

**|POETRY AS A TOOL FOR PROMOTING NATIONAL INTEGRATION AND SECURITY: A
CASE STUDY OF THE POEM OF OLADELE SANGOTOYE “ETUTU ISOKAN”**

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ABSTRACT

Poetry has been identified as a dynamic cultural element in nation building and human history. Its teaching no doubt enhances the potentials of an individual socially, mentally, economically and politically. As an indispensable tool, it makes natural cooperation and integration possible within the natural policy. This paper therefore examines the concept of Poetry, types of poetry, features of poetry and its role in promoting integration in Nigeria. The findings revealed that the peaceful resolution of conflict and prevention of violence, whether interpersonal or societal, overt or structural, is a positive value to promote on a global level through teaching and learning of Poetry. The paper concluded that the culture of violence and war is not sustainable. Though conflict is inevitable in every society, but violent, conflict can be avoided, as an effective use of Poetry can make a lot of contribution not just in avoiding violence but in ensuring integration, peace, security and harmony. Recommendation were made that religious leaders should make use of Poetry that teaches integration in their sermon, teaching and preaching, this will disseminate the message of peace and tolerance to their worshippers.

Keywords: Poetry, National integration, Security

INTRODUCTION

In order to achieve a sound progress, peace, unity, security and development in our country today, literature as a tool for integration is necessary because ones thoughts, ideas, feeling, anger, grievances can be expressed into written. Literature plays an important role both as a mark of identity as well as means of projecting oneself as noted by Omoyajowo (2004) that studying of literature gives one poise, confidence and social strength. Nigeria is a multi-ethnic country, containing more than 350 distinctive ethnic groups who are socially, culturally and historically distinctive. Inter ethnic relation occupy a central position in the economic, social and political development of Nigeria, however, empirical evidence has revealed that the constant rivalries, competition and conflicts which exist among the different ethnic groups in Nigeria, this is as a result of the frequent struggle for power by members of some of the ethnic groups to exclusively control Nigerian economic activities Parden (1991).

Literature as an aspect of education has been established as an integral part of the society. This is where the notion of literature teaching in Nigeria schools as a tool for social integrations and security comes to bear. Agu (2004), further stresses this by saying that, poetry is an art in the organization of words, to give pleasure and through the words elevates and transform all human experience and aesthetic transactions. From the ages till date, literature plays immeasurable roles in the development of the nation. It is the singular weapon capable of changing the valued system of the individuals in society with the overall aim of changing the total essence of the nation. Nwana (1989), postulated that the study of poetry at school level will promote national consciousness and unity among the diverted ethnic groups in the country also there will be solution to some of these conflicts that is happening in Nigeria, if not total, at least to the barest minimal. Nations strive hard in a bid to achieve national development. But national integration and security efforts are hobbled by cultural conflict especially in a volatile Federal, state, and heterogeneous society like Nigeria.

The conflict generally is likely to generate economic crises, humanitarian cataclysm and anarchy among other consequences. To establish peace, unity and security, the paper suggests that the opportunities provided by Poetry should be applied to achieve national integration and both political and religious leaders should disseminate the message of brotherhood and tolerance. Poetry can be divided into namely oral and written poetry. A written poem exists and is transmitted and perpetuated in print. But the Yoruba oral poetry like all oral works of arts, exists and is transmitted and perpetuated in performance, that is, without performance or for want of performance, Yoruba oral poetry has no means of existence and survival. Another aspect of Yoruba oral poetry is that it is learnt, perpetuated and transmitted orally in performance. The period 1949-1959 could be said to be a preparatory period for incoming modern poets.

Oladele Sangotoye is seasoned poet. He uses poetry to make his audience see their environment in new ways, such experience is those that the audience might have earlier considered or concerned as ordinary. He plays multifarious roles in the society viewing it from different perspective with various artistic lenses. Oladele Sangotoye was born in 1960. His father was a farmer. He attended Elega Baptist Day School, modern school Ajaawa near Ogbomoso in Oyo state between 1972 and 1974, Wesley College Ibadan between 1976 and 1979. Oladele started his working career as a primary school teacher. He attended St. Andrew College of Education Oyo, when Tunji Opatotun discovered his literary talent. Between 1987 and 1990 he went to University of Ilorin, where he got B.A.Ed in Yoruba. Now he is a master holder, a poet, an author and contributor to many others books.

