

# Who Are The Öka People?



**Akwali or Öda Ömümü Ümü-Ashü**  
**Symbol of the God of Protection, Fertility and Procreation**

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**(Ezeana, Aböshü-Udughudu-Ngagwu-dü-Igbo-Egwu)**

**DEDICATION**

This booklet is dedicated to those Öka people who may have been misled to believe that their ancestors came from somewhere. Let us peruse the pages, sit back, and ponder the weighty sayings of our forbears that:

Öka ful efu! (Öka grew out of the soil of Öka),

Enwere vbe nna nna (Their descent is in the female line),

Onwere ïka eshivbe bïa (There is no history that they came from somewhere else).

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**About the Author, Nevbechi Emmanuel Anazövba, Ph.D.:****A BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE**

Born in 1945, Nevbechi E. Anazövba was brought up in a Christian family with a strong Polytheistic ancestry, in Ümübeelee village of the blacksmith town Öka, Anambra State, Nigeria. Son of a government teacher, he accompanied his father during the latter's movements from one school to another and attended government primary schools at Ajali, Öka and Afikpo. A very turbulent youth, he attended secondary school at Okongwu Memorial Grammar School Nnewi (1960-63) and Igwebuike Grammar School Öka (1964). Having performed poorly at the end of his secondary school career (bagged a grade 3 school leaving certificate!), he entered the civil service in 1965 at Enugu as a finance clerk from where he joined the Biafran army (July 1967 – January 1970).

In June 1970, his eldest sister, Rose Anazövba, invited him to Geneva, Switzerland, to study French in order to gain admission to study economics at the University of Fribourg. At Fribourg, he got a Licence ès Sciences Economiques et Sociales in 1976 and in 1979 he got a Ph.D. in Econometrics. He was on the Dean's list at the University of Fribourg and was appointed Teaching Assistant to the Econometrics Chair. In 1980 he left Switzerland for Nigeria, where he continued his brief teaching career at the University of Port Harcourt.

He joined the African Development Bank (AfDB) in 1981 as a Statistician Economist. At the AfDB he managed the Loan Accounting & Financial Statistics Division (1996 – 2001) before being appointed Advisor to AfDB's Financial Controller in 2002.

At the age of sixty years, Nevbechi E. Anazövba retired from the AfDB in April 2005. He settled in his Ümübeelee village Öka home, where efforts are underway to revive the polytheistic and living tradition of his ancestors. He is married and has five children.

## 1. Introduction

The Igbo orthography used in this write-up will be explained shortly in the section on the Öka dialect. But before we get there, let me thank:

- (1) Mr. Emeke Igwebuike (Avbülükwe) of Amikwo village, who showed me the books on Öka people by Professor Azuka A. Dike and Özö Amanke Okafor. He also gave me Özö Amanke Okafor's address where I procured all of the master's available publications.
- (2) Mr. Nevbedum Eleazar Nnonyele (Önwa), my Dibia pal and specialist of Ümüeze village, Amawbia, who was always at hand to offer advice through his ükpükpa shells and explain tricky Ödünana concepts.
- (3) Mr. Ekwughelie Nzekwe (Ugonwanne) of Ümübee village, Öka, for his valued explanations of Ödünana Öka.
- (4) Mr. Charles C.N. Nwiyi (Ezenwelibe) of Amudo village Öka, for getting me a copy of Chief Özö E.P.O. Offodile's book and lending me rare books on Öka people and their customs.

I also pay a vibrant homage to my predecessors on the subject of Öka people. Notable among them are our beloved Özö Barrister Amanke Okafor (Löya Okavbö), Chief Özö E.P.O. Offodile, Professor Azuka A. Dike and Dr. Ifeanyi Anagbogu.

This booklet was motivated by important issues on Öka origins raised by Özö Amanke Okafor and Dr. Ifeanyi Anagbogu in their books, viz.:

- (1) This book is dedicated to the young men and women of Awka town, who ask the question: Who are we? (Amanke Okafor, The Awka People – Book 1).
- (2) This book is dedicated to the young men and women of Öka town who are anxious to understand our past (Amanke Okafor, The Awka People – Book 2).
- (3) The question being asked is, where did the Öka man come from? Did he grow out of the soil of Öka, as Öka tradition has it?
  - a. Öka ful efu!
  - b. Enwere vbe nna nna,
  - c. Onwere İka eshivbe bİa.

(Öka grew out of the soil of Öka, they have not one father, there is no history that they came from somewhere else.) (Amanke Okafor, The Awka People – Book 2).

- (4) While the theories of eastern and Nnobi origins are of little value in the present study, the theory of independent generation or autochthony seems to hold the key to our understanding of origins of Awka. (Dr. Ifeanyi Anagbogu, A History of Awka).

While brooding on the above issues, I came across the following mind-stirring statements in the works of the British Egyptologist Gerald Massey:

- (5) Africa was the primal source of the world's people, languages, myths, symbols, and religions and Egypt was Africa's mouthpiece. Egypt brought African genius to its highest and finest expression then proceeded to instruct the world in Africa's wisdom.
- (6) The starting-point of the human family has now to be sought for in Africa, the birthplace of the black race, the land of the oldest known human types, and of those which preceded and most nearly approach the human. Ethiopia and Egypt produced the earliest civilization in the world and it was indigenous. So far as the records of language and mythology can offer us guidance, there is nothing beyond Egypt and Ethiopia but Africa. All the evidence cries aloud its proclamation that Africa was the birthplace of the non-articulate, and Egypt the mouthpiece of articulate man.

The above nuggets from Özö Amanke Okafor, Dr. Ifeanyi Anagbogu and Gerald Massey spurred me to turn around and find the origins of Öka people in Öka. The guiding beacon of light came from the three statements given in item (3) above, viz.:

- a. Öka ful efu!
- b. Enwere vbe nna nna,
- c. Onwere İka eshivbe bİa.

We shall see further on how item (b), Enwere vbe nna nna, is the sesame that unlocks the mystery of who the Öka people are.

Some authors have bemoaned the dearth of archaeological evidence to back the reconstruction of the early history of Öka. But do we really need to further uproot the landscape of an erosion-prone environment, all in the name of finding underground the same facts that litter the very ground on which we walk everyday? The facts are there staring us in the face, but we have chosen not to see them with our Öka eyes. We need the borrowed eyes of some "authority" to see the handwriting left by our forebears on the walls of our ancestral home. That's our dilemma!

Some of my readers have commented on my unbridled use of expressions containing the sex organs. My reaction to this has been unequivocal:

My forbears used sex-related Igbo idioms to convey valuable and weighty information. The inattentive and undiscerning mind simply catches the sex-related words in the idiom. And the information content of the idiom is completely missed.

To buttress the above point, I advice the reader to momentarily put aside his/her acquired prudishness and collect and study sex-related Igbo idioms. At the end of such an enriching study, the open-minded reader will agree with me that, used in context, sex-related Igbo idioms are exceedingly direct, instructive and potent for whoever sees beyond the words used.

Remember that my forbears did not attend the whiteman's school to learn about synonyms and the muddled expressions of the English language. A cat to them was just a cat!

Take this example that a father flung in the face of his rich but recklessly generous son, who complained about being always broke:

Nwaanya obu öma, ikpuye na-aza aza mgbe niine  
The kind woman's pubis is always swollen.

Can you figure out why this kind-hearted woman's pubis is always swollen? Except for prudes, the lesson in the idiom goes beyond the sexual symbol – ikpu – used. The father's lesson to his recklessly generous and complaining son was brisk, direct, humorous and full of wisdom. The old man is simply saying:

Son, stop complaining about being always broke when you are recklessly generous with your money. Because the kind-hearted woman who recklessly offers her vagina to all smooth-talking males never complains of her swollen pubis!

Since this booklet uses concepts developed in previous publications, it is fair to provide a reference document that would place the reader on the same philosophical level as the author. Appendix A contains a detailed presentation of all the philosophical concepts contained in this write-up. It contains what we mean by God, Gods, reincarnation, Chi or personal God, the Agü ritual (mgba agü), Avba and Dibie avba, etc., etc. The Appendix also contains the rudiments of mental culture. It is my gift to all who desire to truly educate themselves as against the mind-stuffing we all undergo at home and school. To complete what is contained in Appendix A, the reader is advised to consult my book, Ngü Arö Öka: The Öka Lunar Calendar, 2010 – 2021, copies of which are available at the author's Ümübeele Village residence at Öka.

Cheers!

### 1.1. The Öka Dialect

The Igbo orthography adopted for this document is the New Standard Orthography (NSO) which, for ease of writing, replaces the sub-dotted vowels (ĩ, o, u) with the unlauded ones (i, ö, and ü).

The vowels in this orthography are: a, e, i, i, o, ö, u, ü; they are syllabic, i.e. they bear tones. The tone-marks "H" for High tone and "L" for Low tone are placed in square brackets beside the relevant word as follows:

aka [HH] = hand  
akaa [LHH] = last year  
evbio [HLL] = foolishness

Igbo consonants are not syllabic, i.e. they do not bear tone. The following are the consonants:

b, ch, d, f, g, gb, gh, gw, h, j, k, kp, kw, l, m, n, ñ, nw, ny, p, r, s, sh, t, v, vb, w, z

The change in the spelling of the name from “Öka” to “Awka” was made by the British Colonial Secretary, Mr. F.S. James, in 1908, through Government Notice No. 729, published in the Southern Nigerian Gazette of 1908, No. 42, Volume 3 at page 8511.

Öka people have a dialect of their own, which is a variation of the Igbo tongue. One outstanding peculiarity of that Öka dialect is a sound not found in other Igbo dialects. It is a sound that is made by slightly parting the lips and blowing out air to make a sound that is between “v” and “b”, but without actually pronouncing “v” as “v” or “b” as “b”. This peculiar sound is also found among the Edo (Edo State), and in the Edo alphabet it is written as “vb”, as in the name “Ovbokhan” or “Egharevba”. We have adopted this double consonant of the Edo alphabet, “vb”, for this Öka sound.

The “vb” in Öka dialect would be pronounced as “f” in Onitsha dialect, or as “h” in Owerri dialect. Examples:

The Öka person would say “ivbe nkee” (this thing) where other Igbo say “ife nkaa” or “ihe nkea”. So, in many cases where other Igbo use the letter “f” or “h”, Öka use “vb”. Other examples:

“efe” (chance) is “evbe” in Öka,

“feta” (come over) is “vbete” in Öka,

“Afamefunu” (a name) is “Avbamevbune” in Öka. [Avba m evbune = May my name never be forgotten].

And the exclamation, “Unu na-afükwa!” (you see my trouble!) is in Öka language “Unu na-avbükwa!”

Of course, Öka people use “f” in some words, such as “füö” – go; “füta” – come out; “füli ya” – take it from him by force (the verb is “fülü” something).

Another peculiarity of the Öka language is that the Öka people do not pronounce the final vowel sounds “i”, “ĩ”, “u” and “ü”, like other Igbo, where they occur. For example, in other dialects the words “malü” (know) and “ralü” or “rali” (choose) are pronounced as written, but the Öka drop the final “ü” and “i” and pronounce the words as “mal” and “ral”. Malü ivbe (be wise) is Mal ivbe and Ralü or Rali oke (take a share) is Ral oke. Kedi ivbe unu meli? (What have you done?) is Kedi ivbe unu mel?

Again, where other Igbo have the vowel sound “a” at the end of a word, the Öka people have “e” instead, thus, “nkea” (this) is “nkee” in Öka, “weta” (bring) is “wete” in Öka; the name “Chukwemeka” is in Öka “Chikwemeke”. Öka has “Chikwu”, not “Chukwu”. Note that Chikwu (Chi-ukwu, the great Chi or God) comes very naturally from Chi (the incarnate personal spirit, Chi or God). In the Öka worldview, every form, from the speck of dust to galaxies, has a Chi or personal God, which is a portion of the universal God (universal omnipresent spirit).

An analysis of the name Kaanaenechukwu (Look unto God) in the light of the above worldview shows the following:

Kaanaenechukwu = Ka a na-ene Chukwu = Ka anyi Nevbe Chikwu anya

Ka anyi Nevbe Chikwu anya = Ka anyi Nevbe Chi anya = Ka anyi Nevbe Chi

Ka anyi Nevbe Chi = Nevbe Chi = Nevbechi



The semi-vowels “m” and “n” are also used as infinitive markers in Öka, where others use the vowels “i” and “i”. Examples:

igba ösö = mgba ösö (to run)  
ije akwükwö = nje akwükwö (to attend school)

Let us also take note of some peculiar Öka pronouns (2<sup>nd</sup> person singular ghi, ghī, ghü; and 3<sup>rd</sup> person plural vba, vbe) in the following examples:

nna gī = nna ghī (your father)  
nne gī = nne ghi (your mother)  
ümü gī = ümü ghü (your children)  
ünö gī = ünö ghü (your house)  
nna ha = nna vba (their father)  
nne ha = nne vbe (their mother)  
sī ha bīa = shī vba bīa (tell them to come)

The 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronoun “ya” and its variant “ye” are also worthy of note as the following constructions show:

Nna ya = Nnīa (his/her father)  
Nne ye = Nnie (his/her mother)  
Ogbonnaya = Ogbonniya = Ogbonniā (the father’s namesake)  
Ogbonneye = Ogbonniye = Ogbonnie (the mother’s namesake)  
Obidiya = Obidiye = Obidie (the husband’s sweetheart)

The following words and expressions are worthy of note:

ibe [HH] = location or place (ibe obubu [HH LHH] = dwelling place)  
neede [LLH] = nekee [LHH] = look!  
ünyaa [LLH] = yesterday  
vbaa [HL] = now  
waa [HH] = divide (as in waa öji [HH HH] = break or divide the kolanut)  
waa [HL] = no!  
gbaa n’aka = make a click using the middle finger and the thumb to express amazement. Hence the expression: Mgbe onye ji-nü, ö gbaa n’aka! (We express astonishment, only when we hear the news).  
ekumavba [HHLL] = forbidden to be mentioned  
ivbe dü n’ünö afüvba mbala = desperate condition, with valuables flying out of the house  
gīnī [HH] = nnī [H] = nnīdī [HH] = what?

Does any one know of an Öka word that begins with “h”? Yes, Hīa!

These peculiar Öka spellings and manner of pronunciation of words will be used throughout this book. More will show-up on this as we go along. Let’s note, however, how Igbo words are derived.

## 1.2. Derivation of Igbo Words

Let us note that the Igbo word is generally derived from a verb root. And the Igbo verb root is formed

by a consonant followed by a vowel! Examples are:

ba, be, bi, bī, bo, bō, bu, bū.  
 cha, che, chi, chī, cho, chō, chu, chū.  
 da, de, di, dī, do, dō, du, dū.

An appropriate affix is then added to the verb root to obtain a word. The affix is used to modify the meaning of the word. The affixes are: the prefix, the suffix, the infix, and the interfix.

Appropriate prefixes are chosen from the list of vowels and semi-vowels: a, e, i, ī, o, ō, u, ū, m, n. The following table illustrates the mechanism of: prefix + verb root = word.

Prefix	Verb root	Word	Meanings
a	gü	agü	leopard
e	ze	eze	tooth
i	gu	igu	palm frond
ī	gba	īgba	drum
o	ke	oke	share
ō	jī	ōjī	kolanut
u	te	ute	mat
ū	mü	ūmü	children
m	be	mbe	tortoise
n	nu	nnu	salt

The meanings indicated are not exhaustive, since tone-marking of Igbo words vary their meanings. For instance:

oke adj. [HH] = male, masculine  
 oke adj. [HH] = grave, great, super – oke mmadī = important person  
 oke n. [HL] = boundary  
 oke n. [LH] = mouse, rat  
 oke n. [LL] = share, portion, allotment

In the same vein a suffix is appended to a verb root in order to modify (inflect or extend) its meaning. The suffix is a vowel or a verb root (consonant + vowel). The mechanism is: verb root + suffix = word. Examples:

We have inflectional suffixes in: ba + a = baa; je + e = jee; ta + a = taa  
 And we have extensional suffixes in: me + bi = mebi; vbe + fu = vbefu; je + mi = jemi

The infix describes the situation where the affix is inserted inside the word. Examples:

(1) kpu + ghe + fu = kpughefu

Here we have two suffixes “ghe” and “fu” attached to the verb root “kpu”. The suffix “ghe” is called an infix. We may note that:

kpu + ghee = kpughee v. [LHH] = open, uncover

So that kpughefu v. [LLL] = open or uncover completely.

(2) gba + ta + kwü + lü = gbatakwülü

Here we have three suffixes “ta”, “kwü” and “lü” attached to the verb root “gba”. The suffixes “ta” and “kwü” are infixes. We may note that:

gbatakwülü = status (of something).

So,

kedi ka ivbe anyi kwulu shi-gbatakwülü? = what is the status of our discussion?

The interfix describes the situation where the affix is inserted inside the word such that what precedes it is exactly what follows it. Examples:

ngö + lĩ + ngö = ngölingö = meandering

atü + m + atü = atümatü = example

eku + m + eku = ekumeku = the process of calling

ana + m + ana = the process of going home

The affixes “lĩ”, and “m” are called interfixes because they break the words into two equal parts, such that what precedes them is exactly what comes after them.

