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Later today, I'll be tweeting on the origins and history of the Ika people of Anioma. Please turn on notifications if you're interested.

The Origins And History Of Ika People of Anioma.

Ika communities mostly comprise the following: Agbor, Owa, Umunede, Mbiri, Abavo, Orogodo, Otolokpo, Igbodo, Ute-Okpu, Ute-Ugbeje, Idumuesah, Akumazi, Ekpon (Edo State), Igbanke (Edo State), Inyelen Edo State).

The Ika people are specifically located in the North-West of Delta State but some like Igbanke, Inyelen and Ekpon are presently located in Edo State.
Other Ika communities found in Edo State are Owanikeke, Owa-Riuzo Idu and Igbogili.

Specifically, Ika people occupy Ika North East and Ika South Local Government Areas of Delta State and a land area of about 117.45 square kilometres. Since the 2006 population census did not stipulate the official figure for ethnic groups, the total population figure of the Ika..

people remains officially unknown.
The dialect of Ika people is Igboid group (Williamson, 1968). This according to him is because it has no noticeable difference from the general Igbo language spoken within the Anioma area only weak phonological and lexical difference separates..

it from the variety of dialects spoken within the Anioma confine. In actual fact, Ika dialect is a mixture of Igbo and Bini which evidently suggests it’s the influence of proximity with the Aniocha/Oshimili and Edo groups.

This is also reflective in the names that the people bear. The whole of Ika communities speak Ika dialect while Igbodo speaks dual Ika and Enuani dialects. If we go by Williams’ hypothesis, then we'll arrive at the postulation that Ika people speak Ika, a branch of Igbo language.

The history of the name “Ika” shows that the term “Ika” has not always been particularized to the present Ika area and its people but has been generally used to loosely accommodate the entire people once referred to as “Western Ibos” by the British colonialists but now Anioma by

natives (Forde and Jones, 1967). With time however, the name “Ika” became limited to the present Ika areas of Ika North East and Ika South and their people including Igbanke, Inyelen and Ekpon and the people’s dialect.

What is said here is that although, we refer to this present group of people as Ika today, original documents of the early European missionaries once viewed the general Anioma people as “Ika”. These missionary writers later added the suffix “Ibo” to the name to make it sound...

“Ika-Ibo”. However, the reason for the retention or limiting of the name to the group already described above is unclear to historians. Only deep researches will ascertain it in due course.

Be that as it may, the people of Ika have always maintained their independence of Bini or any other ethnic group in the country.

ORIGIN

That the Ika people do not trace their ancestry to common origin is truism. The various clans that make up Ika have heterogeneous origins.

In general terms, Ika people do not have common or related origin. As we have already known, it was only after some time that the name “Ika” that has once been used to loosely refer to the “Western Igbos” became limited to this group of people.

Chukwu Ebuke and Iwueze Awele Success affirm it when they wrote that “Members of a clan may sometimes not be able to tangibly prove a blood relationship”. This may also apply to a situation whereby it is difficult to “derive from lineages that become too large or too dispersed...

to keep track of their genealogies” (Bates, 1996). Although, Ika villages or Ogbe sometimes claim a common descent that could be described as nonunilineal (Bates 1996), differences still exist in some ways.

The situation painted here which applies to the Ika people of Delta and Edo States necessitates that these Ika clans be studied here separately. In this discourse consequently, we shall deeply study some of these Ika communities town by town to strongly highlight on their origin

and to an extent their development among others.

Agbor:

Agbor remains the largest of Ika communities with close geographical location to Benin City. Its constant wars with Benin are well-known.

This may have also accounted for its consideration as the “most politically and militarily powerful of all Ika clans as recorded by Chukwu Ebuka and Iwueze Awele Success. The wars which lasted until the 19th century may have also swelled the military prowess of the community and

helped to make it a force to reckon with within the Ika nation (Simpson, 1936). There is therefore no doubt that within the period under study, Agbor remained the headache of the Benin Kingdom until the 18th century.

The Legendary Benin Historian, Joseph Egharevba dismissively presented Agbor as a Benin vassal whose Chief (Obi/Dein) was in constant rebellion against the Benin Kingdom to the extent that the Kingdom had to take steps to bring the situation under control.

Egherevba gave account of how Oba Orhogbua authorized one of his generals, Agbon to restore peace at all cost. Agbon then captured Idigi territory which he renamed Agbon later corrupted to “Agbor”. The people of Agbor as a result of this development were compelled to maintain...

the hard sought loyalty to Benin but this was only short-lived as they again revolted this time during the reign of Oba Ovoramwen. As we were again told, Agbor was to be severely punished but for the 1897 conquest of Benin by British forces & consequent capture of Oba Ovoramwen.

For Joseph N. Egwu, a prominent scholar and historian “The wars between Benin and Agbor are not as simple as Egherevba puts them. Even using his accounts, it seems that the relationship was that of a series of fluctuations and adjustments”.

Position of Egwu is strongly supported by one tradition of Agbor as narrated by Iduwe. According to Iduwe “Our ancestors had long established an autonomous kingdom based on Eze title before our contact with Benin”.
“Agbor Nta formerly called Ominije is the cradle of civilization.

Ogelle or Ogene lived as the great priest. He became Oriowor and was greeted “Oriowor or Oken Eze” meaning “Oriowor, the Great King” (Anioma Essence, 2007). Osita Mordi claims that “The kingdom began to show signs of weakness following the demise of Obi Adigwe.

Agbor Kingdom was weakened by the unhealthy attitudes of the two sons of Obi Adigwe who began to shove for power to ascend the throne following the demise of their father. This was one of the causes of the civil war that ravaged the kingdom in 18th century.

Again, we hear from Osita Mordi that “The supposed provocation which Chief Egharevba referred to which induced Oba Ovonramwen to prepare a declaration of war was not because Agbor had revolted against the rule of Benin, but because Agbor had blocked all channels through which...

the Benin collected royalties from Southern Esan clans demanding that a share of such royalties should come to them (Agbor)”.
The history of Agbor like other communities is based on oral tradition. Popular oral account of the community therefore traces its origin to Ogunagbon,...

the believed founder of Agbor who left Benin with his followers and first settled in Ominijie, located in present Agbor Nta (Emeka Esogbue, 2008). This makes Agbor Nta Agbor’s oldest settlement. One of his chiefs was to later settle in an area known as Agbon.

The word “Agbon” means “Earth” or “Land”.
Oral tradition as well as documented history claims that the Dein Dynasty was founded by Ebonka who reigned as the kingdom’s first Dein (1270-1307). “Dein” is derived from “Dehin”, a word strongly attached to “Warrior”.

The market day for Agbor-Obi is Nkwor.
Past Deins of Agbor:
(i) Dein Ebonka (1270-1307),
(ii) Owuwu (1307-1333),
(iii) Akina (1333-1460),
(iv) Agho (1460-1518),
(v) Oguade (1518-1594),
(vi) Aisama (1594-1630),
(vii) Oseh (1630-1650),
(viii) Adigwe (1650-1740),

(ix) Dein Modu (1650-1795),
(x) Dein Obanor (1795-1795), (xi) Dein Igbe Nije (1795-1885), (xii) Dein Odin (1885-1890), (xiii) Dein Gbenoba (1890-1911),
(xiv) Dein Agbobu (1911-1935),

(xv) Obi Gbewoba (1935-1967), (xvi) Dein Ikenchuku (1967-1979)
(xvii) keagborekuzi 1 (1979-present day (Information obtained from Omania Magazine).

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#Agbor
#IkaHistory
#Nigeria