INTEGRATION

Nigeria is a diverse nation in terms of culture, language, and religion. After the independence in 1960, national integration was one of the main tasks for colonial master. The concept became very important, as various states in Nigeria were formed based on tribes and languages, Nigeria was divided into three regions, northern region with the headquarters in Kaduna, western region with the headquarters in Ibadan, eastern region with the headquarter in Porthercourt. Lagos was the Federal capital and Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa was the Prime minister. All these was done for

the sake of national integration, even the adoption of English as our official language is still part of integration so that no tribe will be seen or treated as a second citizen. When English become lingua franca, it is the language of instruction in the schools, language of judiciary and administration. The most serious threats to the national integration of Nigerians are: linguistics differences, tribalism, and politics. Teline (2010) also highlighted forces that are working against national integration, such forces are: multi-party system, religious intolerance, census controversies, undefined ideology, ethnicity and national identity. These forces lead to clashes between different sects. Such occurrences damage the unity, security and prove to be a hindrance to progress

Communalism is a factor that poses a great danger to our unity. The Biafara war of 1965-1969 led to terrible communal clash, a very large number of people lost their lives and homes, people undergo a lot of suffering or resettle especially the Igbos' Linguistic differences also create problems. Nigerian constitution recognized three major languages to be taught in our schools that is Hausa, Yoruba and Igbo NPE (2004). Because of these differences, the government choose English language as the Lingua Franca. However, sometimes people display hostility towards the language of others. This harms the cause of national unity. As responsible citizens we must give due respect to other languages and cultures and realize that they add to the greatness of the country

When looking at the forces promoting national integration, Ramandeeep (2013) identify Secularism as one of the forces, Nigeria is a secular state, this means that each citizen of the country has the right to practice his or her religion. The government cannot show preference to one religion intolerance. As a democratic state, nobody should be disenfranchise or denied of fundamental human right, because we are all equal before the law and each and every one of us has a constitutional right. National festivals also act as an important unifying force. Independence day, democracy day are festivals that are celebrated by all Nigerians and in all parts of the country regardless of language, religion and culture. Therefore, National integration refers to the process of creating awareness of the single identity by which people from a particular area or country should subscribe. National integration seeks to eliminate vices like inequality, while strengthening Solidarity and unity. Integration can be defined as adding something to a particular circumstance to make it whole or incorporating an object into a situation for different results. At this juncture, national integration is the awareness of a common identity amongst the citizens of a country, it means that though we belong to different tribes, we recognize the fact that we are all one. This kind of integration is very important in the building of a strong and prosperous nation

SECURITY

The term "security" was derived from the old French and Latin word securite and securus respectively which implies "free from care" Tickner (1994)(Online Text).The security of all the citizenry suppose to be paramount to any government because security is the safety of a state or organisation against criminal activities such as theft and terrorism. Hornby (2006) defined security as all the activities involved in protecting a country, building and person against attack, danger, harm or damage, theft or terrorism. Merriam Webster unabridge Dictionary (online Encyclopedia Dictionary) identified the synonyms of this word "SECURITY", i.e. ammunition, armor, buckler,

cover, guard, protection, safeguard, screen, defense, shield, wall, ward. Security could mean, freedom from risk, danger safety, doubt, anxiety, fear, and confidence.

Houghton (2000), opined that, it's a measures adopted as by a business, home owner, government to prevent a crime such as burglary or assault, security personnel, ammunitions and to prevent escape. For security to be meaningful and durable, it would have to amount to a positive or stable peace structure. This would imply considerably more than negative peace equated with an absence of war as merely one particular form of direct violence. Genuine peace and security would presuppose an elimination of or at least a reduction of structural violence i.e the relative deprivation of large part of the world population. Since 1945, however, many of the most significant threats to state security have been internal, rather than external, a shift which has only consequences for the conduct of international relation. The security of states was therefore threatened by any change that might threaten that monopoly of violence whether through external invasion or internationally rebellion.