Consider the series of my male ancestors:

Nna m, Nna Nna m, Nna Nna Nna m, Nna Nna Nna Nna m, etc, etc.

Noting that Nna m = Nnaa, a shorthand for this long series would be:

Nna m vba = Nnaa vba (my father and other direct male ancestors).

So:

Önü nwaakanri vbü öñü Nnĩa vba = The voice of the dwarf is the voice of his male ancestors.

Önü mü vbü nwaakanri vbü öñü Nnaa vba = The voice of me, the dwarf, is the voice of my male ancestors.

### 1.3. The Origin of the Words Ükö Chukwu and Üka

Without explanations, Igbo-English dictionaries simply tell us that:

Ükö Chukwu = Christian priest = Messenger of the Christian God.

Query: Does anyone have the etymology of the name “Ükö Chukwu”?

The dictionary gives “Ükö” as “Messenger”, but based on which dialectical root? Is “Ükö” an Igbo word that existed in any Igbo dialect before the Christian missionaries came to Igboland?

To my knowledge, the priests of Igbo Deities are not called Ükö Alüshī or Ükö Mmöö. In Öka we call them Eze Alüshī or Eze Mmöö. So, how did the Christians invent the name Ükö Chukwu for the priest of their Deity?

I dusted-up my Igbo grammar as indicated above to discover that “Ükö” as an Igbo word may have been constructed from a vowel prefix “Ü” and a verb root “kö”, i.e., Ü + kö = Ükö. We find this verb root in the expression “Köö azü = harvest fish”. And the apostles of Jesus were called “fishers of men”!

I also read the book “The Awka People, Book I (1992)” by Özö Barrister Amanke Okafor (1917-2006). He has this to say in Chapter 8 of the book on the religion of the Öka people:

Öka made Udene, vultures, the messengers of the gods, and used them as an index of whether their sacrifice was accepted by the gods or not, like children in the Obu. If the vultures came to eat the offal from a sacrifice, the sacrifice was accepted; but if they did not come, then it was not accepted. If a sacrifice was being made, and animals were killed, and the vultures did not appear, the officiating priest would beat a gong (a resonant bell-shaped metal) and call out "Uku! Uku!!", meaning, messenger, messenger, and the vultures would appear. There was a saying, "A gbavba aja ma shī avbürö Udene, Ivbe mel be mmöö": When there is a sacrifice and no vultures appear, something wrong must have happened in the land of the gods. That was why when the white Missionaries came to Öka and said that they were messengers of God, Öka people called them "Uku-Chikwu", later corrupted to "Üköchikwu".

U + ku = Uku and “ku” is the verb root in such words as “kuo oku = call or invite”.

He also has this to say in Chapter 12 of the book on the coming of the Christians and about the word “Üka”:

Early in 1904, under the leadership of Reverend G.T. Basden, the Church Missionary Society began its work in Öka town. This is how Rev. Basden described their early days in Öka. (This account is found in the C.M.S. Log Book, kept at the National Archives, Enugu):

"At the commencement life at Awka was (fairly) difficult. The people on the whole, were not anxious to have us in their midst, knowing (fully) well that the advent of the whiteman meant, inevitably, the cessation of some of the questionable practices in vogue. A section of the people, viz, those of the Agulu Quarter were more ready to accept us hoping thereby to reap some advantage over their then enemies the people of Amikwo Quarter....

The site granted to us formed part of the Ajo Ofia of the town and the general belief was, undoubtedly, that (the) spirits of the dead would (have) such disturbing (effect) that we should be glad enough to forsake the place. The Awka folk would neither work for us; nor sell materials, and the first two years were far from being overwhelmingly luxurious. It was a matter of great difficulty to erect the original premises: the students had to prepare the mud, and the Europeans had to lay it to a great extent and build the huts. For several weeks the whole party lived in and shared the one long room".

The Missionaries built a church and started preaching. They were called “Ndü Üka” – conversationalists, story-tellers, that is, preachers.

Now, the Igbo-English dictionary tells us that:

“Üka = conversation” and “Kalĩa üka = converse”.

Whence:

Ndü Üka = conversationalists, story-tellers, that is, preachers!

#### 1.4. Can You Name Our Sex Organs in Igbo?

In our Igbo-English dictionaries we find:

ikpu n. [HL] vulva; woman’s private parts.

But this English rendering of “ikpu = vulva; woman’s private parts” is entirely erroneous as we shall see shortly. Come with me!

I had gone to visit an elder whose company was always refreshing and full of enlightenment. I fondly call him Nna anyĩ (our father). We were making jokes and enjoying the kolanut and gin he offered me when his young daughter in-law (his son’s wife) came in and asked for his urgent attention. She lamented that the village was agog with news that her adolescent son, Chiedu, had impregnated someone’s daughter. She swore that her son, being barely ten years old, could not impregnate any girl. The boy, she wailed, was still too small to do that sort of thing.

Nna anyĩ asked her to sit down and relax a bit. She sat down and the following dialogue ensued.

Nna anyĩ: A shĩlĩ vba na nwa ntöntö Chiedu be ghi tuvbal nwaanya ime? (Did they say your little Chiedu impregnated a woman?)

Chiedu’s mother: E-e-oo Nna anyĩ, ö-ö nke na-avbïö be anyĩ-o! (Yes Nna anyĩ, that’s the news in town!)

Nna anyĩ: Kwükwal, Chiedu ö vbügolü nwoke? (Wait a minute, has Chiedu become a man?)

Chiedu’s mother: Nna anyĩ keezi ele anwü, Chiedu vbünü nwoke, nnwa m nwoke nke izizi. (How come Nna anyĩ, Chiedu is a male, my first male child.)

Nna anyĩ: Waa! Ana m ajü ma Chiedu ö gbago akü n’ikpu. (No! I am asking whether Chiedu has grown hairs on his ikpu.)

Chiedu’s mother: O-o-o-o Nna anyĩ, Chiedu ö vbü nwaanya o ji ga-enwe ivbe ï kulu avbĩa vbaa? (Oh Nna anyĩ, is Chiedu now a woman to have the thing you just named?)

Nna anyĩ: Biko nwunye m, kedi ivbenwa m kulu avba vbaa ï shĩ na Chiedu enwere? Ö vbü ikpu? (Pardon me my wife, what thing did I just name that you say Chiedu does not have? Is it ikpu?)

Chiedu’s mother: E-e Nna anyĩ, ö-ö nwaanya na-enwe ikpu, nwoke anara enwie. (Yes Nna anyĩ, only women have ikpu, men don’t have it.)

Nna anyĩ: Nwunye m, mbü sö ivbe ï mara! M köwaal ghĩ? (My wife, you seem not to know a lot of things! Should I explain?)

Chiedu’s mother: Ngwa köwaal m! (Ok explain!)

Nna anyi went ahead and gave us an astonishing lesson on the precise nomenclature of the male and female sex organs. We shall look at the nomenclature and then come back to Nna anyi's perplexing query to Chiedu's mother: Chiedu, o gbago aku n'ikpu?

We have the following:

aku n. [HH] hair

akpa n. [LL] bag, pouch, pocket, sack; nest

amu n. [HL] testicles

akpa amu n. [LL HL] scrotum; bag of skin containing the testicles

mkpulu n. [HHH] seed, kernel

mkpulu amu n. [HHH HL] testicle

mkpulu obu n. [HHH HL] heart as an organ

mkpulu obu anu = the heart of the animal

utu n. [HL] penis, phallus; male copulatory organ; male organ of urinary excretion

egbe [HL] gun

utu egbe = gun trigger

nwaanya n. [HLL] woman, female person, adult female

utu nwaanya = clitoris

kpuo v. [LH] cover, cap

kpudo v. [LH] cover, cap

kpudo ivbe = cover or cap something

i + kpu = i kpudolu ivbe = something that covers, caps something

ikpu n. [HL] pubis

otü n. [HL] vagina; vulva

ikpu amü = male pubis = i kpudolu amü

ikpu otü = female pubis = i kpudolu otü

aku ikpu n. [HH HL] pubic hair

gbaa aku ikpu = grow pubic hair = become pubescent

akwa n. [LH] egg

ümü n. [HL] children

vüo v. [LH] hatch

vüo akwa = hatch eggs

vüo ümü = hatch children, have numerous offspring

vüö amü = hatch the testicles = become a pubescent male

Let's now go back to Nna anyi's query to Chiedu's mother. He asked:

Chiedu, ö gbago akü n'ikpu? = Has Chiedu grown hairs on his pubis?

Chiedu's mother did not know that men and women have the pubis = ikpu. And that akü ikpu = pubic hair is the clearest sign of male or female pubescence. Nna anyi's query was right on the mark, but Chiedu's mother flew off on the tangent of a misunderstood concept. In the past when children went about naked, parents had no difficulty in identifying the pubescent ones – akü ikpu or pubic hair was the unmistakable sign of puberty. The pubescent were segregated and sent for the man-making (circumcision) and woman-making (introcision) puberty rites.

Let's move on!

## 2. Who Are The Öka People?

### 2.1. The Non-Issue of Öka Origins

Some writers have worked hard to find a primordial home for Öka people. One of them<sup>1</sup> boldly asserts that the Öka are Hebrews, Israelites or Jews. And the only source materials tendered are the Old Testament books of the Christian Bible, which contain a large number of customs that are also practiced by Öka people. Is the similarity of customs a sufficient basis to conclude that Öka people are Hebrews, Israelites or Jews? Evidently no, unless we are afraid of learning through resolute research!

Öka is Öka, Öka vbü Öka. Which other origin of Öka are we looking for? Folks enjoy crab-walking (backwards), hanging out in their heads and moving round in circles. Assuming Israel is found to be the origin of Öka. Then we must also ask for the origin of Israel. And nothing prevents us from asking for the origin of the origin of Israel. This is a futile infinite regressus.

The Öka say: Onye maal nnia (nna ya), maal ndü gboo (ndiichie), i.e., He who knows his father knows his ancestors. The expression "he who knows his father" goes beyond the child's physical recognition of his/her father. It implies the generational transmission of the clan's history from the father to his children. So, the real issue is: What did the Öka person's father tell him/her of his/her pedigree?

Furthermore, the Öka say: Öra nwe nnwa. The community owns the child. So, the upbringing of children is a communal responsibility in Öka. Hence the "father" in the expression "he who knows his father" includes the elders of the community as "fathers/mothers" to the child. The expression translates into: Onye maal diuru (okenye), maal ndü gboo (ndiichie), i.e., He who knows an elder knows his ancestors. This again implies the generational transmission of the clan's history from an elder (father, uncle, mother, aunt, etc.) to the children. So, the real issue remains: What did the Öka person's father/elders tell him/her of his/her pedigree?

Öka tradition has it that: Öka ful efu. Onwere İka vba shi-bİa! Yes, Öka grew out of the soil of Öka and there is no history that they came from somewhere else! Could this be poetic fancy or verifiable historical fact? Both, because poetic language is used to express a verifiable historical fact! How

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<sup>1</sup> Chief Özö E.P.O. Offodile, A Pedigree of Awka and Its People

come? Just be patient and come with me for a stroll down the lane of real and true history – the history written on the pages of Ancient Egyptian Stone Monuments! These monuments contain the true history of the human race as against the deliberate historical deception fabricated by vested interests and fed onto a mentally lazy and credulous multitude. Resolute research should be our watchword.

Here we go with some nuggets culled from the works of the Egyptologist Gerald Massey<sup>2</sup>. He asserts that:

- (1) Africa was the primal source of the world’s people, languages, myths, symbols, and religions and Egypt was Africa’s mouthpiece. Egypt brought African genius to its highest and finest expression then proceeded to instruct the world in Africa’s wisdom.
- (2) The starting-point of the human family has now to be sought for in Africa, the birthplace of the black race, the land of the oldest known human types, and of those which preceded and most nearly approach the human. Ethiopia and Egypt produced the earliest civilization in the world and it was indigenous. So far as the records of language and mythology can offer us guidance, there is nothing beyond Egypt and Ethiopia but Africa. All the evidence cries aloud its proclamation that Africa was the birthplace of the non-articulate, and Egypt the mouthpiece of articulate man.
- (3) The Hebrew legends of the Old Testament are of Afro-Egyptian or Kamite origins. Of especial importance is the remarkable chapter, “The Egyptian Origin of the Jews Traced from the Monuments”. His research shows that the Five Books of Moses represented Egyptian astronomical allegories that had been literalized, historicized, and humanized. The Book of Exodus especially is replete with Kamite astronomical types that were reconfigured to form Hebrew “history.”
- (4) The Gospels, like the Old Testament, are just the humanized and historicized astronomical mythology of Egypt, instituted by the early Christian patriarchs and redactors, and formalized at the Council of Nicea.<sup>3</sup> As an example, the word *Christ* itself, meaning “anointed”, is a late Greek word that only appears about 290 BC in Alexandria (Egypt),<sup>4</sup> clearly derived from the Egyptian *keres(t)*, a name for the anointed and resurrected Osirified mummy. Christianity’s astronomical antecedents are shown in the canonical birthday of Christ, originally celebrated on January 6 – as it still is in the Greek Orthodox Church – but pushed back to December 25 in the Roman Church to coincide with and co-opt the celebration of the birth of the sun-god Horus (and all the solar deities of antiquity). As the sun dawned on December 25<sup>th</sup> at the beginning of the Common Era (from 1 A.D.), the constellation Virgo could be seen on the eastern horizon. The Sun and the Son were born “of a Virgin.”
- (5) Regarding the Egyptian Monuments, Henry Brugsch-Bey<sup>5</sup> says, “Nowhere do the inscriptions contain one syllable about the Israelites.” This is a point blank assertion of one of the foremost

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<sup>2</sup> The interested reader may peruse the Masseian Corpus at websites, such as [www.masseiana.org](http://www.masseiana.org), dedicated to the works of Gerald Massey.

<sup>3</sup> There were at least a dozen – some say as many as 80 – gospels circulating in the nascent Christian World up to the 4th century. The Council of Nicea (325 A.D.), convened by Constantine, canonised just four of them. For his part, though bringing Christianity to temporal power in the Roman Empire, Constantine did not convert until he was on his deathbed.

<sup>4</sup> Edward Carpenter, *Pagan and Christian Creeds*, New York: Harcourt Brace & Co., 1921, p. 202.

<sup>5</sup> Brugsch-Bey, *History of Egypt Under the Pharaohs*, vol. 2, p. 99.



transcribers from the monuments and also a devout bibliolater. It is perfectly true that they contain nothing direct for those who accept the Book of Exodus, and who think to find in Egypt a couple of millions of foreigners called Israelites, Hebrews, or Jews, as an ethnological entity entirely unknown to the Egyptians themselves. It was useless seeking for the Israelites on the monuments until we could get somewhat clear of the astronomical allegory, with its Egyptian myths turned into Hebrew miracles; its gods and leaders of the wars in heaven converted into historic personages.

- (6) The Hebrew books of the Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Joshua, and Judges are invaluable as a virgin mine of mythology; they are of the utmost importance as an aid in recovering the primeval types of Egyptian thought, which, in turn, will interpret the Hebrew writings and permit of their being understood, as they never have been, and never could be apart from their original purpose and manner of setting forth. For the Hebrews, who collected and preserved so much, have explained nothing. There is evidence enough to prove the types are Egyptian, and the people who brought them out of Egypt must have been more or less Egyptian in race, and of a religion that was Egyptian of the earliest and oldest kind.
- (7) Undoubtedly there is some very slight historic nucleus in the Hebrew narrative, but it has been so mixed with the myth that it is far easier to recover the celestial allegory with the aid of its correlatives than it is to restore the human history.
- (8) Egyptians, though conscientious recorders of their own history, never mentioned a group or nation that could be remotely identified with the Hebrews of the Exodus.
- (9) The Hebrews, originally the worshippers of the divine Mother and Son who later renounced them for the all-exclusive Father, brought their religion and language out of Africa, their original home.

So we find at last that the original home of the Hebrews is black Africa. And why not Öka, from where they borrowed their famous customs?

It is indeed a shame for any learned Öka person to link Öka origins to Israel. Which Israel can anybody be talking about? The Zionist State created within Palestine in 1948, thanks to British and American treachery? Or is it the Israel of the fairytale found in the Old Testament portion of the Christian British King James Bible? Historical deception is an art that colonialism has always used to transmute patent lies into apparent truths.

Let us humbly inform ourselves with a view to liberating our reason from any form of deception or stranglehold. We may peruse the following books for some healthy information on the fable of the chosen people, the Old Testament books of the Bible, Israel and the Jews in general:

- (1) Ahmed Osman: Christianity, An Ancient Egyptian Religion;
- (2) Moustafa Gadalla: Historical Deception, The Untold Story of Ancient Egypt;
- (3) Douglas Reed: The Controversy of Zion;
- (4) Gerald Massey: Ancient Egypt, Light of the World;

Ka anyi na-eje n'ubi ka ji na-aka. Let us visit the farm while the yam matures.

Another non-issue of origins concerns the origin of the Agülü Quarter of Öka. Some writers on the history of Öka have invented ingenious stories just to place the “stranger” tag on Agülü, the ancestor of the seven villages that make up the Agülü Quarter. Is this history or another instance of intellectual crab-walking on the part of half-clever myth-makers? Yes it is intellectual crab-walking, backed by the very evidence provided by the same writers! Eh? Yes, come again with me and judge for yourself.

