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“Emii: *A Cultural Portrait of Ten Igbo Villages Bound by Tradition and Heritage*”

By Chukwunwike Ossai

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“EMII”

“Emii: A Cultural Portrait of Ten Igbo Villages Bound by Tradition and Heritage”

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The ten villages of Emii are the backbone of how they used to do things in the community. They built the town’s culture and social life. The way they were arranged, from the oldest to the youngest, shows that it was a history, and the ancestors determined who was the oldest. Umuorisha is the senior village, followed by Umudulu, Nkpehi, Mgbahiri, Umuolu, Eziala, Umuebeh, Ubaa, Umuawuka, and the last one is Emeohe.



Emii- photo by Ou Travel and Tour

Seniority was not just a tradition; it affected who led, who did things, and how the people related to each other. Each village was put together like a compound, but thick bushes separated them a little.

Still, they were very close to each other; if someone fired a gun in one village, the sound reached others.

All the villages were along a road that spreads like a fan, about four miles from Umuawuka to Mgbahiri. The widest part from Umuawuka to Emeohe is two and a half miles. The road doesn't have tar, but it was connected with the Emii people to other areas through the Egbu Owerri Market junction.

Geography and Environment: A Land Shaped by Nature. Emii's land had equatorial weather, with much rain and hot sun. The ground was flat; only small valleys like Okitankwo and Oramurukwa existed. The dry season was cool, with a sweet breeze and a flower smell, while the rainy season made the bushes grow well for farming. Every four years, they cleared the forest to plant again.

The trees that fill Emii are tamarind palms, one of which they call "Elizabeth." River-side areas like Emeohe, Umuorisha, Umuolu, Nkpehi, Umuebeh, Eziala, and Mgbahiri have many palm trees. That is why they know how to produce Dagwa Special palm wine well.

A big forest, called Okohia Ode Emii, is still there. It is a sacred place where people believe their ancestors, especially Oche, started Emii and first stayed.

There is no big river in Emii except in Mgbahiri, so people would walk to the village on foot or by bicycle. This free movement helped people mix well. Emii is among other towns like Emekuku (north), Agbala (south), Enyiogugu and Obube (east), and Egbu and Naze (west).

Economic Life: Farming, Tapping, and Tradition. Emii people, more than anything, farm and tap palm wine. They plant yam, cassava, and cocoyam and tap palm wine. River-side villages are the top of the Dagwa Special production, which is sold in faraway places.

Hunting was not a serious work here, but some people would still hunt for fun.

Even though the villages were scattered like a fan, each one would farm independently, which helped balance the economy. Every four years, they would clear the bush again for new planting; it was a tradition that they passed down.

Cultural Heritage and Ancestry. The Emii people believed that they came from one ancestor called Oche. They shared blood with people in Emekuku, Obube, Naze, Obibi, Umuekwunne, and Nnorie. Emekuku and Emii even had a special connection, but history has shown that they didn't start from the same place.

The big forest, Okohia Ode Emii, is like a shrine. People respect it as the origin of their people. It reminds them of their roots and gives them spiritual strength.

The way Emii villages are organised and the small differences in how they speak Igbo make it hard for them to unite politically. But they still hold themselves strong through tradition and joint efforts.

Social Dynamics and Communal Unity. The proximity of the villages made them dependent on each other. Each village had its way, but they still related. If an issue arose in one place, other villages would hear and respond.

During the dry season, social life used to be sweet, flowers used to bloom, the air was cool, and people were happy. One big festival that they perform every year is the Okazi Akirioche Festival. It brings everybody together to celebrate as one family.

Emii in the Modern Era: A Town in Transition. Emii has been divided into three communities to help with development and politics: Mbaoma (Ubaa, Umuawuka, and Emeohe), Ezimba, and Emii Central. They did this to make things run well, but kept the culture tight.

They speak the Owerri dialect of Igbo, and they still proudly call themselves ndi Owere. Because they are close to Owerri town, which they call Nigeria's entertainment capital, Emii youths can join

entertainment and business. But their main focus is still farming and culture.



Okazi, Emii Festival men in display photo by Showlate Entertainment Limited.

Emii is not just ten villages; it is strong people united by heritage, culture, and community spirit. From the senior village Umuorisha to the last born Emeohe, everybody contributes to the Emii story.

They have a beautiful forest, strong palm wine work, and deep ancestral roots in Oche. Even though they have yet to develop in some towns, their love for their land and tradition is still strong.

The fan-shaped road from Umuawuka to Mgbahiri is not just a road; it is a sign of the connection that joined Emii together. As the modern world changed, Emii still carries their traditional walk into the future.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chukwunwike Ossai

An enthusiast in tech with deep passion for studying and showcasing the vibrant cultural heritage of southern Nigeria . Combining my skill with my obsession towards African history and traditions to create contributions that impacts the digital space.



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