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Traditional Funeral Rites: *How Igbo People Bury the Dead*

By Chukwunwike Ossai

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TRADITIONAL FUNERAL RITES

Traditional Funeral Rites: How Igbo People Bury the Dead

By Chukwunwike Ossai · Cultural Heritage · Ozikoro.com

The funeral rites of the traditional Igbo people are evidence of their profound displaying of their rich tradition and custom, showing respect to the deceased, the belief of after life continuation and community solidarity, in this post we will look at an overview of these rites.

After a person is confirmed dead, the body is washed and will be clothed in attire of the tradition, this process is carried out with uttermost care, portraying a sign of last love and respect from the community, this process also serves to purify the dead from any impure deposits before moving to afterlife.

This is a gathering that is held by well wishers, alongside family and friends with purpose of mourning by sharing memories of the dead and singing, this could last from several days to numerous nights, traditional music and story telling is not left out too and sometimes masquerade get to perform, this period is also important for social bonding and communal catharsis.

A notable process in the traditional funeral rites of the Igbo people is the burial, this takes place in either a community designated background or family compound, most times accompanied with rituals, making sure the spirit of the dead find solace, this day is the day when prayers are made to ancestors, appealing with them to receive the deceased.

Another exceptional aspect of funeral traditions of ndi Igbo is the second burial known as Ikwa-Ozu. this process is basically a ceremony that could happen years or months after the deceased has been

buried. it is an essential celebration of the dead, rather than a gathering where people mourn. Dancing and feasting laced with re-enactment of the dead's life via masquerade and other performances.

After the burial, other rites are observed to make sure the dead does not wander but transit to meet the ancestors. These rites include pouring libations, breaking kolanuts and other sacrifices, these process are carried out to protect the living and honor the deceased.

The traditional funerals of Igbo are basically seen as a community event, where the whole town takes part, reflecting the importance and value of community as every burial warrants the community members to share their celebration and grief

Even though these traditional rites have overtime been adapted, adding other religious elements especially for people that moved to urban areas is still present, provided that the reason for paying last respect and making sure the dead rests in peace, this remains central.

The funeral rites of Ndi Igbo are not just tied to saying goodbye to the deceased but these rites are cultural complex tapestry of social practices and spirituality which acknowledges death while celebrating life. these traditions are testimonies of the deep respect that the Igbo culture have for continuity of life. Embodying the Philosophy of life, afterlife and death.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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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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