We are told that the coming of Agülü to Öka is traced to the coming of his father, Nevbechi Uzo, whose names were shortened to Nevbuzo. Nevbuzo was a native of Agülü-Ümana Village in Ümana town in Ezeagu Local Government Area of Enugu State of Nigeria. He came to Öka to trade in elephant tusks and to work as a blacksmith. He begat his son, Agülü, in Öka, and Agülü became a natualized Öka citizen. Agülü was also a hunter and became the progenitor of the seven families, now Villages, of Agülü Quarter.

The myth-makers finally conclude that: It is generally held, among the Ümana and Ezeagu peoples, in their tradition, that the ancestor of Nevbuzo, who came to live among them, but whose name is now forgotten, was an Öka blacksmith; and that when Nevbuzo, his descendant, went to live in Öka, he was, in fact, returning to the land of his fathers.

So, Agülü turns out to be more Öka than the self-styled Öka people who have fought vainly to tag him “a stranger” to Öka! What a cruel fate that befell our half-clever myth-makers. The trickster ends up tricking himself, says the Öka adage; Onye ghöka aghühö, ö ghögbuo onwie (onwe ye).

Yet another non-issue of origins concerns the origin of the Öka smithing Deity Akpütakpü. We may note that akpütakpü is the name of iron slag (avbulu üzü, refuse from smithing) in Agülü-Ümana. And Agülü-Ümana also has a smithing Deity, called Akpütakpü. One writer<sup>6</sup> has tried very hard to show that Akpütakpü is not indigeneous to Öka. He says:

“Ümüzöcha also has Akpütakpü, but Amudo who was of the same mother with Ümüzöcha does not worship Akpütakpü. They worship Ofvufve like the rest of Awka. Thus, it is safe to say that Akpütakpü is not indigenous to Awka. However, why Ümüzöcha worships Akpütakpü and Amudo does not, remains a mystery. It is reasonable to assume that if Akpütakpü came to Ümüzöcha through the latter's maternal grandparents, then one would expect that Amudo who is of the same parent with Ümüzöcha should worship it too. Akpütakpü is an idol unlike many others. It is quite powerful and could not just be copied (nsata) or bought. It is likely that Ümüzöcha acquired Akpütakpü from elsewhere when Üzüöcha had separated from his brother—Amudo. To the best of our knowledge, Akpütakpü is indigenous to Nsukka area, not Öka. From the early times, Ümüzöcha people have had very close relationships with Nsukka people. And, until recently, a good number of their wives have come from Nsukka.”

Why Ümüzöcha venerates Akpütakpü and Amudo does not, will remain a mystery until we realize that Öka has functional Deities. Amudo was a farmer, while his brother Üzüöcha was a blacksmith whose patron Deity is Akpütakpü – the God of technology, blacksmiths, craftsmen, artisans, sculptors, metals, metallurgy, and fire. The Deity’s symbols are a smith's hammer, an anvil and a pair of tongs. This same Deity is found in ancient Greece under the name of Hephaestus, whose Roman equivalent was Vulcan. He was the god of technology, blacksmiths, craftsmen, artisans, sculptors, metals, metallurgy, fire and volcanoes. Like other mythic smiths, Hephaestus was lame. He served as

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<sup>6</sup> A Pedigree of Awka and Its People, by Chief Özö E.P.O. Offodile

the blacksmith of the gods, and he was venerated in the manufacturing and industrial centers of Greece, particularly in Athens. The center of his cult was in Lemnos. Hephaestus's symbols are a smith's hammer, an anvil and a pair of tongs. There is a Temple of Hephaestus, the Hephaesteum, located near the Athenian agora, or marketplace.

The Temple of Akpütakpü in the Agülü Öka Quarter is at the Avbö-Agülü market square in Ümübeele village! With the Temples of the Greek and Öka smithing Deities located near the marketplace, should we then conclude that Akpütakpü and Agülü people came from Greece or maybe the Greeks came from Öka – just as we discovered above that the Jews might have come from Öka?

We learn from another author<sup>7</sup> that Agülü was both a smith and a proficient hunter, even though he had deformed legs. Yes, like other mythic smiths, the Greek smithing Deity Hephaestus was lame. His physical appearance is taken by some to indicate arsenicosis, low levels of arsenic poisoning, resulting in lameness and skin cancers. In place of less available tin, arsenic was added to copper in the Bronze Age to harden it; most smiths of the Bronze Age would have suffered from chronic workplace poisoning, and the mythic image of the lame smith is widespread. And Agülü, our venerable smith and proficient hunter, had deformed legs!

Recall what we stated above that Africa was the primal source of the world's people, languages, myths, symbols, and religions and Egypt was Africa's mouthpiece. Egypt brought African genius to its highest and finest expression then proceeded to instruct the world in Africa's wisdom.

We may confidently re-assert what Öka tradition has taught us, viz.: Öka ful efu. Onwere ïka vba shi-bïa! Öka grew out of the soil of Öka and there is no history that they came from somewhere else!

Yet another author<sup>8</sup> tells us that:

“The people of Agülü and Ümüdiöka villages are believed to have joined the autochthonous inhabitants later.”

“In the present state of our knowledge of Öka history, it is reasonable to assume that the next stage in the peopling of Awka polity was the migration of Ümüdiöka people into the town. According to Ifeanacho Okafor, the progenitor of Ümüdiöka maximal lineage was Ichide and is believed to have migrated from Neni. All our informants however do not agree with this one related by Ifeanacho Okafor. Rather, they believe that the progenitor of Ümüdiöka village was Ezeanyakpudolu, who migrated from Ümüdiöka near Ogidi, in Dunukofia Local Government Area of Anambra State. This tradition is one which an average Ümüdiöka man of today can easily tell. It holds that Ezeanyakpudolu was a medicine man and body scarifier and that he left Ümüdiöka, near Ogidi in the remote past to Awka to practice his trade.”

We saw above how the attempt to put the “stranger” tag on Agülü fizzled out when the Agülü-Ümana people said they are from Öka. I will not be surprised to learn someday that the so-called coming of Ümüdiöka to Öka was indeed another Return of the Native!

Let's move on!

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<sup>7</sup> The Resilience of Igbo Culture: A Case Study of Awka Town, by Azuka A. Dike

<sup>8</sup> Dr. Ifeanyi Anagbogu, A History of Awka.

We have:

vuo uzo = buo uzo [LH HL] = lead; go first; be in front; be first in line.

vulu uzo = bulu uzo [LH HL] = start or begin with.

vulu uzo lie nli = begin with eating a meal, eat first.

Chi vu uzo = Chi bu uzo = Chi leads = Chi is in front

vbü = bü [H] = is; to be.

Ndü vbü ishi = Ndü bü ishi = Life is (comes) first.

Onye vbü Chi m? = Onye bü Chi m? = Who can impersonate my Chi?

Ada [HH] = eldest daughter; first daughter; daughter

Ökpü [HH] = ancient

Nwa-ökpü = daughter of the ancient one

Ünö [HL] = habitation

Ökpü ünö = Ökpünö = ancient habitation

Ökpünö Agülü = ancient habitation of Agülü

Ökpü Orimili = ancient sea

## 2.2. Who Is The Öka Woman?

The Öka say:

Nne vu uzo = the Mother came first.

Nne vbü uzo = Mother is the door.

Nne vu uzo (the Mother came first) and Nne vbü uzo (Mother is the door) are weighty assertions that could be glossed over by the undiscerning. That the Mother is the door becomes evident if we say: Mother is the door of life! But that the Mother came first needs some explaining, because the presence of the father tends to distort the picture. The untutored would ask: How can the mother be first when the father is there? So, let's see how it happened that motherhood was first before fatherhood.

Since we shall be meeting with the terms “totem” and “totemism”, it would be helpful to provide some explanations before we continue.

In very simple terms:

Totem = tribal mark

Totemism = tribal marking

The name “totem” originated in the language of the North American Indians<sup>9</sup>. The word denotes a sign, a symbol, mark, or device of the group, family, clan, or tribe. Their belief concerning their divisions into tribes is that many years ago the Great Spirit gave his red children their totems, or tribes, in order that they might never forget that they were all related to each other, and that in time of distress or war they were bound to help each other. When an Indian, in travelling, meets with a strange band of Indians, all he has to do is to seek for those bearing the same emblem as his tribe; and having made it known that he belongs to their totem, he is sure to be treated as a relative.

By totemism we mean the earliest formation of society in which the human group was first separated from the human multitude that grovelled together previously in animal promiscuity.

Tribal marking or totemism was a primitive means of distinguishing the offspring of one mother from the offspring of the other. The earliest sociology touches on promiscuity at the point of departure from the human multitude when the Mother was the only parent known.

Özö Amanke Okafor has very useful information on tribal marking or totemism in Öka. What follows is culled from his book, *The Awka People Book 1*.

Body ornamentation, Ichi, mbubu, circumcision, tribal marks, these were the specialties of the Öka surgeon – the Diöka. With his nimble knife he deftly cut intricate patterns on the human body, and, using herbs which he alone knew how to use, he sterilized the wounds and ensured speedy recovery.

When an Öka man grew to manhood, and was ready to found a compound of his own, and to impregnate women, he was forbidden by custom to do either, until he had undergone a ceremony called "Mwa eze" (teeth chiseling). The Diöka chiseled the front teeth into the required shape as a mark of endurance and manliness. A feast was made for the occasion.

When a man was to take the highest title in Öka, that of Özö title, he could not do so until he had been given the "ichi" marks by the Diöka, that is, cicatrization. It was an elaborate proceeding, in fact a celebration, and the Diöka with his knife cut hachures on the face of the candidate, making parallel lines all over the face of the person, from the forehead to the chin. This scarification of the face was a mark of endurance and a test of manhood. The wounds later formed cicatrices which were considered a mark of manliness and distinction.

On the day of the ichi-making ceremony (mgbu ichi) there was feasting and merriment, and people made music in order to distract the candidate, and prevent him from showing signs of pain, which would have been considered unmanly. In the olden days every Öka Özö title holder had ichi marks.

Likewise, when a girl was to enter into womanhood, there was a ceremony performed for her called "nru mkpu". It was a ceremonial outing, after a period of seclusion. All celebrants must have had the "mbubu" marks made on them by the Diöka. "Mbubu" were intricate patterns made on a girl's body, starting from the neck and going down her belly to the beginning of the pubic hair. The patterns could be figures of butterflies or some other interesting objects, depending on the ingenuity of the Diöka. Inside the cut skin the Diöka inserted a pigment which gave the lines a dark coloring that remained so till the person's death. Without "nru mkpu" there was no entry into the marriage state, and without the "mbubu" there was no "nru mkpu".

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<sup>9</sup> Rev. Peter Jones, *History of the Ojibway Indians*.

When people of one tribe gave marks to themselves to distinguish themselves from others, Öka had a tribal mark of their own. It was called "nvö ngwele" (lizard's claw). Every Öka man from the 1920 age-grade backwards had it. Those born after that date may or may not have it, for the Government had come and things had changed! It consisted of three short horizontal lines, parallel to one another, on either side of the face, a few millimeters from the corner of each eye. Anyone meeting an Öka man, and looking closely at his face was likely to see the mark.

Let's thank Özö Amanke Okafor for the above beacon of light. We may add that the moment a girl becomes pubescent was a time of rejoicing because the girl had come of age and was now ready to be welcomed into communal sexual union by the whole group of grown-up males. When the female had attained pubescence and become of age the opening period, as it is commonly designated, was proclaimed, and confirmation given in various modes of sign-language. The fact was tattooed on the person. A cicatrice was raised in the flesh (mbubu).

The very first thing to regulate in primitive marriage was the time at which the pubescent girl was marriageable. This was determined primarily by nature and secondly by the preparatory rite. No girl was marriageable until the rite of introcision (opening, during Nkpu) had been performed upon her person. It is evident that the pubescent female goes through the painful cicartriztion of mbubu before the more painful introcision or opening of mkpu. And we can now understand why without mbubu there was no nkpu! The endurance of the ordeal of mbubu prepares the maiden's mind for the opening of her vagina or introcision, in preparation for a hassle-free sexual union and childbirth. The boys became men after the puberty rite of circumcision.

Let's move on and continue our unveiling of fact that, in Öka history, motherhood was first before fatherhood. Ümünne (children of one mother) were first before Ümünna (children of one father).

### **2.3. Old Öka was a Matriarchy**

Literally, matriarchy means government by mothers, or more broadly, government and power in the hands of women. Matriarchy can be thought of as a shorthand description for any society in which women's power is equal or superior to men's and in which the culture centers around values and life events described as feminine.

A man had a life-long obligation to work for women and their relatives in that society. This entails a life-long obligation of every man to work for his kinswomen and their families. When a boy begins to garden, he does it for his mother. When his sisters grow up and marry, he works for them. If he has neither mother nor sisters, his nearest female blood relation will claim the proceeds of his labor.

The earliest human being individualized was necessarily the mother. She and her children formed the primal family, whose tie was that of blood-motherhood, a tie that must have been already common with the humans in pre-tribal times, the one blood of motherhood being the original source of all blood-brotherhood. The primary form of human personality was that attained by woman under the matriarchate as the mother. Fortunately providence placed the mother first and secured her on the side of procreant nature, for the perpetuation of the race. It has been cast up against woman that she is mother first and consort afterwards, and that the maternal instinct reigns supreme.

But woman was the mother ages earlier than she could be the wife. The mother had the start by many thousand years. The child was known as hers from the beginning. The husband was not. Her function was that of breeder for the group and bearer for the tribe, and not for love of the individual. She fulfilled the ideal of primitive man as the woman of infinite capacity, like the lioness, hippopotamus, or other huge titanic-type of superhuman power and size.

She may have had her individual likes and dislikes, but was grimly governed in the grasp of stern tribal or totemic law. It was perforce her duty to provide pasturage for “forty feeding as one,” or the whole tribe, not to cultivate her own personal preferences. The mother necessarily grew predominant in the duality of her nature. And still the noblest nature yet evolved is hers whose desire for maternity is dual, and who blends most perfectly the love of the mother and wife in one.

Because the mother was the primal personality it followed that the earliest human group was a motherhood. The clan at first was matriarchal. When there was no individual fatherhood yet determinable, descent was in the female line, from the mother to the eldest daughter (Ada!). These became the typical “two women” in totemism and the “two mothers” in mythology because they had been the two mothers in the primitive sociology, as the mother and the eldest daughter of the human family. The primary human group was naturally uterine. The family first formed were the children of one mother, and the human pact or tie was founded on the one blood of the mother; the blood-motherhood which determined the blood-brotherhood. Hence Ümü-Nne preceded Ümü-Nna.

At a very early stage the boys became the consorts of the mother. When of age they would enter into sexual union with her, the eldest being first. Incest at the time was naturally unknown, it being the same with them as with the animals. This status is reflected in the mirror of mythology. For example, there is evidence that the eldest son was the earliest representative or outline of a father and that he cohabited with his own mother on purpose to keep pure the mother-blood. This is an African institution.

Early man observed everywhere in nature that production of new life was the prerogative of the female of the species. Early humans realized no connection between sexual intercourse and reproduction; hence there was no notion of fatherhood.

Altogether, the cessation of the female menstruation, followed by the swelling and bulging of the female body, culminating in the bursting forth of new life presented itself as an awesome, transcendent mystery. It made the female, in her exclusive motherhood, the model of the first conceptions and images of deity. For our forbears, God was feminine, because the surrounding fauna and flora furnished them with examples of superhuman females such as the obese hippopotamus, the long-lived tortoise, the terrifying crocodile, the ferocious lioness, the grand, overspreading sycamore tree – all of these figures embodied powers both non-human and super-human. These concrete nature powers supplied the earliest divine images; only much later was the deity made immanent in human form.

The sole catholic and universal first producer was feminine.

It may be difficult for the modern mind to conceive of the primitive priority of the woman; the precedence of the sonship to the institution of the fatherhood; of the nephew to the son of the father; and of the types of thought, the laws and ceremonies that were left as the deposit of such primitive customs.

Descent in the female line was universal in the earliest times and most archaic condition of society; the kin being composed of a female ancestor and her children. The fatherhood is unknown to the primary group, and this status of the human family originated the figure of the Great Mother and her children in the heavens.

So far from the patriarchal family being first, it is the last but one; the monogamous being last of all. The genesis of the human group was as follows:

- (1) First was the gregarious horde, undistinguished by name or symbol or law of sexual intercourse;
- (2) Next, the group organized itself on the basis of sex, with later rules for the checking of incest;
- (3) Then arose the family in which marriage was by single pairs, pairing at pleasure, or cohabiting until the child was born;
- (4) Then followed the patriarchal or polygamous family, with property in cattle and wives;
- (5) Finally came the monogamous family founded on the individualized fatherhood.

There was a general rejoicing at the time when the youth was made into a man and the girl into a woman. The general rejoicing at the girl's coming of age was in celebration of her entering into sexual union, which was communal, as she was then open and accessible to all the males, at least on this occasion when she entered the ranks of womanhood as common property, which was afterwards made several by development of the marriage-law.

Marriage began as a recognized, though regulated, right of all the brothers to ravish every maiden as she came of age, and thus to make a woman of her for tribal sexual union. And in the communal system of sexual union it was impossible to father the child.