As the predominant concerns of security strategists have changed, however, there has also been a more fundamental rethinking of the very framework of state security. Human security have been suggested to express the need of individuals for safety in other arenas of basis need, access to clean food, water, environmental, energy security, freedom from economic exploitation, protection from arbitrary violence by the police, gangs or domestic partners etc. Some scholars however have argued that the rethinking must go even further, including the ends of security policy as well. The effort to broaden security planning to include "human security". Thus Tickner (1994), quotes approvingly another author is definition of security not only in terms of the internal security of the state, but also in terms of secure systems of food, health, money and trade. He places a focus on structural violence, which goes beyond physical violence to include the indirect violence done to individuals when unjust economic and political structures reduce their life expectancy through lack of access to basic material needs.

A secure society must promote a viable ecosystem while at the same time working towards the elimination of both physical and structural violence, an elimination that requires dismantling hierarchical boundaries between women and men, rich and poor, and insiders and outsiders which have contributed to an exclusionary divisive definition of security Tickner (1994). Thus if all unjust social arrangement are inherently violent, no unjust society is secure and it is impossible to give a descriptive account of security without first establishing normative agreement on what constitutes a just economic and political system. True security cannot be achieved until hierarchical social relations and divisive boundary distinctions are recognized and substantially altered and until all individuals participate in providing for their own security.

POETRY

Poetry is a form of literature that is spoken or written which emphasizes rhythm, other intricate patterns of sound and imagery, and the many possible ways that words can suggest meaning. The word itself derives from a Greek word, *poesis*, meaning "making" or "creating". Whereas ordinary speech and writing, called prose, are organized in sentences and paragraphs, poetry in its simplest definition is organized in units called lines as well as in sentences, and often in stanzas, which are

the paragraphs of poetry. The way a line of poetry is structured can be considered a kind of garment that shapes and clothes the thought within it. The oldest and most longstanding genres for classifying poetry are epic, a long narrative poem centered on a national hero, and lyric, and a short poem expressing intense emotion Agu (2012).

Throughout its long history, poetry has relied on evolving rules about what a poem is, with new kinds of poetry building on earlier kinds to create greater possibilities of expression. In the 20th century poets have increasingly used the language of everyday speech and created new forms that break the usual rules of poetry, such as its organization in line units. Yet to surprise a reader and evoke a response, the new has to be seen in contrast to the old, and thus poetry still depends upon a reader's depth of knowledge about the poetic practices of the past for its effectiveness. Though much poetry is in written form, it usually represents a speaking voice that is not the same as the poet's. In some lyric poems, this voice seems to speak about individual feelings; in epic poems, the voice seems to speak on behalf of a nation or community. Poetic voices of all kinds confront the unspeakable and push the limits of language and experience. The 20th century American poet Michael Palmer characterizes this aspect of poetry when he writes playfully, "How lovely the unspeakable must be. You have only to say it and it tells a story." At its deepest level. Poetry attempts to communicate unspeakable aspects of human experience, through the still evolving traditions of an ancient and passionate art (Karen Volkman 2008 in Encarta 2009).

According to Martins (2010) he believe that poetry has to do with the act of poem writing. Poem can be described as a literary composition characterized by the presence of imagination, emotion, truth, sense of impression and concrete language expressed rhymerically and with an orderly arrangement of parts and possessing within itself a unity. Furthermore, poems experiences of intense feelings and thoughts which are written in lines. Traditionally, these lines are measured and each letter that begins every line of poems is written in capital letter. Such measurement depends on the arrangement of regular number of stressed and unstressed syllables within a line. This is called metre and it determines the rhythm in a poem. This form of arrangement is described as verse which may or may not be divided into stanzas.

However, modern poets i.e. those who write poems do not only use small letters at the beginning of some lines of poetry but also use irregular rhythm which is popularly known as free verse. Stanza means a group of lines forming a unit in some types of poems.

Types of Poems

Poems are often described in accordance with their forms and contents. It is indeed true that the Yoruba readily recognize some poetic forms according to the way they are performed or chanted i.e according to the musical mode of performance. Babalola (1966) in Olatunji (2005) convince a knowledgeable Yoruba that not all the forms are recognizable by the mode of chanting

Ràrà- is chanted by men and women, old or young, for entertainment on social occasion

Ìjálá- Is performed by hunters or devotees of Ògún (the Yoruba divinity of iron)

Èsà- Is chanted by masquerades worshipper

Ìrèmòjé- Is chanted by Ògún worshipper during the funeral ceremony of an hunter, different from Ìjálá

