

The emergence of central political authority in Kano was closely associated with the foundation of *birni* (city) Kano itself. This was like other Hausa states where the *birane* (cities) were the centers of political authority. These cities developed as a result of immigration of diverse groups who have no kinship relationship and were integrated gradually displacing authorities whose power depended on kinship loyalties.

It has been suggested that political authority in Hausaland evolved from farming family groups whose farms were very close to their homes and they were separated by waste-lands. These separate settlements were called *ka uyuka*

or

*unguwoyi*

(sing.

*kauye*

,

*unguwa*

). It was further suggested that authority was of two types family and communal. The communal authority was vested in the

*sarki*

(ruler) which was recognized for specific purposes. Especially farming which was the backbone of the economy. The

*sarkin noma*

(king of farming) coordinated all the farming activities including the religious rituals for rains. The head of the family unit regulated all other affairs not related to agriculture. The

*kauye*

was a collection of these independent family units

*gidaje*

(sing.

*gida*

) each headed by the

*maigida*

(family head). The society expanded as a result of immigration of families

who were not related to each other,

*unguwoyi*

and

*kauyuka*

merged and became towns

*garuruwa*

(sing. *gari*). The community leader of the *gari* was known as

*sarkin gari*

who was assisted by ward heads

*masu ungwuwani*

(sing.

*mai unguwa*

). As the town developed the authority of the *sarki* became expanded beyond the farmland with diminishing emphasis on kinship since most of the immigrants were not related.

The *birni* (city) evolved from the *gari* (town). The *birni* of antiquity was cosmopolitan; it was an urban center with a considerably large population of diverse groups who lack kinship relations with one and the other. Economic factors were responsible for the growth of

*birane*

(sing.

*birni*

) of ancient Hausaland, because only buoyant economy could support a large population. Agriculture supported by fertile soil was the mainstay of the economy. The iron industry also supported agriculture by producing farm implements. Dutsen Dala, which was an iron site, was the foundation of Kano the greatest of all Hausa

*birane*

.

*Birnin*

Kano became the nucleus of fertile

*Kasar*

(country of) Kano. Trade and religious attraction was contributed to the growth of Kano. Dutsen Dala and Kurmin Jakara both located in Birnin Kano

were centers of

*iskokai*

(spirits) adored by the ancient Hausas. Barbushe the first known Sarkin

Kano was a chief priest of

*Tsumburbura*

which were also

*iskokai*

. For any

*birni*

to flourish it needed security thus another very important feature of any birni

of ancient Hausaland was the

*ganuwa*

(city wall) which was a fortification. It has been suggested that this security

of the

*birane*

was an essential element in their emergence as centers of "unusual political

power". The emergence of states in Hausaland appeared to have been

linked with the foundation of

*birane*

as these centers of political power.

Political authority is closely associated with class distinction. In Hausaland members of the ruling class were known as *masu sarauta* and the *talakawa*

are the commoners. The sarki was the head of the

*sarauta*

and also the head of state and all the state officials were

*masu sarauta*

. The office of the

*sarki*

(king) was dynastic and in Kano throughout the pre-jihad era it was vested in

the family of Bagauda. The

*masu sarauta*

were fief holders given to them by the sarki for their loyalty. The system was

complex and it took several years to develop. The most important innovation

was the creation of the

*Tara ta Kano*

(literarily Kano nine) by Sarkin Kano Muhammadu Rumfa. This was the Council of State made up of the senior state officials:

*galadima*

,

*madaki*

and

*wambai*

(always a slave) who were considered greater than the sarki, followed by

*makama*

,

*sarkin*

*jarumai*

and

*sarkin bai*

(always a slave) who were considered equal to the sarki and the last three who considered less than the sarki were:

*barde*

,

*sarkin dawakin tsakar gida*

and

*turaki*

. The

*Tara ta Kano*

underwent several transformations during the pre-Jihad period as explained by Fika (1978) and Temple (1909). For example