We may now appreciate why the Öka daughter of the clan is called Ada Anyĩ (our daughter!) and a wife of the clan is called Nwunye Anyĩ (our wife!). These appellations are residues of the matriarchate when the females of the clan were the promiscuous property of the males of the clan.

During the matriarchate, the names of Öka children contained two parts: the first part was the name given to the child at birth and the second part was the name of the child's mother. Two boys born to two women of the kin on any Eke market day are named Nweke (Nwa-Eke). To distinguish them the name of the mother was appended to each name. So we may have Nweke be Mgbavbö and Nweke be Anyankwö. When someone called Nweke, he is usually asked: Nweke be onye? (which Nweke?) He then adds: Nweke be Mgbavbö, i.e., Nweke of/from Ngbavbö. The "be = of, from" is usually omitted and we simply say Nweke Mgbavbö, the "be = of, from" is implicit. They were all children of the mother, and were named from the mother. This naming procedure that originated in the matriarchate was continued later in the patriarchal or polygamous family setting.

Something startling happened during the Agü<sup>10</sup> ceremony for one of my nephews named Chikwuemeke (Emeke). We were puzzled that no ancestor or Alüshĩ showed up as having incarnated in the boy. Then it occurred to me that we may have given the boy's name in a non-Öka fashion as Emeke Anazövba, where Anazövba is his father's name. Now, we have three Emekes in the Anazövba family – the boy undergoing the Agü ritual, his father, and my first son are all called Emekes! I told the assistance that we should give the boy's name in the Öka fashion as: Emeke be Ngözi nwa Ivbite-Nibo.

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix A.



The Dibia agreed and threw down his *ükpükpa* shells asking the reincarnator to show up and claim his/her due. Looking at the oracle, the Dibia screamed *ö shī na nya vbü nna nna*, he says he is a father's father! Which father, we asked? Is it the boy's father or some other ancestor-father of a father within my lineage? It was finally the boy's father's father! The point to note here is that a reincarnator showed up as soon as the boy was named from his mother – the true *Öka* way of naming children!

My clan in *Ümübeele*, *Öka*, is called *Ümüashīi*. Now *Ümü* = children and *Ashīi* = name of our Old First Mother. So, *Ashīi* was a woman who, contrary to known *Öka* patriarchal customs, has an *Obu* named after her and situated in her compound – *Obu Ümüashīi*! This is clearly a descent in the female line, the kin being composed of a female ancestor *Ashīi* and her children. I had been led to believe that this *Obu* must be an *Obu Nkpuke* belonging to the sons of one of the many wives of a polygamist. But this implies the patent absurdity that each of the wives of the polygamist would have her own *Obu*. No, this *Obu* belonged to the Matriarch *Ashīi* from the first! Her supposed husband, *Maazi Odikpo*, was a later-day invention of those votaries of patriarchy who have vainly attempted to maladroitly camouflage the historical truth that *Öka* of old was a matriarchy.

The genetrix as typical woman is both mother and consort to her own children.

Thus, in the mirror of Egyptian mythology human promiscuity is reflected when the Great Mother's own sons are her consorts. Polyandry is represented when brothers and sisters couple together, as did *Shu* and *Tefnut*. The African marriage of one male with two sisters is reflected in the myth when *Osiris* is the consort of *Isis* and *Nephthys*.

Capture in marriage originated as a mode of rescuing or ransoming the woman from the clutch of the general community in which the female was common to all the males of the group. In the special marriage of individual pairs the woman had to be captured and carried off from the group. Only instead of being captured we might say “rescued” by the individual (and his friends) from being the promiscuous property of the community. Hence, the custom of compensation (dowry) to the group (or, later, parents) for permitting the female to become private property in personal marriage.

To further buttress our stand on *Öka* being a matriarchy from the first, let us have a look at the history of the *Imöka Öka Deity*.

*Özö Amanke Okafor*<sup>11</sup> gives us the following genesis of the *Imöka Öka Deity*:

There was a daughter of the *Öka* people called *Nnomeh*, a most beautiful girl. She fell ill, and the *Ümüzeukwu* people, who were mostly native doctors, but not of *Ifiteana* stock, undertook to cure her. They failed, and *Nnomeh* died. The *Öka* people charged that *Ümüzeukwu* had murdered the girl. They attacked *Ümüzeukwu* and war ensued. *Ümüzeukwu* were eventually defeated and scattered, and they left the neighbourhood of *Öka*. *Nnomeh* was buried in what is now the Shrine of *Imöka*. Other *Ökas* began to be buried there, and it became the burial ground of the *Öka* people.

After some years the spirit of *Nnomeh* began to haunt her *Öka* relatives. She was angry because her life had been cut short, and she was not spared to marry and beget children. To appease her, the *Ökas* went to *Akpötö* – to the land of the *Idoma* people – who were famed native doctors, and got a group of

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<sup>11</sup> *Amanke Okafor*, *The Awka People*.

them to come and do a medicine for Öka. The Akpötös came, and the medicine they made for Öka was Akwalī-Öda-Ömümü Ümüöka, an akwalī to bring Ümüöka children, and ward off evil.

This akwalī was sited at the spot where Nnomeh was buried. The akwalī became known as Akwalī Ümüöka, or Imöka. When it got very powerful the Öka people worshipped it as a god, and celebrated its festival once a year. Hence Imöka was sometimes called Imöka Nnomeh!

After the akwali was made, the diviners (native doctors who specialized in ascertaining the wishes of the gods) had to determine who were to serve it and give it food. The job, or honour, fell to a family called Ümü-Ofunu, in Amachalla Village. They served it for sometime, and then grew careless, and could not keep the rules and taboos, and so died off. Ümü-Eleke family, also in Amachalla, succeeded them, and have been serving the god up till today, enjoying both the prestige and the proceeds from sacrifices made to the god.

The Akpötö native doctors were not allowed to return to their native land. The medicine they made was of such importance to the Öka people that it was feared that if they were allowed to go home they might do something to reduce its potency, or else, do a similar medicine for other people who could then become more powerful than Öka.

For that reason, they were persuaded to settle permanently in Öka town and carry on their trade of native doctors. But after living for some time in Amachalla Village, on a piece of land along what is now G.I. Nwigbo Street, at the front of the present compound of Nwaforka Nwoka (Chinemeaku), the Öka people became apprehensive of them, because of their powerful medicines, and so moved them to a place behind the habitation of the Okpos, called Ökpünö, and settled them there. The Akpötös occupied the site, progressed and multiplied in numbers, and eventually formed a large community of their own – a Village, called Ökpünö-Ökachī, meaning, Ökpünö settlement brought about by the Öka people.

No Öka man, under any circumstance, would knowingly eat the meat of a black monkey. "Onwere onye Öka na-asö enwe, ibie a na-elie". The reason was that the black monkey, which lived within the town among people (as opposed to the brown monkey which lived in the bush), was an animal dedicated to Imöka, and like everything owned by a God, it was sacred, and must not be touched. Visitors to Öka used to comment on this custom by saying: "Anü jul Öka aka, ewee vbe wel enwe chüöl Alüshī" (It is because Öka have surplus meat, that they could consecrate the black monkey to the gods).

The story went that "ikpükpa", an animal much like the rabbit, which lived in the bush, was the first animal dedicated to Imöka, but after the Okoli Ijoma or Ada war, when the black monkey performed a service to Öka, by alerting Öka people to their danger through making excited noises on the approach of the enemy, the ikpükpa was demoted, and the black monkey was elevated to the status of an animal sacred to the gods, which must not be killed.

We are grateful to Özö Amanke Okafor for the above bit on the genesis of the Imöka Deity. But what does that story tell us?

- (1) There was a daughter of the Öka people called Nnomeh.
- (2) Nnomeh ordered her Öka relatives to bring Akpötö native doctors to come and do a medicine for Öka.

- (3) The Akpötö doctors came, and the medicine they made for Öka was Akwalī-Öda-Ömümü Ümüöka, an akwalī to bring Ümüöka children, and ward off evil.
- (4) The akwalī became known as Akwalī Ümüöka, or Imöka.
- (5) Hence Imöka was sometimes called Imöka Nnomeh!

Imöka is also addressed as follows:

Imöka Nnomeh, Nne-mülü-Öka = Imöka Nnomeh, the mother of Öka.

Now, what does all this teach us?

- (1) Nnomeh = Nne-mülü-Öka
- (2) Ümü-Öka = Ümü-Nnomeh
- (3) Akwalī Ümü-Öka = Akwalī Ümü-Nnomeh
- (4) Hence, Öka = Nnomeh

So, Nnomeh was a Matriarch whose clan is called Öka. Her clan initially had the ikpükpa, and later the black monkey, as its totem; and the clan's functional Deity of life, procreation and protection was the Akwalī Ömümü Ümüöka (Imöka). She also has an Obu – the Obu Imöka.

Now, Ashī, the Matriarch of my clan has an Obu and an Akwalī Ömümü Ümüashī, just as Matriarch Nnomeh has her own Obu and Akwalī Ümü-Nnomeh or Akwalī Ümu-Öka or Imöka.

The Akwalī Deity appears to be the oldest of Öka's local Deities, because it was introduced during the matriarchal era and matriarchy pre-dates patriarchy. Women were the sole ancestors – Ndiichie – of the clan during the matriarchy. And the Matriarchs had the Obu or family temple with all the associated paraphernalia – Ndiichie, okpenshi, övbö, etc. When the patriarchs took over, Ndiichie referred to only male ancestors. So, Ndiichie, when properly understood, comprise female and male ancestors. The Agwü Deity also belongs to the matriarchal era since women participate fully in its celebration. We may comfortably conclude that Agwü, Akwalī and Ndiichie were introduced during the matriarchy. All local Deities that exclude the participation of women in their celebration are products of the patriarchal era.

The following piece on the Akwalī Deity and blood relationship is culled from Özö Amanke Okafor<sup>12</sup>:

The extended family, who were the descendants of one man, worshipped at a common shrine of the goddess Akwalī, called Akwalī Ömümü, or Öda Ömümü. Akwalī was the goddess that gave children, in Öka religion, to people. The same people who worshipped at the common shrine of Akwalī also ate the Otite feast together in the common ancestral Hall or Obu, of the family.

In Öka if there was a dispute as to whether a person was a blood relation of the members of an extended family or whether he was a mere sojourner in the family, the questions that were asked were: Did his father worship Akwalī with the rest of the members of the family; and did he celebrate the feast of Otite in the common Obu with them? If the answer to both questions was Yes, the matter was settled, the person was adjudged a member of the family, notwithstanding any other evidence to the

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<sup>12</sup> Amanke Okafor, The Awka People – Book 2.

contrary. A stranger did not do any of those things in common with members of an extended family, only blood relations.

But the above definition of the extended family as the descendants of one man cannot stand unqualified, because descent in the female line preceded descent in the male line. Blood was the ancient life and motherhood the fount of source. Blood was the earliest human tie and blood brothers are men born of the same mother or of two sisters. Blood-motherhood was first. Then the blood-brotherhood succeeded and gradually superseded the blood-motherhood. A group of progenitors, or brothers of the blood, began to usurp the place of the female ancestors as parental powers on the way to finally establishing the patriarchate.

The definition of the extended family as the descendants of one man holds true during the patriarchate. During the matriarchate the extended family are the descendants of the same mother or of two sisters. We address our Matriarch Ashīi as Ashīi Nta Nwaiwaöma. Now, we have:

nta [HL] = little, small, junior  
 ukwu [HH] = big, great, senior  
 üwa [LL] = life, destiny;  
 öma [HH] = good, pleasant, beautiful

So,

Ashīi Nta Nwaiwaöma = junior or small Ashīi whose destiny or life is beautiful, good, or pleasant  
 The adjective “nta = junior, little, small” affixed to Ashīi points to the existence of another Ashīi – a senior Ashīi or Ashīi Ukwu, i.e., the senior sister of Ashīi Nta!

Hence, the Ümüashīi clan turns out to be the descendants of the two sisters Ashīi Nta and her elder sister Ashīi Ukwu.

Having traced the origin of the Akwalī Deity to the matriarchal epoch, we may now recast the piece from Özö Amanke Okafor as follows:

The extended family, who were the descendants of one mother or of two sisters, worshipped at a common shrine of the goddess Akwalī, called Akwalī Ömümü, or Öda Ömümü. Akwalī was the goddess that gave children, in Öka religion, to people. The same people who worshipped at the common shrine of Akwalī also ate the Otite feast together in the common ancestral Hall or Obu, of the family.

In Öka if there was a dispute as to whether a person was a blood relation of the members of an extended family or whether he was a mere sojourner in the family, the questions that were asked were: Did his father worship Akwalī with the rest of the members of the family; and did he celebrate the feast of Otite in the common Obu with them? If the answer to both questions was Yes, the matter was settled, the person was adjudged a member of the family, notwithstanding any other evidence to the contrary. A stranger did not do any of those things in common with members of an extended family, only blood relations.

Ask the informed Öka person why his folks don't eat or kill the black monkey, and he is likely to give you the above story, on how the animal saved Öka people, taken from Özö Amanke Okafor's book.

In Nnewi mythology the "ewi" (giant rat) is believed to have played a great role in saving the founders of Nnewi and because of this the killing or eating of ewi in Nnewi was forbidden.

Yes, the giant rat (ewi or eyi) saved the founders of Nnewi just as the black monkey (enwe ojii) saved Öka people from Okoli Ijoma's army. And that's why the giant rat and the black monkey are not killed or eaten in Nnewi and Öka, respectively.

But research has shown that natural genesis provides a better and rational explanation of the Nnewi giant rat taboo and the Öka black monkey taboo. How? Come with me!

The human mother was the nurse of life and suckler of her children. She was symbolized by such zootypes as the fruit tree, the many-teated sow, the large-uddered cow, the lioness, the dog-headed ape, the black monkey, the giant rat (ewi or eyi), the python (eke), the snake (agwö), etc.

The Hindu does not eat the cow, the Jew does not eat the swine, the Öka person does not eat the black monkey, the Nnewi person does not eat the giant rat (ewi or eyi), because these represented the mother or human female as a totem or tribal sign.

Nnewi and Ümüagwö are names of Igbo towns in Anambra and Imo States of Nigeria. Now, the word Nnewi = Nne Ewi, the mother of the giant rat Ewi and the word Ümüagwö = Ümü-Agwö = The children of the snake Agwö!

If the totem is a means of taboo, as we know it to have been, and the mother or the sister is represented by the totem, then the human female is aimed at under various totemic types. Thou shalt not eat the black monkey = thou shalt not cohabit or have sexual union with the mother or daughter of the clan.

The kin types originated when the gregarious or undistinguished herd was first separated into groups, and the groups were discriminated by some particular sign, clan, or tribal name.

The types adopted to distinguish the groups were the earliest ideographs that served for signs when these were without other names, and the body of a person was only known from the gregarious mass by means of the natural figures which were at first branded into the flesh at the period of puberty.

Nothing is more common in the initiation of youths than for these to be solemnly warned against eating forbidden food. They are not to eat a certain food, which is a totem that represents the mother. Thus eating the fruit of the forbidden tree is violating the mother or female, in one of the phases when it was known to be prohibited. If the totem first represented the mother, we may find a root-reason why it came to be prohibited from being eaten, excepting as a sacrament at the religious festival of promiscuity once a year.

We know that in the totemic mysteries it was the mothers or female elders who inducted the boys into the knowledge of sexual union. This probably registers the fact that, when the boys became pubescent, the mothers showed their own the way, in the early state of promiscuity. And the likelihood is that the mother was made taboo to her own children as the earliest law of prohibition from what came to be considered unnatural sexual intercourse which had been at one time natural. They were prohibited

from “eating of her” in this sense, and the mode of memorizing the law would be by not eating of the zootype which represented the mother.

Nnewi and Öka were founded by Matriarchs whose totem or tribal signs were the giant rat (ewi) and the black monkey (enwe ojii), respectively. The patriarchs who overthrew the matriarchy were responsible for inventing the fable that:

The giant rat saved the founders of Nnewi and the black monkey saved the Öka people. And that’s why the giant rat and the black monkey are not killed or eaten in Nnewi and Öka, respectively.

But this sort of historical deception leads nowhere. There are too many tell-tales that point to the existence of matriarchy before patriarchy. The evolutionary sequence was: general promiscuity, matriarchy, polygamous patriarchy and single fatherhood!

It is the same historical deception by the patriarchs that we find in Christian Bible’s nursery tales of Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, etc. Fatherhood is forced on us as the beginning phase of the human family. And many undiscerning minds have accepted this deception as divine fiat!

Furthermore, Özö Amanke Okafor has this to say on Nnomeh and Öka:

Agbala-Imöka was the name given to the Feast of the Eleventh month – Önwá ili ná ovbu. It was a feast for men only. The feast was held at the Nkwö Imöka market-place, where the Shrine of the god, Agbala, was situated, in front of Imöka Shrine itself.

Five days before the festival, a gong-man went into every nook and corner of Öka town, announcing:

“Öka Nnomeh, Öka Nnomeh,  
A ga-elikwe Agbala Imöka  
Izu nte - o - o”.

(Öka people, Öka people, celebration of Agbala Imöka is a week hence).

Following the Öka naming-rule, there is a flaw in the translation of “Öka Nnomeh” as “Öka people”. Let’s see why.