Ekún Ìyàwó- Is sung by brides on the eve of their marriage

Ìyèrè Ifá- Is chanted by devotee of Orunmila when they come together on festive occasions

Each of these poetic forms has its characteristic musical style. There are still other musically identifiable forms which can be added to this list, they include Şàngó-pipe, Esu-pipe and Oya-pipe which are associated with their particular divinities and devotees. Outside the Oyo communities, there are several others, such as Ege in Egba land, Efe in Egbado, Alamo and Asamo among the Ekiti, Olele among the Ijesa, Osare and Adamo among the Ondo and Laghalogho, Reso and Oseghe among the Owo. More of these forms are yet to be identified and described, since the modes of chanting vary from place to place among the Yoruba.

Those poetic forms which are recognized solely by the musical manner in which they are chanted have chanting modes. Some of them, such as Ìyèrè Ifá, Ìjálá and Èşà are widely distributed over Yoruba land, but most are localized, as has been stated above. Among the poetic forms in the list compiled by Babalola, there are those which are not recognized by the musical mode of chanting, but by certain characteristic linguistic and semantic features which usually occur within the repertory of the poets performing in the various chanting modes. They are Oríkì, Èşè Ifá, Òwe, Àlò Àpamò and Ọfò or (Ògèdè). The fact that they can be recognized within the repertory of various chanting modes confirms the idea that the poetic forms in this class have features which distinguish them, whether they are spoken or chanted. Another category of Yoruba poem is song. Songs permeate almost every aspect of Yoruba life as Ulli Beier (1970 in ojo 2011:7) has aptly pointed out:

There is no occasion in Yoruba life that is not accompanied by songs. Births, marriage, and funeral are all occasions for lyrical songs of great beauty. Everyday life is also accompanied by a great deal of impromptu singing, as kind of musical thinking in which the singer puts everything to a tune, which happens to pass through his head.

In songs, there exists a regular recurrence of rhythmic patterns; such pattern are, of course, absent in chant where rhythm may be called 'free' in the sense that it is the choice off the individual singer. The songs and chanting modes are musical style of vocalization. The three classes already described for Yoruba oral poetry as a cline of which the feature types and the songs are the two extremes, while the chanting modes are at intermediate intervals in the continuum. In the category of songs are festival songs, e.g. Asigbon in Iyin Ekiti, Agasa in Egbado, Onmoka in Ofa, Igogo in Owo, Oro in Ijebu and Ajagbo in Ekiti. Folksongs which anyone can compose and which easily get disseminated belong to this category. There are others such as Etiyeri, Waka and Apala, we have therefore now set up three major classes within Yoruba oral poetry in place of the undifferentiated listing of poetic forms.

Features of Poetry

Mood: This depicts the state of mind or feelings of the poet. It can be realized by the language and wordings (the tone) used by a poet. The mood of a poet can be that of happiness, anger, sorrow, ridicule, etc.

Refrain: This is the repetition of lines at regular intervals in a poem.

Poetic licence: This is the liberty which the poet has to use language arbitrarily.

Theme: This refers to the central idea or the main message of a poem.

Prosody: This is connected with the form and analyses of the various elements of versification

The Role of Poetry

Poet who has contributed immensely to reshaping the society with the message of peace, integration and securities was Oladele Sangotoye. This paper focuses on poetry as a mirror of society with special reference to Oladele Sangotoye “Etutu Isokan”. It X-rays the concern of this poet on the effect of peace, integration and security in our society. The poet creates a situation of disunity and social insecurity in a crime – infested society and thrills his readers on how we can solve some of the crisis. He does not write merely to provide emotional pleasure, he highlights the laxity of integration and security in our society.

