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The Creation of the Four Igbo Market Days: *A Mythological Perspective*

By Chuka Odike

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FEATURE
IMAGE

Photo: Mbari votive shrine in Percy Amaury Talbot (1926). “The people of Southern Nigeria.” Flight. II, fig.13. via the Musée du quai Branly.

**Creation of the days from the
Owere.**

Article image · caption retained from the published Ozikoro article

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The Igbo people have a rich cosmology that explains the origin of time and space through their traditional belief systems. According to the Owere (Owerri) narrative, the supreme deity, Chineke, created four primordial beings and assigned them to separate rooms within a house, that is; Eke, Orie, Afo, and Nkwo. These entities represent the four market days that govern the Igbo calendar. Women were also created and placed in a separate room, emphasizing gender roles in creation mythology.

In the story, Eke suggested the existence of Ala (Earth), which appeared spontaneously, reinforcing the Igbo view that the land and sky coexisted without a known origin. Agwushi (Agwu) the god of divination, identified and named the four days, establishing the market cycle essential for social and economic activities in Igboland. These days were then entrusted to various deities, including Amadioha (god of thunder) and Ala (goddess of the earth), signifying their spiritual and cultural significance.

The Mbari votive shrine, an artistic and spiritual representation of Igbo deities, often depicts these elements, reinforcing their relevance in Igbo life. Mbari houses, traditionally constructed as offerings to the gods, serve as visual narratives of Igbo cosmology, reflecting themes of creation, fertility, and harmony. The myth highlights the Igbo worldview, emphasizing balance, order, and the sacred relationship between the spiritual and physical realms.

Cole, H. M. (1982). Mbari: Art and life among the Owerri Igbo. Indiana



University Press.

Talbot, P. Amaury. (1926). The people of Southern Nigeria. Oxford University Press.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Chuka Odiike

I'm a dedicated civil engineer with a passion for infrastructure development and community empowerment. With a strong background in engineering, my work focuses on creating sustainable solutions for urban and rural development projects. Outside of my professional career, I'm deeply interested in Igbo history and culture. I actively explores ways to impact society by using historical lessons to inspire and educate others about the rich cultural heritage of the Igbo people, aiming to bridge tradition and modern development.



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