Consider the name Nweke Mgbeke.

Nweke = the name of the person  
Mgbeke = the name of the person’s mother

Now consider the name Öka Nnomeh.

Öka = the name of the person  
Nnomeh = the name of the person’s mother

Nnomeh is the Mother of Öka, i.e., Nne-mülü-Öka.

Thus, the correct rendering would be:

Öka Nnomeh = Öka, children of Nnomeh

The above analysis sheds a flood of light on what Özö Amanke Okafor tells us in his excellent book<sup>13</sup> that:

- (1) Öka ful efu!
- (2) Enwere vbe nna nna,
- (3) Onwere ika eshivbe bïa.

(Öka grew out of the soil of Öka, they have not one father, there is no history that they came from somewhere else.)

We have already addressed items (1) and (3) above in the section titled “The Non-Issue of Öka Origins”.

About the Öka people, item (2) above states:

Enwere vbe nna nna,

Özö Okafor oddly renders Enwere vbe nna nna as “they do not have one father”.

But simply put, the statement “Enwere vbe nna nna” says that the descent of Öka people is in the female line – not in the male line – the kin being composed of a female ancestor Nnomeh and her children! It is when descent is in the male line that we can have nna nna (father’s father).

The above tell-tales are sufficient to warrant the informed deduction that:

- (1) Öka of old was a matriarchy;
- (2) Öka families whose descent is in the female line are the core Öka people – Ökpülnana, Öka ful efu, Ndü enwere nna nna, children of the mother!
- (3) Öka families whose descent is in the male line are accretions to the core Öka people – Öka efuro efu, Ndü nwel nna nna, children of the father!

I have heard some Öka people publicly chiding their peers (ulo, age-grade) about their descent from a woman, when descent from a man is the true Öka badge of honor. The untutored son-of-the-mother usually developed cold feet and had no argument to counter the humiliating banter of his son-of-the-father peer. Had the son-of-the-mother known the truth, he would have told the loud-mouthed son-of-the-father that:

Onye e kulu bïa lie ivbe ö kwöö aka n’abö,  
Onye nwe nli, ö ga-aghüzï arü?

When the guest washes both hands before eating, should his host and owner of the food go and take a bath?

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<sup>13</sup> Amanke Okafor, The Awka People – Book 2.

Yes, because the son-of-the-father is a guest at the table of the son-of-the-mother! In Öka, matriarchy preceded patriarchy and the son-of-the-mother pre-dates the son-of-the-father. It was Nwa-Nne before Nwa-Nna! Ümü-Nne before Ümü-Nna!

Concerning Öka women, Özö Amanke Okafor<sup>14</sup> informs us that:

“Awka people shielded their women from two things, namely, shedding of blood, and carrying, or burying, a corpse. These two things a woman was protected from doing – even symbolically. That was why a woman did not make sacrifice to the gods, because that would involve her in shedding the blood of animals or birds, since the Awka people used the offering of animals or birds to worship their gods, not mere words.

And that also explained what was seen at burials in Awka town. Men were always seen carrying a cloth to cover a corpse, but not women. When a woman, because of close relationship to a deceased, wished to cover her with cloth, she invited a male to carry the cloth, while she followed him behind. This was because covering a dead person with cloth (a very important Awka custom, and the last honour to a deceased person) was part of burial, which a woman should not participate in. Even when a group of women wished to do so, because the deceased was a member of their Society, they usually got a man to carry the cloth for them. He held the cloth in the peculiar Awka way, and they followed him behind. At the table of the deceased’s relatives, he showed them the cloth, and explained that it belonged to the female persons following him, and who they were. Then he went to the place where the corpse lay, the women following him, and solemnly covered it with the cloth.

It would have been easy for a woman to take the cloth in and cover the corpse with it, even holding the cloth in the Awka way people usually held it, but it was not done. It was not Awka custom.”

Before we digress on the above piece on the Öka woman, I beg the reader to consider the following dialogue.

Query: Why is the Öka woman shielded from (a) shedding blood and (b) carrying or burying a corpse?

Response: Because it is not Öka custom!

Query: And why is it not Öka custom?

Response: It has been the practice from time immemorial = Ö dü növbü shite n’igbii

The last response in the above dialogue just shows how ignorant we are about the roots of our customs. The statement “Ö dü növbü shite n’igbii = It has been the practice from time immemorial” provides a perfect idol behind which we hide to mask our ignorance concerning our past!

As indicated above, Öka was a matriarchy from the first. And matriarchy means government by mothers, or more broadly, government and power in the hands of women. A man had a life-long obligation to work for women and their relatives in that society. This entails a life-long obligation of every man to work for his kinswomen and their families. When a boy begins to garden, he does it for his mother. When his sisters grow up and marry, he works for them. If he has neither mother nor sisters, his nearest female blood relation will claim the proceeds of his labor.

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<sup>14</sup> Amanke Okafor, Awka System of Marriage: The Best in the World.



This could explain why the Öka woman was shielded from menial tasks such as shedding blood and carrying or burying a corpse. The Matriarch was in command with her daughters and sisters, while the men were executioners.

We also noted above that:

Nne vbü uzo = Mother is the door = Mother is the door of life!

Mother is the door of life = Mother is the door through which new life comes into the world.

In Öka, death is seen as a corrupting influence – öräkwü. That's why people going home from funerals cleanse themselves before entering their homes: they would ask for water to wash their hands at the compound gate; or they would touch their bodies with a grain of alligator pepper (ose örö) and throw away the grain, commanding the departure of corruption – öräkwü füö. Some folks carried a small piece of the buffalo's bone (ökpükpü atü) as a comprehensive insurance against corruption.

If death is seen as corruptive and the woman is seen as the door of new life, would it be intelligent to associate a woman with carrying or burying a corpse? No, evidently!

Our forbears understood sympathetic magic. The woman, as the creator of human forms, has very powerful imagination. Habituate her to contact with corpses and she may fail to procreate or produce still-born babies. Pregnant women are not allowed to watch masquerades because of the reality of sympathetic magic. The child under construction in her womb could inherit the fierce-looking face of the Agaba or Mgbedike masquerade.

Blood is life and the woman produces new life in the form of babies. Allowing the woman to shed blood could lead her to shed the blood of her offspring without remorse – infanticide. As a boy, my mother always asked me to kill the fowl for her. She showed me how to go about it, but she never did the throat-cutting. She simply said Öka custom forbade women to shed blood.

We are now able to fathom the source of the power wielded by Ümü-Ada and Ümü-Ökpü of old. A daughter of the clan is called Ada anyi (our daughter). Even in today's Öka patriarchal society, we may ask:

- (1) Why do Öka men continue to genuflect when greeting the daughters of their clan?
- (2) Why do Öka men invite their married daughters (Ümü-Ökpü) to come and settle seemingly intractable disputes in the clan?
- (3) Why do Öka men invite their married daughters (Ümü-Ökpü) to come and pray for the clan when the latter's survival is at stake?

The answer is that these practices are a survival of the matriarchate, where the daughter is next to the mother in the rulership of the clan or family.

The powerful Awo-mmili women's group was a residue of the old matriarchal epoch.

Awo [LL] = dress, garment

Mmili [HH] = rain, water

Awo mmili = rain coat, dress for the rain

Azuka Dike<sup>15</sup> provides useful information on the women's organization whose central committee of thirteen is known as Awommili. All members of this committee were wholly conversant with the traditional norms, the average age of the committee being sixty-five.

We are told that:

- (1) The formal establishment of Awommili included ritual prayers before the major Alūshī in Awka to secure their cooperation, help and goodwill in the progress of the women, men and children of the town.
- (2) It was the need to provide pipe-borne water that was partially responsible for the birth of Awommili. Some few months after its formal inauguration the Awommili group, with the cooperation of all the women in town, was able to provide some fifteen percent of the needed capital to the government and about a year later pipe-borne water was installed in Awka. The Awommili group cooperated with the men in executing many projects, such as the electrification of the town, the feeding of the Igwebuike Grammar (High) School, and most recently, in 1971, the building of a new Post Office. They also were responsible for clearing the bush for the building of Amaku Hospital and supervising the molding of cement blocks for the hospital.
- (3) Before the open conflict between the Awommili and the Ozo men occurred, the women already had behind them a series of accomplishments and as such had impressed the Umuokolobia, the young and medium-aged men in town, as a group that gets things done. It must also be noted that many of these women were the mothers of the Umuokolobia. But the young men were not the Awommili's only source of power. Their well-knit organization, their strict discipline and their ability to split the Ozo men contributed immensely to their influence and prolonged the battle for supremacy.
- (4) The Awommili group not only executed popular programs that in themselves galvanized support and influence, they also ran a disciplined organization and were able to divide the traditional power base in the town. It is from this perspective that one can understand the conflict between the Awommili and the Ozo men.
- (5) The power of the Awommili may also be traced in part to the personalities of the leaders as well as to the manner of their public presentation. The thirteen-woman committee can be described as a group of strong-willed, outspoken but generally tactful, eloquent and fearless women who had demonstrated their ability to lead. The character of the leadership of the Awommili was such that it commanded respect and obedience. It was forthright, impartial and objective in its arbitration of disputes. Fines were imposed equitably. Individually they were each handsome, personable and articulate. They had unusual respect for and confidence in one another.
- (6) The Awommili attacked the traditional basis of power in Awka by vehemently demanding that the Ndi Ichie, the pillars of the society and culture, should publicly recant. The Awommili contended that the Ozo men and other elders had falsely accused them of corruption, an accusation they attributed to the Ozo men's envy of Awommili's popularity. They demanded that the Ozo men go to the marketplace and publicly recant. This demand, if carried out, would have been tantamount to the public disgrace of the elders. The supporters of Awommili thought this was going too far. Even

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<sup>15</sup> The Resilience of Igbo Culture: A Case Study of Awka Town, by Azuka A. Dike

their patrons thought the demand was indefensible and that it was close to abomination. In effect the demand of the Awommili neutralized all other segments of the community. The struggle was now left to two unequal disputants: the Ozo men and the Awommili. The Awommili, though still supported by the women, no longer had the broad support it had enjoyed. The Ozo men continued to be regarded as the supreme traditional authority. They therefore seized the opportunity to outlaw the Awommili group through the Local Council, which had the legal power to take such action.

So, our crafty Özö men and other scheming patriarchs got the Local Council to do the dirty job of disbanding the truly powerful and righteous Awommili women's group.

We may recall that the formal establishment of Awommili included ritual prayers before the major Alüshī in Öka to secure their cooperation, help and goodwill in the progress of the women, men and children of the town. And all the members of Awommili committee were wholly conversant with the traditional norms. These women, therefore, knew that the major Alüshī were behind them in all their endeavors.

The Özö men and elders realized too late that Awommili was right in asking them to publicly confess for falsely accusing them of corruption. They knew that the women had the liberty and right to invoke the wrath of the major Alüshī on those who have maligned them. The Özö men and elders were in dire straights vis-à-vis Awommili and her Alüshī patrons. This dilemma explains their desperate recourse to the Local Council for the disbandment of Awommili. The Local Council, not the Özö men and elders, is the culprit in the disbandment of a powerful and righteous women's group – Awommili. Thus, the wrath of the Alüshī would eventually fall on the Local Council and not on the instigators of the abominable act. But the Alüshī know better and the smoke will always follow the holder of the firebrand (Anwülü na-eso onye ji önökölö!).

Özö Amanke Okafor<sup>16</sup> has this to say on the relationship between the Öka man, Öka Deities and the Övbö stick:

In the practice of their religion the Öka people aimed at righteousness at all times.

They were also pragmatists. They made covenants with their gods. They were always under contract with them. They would say, "make my journey this year successful and I will give you a goat in sacrifice when I return". If his journey was indeed a success he did not fail to sacrifice a goat to the god to whom the promise was made.

The Öka man constantly staked his life on doing what he considered to be right. The common expression "ejieli m gü övbö", meant, I speak to you, or, I act towards you, with Övbö in my hand. It was a mighty oath, and meant that if what he, the Öka man, had done was wicked or deceitful may the gods visit him with instant punishment or death.

"Jide Övbö!" was a powerful evocation in Öka. Do what is right, or else suffer the consequences!

Igwe Osita Agwuna, Igwe of Enugwu-Ukwu and Eze of Ümünri, explained this contract with the gods to the author in this way, he said: "Övbö was always made from the branch of an Övbö tree", (or from some other tree favored by the gods). "When a person said, 'ejim Övbö!', he meant, 'if what I am doing

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<sup>16</sup> The Awka People – Book 1, Amanke Okafor

towards you is not right and proper, may the gods make me like the Övbö tree, whose branch I now hold in my hand; let my whole life be useless and barren.' Because Övbö tree was a useless tree. It served no purpose. It did not bear fruit. Its leaves were not eaten by men or beasts. Its wood did not burn well, and was therefore not used for firewood. It was a tree that was good for nothing. Therefore, if a person was likened to the Övbö tree, it meant that his life was useless and barren. To hold the Övbö and act rightly was the only way to escape a terrible fate."

The Öka man strove to be just and upright in all his ways. He did his best to live according to the dictates of his religion; and he regulated his entire moral code according to its tenets. To know him well, you must know his religion.

The above piece on the concept of *nji övbö* explains why the Awommili women were adamant in their conflict with the Özö men. The women had proof that they had been maligned by the Özö men. Thus, Awommili *jieli ndü Özö övbö*. And the only Öka method of atoning for the crime of slander was *nkü ivbe n'avbä*, i.e., hitting a calabash and recanting at the marketplace. The Özö men knew the rules and realized that the women had cornered them. The only escape route for the Özö men was their use of the Local Council to disband the Awommili women's group.

We may recall that:

- (1) It was the need to provide pipe-borne water that was partially responsible for the birth of Awommili.
- (2) Some few months after its formal inauguration the Awommili group, with the cooperation of all the women in town, was able to provide some fifteen percent of the needed capital to the government and about a year later pipe-borne water was installed in Awka.
- (3) The Awommili group cooperated with the men in executing many projects, such as the electrification of the town, the feeding of the Igwebuiké Grammar (High) School, and most recently, in 1971, the building of a new Post Office.
- (4) They also were responsible for clearing the bush for the building of Amaku Hospital and supervising the molding of cement blocks for the hospital.
- (5) The Awommili group not only executed popular programs that in themselves galvanized support and influence, they also ran a disciplined organization and were able to divide the traditional power base in the town. It is from this perspective that one can understand the conflict between the Awommili and the Ozo men.
- (6) The power of the Awommili may also be traced in part to the personalities of the leaders as well as to the manner of their public presentation. The thirteen-woman committee can be described as a group of strong-willed, outspoken but generally tactful, eloquent and fearless women who had demonstrated their ability to lead. The character of the leadership of the Awommili was such that it commanded respect and obedience. It was forthright, impartial and objective in its arbitration of disputes. Fines were imposed equitably. Individually they were each handsome, personable and articulate. They had unusual respect for and confidence in one another.
- (7) The Awommili attacked the traditional basis of power in Awka by vehemently demanding that the *Ndi Ichie (Ndü Özö!)*, the pillars of the society and culture, should publicly recant. The Awommili contended that the Ozo men and other elders had falsely accused them of corruption, an accusation they attributed to the Ozo men's envy of Awommili's popularity.
- (8) The Özö men used the Local Council to disband the Awommili women's group.

The above is a summary of Awommili's birth, its achievements and its shameless disbandment by a cabal of Özö men, who cleverly took over governance in Öka. A disturbing question pops up in the mind of the attentive reader:

Since the subversion of Awommili by the Özö men, has Öka moved forward meaningfully in terms of development?

My answer is NO!

In terms of meaningful development, Öka has been in the doldrums ever since the Özö men disbanded the Awommili women's group and took over governance in Öka.

The conflict between the Awommili women and Özö men was a continuation of the battle initiated by the votaries of patriarchy, with a view to destroying matriarchy. The demise of Öka matriarchy took root with the entrenchment of title-taking, a process that starts with the young-man-making Amanwülü initiation at the base and ends with the Özö title at the apex of the Öka social power triangle.

On Amanwülü, Özö Amanke Okafor tells us that:

"Amanwülü" was the first real title in Öka, the first investment. Apart from being an investment its significance was very great. It was the title that decided the status of every Öka male. A foreigner, or a person not a freeborn of Öka, could not take it; and not having taken it he could not take any other title in Öka town.

An Öka man who had not taken the Amanwülü title was in the class of people called "Ogbody", meaning, a mere man, just-a-body-moving-about!

He who had taken the Amanwülü title had proved himself to be a freeborn of Öka, not a slave or a foreigner.

Thus, the Amanwülü rite proved the reality of manhood in patriarchal Öka. It lasted one whole lunar month and was a trial-test. With this trial-test the youth became a man; a fathership was founded, and the motherhood was in a measure cast off or typically superseded by the fatherhood.

In his book, *The Awka People Book 1*, the venerable Özö Amanke Okafor tells us that Agülü-Ümana called a master-blacksmith "nna-üzü", (father of smithing) but Öka called him "nne-üzü" (mother of smithing).

