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IBINA IBINA **A TRIBUTE TO LATE** **PROFESSOR EMERITUS TEKENA NITONYE TAMUNO** **(28 January 1932-11 April 2015)**

Sir, *Ibina Ibina* (translated from Okrika language to mean "may it always remain well with you") was the way you always ended the many conversations, chats and discussions I had with you – be it a short greeting or a long, hour plus delve into university matters or life's experiences. The only difference is that *Ibina Ibina* is coming this time from me, not you; and there is no audible response from the other, signaling not just a transformation, but perhaps a permanent divide, may be, even a transfiguration. May it always be well with you Sir. Amen.

Having not studied at the University of Ibadan where your presence and aura have remained fresh, aglow and undiminished ever since you first set foot in that citadel of learning in 1953 as an undergraduate student in the Department of History, coming from the far away wetlands of Okrika on the tributaries of the Atlantic ocean and from the bowels of its pristine educational institution, the Okrika Grammar School to this day, nor gone the way of the liberal arts where you have professed as an oracle for decades, at the moment of the Science/Arts bifurcation in my secondary school days, our paths did not cross early. It took university administration, just at the turn of the millennium, when I had the good fortune of serving the University of Port Harcourt along with your younger sister – *Katy* or *Chris* as we all know her, to bring us together. Not blessed with a huge frame, she was gargantuan in ability; not gifted with many words, she had depth, character and tenacity. For indeed the trio of Ayo Banjo, Nimi Briggs and Chris Tamuno proved to be what the University of Port Harcourt needed at the time.

Forgive me Sir; am digressing. So, back to you.

Ibina Ibina, by which you constantly wished me well was more than a wish, prayer, craving or indeed an incantation. It was the total expression of the limitless goodness in you by which you radiated love, friendliness, generosity, affection and much more to all you met. Temperate in all you did; measured with all your words; moderate even in your disapproval and charming in your disposition, with a regular tinge of humour to the spice, you were constantly the one to revere, admire, copy, emulate and look up to. Not surprising then, an encounter with you of only a few years has turned out to be for me, a life time of learning, mentorship and tutelage.

And as is stated in one of the great works of King David in Psalm 24 of the Holy Bible, one with *clean hands and a pure heart* like you, *who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity ...he shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.*

The essence of *Ibina Ibina* is its permanence, constancy and perpetuity. It is not a one-off wish. It is a desire that endures; it is a yearning that is immortal. *Ibina Ibina* will ensure that you never fade in my memory. Sir, *Ibina Ibina*.


Nimi Briggs

April, 2015.