharge all the above objectives, this *masjid* will be built upon the same canons and style of the ancient *Masjid Sankore'* of Timbuktu in conjunction with existing local and state building codes. The purpose for this is to introduce into the American landscape a prototype *masjid* that would exemplify the unique sacred architectural style of Islamic Black Africa. In the same manner in which Chinese and Japanese Buddhist Temples, Greek Orthodox and Catholic Adobe' style churches dot the landscape of America and illustrate the positive contribution which these cultures and civilizations have played in defining the American self image - The Sankore' Institute considers that the recreation of a traditional *masjid* like the ancient *Masjid Sankore'* will testify to the positive contribution which Muslims of West African origin have played in the development of western civilization.



**Institute of Islamic-African  
Studies International**