The concept of fatherhood was thus inexistent in old Öka. And the Agülü-Ümana people say they are from Öka. Now, they have nna-üzü – father of smithing – instead of the nne-üzü of their ancestral Öka home. They have the concept of fatherhood, which was unknown in their home of origin. We may conclude that the Öka ancestors of Agülü-Ümana left Öka after patriarchy had overthrown matriarchy in Öka.

Let's move on!

Some clarification is necessary when we talk about cocks and hens in Öka. We have:

Egbene öküü = a pubescent cock, a cock that has crowed, or a rooster

Oke öküü = oti nku eghe öñü = an impubescent cock, that flaps its wings but cannot yet crow

Nnekwu öküü = a pubescent hen, a hen that has laid an egg

Nwunye öküü = an impubescent hen that has not yet laid an egg

## 2.4. Mmedo ivbe Nwaanya or Öka Traditional Wedding

The process of marriage in Öka may be briefly described as follows:

- (1) Nkü aka n'uzo to ask: aga m anükwa? (Knocking at the door to ask for a woman's hand in marriage)
- (2) Nnü oku and Mme ego (Honoring an invitation to discuss and pay an agreed bride-price)
- (3) Mmedo ivbe nwaanya or Ngbu Öküü Onye-üwa (Wedding or Solemnization of the marriage)
- (4) Eghu Nna, the father's goat (Exchange of gifts – castrated he-goats – between the bridegroom and his father inlaw).

We have chosen to write on item (3) in the above list, because of misconceptions associated with that solemn ritual offering: Mmedo ivbe nwaanya or Ngbu Öküü Onye-üwa. It is the performance of this ritual that transforms a married couple into husband and wife. Without the ritual, the bride and the bridegroom are considered as mere concubines. And all children produced by the couple before the ritual is performed belong to the bride's family.

Mmedo ivbe = solemn ritual offering

Medoo ivbe = perform a solemn ritual offering

Medoo Agwü = perform a solemn ritual offering to the Agwu Deity

Medoo Ndiichie = perform a solemn ritual offering to Ndiichie at their altar in the Obu

Medoo Alüshĩ = perform a solemn ritual offering to Alüshĩ

We have shown in the section on reincarnation<sup>17</sup> that:

Onye-üwa = Onye-nölü-onye = Chi-onye.

Hence:

Onye-üwa Nwaanya = Onye-nölü-Nwaanya = Chi-Nwaanya

Hence, for the maiden being married or Nwaanya:

Ngbu Öküü Onye-üwa Nwaanya = Ngbu Öküü Chi-Nwaanya.

So:

Ngbu Öküü Onye-üwa Nwaanya = a solemn ritual offering of a hen (nnekwu) to Chi-Nwaanya.

Let's take good note of the type of hen that is used in this ritual – nnekwu, a pubescent hen that has

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<sup>17</sup> See Appendix A.

laid an egg. Having laid an egg, the womb of this hen is opened and ready to produce male and female offspring. This hassle-free production of male and female offspring by the nnekwu is the magical image being imparted to all present by the solemn ritual offering of Ökükü Onye-üwa. The cool displayed by egg-laying hen results from her unwavering trust in her Chi. In a like manner, the bride is being asked to place complete trust in her Chi, so that the latter will lead and protect her.

In fine, this solemn ritual offers an egg-laying hen, palm wine, kolanut, yams, etc., to the bride's Chi asking It (the Chi) to:

- (1) Accompany the bride to her husband's home and abide with her always;
- (2) Give male and female children to the bride, more males than females, one at a time, until her house is full; twins are also welcome;
- (3) Ensure that the bride will deliver her babies without hassles, just as the hen lays her eggs without hassles.

We learn from Özö Amanke Okafor's excellent book<sup>18</sup> that:

Ökükü-Onye-Üwa was a meal. It was a meal prepared by a mother-in-law with the fowl and yams brought to her by the son-in-law. The meal was solemnly shared by the two families concerned, and it made them one, and legitimized the marriage.

This marriage meal, prepared with the materials brought by the young man's family and eaten by both families, completed the Ökükü-Onye-Üwa celebration. It was a kind of Mgba Ndü (mutual oath taking) which made the two families one, and no more strangers.

After the ceremony of Ökükü-Onye-Üwa, the uluchi (okpenshi) or altar used for the sacrifice to the girl's Chi remained in her father's Obu. And if there was need for her to sacrifice to her Chi later on (as might be advised by the Dibia) the girl had to travel all the way to her father's house to do it.

Therefore as soon she was settled in her husband's house another altar was made for her Chi in her place of marriage. It took the shape of an Ögbü tree, planted for her in her husband's compound. It was done by her father's people with the cooperation of the husband. Her father's people brought a cutting of an Ögbü tree from their place, and planted it in a good site in front of her Ogbolodo, or house. But they did not plant an Ögbü tree alone, they joined three other trees with it – an ogilishi tree, an echichili tree, and an öra tree, planting them in such a way that they made a square enclosure, over which they constructed a platform, beneath which sacrifices to the Chi could be made.

So, Ögbü-Chi became the altar of a married woman, the Shrine of her Chi. During her married life all sacrifices to her Chi were done there, in her husband's compound.

During the Chi festival (Alöm Chi), the feast of the fifth month of the Öka year, when all married women in Öka town celebrated the feast of their Gods – their Chi – she performed hers at the foot of this her Ögbü-Chi.

The Ögbü-Chi remained her Chi's Shrine throughout her life. When she died and her people came to take home her corpse they uprooted the Ögbü-Chi (not merely cut it down) and cut its log into pieces.

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<sup>18</sup> Awka System of Marriage: The Best in the World, Amanke Okafor

It was the last act they did before carrying the corpse away.

The discerning reader would have realized that the above rituals are rooted in sympathetic natural magic, where appropriate living images are used to engrave powerful concepts onto the human mind. The all-powerful concept involved is that:

Our personal Chi – our share of Chikwu – is our sole guide and Savior during our sojourn here on Earth.

This is the whole lesson contained in the rituals of Ökükü Onye Üwa and Ögbü Chi performed in Öka for the married woman. When properly understood and internalized, this age-old concept is worthier than our present-day vain theological mummeries that we call prayer.

We pray to some Almighty God in the high heavens to which we have no access, except through our own Chi. Yes, the Chi says:

No one goes to the Father (Chikwu) except through me (the Chi).

That is what John 14:6 teaches us in the Christian Bible. But, how many so-called Christians understand this basic and redeeming truth? True salvation is through our Chi and, therefore, in our hands.

Can our salvation be in our hands? Yes, it can if we decide to co-operate with our Chi! Recognize your Chi, place It into the driver's seat, relax, let It lead and guide you. Then enjoy a hassle-free ride on the highway of life.

Re-read and meditate our piece in Appendix A on the basics of natural magic. Communicate with the Chi that resides in your body and see how your life changes. That's the key to happiness and success, however we define those words.

We repeat: The personal Chi – a portion of Chikwu – is the only Almighty that a person can access. It is the God at one's elbow!

Let's recall the basic rule of natural magic:

You cannot achieve what you cannot imagine, i.e.,  
You cannot achieve something unless you have a precise mental image of it.

An Öka adage says:

Onye kwe, Chi ye ekwe! = When one assents, his/her Chi assents!

We may ask: When one assents to what? When one assents to a mental image! So, the adage becomes meaningful when we assert:

Onye kwe n'ivbe, Chi ye ekwe n'ivbe anwü

When one assents to a mental image, his/her Chi assents to that mental image!



Note that ivbe = thing and ivbe anwü = that thing.

The primordial role of the Chi in the Öka mindset is clearly put in evidence by the rituals of Ökükü Onye Üwa and Ögbü Chi. The mental magic achieved by the two events is tremendous, because the mind of the married woman is thereby empowered to go into marital life without fear. Whatever happens, her Chi is always in charge.

The annual celebration of Mothers' Day by a married woman is aimed at highlighting, reinforcing and renewing the magical power of her Chi. Yeah-e-e-o, her God is Good-oo!

The 5<sup>th</sup> moon – Önwá Ise, Önwá Alöm Chi – is Mothers' Festival Month. And Mothers' Day is celebrated on the Oye day in the 5<sup>th</sup> week of this 5<sup>th</sup> month. Who said we copied Mothers' Day from the whiteman, who came to Öka in 1904?

Let's celebrate the Mother's Chi with her and recognize thereby that the Chi is indeed good, omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient! A schedule for Mothers' Day celebration covering the years 2011 – 2022 may be found in Appendix E.

## 2.5. The Öka Concept of Nwa-di-ana

di [H] = husband, lord and master; di m = my husband

di [H] = colleague, partner, age-mate; di anyi = our age-mate; our friend

di-ana = lord and master of the land; free-born

nwa-di-ana = child of the lord and master of the land; child of free-born

But: nwa-di-ana = child of the daughter and nwa = child

So: di-ana = the daughter = lord and master of the land; free-born

An Öka adage says:

nwa-di-ana nwe ana = the child of the daughter owns the land

But the lie of that adage shows up in the following piece from our venerable Özö Amanke Okafor<sup>19</sup>:

The name “nwadiana” was a proud name in Awka town. It meant, our daughter's son! Or, our daughter's daughter! He or she (nwadiana) was held in high esteem. Everyone was eager to greet him, or her, on a visit to the community. He or she was an honoured visitor at all times. As they held him in high esteem so did nwadiana hold his mother's people in high esteem. His mother's people – ndü ikwu nnie (ikwu, people, nnie, his mother) were precious to him.

After the official visit, which was called “mgbu eghu nwadiana”, a boy's life was linked with that of his mother's people.

If her father and mother had died early, and there was no person in his paternal family to take care of

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<sup>19</sup> Amanke Okafor, Awka System of Marriage: The Best In The World

him, his mother's people took him over, so that he did not perish.

If he was oppressed in his father's family, his mother's family intervened and gave him succour.

On occasions, a daughter could run back to her people with her children to avoid their being kidnapped and sold into slavery in the bad old days when life was very insecure; and the children would grow up with her people.

The daughter's family always took over her young children while they were young and helpless, and brought them up until they grew up and were able to stand by themselves. They trained them, and did for them, what their paternal family had failed to give them.

Sometimes, people would not know that the young man in the village, who did everything with the other young men, was not a native until the day he was to return to his father's people.

For return to his own people he must. For although his mother's people might care for him, he had no rights of property there. He was not entitled to any land there. He had rights only in his father's family, not his mother's.

Besides, nwadiana must not lose his roots. A person's roots – only traceable through his father – were very important in Awka. No matter how long a time he might live with his mother's people they did not forget that he was not a native-born. And some day somebody would taunt him with it!

That was why when nwadiana grew up to manhood his mother's people encouraged him to return to his father's people. And if they didn't do so themselves because they had become very fond of him, his father's people took steps to see that he returned home to them.

A classic example was Joseph Ndife Okafor of Umubele Village, Awka, who was nick-named "Gambia". He was a highly-placed civil servant, who was sent by the Nigerian Government to assist the Gambian Government in Gambia, and he worked in the Gambia till his retirement from service. Because he worked so long with the Gambian people he was given the nick-name "Okafor-Gambia".

Joseph Ndife Okafor lost both his parents at an early age. His mother's people of Umudioka Village, Awka, took him over, and cared for him. His maternal uncle, Mbonu Anunobu, took him to Northern Nigeria where he was working, and put him to school. Joseph grew up to manhood with his mother's people. He became so fond of them that he took his uncle's surname – Anunobu – as his surname. When he became a man, and seeing that he was enamoured of Umudioka Village, his paternal family of Umubele became worried that if care was not taken he might become an Umudioka man. So they mounted pressure on him, and succeeded in bringing him back to his paternal family. Great was the joy on the day he returned to his roots!

Joseph Ndife Okafor-Gambia is dead. He died in 1979. In the brochure, 'Order of Memorial Service', printed by his children for the celebration, at St. Faiths Pro-Cathedral, Awka, of the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of his death, on Saturday the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of October, 2004, they gave a brief history of his life. They wrote as follows, among other things:

"Pa Okafor's attachment to the Anunobu family of Umudioka, Awka, in particular his maternal uncle, who took him to the North and ensured that he received western education, was so strong that he

adopted Anunobu as his surname. At some point, his paternal family of Umubele, Awka, fearing that his true identity would be lost, forcefully ensured his return to his kith and kin at Umubele, a return that led to a great reunion with his kindred”.

The paternal family might be rejoicing, but the departure of nwadiana to his own people was often-times heart-rending to his maternal family, who might have grown very fond of him; and it was particularly so to his age-mates with whom he had grown up, and with whom he had done many things in common. But Awka law was implacable on that point – he must return to his roots, or he had no rights of property.

Let’s go back to our Öka adage given above. It says:

Nwa-di-ana nwe ana = the child of the daughter owns the land

Query: Nwa-di-ana nwe ana onye? = the child of the daughter owns whose land?

Answer: Nwa-di-ana nwe ana di-ana! = the child of the daughter owns the land of the di-ana!

Query: Onye vbü di-ana? = who is the di-ana?

Answer: Di-ana = the daughter = lord and master of the land; free-born

Query: Di-ana be onye? = the daughter in whose house?

Answer: Di-ana be nnie/nnia (nne ye/nna ya) = the daughter in her maternal home.

So, we may conclude that:

Nwa-di-ana nwe ana n’ikwu nnie, where the mother is Di-ana!

So, the Öka law that says Nwadiana has no rights of property in his mother’s home, ikwunnie, is wholly arbitrary and has no basis in natural genesis. The woman is the Di-ana who owns the land at her maternal home. Her child – the Nwadiana – inherits the Di-ana’s land.

## **2.6. Social Subversion by Catholic and Pentecostal Churches**

The direct participation of women in burial rites has been a source of friction between the Catholic Church and Öka. Catholic priests officiating interments insist that the wife must throw handfuls of sand onto her husband’s coffin before the grave is filled-up with sand. And Öka people are outraged by the practice, which they consider as an abomination – alü.

In Öka, sand can be thrown only at someone who has committed an abomination. Thus, it is a grave insult for one to have sand thrown at him/her. So, Öka considers it an unforgivable sin for a widow to throw sand “into the eyes” of her dead husband! Wel aja gbakpöchaa die (di ye) anaya!

Some of these foolishly temerarious Catholic priests almost got buried alive by the angry relatives of the deceased, who felt insulted by the antics of an uncouth stranger. The folks felt very strongly about any stranger coming to trample on their established rules of conduct. Being the priest of some God was no warrant to justify such impudence! And the Öka people are absolutely right to be intransigent on the issue. They ask, quite pointedly, whether they would be justified in forcing the Catholic priests and nuns to get married.

The Catholic and Pentecostal Christians have chosen a brazenly confrontational approach in their work of evangelization.

Families have been torn apart as a result of disruptive advice given to marital partners, all in the name of divinely inspired counsel. Hapless mothers have been humiliated, and even tortured to death, after the priest confirmed them as witches. Wives have abandoned their matrimonial homes because the priest branded their husbands as devils incarnate.

With fiery sermons, these undiscerning priests have engineered the untutored rabble to torch Alüshī groves and temples – all in the name of Jesus-the-Christ.

Members of a Pentecostal church escaped death by the whiskers when they had gone to torch an Alüshī grove in a neighboring community. Five members of the group, including two pastors, were captured in the grove and tied-up for immolation to the Deity by a horde of unemployed irate youths. There was pandemonium because the human sacrifice was scheduled for mid-day with the sun at the zenith. The prompt and tactful intervention of the elders of the community saved the situation. The youngmen renounced their resolve to immolate their Pentecostal church captives. And the captives swore by their Deity and the Alüshī whose grove they had come to burn that such an incident would never recur. Asked why they had wanted to immolate human beings to the Deity instead of the usual animals, the youths said: We discovered that our community has been in the doldrums since human sacrifice to our Deities was abolished by the whiteman and his imported religion. An oracle told us that the sacrifice of at least four members of the Christian denomination at an Alüshī's grove would restore the Alüshī's lost glory and power. Thus, the concerned Alüshī will stand up again (ö ga-ebinigheri ötü!) and will regain its former efficacy (ö ga-ebidogheri kovbe uko!). We were advised to go and wait at this Alüshī's grove for the arrival of the Christian victims chosen by the Deity for the sacrifice. So the advice of the oracle became divine revelation when the Pentecostal church fellows showed up at the grove. Does the explanation not make a lot of sense? Judge for yourself!

It is true that unchecked human turpitude is boundless, but we must all thread carefully. The security forces look the other way when these men of a deviant philosophy openly violate the rights of their fellow citizens to freedom of worship. Those whose affairs are trampled upon might take the law into their hands and sack the culpable Christian denominations from their community. A word must be enough for the wise!

On the rules of conduct of Öka people, Özö Amanke Okafor<sup>20</sup> tells us that:

The rules of conduct of the Öka people, religious and secular, were collectively called "Omenana" or "Ö na-eme". They were divided into three categories, two of them having religious sanctions. They were:

(a) Iwu – ordinary regulations made to regulate ordinary affairs. They had no religious sanction, or religious penalty.

(b) Nsö – prohibitions, or weighty rules of conduct. They were rules which grew with the people, and were part of Öka life. A breach of Nsö could only be expiated at the instance of Eze-Ajana, in a ceremony for that purpose.

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<sup>20</sup> Amanke Okafor, The Awka People – Book 1.

