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Igbo Recoil : *Unyielding Spirit of an Ancient Traveler Tribe*

By Chukwunwike Ossai

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FEATURE
IMAGE

Mgbedike Masquerade of Nri-Oka, Seen in Okitipupa, Ondo State 1940s

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IGBO RECOIL

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Igbo people, from ancient times have been proven to be travelers and sojourners, their exploration spirit has most times led them to settle in distant areas including parts of Ile Ife down to Benin areas. However, certain misconceptions for long time has clouded the history of Ndi Igbo, connecting the whole race to ancient Ife and Benin.

Meanwhile, Igbo recoil is necessity does not imply a mass migration of Ndi Igbo back to Igbo land but it specifically refers to travelers and sojourners of Igbo origins that temporarily settled in other distinct regions and returned home eventually.

These skilled travelers and sojourners were pioneers that always left marks wherever they went, with their various crafts and blacksmithing, recorded far back 8th century.

From presence of Oka gunsmith in Ekiti state to artisans in Ondo, these Igbo sojourners and travellers helped to enrich local economies with their new products and technologies.

For example, Oka blacksmiths introduced gun assemblies that is screwbased (Oka made), a strategic method that Yoruba craftsmen that were using riveted designs benefited from.

This ingenuity of ancient Igbo sojourners and travellers contributed hugely to the misconceptions of generalized emergence of common ancestry in Benin or Ile Ife. But in reality the settlements were communities that were isolated and formed by Igbo merchants, sojourners and artisans whom their travels made them find themselves in western Nigeria.

The story of Eze Chima who was said to be an Igbo leader that left Benin to found settlements in present day Anioma happens to be a perfect example of Igbo recoil. The migration of Eze Chima from Benin was neither an ancestral indicator nor conquest but the journey of people and their leader that sought for new beginning, returning home and establishing new Igbo communities along the way, most times after years of exchange, culturally.

Essentially Igbo recoil further buttresses the nature of the adaptive society of the Igbo people not being a mass migration but people and family moving after their legacy has been felt throughout the environment, this historically reminds us how ndi Igbo can never be defined by a single origin story but through adventurous and resilience spirits of the people.

Igbo people have always been aborigines of their homeland with a profound history that still endures today despite external influences.

Yet, a misconception has long clouded Igbo history, the idea that the entire Igbo race originated from or was directly connected to ancient Ife and Benin. It's important to clarify that Igbo recoil doesn't mean a mass migration of all Igbos back to the homeland; it refers specifically to Igbo travelers and sojourners who settled temporarily in other regions and eventually returned home due to conquest attempts or migration purpose, the aboriginal Igbo people like Ezechima and many of his likes were not migrants in Igbo land but travelers and sojourners.

Around 1940s Harland Duckworth took picture of the famous Mgbedike masquerade attributed to Nri-Oka part of Igbo land, Harland took the picture at a village in Okitipupa of present day Ondo state.

Essentially, Igbo recoil portrays the adapting nature of Igbo people. A movement of people and their families whose legacy must be felt across Nigeria, this historical facts shows us how Igbo land cannot be understood by a single origin but by the adventurous and resilient

spirit the tribe. Igbo people have always been aboriginals in their present location, with a profound history that predated influences from external factors but still endures today.

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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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