The massacre of innocent people by Boko Haram member does not make for integration in the society, rather it makes for an unhealthy and chaotic environment. The attitude expressed over these ritual killings was revealed, people expressing joy as fellow human beings get killed, simply for money. They have failed to realize what loss such destruction of life is to humanity. The poet shows his disapproval for the massacre of innocent souls. Oladele expressed his view about Nigeria how things are not going well in Nigeria that is why he says:

Àánú orílẹ̀-èdè yí n ẹ̀ mi
Torí ẹ̀ ni mo se n da omi lójú
Bíi tegbére lójó gbogbo
Òní ọ̀tẹ̀, ọ̀la wàhálà ló n pa mí lẹ̀kún
Rúdurúdu táyẹ̀ n se ló n pa mí nígbẹ̀
Ibi tókò orílẹ̀-èdè yí n ló kò yé wa mọ̀
Ibi à n rẹ̀, a kò tilẹ̀ mọ̀ (8lz 1-6)

I pity this country
That is why I am always cry like a goblin
The unrest situation of this country made me to cry
Confusion of this country is making me to cry
Nobody knows where this country is heading to
We don't even know where we are going (line 1-6)

He also describes the kind of conflict that is happening in Nigeria which hinders the integration and peace, such as killing, shooting, war and rebellion.

Àfi K'Ólúwa ó kó wa yọ

Ìró ogun, ìró ọ̀tẹ̀ ni gbogbo ìgbà
Òní ìjọba dàrú
Ọ̀la sójà yòbọ̀n
Wọ̀n á máa parawon sí pópó
Wọ̀n á máa dú ara wọ̀n bí ẹ̀ni dúran
Èjẹ̀ ẹ̀niyàn a sì máa dà yàlàyòlò (8lz 10-16)

Except God deliver us
War, Rebellion every time
Today, the Government is disconcert
Tomorrow the soldier shoot
They killed themselves to the street
They slaughter themselves as if they slaughter Ram
People's blood will be rushing luxuriously. (line 10-16)

There is no how conflict, trouble and killing can bring integration, and it cannot take us to any where as a nation. He advises that society should give these a second thought. That is why he says:

Ìjàngbọ̀n fífà kò lè ràn wá lówó
Ìpàniyàn sẹ̀bọ̀ lódoṣdún látàrí iditẹ̀ kò lè tánràn
Lóníí, lóla bí ẹ̀kùn apọ̀kojẹ̀, kò le tánsòro wa (8lz 24-26)

Trouble making cannot helps us
Indiscriminating killings all the time cannot solve our matter
Fighting here and there cannot settle our problem (line 24-26)

The poet know the important of integration in a nation that is why he makes use of repetition to lay emphasis and kicked against shedding of blood and killing, that, this cannot bring integration to the country rather it will lead to crisis and insecurity, he states:

Ìpàniyàn sẹ̀bọ̀ kò le ràn wá lówó
Ká má a para wa kì í sètùtù isòkan
Àjosepò tó dán mọ̀rán kò lè sí
Níbi tí a bá gbé n para wa bí ẹ̀ran (8lz 88-91)

Killing for sacrifice cannot help us
Killing one another is not the sacrifice of unity
There will be no cooperation
Where we are killing ourselves like

Oladele also suggested Sovereign Conference, where civil servants, traditional ruler, NGO's, traders, business men/women, students, youth, adult, old ones, unemployed, farmers, Entrepreneurship, religious leaders etc will be on seat and ironed out some of the issue that is hindering national integration. He says:

Èmi ìbá dàmọ̀ràn Ìpàdé nlá

Níbi a óò pe òpò èniyàn fún ijíròrò (8lz 36-37)
Kí gbogbo wọn ó foríkorí
Kí wọn ó sọrò lórí kí ló n da ilú rú
Lórí kí la le še táyé fi le tura fún ẹrútomọ
Kí wọn ó sọrò lórí i kí ló n fa wàhàlà
Kí wọn ó sì mú àbá wá lẹyìn ijíròrò (8lz 47-51-)

I will suggest sovereign conference
Where we call people for discussion (line 36-37)
Let's all of them sit on the round Table
Let them discuss the causes of these Troubles

What are the ways forward, so that citizenry will be comfortable, let's them discuss on the causes of conflict and bring suggestions after the discussion. (Line 47-51)

He suggest that, if the Sovereign Conference should hold, the conference should look into the issue of separation of each geo political zone in Nigeria, peradventure this may bring integration, peace and unity to the country. In his poem he says:

Káwọn ìgbimọ́ ó fẹ̀nukò
Bóyá kóníkálukú ó kẹ̀kọ̀ rẹ̀ lówọ̀
La fi le dẹkun fifi ẹmí sòfò
Kí ẹni tó bá fẹ̀ lójó iwájú
Ó tún máa bá ara wọn se
Ọ̀rò ijà kọ, Ọ̀rò àjọsọ ni (8lz 62-70)