(c) Alü – abomination. These were acts absolutely prohibited which touched the very existence of Öka, by being disruptive of society, such as a man having carnal knowledge of his blood relation, or betraying his town, and so on. Anyone committing Alü was not forgiven but was visited with severe punishment, including death. Alü could only be cleansed, after the person had suffered the penalty, by a ceremony conducted by Nwanri. Nwanri meant "Nwoke-Nri", which meant "a man from Nri town". The Nris did all the cleansing ceremonies of Alü in Öka town.

We have discussed and noted why Öka shielded their women from two things: (a) The shedding of blood, and (b) the carrying and burying of corpses. These actions are abominations – alü – and are absolutely prohibited in Öka. So, why should an intelligent and discerning stranger to Öka strive to subvert such weighty rules of conduct? They might look unreasonable, and even stupid, to the undiscerning stranger. But, is that sufficient justification to humiliate a community by trampling on its established rules of conduct? No, evidently!

My folks and I have discussed the issue of corpse disposal and all its associated hassles. My stake is that there should be no quarrel at all on the subject. Because corpse disposal is the key thing! The method or manner of achieving this disposal is entirely secondary. We may, for instance, choose to:

- (1) cremate the corpse, and collect the ash in an urn for keeps;
- (2) bury the corpse in the ground, so that its constitutive parts will return to the food chain from whence they were drawn;
- (3) put the corpse out somewhere on a high funeral tower for the birds to clean out the flesh, so that we may collect the cleaned bones later.

I told them that the issue of a widow throwing sand “into the eyes” of her husband is meaningless, because the corpse is not her husband. Her husband was the spirit that animated the lifeless corpse under consideration. And that spirit has left the husband’s body, just as a butterfly leaves its cocoon.

On the “abomination” concerning a man having carnal knowledge of his blood relation, we may note that this rule of conduct was not there from the first. This is so because the natural genesis was: general promiscuity, matriarchy, endogamy, patriarchy and exogamy. We learn from Gerald Massey<sup>21</sup> that:

The tribal festival of fructification naturally had a phallic character, as it was sexual from the first. It was not only performed at seed-sowing and harvest, on behalf of food. Long before corn was cultivated in the name of Isis or Demeter, there was a general rejoicing at the time when the youth was made into a man and the girl into a woman. The general rejoicing at the girl's coming of age was in celebration of her entering into sexual union, which was communal, as she was then open and accessible to all the males, at least on this occasion when she entered the ranks of womanhood as common property, which was afterwards made several by development of the marriage-law. Marriage began as a recognized, if regulated, right of all the brothers to ravish every maiden as she came of age, and thus to make a woman of her for tribal sexual union. And the primitive rite, though commuted, was continued in the later ceremonies.

Various customs tend to show that capture in marriage originated as a mode of rescuing or ransoming the woman from the clutch of the general community in which the female was common to all the males

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<sup>21</sup> Gerald Massey, *Ancient Egypt the Light of the World* – Book 2.

of the group. In the special marriage of individual pairs the woman had to be captured and carried off from the group. Only instead of being captured we might say “rescued” by the individual (and his friends) from being the promiscuous property of the community. Hence the custom of compensation (dowry) to the group (or, later, parents) for permitting the female to become private property in personal marriage.

The primitive rite of sexual union was first consummated by all the males of the tribal group, not by an individual husband. The customs show that communal sexual union involved connection with the whole brotherhood as a rite of marriage after the general promiscuity had been modified.

In various ways the totemic or tribal organization fought hard and long against the woman becoming private property. The males considered, with Proudhon, that property was robbery, and individual ownership in marriage had many modifications in the course of being eventually established.

Consanguine sexual relations became taboo as a result of the observed genetic problems associated with the practice. The genetic problems generated by consanguinity are highlighted in such tell-tale Öka exogamy-related expressions as:

“nköta agbö” = importing a stronger gene

“nköta mmee” = importing a stronger blood.

Yes, people married from other clans or tribes in order to import stronger blood and genes into their clan or tribe. To encourage and enforce exogamy, and thus eliminate the attendant genetic problems, consanguine sexual relations were branded taboo or abomination (alü).

### **3. Timekeeping In Öka of Old**

Someone had asserted that my Öka forbears, being savages, had no scientific method of timekeeping. But this type of assertion is laughable if by “scientific method of timekeeping” we understand modern-day devices for reckoning time – atomic clocks, mechanical and electronic wristwatches, etc. No, my Öka forbears had timekeeping devices that were better and simpler than the so-called scientific ones.

First, they had the woman as the closest and surest keeper of time. Second, they had the moon and the sun to which the cyclical seasons on earth were easily correlated by observation.

The earliest modes of time-reckoning were to be found in nature, and the female because of her more or less regular monthly periodicity (menstruation), became an early type of time-keeper. Puberty was recognized as the opening time of the sexes. Now the man and woman did not exist previously to the period of opening. Man did not first recognize his selfhood as the ego of metaphysics, but as the person who was constituted a man at the opening time of puberty. This time of life and coming of age applies to both sexes, but it was the woman-nature that made the primeval revelation, and was the first teller of the time; the demonstrator of periodicity in its most attractive and most mystical aspect.<sup>22</sup>

The lower world, says the Zohar, is created after the pattern of the upper, and everything existing above is to be found, as it were, in a copy on the earth. But this is a reversal of the real process; a result of the later thought which culminated in the Hindu tree of life with its roots above and its branches

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<sup>22</sup> Massey G., *The Natural Genesis*, Vol. II, p. 273.

below. The lower was first in mythology, as in evolution. The esoteric interpretation was last. The Great Mother, the Virgin Mother, of mythology, represents the human mother, as the first mistress of the home in the pre-paternal phase, and thus mythology helps us to ascertain the natural genesis of such customs as those of matriarchy (the mother-right) by becoming the mirror to the prehistoric past, which reflects the most archaic social conditions of the human race.

So the woman was the closest and surest timekeeper of our forbears. The next in line after the woman is the moon to which the cyclical seasons on earth were easily correlated by observation. This gave rise to the lunar calendar.

On lunar timekeeping in Öka, my book, *Ngü Arö Öka: The Öka Lunar Calendar, 2010 – 2021*, may be consulted with profit.

Arö [HL] = year

Güö [HH] = count

Ngü [H] = Ögügü [HHH] = counting

Ngü Arö = counting the year = counting the moons of the year

Some ideas have been further clarified since the publication of *Ngü Arö Öka* and we would like to share them with our readers as we go along.

### 3.1. The Concept of Izu Önwa

A clarification of the concept of Izu Önwa is necessary for a clear understanding of the Öka lunar calendar and the associated cultural events. This clarification will help us to eliminate the caprices of scheming priests who toy with the lunar calendar elements and clear most of the clutter that currently obscures the landscape of traditional religious practice.

Izu = 1 week of 4 market days (Eke, Oye, Avbö, Nkwö).

Önwa = 1 lunar month = Izu n'Asaa or 28 days.

Izu Önwa = Any week of any lunar month.

If today is Eke, then Izu taa is the next Eke day = 4 days counting from tomorrow, i.e., from Oye.

Izu nvü Önwa begins on the day after the new moon day and ends on the 4<sup>th</sup> day;

Izu n'abö Önwa begins on the 5<sup>th</sup> day after the new moon day and ends on the 8<sup>th</sup> day;

Izu n'atö Önwa begins on the 9<sup>th</sup> day after the new moon day and ends on the 12<sup>th</sup> day;

Izu n'anö Önwa begins on the 13<sup>th</sup> day after the new moon day and ends on the 16<sup>th</sup> day;

Izu n'ese Önwa begins on the 17<sup>th</sup> day after the new moon day and ends on the 20<sup>th</sup> day;

Izu n'eshii Önwa begins on the 21<sup>st</sup> day after the new moon day and ends on the 24<sup>th</sup> day;

Izu n'asaa Önwa begins on the 25<sup>th</sup> day after the new moon day and ends on the 28<sup>th</sup> day;

Cast in the Gregorian date format, the Izu Önwa dates are easily found for any new moon date.

Example: The 2010 Otite moon date is 7/10/2010, Eke. Each Izu-önwa for this Otite month starts on Oye and ends on Eke. From the above data we have:

Izu nvü Önwa Otite begins on 8/10/2010 (Oye) and ends on 11/10/2010 (Eke);

Izu n'abö Önwa Otite begins on 12/10/2010 (Oye) and ends on 15/10/2010 (Eke);

Izu n'atö Önwa Otite begins on 16/10/2010 (Oye) and ends on 19/10/2010 (Eke);  
 Izu n'anö Önwa Otite begins on 20/10/2010 (Oye) and ends on 23/10/2010 (Eke);  
 Izu n'ese Önwa Otite begins on 24/10/2010 (Oye) and ends on 27/10/2010 (Eke);  
 Izu n'eshii Önwa Otite begins on the 28/10/2010 (Oye) and ends on 31/10/2010 (Eke);  
 Izu n'asaa Önwa Otite begins on 1/11/2010 (Oye) and ends on 4/11/2010 (Eke).

Someone had rightly remarked that the Öka are polytheists since their Gods were openly celebrated during the lunar months of the Öka year. So, is the Öka person a polytheist? Yes, and he is closer the truth about God than the sneering, ignorant monotheist. For the Öka person God, like the Army, is both one and many. The Army is a Unit (One) with functional sub-divisions (Many). The same holds true for God. It is one Spirit, one Unit whose functional parts are Gods or Spirits. The functional parts of the Army are hierarchized. The same is true of the Gods. It is meaningless to assert that I applied to the Army for help to put out a fire in my house. The correct statement is that I applied to the Fire Brigade of the Army for help to put out a fire in my house. It is the Fire Brigade of the Army, not the whole Army, which handles fire-fighting. Similarly, we apply for help to a God in charge of a particular function, say, procreation (Akwalī Ömümü). To pray to a God makes sense, but it is foolishness and ignorance to pray to God. To worship or venerate God is inefficacious, but to worship or venerate a God yields immediate results. Our ancestors knew this and that is why they were ögö olee. Their prayers to a given God always yielded the desired result.

We repeat: Before the advent of Christianity in our midst, the Igbo mindset was that God is both one and many, just like the Army. The Christian mind-warping strategy was to assert that there is only One God, the Christian God, which is the God of all Gods. Man's salvation lay in venerating and worshipping this Christian super-God. But the sober truth is that the Christian God is just one among the many Gods. The attempt to reject the Gods and cling to some super-God unsettles the mind because that mindset goes against all our observations. Can the world in front of our eyes be the creation of one super-God? No! Nature confirms the reality of Gods or fashioning powers, but not the reality of one super-God. The Öka adage says, Ovbu nne na-amu, mana öbürö ovbu Chi na-eke, i.e., Children of the same mother are not made / fashioned by the same God or Chi.

The white people of the Anglican Communion (Church Missionary Society – CMS) came to Öka in 1899. Under Rev. G.T. Basden, the CMS started work at Öka in 1904 and St. Paul's School was established. St. Faith's School Iyiokpu came up in 1905, while the St. Faith's Church came along in 1907. In 1916, Rev. Father Bubendorf came to Öka from Nteje to establish a Catholic School in the Amaenyi Quarter. This is history!

So, the Christian God Almighty and the associated praying mania came to Öka with the white people in 1904. But the Alüshī were there with us before 1904 and did a marvelous job of policing the society. We had no police, prison, lawyers, liars and whatnot to bully and intimidate people. Our retributive Deities – Alüshī – settled difficult disputes, here and now, without regard for social status. If someone steals my goat, I will appeal to the appropriate Alüshī to find, expose and finally kill the unrepentant thief. Mutual oath-taking in the presence of an appropriate Alüshī is a comprehensive insurance policy to protect the concerned parties against the evident human weaknesses that undermine human relationships today in our “modern” world – hypocrisy, betrayal of trust, double standards, brigandage, 419 in all its shades, etc.



An Öka adage says: Alüshī anara egbu na nkīti, meaning, the Gods do not kill a person who is innocent of an offence. And Öka history also tells us that, following due process, social conflicts brought before retributive Deities have been peacefully resolved by the priests and attendants of those Deities.

And what is the due process? The due process is: That both the complainant and the defendant willingly accept the jurisdiction of the concerned Deity.

When lodging a complaint at the Shrine of a Deity, the complainant pays a modest fee and gets the operational rules/procedures for settling disputes. The complainant thus accepts the jurisdiction of the Deity.

What about the defendant? A messenger from the Shrine is sent to the defendant inviting him/her to come on a given date (Eke or Avbö) to hear the charges brought against him/her by the named complainant. It is at this meeting that the defendant is required to accept or reject the jurisdiction of the Deity, with a view to finding a peaceful settlement in accordance with the attendant rules/procedure.

If the defendant accepts the Deity's jurisdiction, the rules/procedure are given to him/her, he/she pays a moderate case-hearing fee to cover the cost of a bottle of local gin, four kolanuts and a symbolic cash donation for the Alüshī's altar – ikpo mmöö. A date is then fixed for the hearing of the case. Both parties are heard-out on the appointed date and the defendant's culpability is decided by the priest and attendants, guided by the facts presented, the Deity's övbö and the outcome of the attendant Dibiavba's oracle on the issue. When the culpable party is convinced of his/her wrongdoing, a befitting penalty and damages are awarded.

If the defendant rejects the Deity's jurisdiction, then the complainant would proceed to invoke the retribution of the Deity by doing the appropriate ritual and firing the cannon.

Since the retributive Deity's action is unfailing, the temerarious culpable defendant who braves the Deity's jurisdiction and allows the cannon to be fired against him/her will surely find himself/herself in dire straights. The Deity will go after the culprit and members of his/her family. That is the origin of the Öka adage "Alüshī na-etikpo obodo", i.e., the Alüshī can destroy an entire lineage.

Because of the intelligence inherent in the above process, the use of Alüshī to settle disputes survived the colonial introduction of the police and judiciary. The beauty of the process is that: Both the complainant and the defendant willingly accept to subject themselves to the jurisdiction of the Deity. And this jurisdiction does not, in any way, encroach on the jurisdictions of the police or the judiciary. The Alüshī Shrine is not a police post where civil litigations are lodged and accused persons are invited for questioning. The Shrine is also not a civil court where civil litigations are heard and adjudicated.

Our forbears understood that to operate outside the limits of the due process described above was arbitrary, fraudulent, illegal and unjust, contrary to the retributive and just attributes of the Deity. History tells us that the greed and irresponsibility of Alüshī priests and attendants have been the root-cause of the disrepute and opprobrium suffered by those Alüshī. The cases of Agbala and Obe are still there to keep us on the straight and narrow path of righteousness.

### 3.2. Date and Market-day Arithmetic

Let date1 and date2 be two Gregorian calendar dates.

The day-count (DC) from date1 to date2 is the number of days counting from date1 to date2. We denote it by  $DC(\text{date1}, \text{date2})$ .

The number of days between (DB) the two dates is the number of days counting from date1+1 to date2. We denote it by  $DB(\text{date1}, \text{date2}) = DC(\text{date1}+1, \text{date2})$ .

Example: date1 = 1/1/2010, date1 + 1 = 2/1/2010 and date2 = 31/1/2010

The day-count from 1/1/2010 to 31/1/2010 is:

$$DC(1/1/2010, 31/1/2010) = 31 \text{ days}$$

But the number of days between 1/1/2010 and 31/1/2010 is:

$$DB(1/1/2010, 31/1/2010) = DC(2/1/2010, 31/1/2010) = 30 \text{ days.}$$

The number of days between 1/1/2010 and 31/1/2010 is 30 days, because the day-count starts from 2/1/2010 to 31/1/2010.

Given a date and its market-day (MD), how do we find the market-day (MD) of another date?

Let  $MD(\text{date})$  = Market-Day of the “date” in parenthesis.

The market days are 4: Eke, Oye, Avbö, Nkwö.

Consider the series: date, date + 4 days, date + 8 days, ..., date + 4n days, for any integer n.

We note that  $MD(\text{date}) = MD(\text{date} + (4xn) \text{ days})$ , for any integer n.

Example:

We have: date = 5/6/2010,  $MD(5/6/2010) = \text{Eke}$

date + 4 days = 5/6/2010 + 4 days = 9/6/2010 and  $MD(9/6/2010) = \text{Eke}$

date – 4 days = 5/6/2010 – 4 days = 1/6/2010 and  $MD(1/6/2010) = \text{Eke}$

So, date + 4n days = 5/6/2010 + 4n days and  $MD(5/6/2010 + 4n \text{ days}) = \text{Eke}$ , for any integer n.

If  $DB(\text{date1}, \text{date2}) = 4n$ , where n = an integer, then date1 and date2 have the same market-day.

That is, if the number of days between two dates is a multiple of 4, then they have the same market-day. Remember the set of integers comprises positive/negative whole numbers and zero.

Example: What market day is “Izu ta”?

Ta = Taa = Today = 2/2/2011 = Avbö

Izu ta = Izu taa = A week hence = 2/2/2011 + 4 days = 6/2/2011 = Avbö

Ta o kwe izu = A week before today = 2/2/2011 – 4 days = 29/1/2011 = Avbö

Example:

$MD(1/1/2010) = \text{Market-day of } 1/1/2010 = \text{Oye}$

What is  $MD(31/12/2010)$ ?

Now,  $DB(1/1/2010, 31/12/2010) = 364 \text{ days} = 4 \times 91 \text{ days}$ , a multiple of 4.

