

SUBJECT: HISTORY

CCLACS: JSS1

TOPIC: HISTORICAL SITES IN NIGERIA: ILE-IFE

IFE CULTURE AND TRADITIONS: THE PEOPLE AND OCCUPATIONAL ACTIVITIES

The people of Ife are spiritual, highly advanced, artistic, and agriculturist. They were the first Yoruba from whom all other Yoruba groups emerged and spread to other places.

RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL LIFE OF IFE PEOPLE



Although modernity has erased most of its cultural heritage, the people of Ife are still known to worship deities. Till date, some traditional festivals are still very much celebrated. The Ikedu tradition is the oldest Ife tradition highlighting the origin of the Yoruba people. Given that Ile-Ife is the origin of the Yoruba people, the pagan worship found across the Yoruba today originated there; the most prominent being Ifá. Due to the strong belief in Ifá, the Yoruba people do not toy with it and Ifá worship is performed anywhere Yoruba people are found. As a matter of fact, Ifá priests in diaspora visit the Ifá temple in Ile-Ife for initiation.

The king of Ile-Ife is referred to as the Ooni of Ife. He is a direct descendant from Oduduwa and is counted among the foremost Yoruba kings. The Ooni is considered the 401st Ife deity and he is worshipped accordingly.

ECONOMIC/OCCUPATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF IFE PEOPLE

Very little is known about the state apparatus of Ife and how it's controlled its territory. Even information on the economy is sparse. It is likely that Ife and the whole area of the West African rainforest in general, prospered thanks to iron smelting technology which could produce iron tools that the hoe and a host of others which in turn brought forth plentiful harvest of food such as okra, yams, dates, palm oil and fish.

Goods which could be traded with kingdoms to the north included kola nuts, pepper, gold, and ivory. Slaves were also sent northwards and so Ife was indirectly connected to the camel caravan trade routes that crossed the Sahara and reached cities such as Tripoli on the Mediterranean coast. Goods exchanged for those provided by Ife would have been

principally salt from the Sahara and luxury goods for the Ife elite who controlled the trade. Luxury items would have included swords, copper, brass, jewelry, perfumes, and horses.

Today, the people of Ife are mostly farmers. Ile-Ife is a major collection point for cocoa and cotton. For local markets, palm oil, yams, cassava, corn, pumpkins, and Kola nuts are also cultivated. Palm wine is produced in abundance. Blacksmithing is also practiced. Blacksmiths produce cutlasses, hoes, and other implements for farming. There are also hunters and carvers (gbénàgbénà).

Some traditional festivals in Ile-Ife are;

Edi Festival

Olojo Festival

Itapa Festival

Igare Festival etc.

Summarily, below are the different occupational activities of the people of Ife;

1. Farming
2. Palm wine tapping
3. Palm oil production
4. Blacksmithing
5. Hunting
6. Carving
7. Pottery
8. Trading
9. Fishing
10. Drumming.

DRESSING OF THE IFE PEOPLE

Till date, the people of Ife love dressing in their native attire. When an Ife man puts on Buba, he dons a cap to complete the dressing. Although Aso Ofi is the main costume, Ankara is the most common textile of the people. Noticeable in the dressing of Ife people is that there is high discipline and morality.