*barde*

and

*turaki*

were later expelled and replaced by

*dan iya*

and

*ciroma*

respectively

One of the functions of the *Tara ta Kano* might have been the selection of the new *sarki* from amongst the *'yan sarki* (sons of the King). It has been reported that the *sarki* always feared the consensus of the members of *Tara ta Kano* (Ado-Kurawa 1989). Some members of the *sarauta* had specific functions for example *sarkin kasuwa* was in charge of the market, the *sarkin kofa* was the official gate keeper. These and some other titles later became less important. The *sarakuna* of important towns such as Gaya, Birnin Kudu, Dutse, Bebeji and Ringim were later incorporated into the *sarauta*. Rano also later lost its independence and became part of Kano. During the emirate period these *sarakuna* were relegated to the status of *manyan dagatai* (territorial chiefs) and they were considered below other *hakimi* (title holders) in precedence and they became vassals of the powerful *hakimi* who were resident in the city. There were also

*sarauta*

titles that were reserved for royal slaves throughout the history of Kano for example

*shamaki*

,

*dan rimi*

,

*salama*

,

*kasheka*

,

*turakin soro*

and

*kilishi*

while other titles were later converted from royal slave titles to the nobility.

The Bagaudawa reign was not smooth as there was opposition from those displaced from power especially the descendants of Barbushe. Two Kings (*Sarakuna*) of the Bagauda dynasty Gajimasu and Tsamiya consolidated the political gains of Bagaudawa, built upon the solid foundation for territorial expansion of the community and attempted to socialize different cultures into one single dominant culture.

Some of the sarakuna were very innovative. The most famous was Sarkin Kano Muhammad Rumfa (1463-1499 CE/867-904 AH). The

*Kano Chronicle*

has stated that: "He can have no equal in might from the time of

founding Kano until it shall end". Rumfa made twelve innovations: the most notable political innovations were the institution of

*Tara ta Kano*

as earlier mentioned and conferment of titles on eunuchs.

Sarkin Kano Muhammad Rumfa consolidated the

*Sarauta*

(Kingship) with several enduring features

*Gidan Rumfa*

(the Palace),

*Hawan Sallah*

(procession on the days of Muslim festivals) which is the largest procession of colorful horses (Durbar) in the world,

*Dawakin Zage*

(spare horses for the sarki during battles and processions),

*Kakaki*

(trumpet),

*Figini*

(sarki's fan),

*Takalmin Jumuna*

(ostrich sandals)

*Tagwayen Masu*

(twin spears).

These regalia of Rumfa have remained part of Kano heritage ever since. The greatest legacy of Rumfa is not materialistic but social and intellectual which have remained relevant ever since. This legacy guided the social and political responses of Kano even during the most traumatic British colonial enterprises. The Kano leaders were guided Rumfa's legacy of hard work, good sense, courage, confidence and above all faith (Yahya 1985).

The first Islamic scholar who lived in Kano and wrote a political treatise in Arabic was perhaps Shaykh Muhammad bn Abd al-Karim al-Maghili. He was in Kano during the reign of Sarki Rumfa (1463-99). He was a great Maliki Jurist and political theorist. He wrote *Ta'if fi ma yajib al-Muluk* (The obligation of the Princes) (Baldwin 1932) and

*Mukhtasar mimma yajuz li 'l-hukkam fi radd al-nas an al-haram*

(summary of permissability of turning away people from unlawful acts by those in authority) (Palmer 1915) to guide Sarkin Kano Muhammadu Rumfa. It is not clear whether he wrote his

*al-Mughni al-nabil fi sharh Mukhtasar al-Khalil*

(A commentary on Mukhtasar Khalil) in Kano.

Muhammad b. Ahmad (a.k.a. Aida Ahmad)

(824-936AH/1469-1529CE) is said to have resided in Kano and other parts of Hausaland he was an author and contemporary of al-Maghili. He was given

*ijaza*

(certificate) to teach by some scholars in Egypt and Hijaz and he wrote a commentary on the

*Mukhtasar*

. He may have taught in Kano before he became the

*Qadi*

(judge) of Katsina. Another Maliki Jurist who resided in

Kano during the Baguadawa period was Makhluf al-Bilbali apart from his knowledge of Fiqh he was also a

*Muhadith*

(scholar of Prophetic traditions) he had memorized the Sahih al-Bukhari. Some of his judgments and legal views have been documented.