Let the committee agreed
May be each political zone should stay on their own
May be this will put an end to wasting of life
Whoever that want it in future
Can come together for another Amalgamation
It's not the matter of fight, It's a matter of agreement. (line 62-70)

The poet also kicked against, unnecessary killing and killing of innocent souls. He says, killing, conflict, crisis cannot bring peace and harmony, instead it will add to it. He says:

Orí bíbẹ̀ kọ̀ lòògun iná
Ká máa parawa ẹ̀bọ̀
Kò lè tánràn ohun tó n ẹ̀ni
Ọ̀nà bí ijàngbọ̀n ó se dínkù la à bá wá
Ọ̀nà isọkan la à bá múpọ̀n
Ajosepọ̀ àti Àgbóyé
Lóle tánràn wàhàlà àwa
Ó dá mi lójú dáadáa (8lz 74-81)

Cutting of head is not the solution to lice
Killing ourselves for sacrifice
Cannot solve ones problem
We should have look for way to put an end to conflict
We should seek for way of Unity
Good relationship and understanding
Are the tools in solving our Trouble/conflict?
I am very sure. (Line 74-81)

He stressed that conflict and killing are not the sacrifice of unity, integration and harmony. Where there is problem, crisis, conflict and misunderstanding, there won't be good relationship between the ethnic groups. In line 88-93 he establishes this fact by saying:

Ìpànyàn şẹbọ kò le ràn wá lówọ
Ká máa para wa kii şètùtù isòkan
Àjoşepò tó dán mórán kò lè sí
Níbi a bá gbé n parawa bí eran
Ìsòkan danyindanyin kò sì le wà
Níbi a bá gbé n fẹjẹ ọmọnikẹjì wẹ (81z 88-93)

Killing people for sacrifice cannot help us
Killing ourselves is not the sacrifice of unity
Good relationship cannot exist
Where we killed ourselves like Goat
Smooth unity cannot exist too
Where we shed people's blood
Where we make use of people's blood to bathe (line 88-93)

The reflection of peace, security, unity, moral, religious and socio-economic changes in the contemporary life is the concern of the poet. The poem constitute a reflection of various evil, war, crisis, insecurity, disunity, shedding of blood in contemporary Yoruba society and Nigeria as a whole, a depiction of culture, conflict, ethnic crisis, the problem of individual moral and public responsibility. Poetry is a weapon and in fact, the best moral tool of the society if well utilized in our society where, violence, insecurities, intimidation, disunity humiliation, greedy, hatred, immorality are rife. Poet has assumed greater responsibility in their crusade against social ills in our society Egudu (1986).

At this juncture, the paper calls for resolution for the progress of the nation, therefore reading and learning Poetry can serve as a tool for promoting peace, unity and tolerance, because Poetry can be learn and taught in an appropriate and diplomatic way the understanding will arise. Poetry is a tool for peace, integration and progress if properly used for a sustainable development. If we can

understand one another we will achieve the National stated goals, aims and objective of the government.

CONCLUSION

The growing culture of disunity is a cause for concern by all well meaning Nigerians. It is ironical that those who fought to keep Nigeria one are now associated with ethnic agitations under the guise of Ethno-Regional association. Under many decades of self governance however, the political equation and that of national unity are far from being balanced. Country, like Nigeria are threatened by ethnicity, religious intolerance and high level of corruption perpetrated by the well educated, chiefs, kings, political leaders, economists etc. But if poetry can be published frequently on these societal problems and it was taught from primary school to tertiary institution (as General Study) most of the students, people, leaders and perpetrators behind the conflict, violence and crises in Nigeria will have the spirit of love, peace, integration, tolerance and progress.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations were made which if implemented will enhance integration and harmony in Nigeria.
2. The media houses should have time to read Poetry books that will benefit their audience and promote peace and unity.
3. Parents and teachers should encourage their children to read Poetry book that will foster unity and peace.
4. Government and other agencies should adequately fund school libraries by providing Poetry books that promote peace and unity.
5. Both the writers and the publishers should cultivate the habit of writing and publishing Poetry books that will promote peace and unity.
6. Religious leaders should make use of poetry that teaches peace in their sermon, preaching and teaching, this will disseminate the message of peace, unity and tolerance.

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