

FROM SONGHAI TO TOURE



President Sekou Toure of Guinea & his wife Andree
...in the late 50's

by CHRIS ACEMANDESE HALL

In the Fifteenth Century, in Northwest Africa where the beautiful Niger River flows, a strong kingdom developed. The Niger River flowed through African soil giving life to plants, animals and civilization. According to Pro. John Henrik Clarke, a great historian, friend and advisor, Africa had three Golden Ages. Egypt had the first Golden Age. The second, according to Pro. Clarke, was shared by Egypt, Kush and Ethiopia. The first main European invasion, led by so-called Alexander The Great, led to the Punic Wars between Hannibal The Great, and Rome. The third Golden Age in Africa developed in the Western Sudan, Ghana, Mali and Songhai. The Songhai Empire took in the rich empires of Mali and Ancient Ghana. The Songhai, as they say, was filled with Gold and dazzling women. Those Golden Kingdoms of the old Sudan also included the cultures of Kanem-Bornu, the Nok Village and the City States of Ife and Benin. The beautiful sensitive naturalistic pottery, heads and bust of Nok, Ife and Benin

represent the heart, soul and pride of Africa. These heads and busts are also symbolic of the religion and morals of Africa. They are examples of some of the World's Greatest Artistic Achievements. The Yoruba's of what is now Southern Nigeria, are responsible for most of these beautiful brass and bronze art masterpieces. According to some historians, the Songhai was larger than all of Europe, and one of the greatest civilizations of its day.

One of the first and most outstanding rulers of the Songhai Empire was Sonni Ali II. Sonni Ali II, had reservations about straying too far from African culture and religion. The Moslem religion was penetrating the Songhai. Sonni Ali II observed some Moslem traditions but he was doubtful. Ali developed the Songhai into a great Empire. One of Sonni Ali's best known Generals was Askia The Great. Askia The Great was next to occupy the throne. Under the rule of Askia, The Songhai Empire grew and reached a high level of prosperity. Under Askia's reign, the University of Sankore in Timbuktu became one of

the world's greatest centers of education and knowledge. His original name was Turé (or Touré) as they spell it in French. The Guinea of today is located in an area that was part of The Songhai. Fratricidal warfare, the Moors, Arab Berbers and Tuaregs, and Christianity are all contributors to the destruction and decline of these great African civilizations.

At the decline of the Songhai Empire, Europeans had begun to move in and split up African Territories. France eventually took over Guinea. It wasn't long before colonialism and imperialism spread throughout the land, clearing the way for a debase erratic system of slavery that would shame the world.

In 1957 Kwame Nkrumah (of Ghana) became the first president and liberator of West Africa in modern times. The winds of change were blowing in Africa again. In 1958 another great Black Man Se'ku turé (Sekou Touré) with the aid of the PDG (the Democratic Party of Guinea), became the liberator of the Republic of Guinea. It's been said that

his bloodline goes back to Askia Muhammed Touré (Askia the Great). Whether or not Askia the Great was an ancestor of Seku Turé, his inner soul, drive, personal esteem and ethics provided the tools he needed to liberate a nation.

At a time when the majority of news we get is decadent, inflation is on our backs, the Ku-Klux-Klan is on the march, and black on black crime is in full bloom, most black people fail to realize the importance Black History and culture has on the psychological stability of the minds of our youth. The absence of cultural awareness is a great contributor to the destruction of ambition, ethnic and moral values, torture of mind and body, and psychic distress. The Black Experience includes many people, places and things. African leaders like Seku Turé, Patrice Lumumba, Jomo Kenyatta, Robert Mugabe of the "new" Zimbabwe, Great African-American Poets like Countee Cullen and Paul Lawrence Dunbar, The Har-

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