So,  $MD(31/12/2010) = \text{Oye}$

Example:

$MD(1/1/2010) = \text{Oye}$

What is  $MD(31/1/2010)$ ?

$DB(1/1/2010, 31/1/2010) = 30 \text{ days}$

Now,  $1/1/2010 + 28 \text{ days} = 29/1/2010$  and  $MD(29/1/2010) = \text{Oye}$

And  $31/1/2010 = 29/1/2010 + 2 \text{ days}$

So,  $MD(31/1/2010) = MD(29/1/2010) + 2 \text{ days} = \text{Oye} + 2 \text{ days} = \text{Nkwö}$

Example: going backwards

$MD(31/1/2010) = \text{Nkwö}$

What was  $MD(1/1/2010)$ ?

$DB(31/1/2010, 1/1/2010) = -30 \text{ days}$

Now,  $31/1/2010 - 28 \text{ days} = 3/1/2010$  and  $MD(3/1/2010) = \text{Nkwö}$

And  $1/1/2010 = 3/1/2010 - 2 \text{ days}$

So,  $MD(1/1/2010) = MD(3/1/2010) - 2 \text{ days} = \text{Nkwö} - 2 \text{ days} = \text{Oye}$

Example:

$MD(1/1/2010) = \text{Oye}$

What is  $MD(14/5/2010)$ ?

$DB(1/1/2010, 14/5/2010) = 133 \text{ days}$

Now 133 days as a multiple of 4 gives:  $133 = 132 + 1 = (4 \times 33) + 1$

Thus  $1/1/2010 + 132 \text{ days} = 13/5/2010$  and  $MD(13/5/2010) = \text{Oye}$

So,  $14/5/2010 = 13/5/2010 + 1 \text{ day}$  and  $MD(14/5/2010) = \text{Oye} + 1 \text{ day} = \text{Avbö}$

Example: 2011 as a non-leap year has 365 days by definition

$MD(1/1/2011) = \text{Avbö}$

What is  $MD(31/12/2011)$ ?

$DB(1/1/2011, 31/12/2011) = 364 \text{ days}$

Now 364 as a multiple of 4 gives:  $364 = 4 \times 91$

So,  $1/1/2011 + 364 \text{ days} = 31/12/2011$  and  $MD(31/12/2011) = \text{Avbö}$

Example: 2012 as a leap year has 366 days by definition

$MD(1/1/2012) = \text{Nkwö}$

What is  $MD(31/12/2012)$ ?

$DB(1/1/2012, 31/12/2012) = 365 \text{ days}$

Now 365 as a multiple of 4 gives:  $365 = 364 + 1 = (4 \times 91) + 1$

1/1/2012 + 364days = 30/12/2012, and MD(30/12/2012) = Nkwö  
 But 31/12/2012 = 30/12/2012 + 1 day  
 So, MD(31/12/2012) = MD(30/12/2012) + 1 day = Nkwö + 1 day = Eke

The above might seem tedious to some people. But any computer spreadsheet has an inbuilt algorithm for date arithmetic. Hence the calculation of the number of days between two dates is child's play. Without a computer, we have to manually do the day-counting of the number of days from one date to another. Let's take a pencil and sheet of paper and do some manual day-counting, to see how it works. What is the number of days between 1 January 2012 and 30 June 2012? In other words:

What is DB(1/1/2012, 30/6/2012)?

Our day-count begins at 2/1/2012 and ends at 30/6/2012. Now:  
 January 2012 has 30 days, because the count starts at 2/1/2012 and ends at 31/1/2012  
 February 2012 has 29 days, since 2012 is a leap year  
 March 2012 has 31 days  
 April 2012 has 30 days  
 May 2012 has 31 days  
 June 2012 has 30 days  
 And the sum is:  $30 + 29 + 31 + 30 + 31 + 30 = 181$   
 So, DB(1/1/2012, 30/6/2012) = 181 days

Try the above process to find the number of days between 1 January 2011 and 30 June 2011. The answer is DB(1/1/2011, 30/6/2011) = 180 days. Look at the number of days in February 2011 to see what happened.

#### 4. Calendar of Egwu Alüshï or Dance for the Gods

Egwu Alüshï in Öka are moon-related festivals to celebrate and dance for Öka Deities. Each Öka Deity has a dedicated lunar month (önwa), lunar week (izu-önwa) and lunar day (Eke, Oye, Avbö, Nkwö).

The ambit of Öka Deities ranges from the personal to the collective, viz.: my Chi, Akwalï Ömümü Ümüashï (my Ümünne), Ngene Onyeachönam of Ümübeelee village, Akpütakpü na ünö üzü of Agülü Quarter (seven villages of Agülü Quarter), Imöka Öka (33 villages of Öka).

The available descriptions of the Öka lunar year have cast the calendar in the Gregorian mould. The first Öka moon is pegged at the Gregorian month of April, May or June.

One author<sup>23</sup> writes: "The beginning of Öka year, when compared with the English calendar, corresponded to the month of May, or, sometimes, April, depending on the reading of the seasons."

Yet another author<sup>24</sup> states: "There are twelve lunar months in the traditional Awka town calendar, most of which are associated with major cultural events of the year. Placed parallel to the Gregorian calendar the months run as follows:

<sup>23</sup> The Awka People – Book 1, Amanke Okafor

<sup>24</sup> The Resilience of Igbo Culture: A Case Study of Awka Town, Azuka A. Dike

## Gregorian calendar

6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12

## Awka town calendar

I showed in my book, *Ngü Arö Öka – The Öka Lunar Calendar, 2010 – 2021*, that the Öka lunar year starts with the first moon on or after the March Equinox (March 20 or 21). The lunar months dedicated to Öka Deities are also described in that book.

This obsession to cast the Öka lunar calendar in the Gregorian mould has created a muddle in the establishment of detailed schedules for Egwu-Alüshi. We shall illustrate with the 2009 Egwu-Imöka schedule.

The key sections of a general notice issued by the Eze-Imöka for the 2009 Egwu-Imöka read as follows:

- (1) This is to inform Awka citizens, both at home and abroad and the general public especially that Egwu-Imöka starts from the month of May.
- (2) Masquerades will start parading in Awka Town.
- (3) The official processional visit to Ümüokpu Awka by masquerades takes place on Avbö, the 19<sup>th</sup> May 2009.
- (4) Women activity (Opu-Eke Ümünwaanya) opens the festival on the end of five weeks, Izu n'Ese Önwa, Avbö the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2009.
- (5) The men activities – Masquerade day takes place on Nkwö market day 24<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

This general notice states that: Egwu-Imöka starts from the month of May. And the entire schedule is established as if the Imöka moon appeared on May 01, 2009. The visit to Ümüokpu happens on May 19, the Avbö day following the end of four (4) native weeks, Izu n'Anö Önwa, or sixteen (16) days from May 01, 2009. Egwu-Imöka festival then opens on May 23, the Avbö day following the end of five (5) native weeks, Izu n'Ese Önwa, or twenty (20) days from May 01, 2009.

Query: Does Egwu-Imöka start with a specific Öka lunar month or with the Gregorian month of May?

We may note that the Gregorian months – ranging from January, though May, to December – came to Öka with the British in 1904.

So, did our forbears have no Egwu-Imöka schedule before the British introduced the month of May and the Gregorian system of timekeeping?

On the schedule for celebrating Egwu-Imöka we have the following from three writers: Özö E.P.O. Offodile, Özö Amanke Okafor, and Prof. Azuka A. Dike.

Özö Offodile says:

“Egwu Imoka is celebrated on the first Avbö market day following the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the moon. The first day of Egwu Imoka moon must be an Avbö market day. Sometime though, the first day of the

moon might appear on a day other than Avbö. However, the celebration must be on the first Avbö market day, 21 days after the moon appears.”

For this author, Egwu-Imöka is celebrated on the Avbö day after the 5<sup>th</sup> week (i.e., on the Avbö day in the 6<sup>th</sup> week) of the Imöka month.

Özö Amanke Okafor says:

“Egwu Imöka was celebrated in the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the lunar month (Izu-önwa n’ese); and it started on an Avbö day. (Four days made the Öka week – Eke, Oye, Avbö, Nkwö).”

And Prof. Azuka Dike says:

“Egwu Imöka, a festival celebrated by the entire Awka, starts in the fifth native week and lasts for four days. It begins on the Avbö market day.”

Query: Is Egwu-Imöka celebrated on the Avbö day in the 5<sup>th</sup> week or the Avbö day after the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the Imöka month?

When there is a muddle, an Öka adage says: Ovbu avbö ga-azü, i.e., only one avbö market day can hold in any izu or native week.

So, on which avbö day do we celebrate Egwu-Imöka?

My formulation is:

“Egwu Imöka is celebrated on the Avbö day in the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the lunar month (mböshī Avbö n’ime izu n’ese önwa); and it lasted one native week – from Avbö to Avbö. (Four days made the Öka week – Eke, Oye, Avbö, Nkwö).”

On Önwa Asaa, Özö Amanke Okafor says:

“Önwa Asaa, or the Seventh month, had the Otitie Feast attached to it. Otitie was celebrated by the Ifite Quarter of Öka on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the seventh month (izu n’atö), while Ezi Quarter celebrated it on the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the new moon (izu n’ese).”

But this formulation is a muddle, because the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the lunar month marks the start of izu n’anö (not izu n’atö) and the 21<sup>st</sup> day of the new moon also marks the start of izu n’eshii (not izu n’ese).

Again, my formulation is:

“Önwa Asaa, or the Seventh month, had the Otitie feast attached to it. Otitie was celebrated by the Ifite Quarter of Öka on the Avbö day in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the seventh month (mböshī Avbö n’ime izu n’atö önwa asaa), while Ezi Quarter celebrated it on the Avbö day in the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the lunar month (mböshī Avbö n’ime izu n’ese önwa asaa).”

When I ask why our forbears chose to celebrate their Deities in the 3<sup>rd</sup> week or 5<sup>th</sup> week of the lunar month, the answer is always: Ö'ö ele e shi-emie shite n'igbii! It has been like that from time immemorial! Which means ... we don't know!

But an analysis of moon phase facts provides a plausible explanation for the choice. Most of the feasts are full moon festivals and the full moon occurs 13 to 16 days after the new moon day, i.e., within the 4<sup>th</sup> lunar week (n'ime izu n'anö önwa) – after the 3<sup>rd</sup> lunar week! Also the last quarter of the moon occurs 21 to 23 days after the new moon day, i.e., within the 6<sup>th</sup> lunar week (n'ime izu n'eshii) – after the 5<sup>th</sup> lunar week! The abundant full moon light was needed by the Onyekulie and Ösülü (night masquerades!) and for the late-night reveling associated with the feasts.

#### 4.1. Egwu-Imöka

Our book on Ngü Arö Öka gave a schedule for Egwu-Imöka using the 2010 Öka lunar calendar to demonstrate the mechanics of festival-fixing for the Imöka lunar month. We stated there as follows:

- (1) Four days make the Öka week – Eke, Oye, Avbö, and Nkwö. The Imöka feast is celebrated in the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the 2<sup>nd</sup> lunar month (izu-onwa n'ese, 20 days after the Imöka moon date); and it starts on an Avbö day.
- (2) A week (four days) before the festival day (izu-önwa n'anö, 16 days after the Imöka moon date), a message is sent to Ümüokpu Villagers living on the border of Öka town that Egwu-Imöka is one native week away. Masqueraders, and young men wielding sticks, take the message to Ümüokpu; and are entertained by the Ümüokpu Villagers.
- (3) Let us note that Egwu Imöka begins from the full moon phase or middle of the lunar month (izu-önwa n'anö, the 4<sup>th</sup> lunar week) and ends in the third quarter phase of the lunar month (izu-önwa n'eshii, the 6<sup>th</sup> lunar week). The visit to Ümüokpu takes place immediately after the full Imöka moon. So, the festival ends before the start of the 7<sup>th</sup> lunar week (izu-önwa n'asaa), called ishü önwa (blind moon) because there is no moonlight. Our forbears tell us that Ezu Ugwuoba once flowed through Nkwelle Village from Umudioka Village side and that the watercourse is still there. The God Imöka got Its water from it and hence got the name "Ökpü Orimili" (ancient sea). On the eve of the start and close of Egwu Imöka, Ezu comes to and departs from the feast with a thunderstorm.
- (4) The Imöka festival ends on Avbö day, 24 days after the Imöka moon date. The schedule for 2010 follows:
  - (a) Now, the 2010 Imöka moon date was Friday, Avbö, 14 May 2010.
  - (b) Izu-önwa n'anö or 16 days after the Imöka moon date gives us Sunday, Avbö, 30 May 2010 for sending the message to Ümüokpu that Egwu-Imöka is the next Avbö day, i.e., on 3 June 2010.
  - (c) Izu-önwa n'ese or 20 days after the Imöka moon date gives us Thursday, Avbö, 3 June 2010 for the Imöka festival.
  - (d) The 2010 Imöka festival will thus end on Monday, Avbö, 7 June 2010, i.e., 24 days after the Imöka moon date.

Note that if the 20 days after the Imöka moon date fell on an Nkwö day, the festival would start on the Avbö market day immediately following the relevant Nkwö day, i.e., three days later.

New data on the Egwu-Imöka schedule will now be supplied in line with the following precise definition:

- (1) Egwu Imöka is celebrated on the Avbö day in the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the Imöka lunar month (mböshī Avbö n'ime izu n'ese önwa); and it lasted one native week – from Avbö to Avbö.
- (2) The visit to Ümüokpu takes place on the Avbö day in the 4<sup>th</sup> week of the Imöka lunar month (mböshī Avbö n'ime izu n'anö önwa).
- (3) Egwu Imöka ends on the Avbö day in the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the Imöka lunar month (mböshī Avbö n'ime izu n'eshii önwa)

The choice of a preferred schedule is left for the keepers of Imöka Deity – the Ümüeleke family of Amachala. The beauty of the new schedule lies in its clarity of definition. The new Egwu-Imöka data and schedules for 2011 – 2022 are given in Appendix D.

Lunar phase data are available today on the Internet. New moon dates are known with accuracy, even when the moon cannot be seen because of aerial humidity (clouds). The same moon-related Islamic festivals were celebrated on different days because the associated new moons were sighted on different days. With the progress of astronomy, this is now history. Moon-related Islamic festivals are now celebrated on the same day all over the world and no longer depend on the whims of capricious priests.

My research and gut-feeling have led me to conclude that the Öka lunar year starts with the first moon on or after the March equinox (20 or 21 March). We may note that, at the equinox, day and night have almost equal duration. Any observant person (priest or not) may use the equinox phenomenon (which occurs twice every year in March and September) to predict the start and end of the rains in our part of the world.

We may note in passing that the Roman year started on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March and the vestiges of the associated Roman calendar are still with us in the current Gregorian calendar. September, October, November and December were respectively the seventh (septem), eighth (octo), ninth (novem), and tenth (decem) months when the year began on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March.

And we have seen how Equatorial Africa (between latitudes 15° N and 15° S) is the cradle of humanity. So, would it surprise the experts in historical deception to hear that the Öka lunar year starts with the first moon on or after the March equinox (20 or 21 March)? Did lunar timekeeping not precede the current solar one? It did!

The Christian Easter is a moon-related festival of Pagan origin and marks the beginning of the New Year in the Northern Hemisphere of our world. The Christian churches calculate Easter as the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after 21 March. Appendix F shows the Western Christian Easter schedule for 1997 – 2030.

#### **4.2. Önwa Asatö – Akpütakpü na Ünöüzü**

We have indicated that Akpütakpü is the Öka God of technology, blacksmiths, craftsmen, artisans, sculptors, metals, metallurgy, and fire. The Deity's symbols are a smith's hammer, an anvil and a pair



of tongs. This same Deity is found in ancient Greece under the name of Hephaestus, whose Roman equivalent was Vulcan. He was the god of technology, blacksmiths, craftsmen, artisans, sculptors, metals, metallurgy, fire and volcanoes. Like other mythic smiths, Hephaestus was lame. He served as the blacksmith of the gods, and he was venerated in the manufacturing and industrial centers of Greece, particularly in Athens. The center of his cult was in Lemnos. Hephaestus's symbols are a smith's hammer, an anvil and a pair of tongs. There is a Temple of Hephaestus, the Hephaesteum, located near the Athenian agora, or marketplace.

The Temple of Akpütakpü in the Agülü Öka Quarter is at the Avbö-Agülü market square in Ümübeele village!

Önwa Asatö (the 8<sup>th</sup> lunar month) has Akpütakpü, Ovbuvbe, Ugwu Nwoköjī and Ngene feasts attached to it in Agülü Öka. Akpütakpü is celebrated at Avbö Agülü, Ümübeele village, on the Eke day in the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the eighth month (mböshī Eke n’ime izu n’ese önwa asatö); Ovbuvbe is celebrated at Oye Nwovbuvbe square, Ümüögbü village, on the Oye day in the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the eighth month (mböshī Oye n’ime izu n’ese önwa asatö); Ugwu Nwoköjī is celebrated at the shrine in Ümüanaga village, on the Avbö day in the 5<sup>th</sup> week of the eighth month (mböshī Avbö n’ime izu n’ese önwa asatö); Ngene eats new yams at the shrine in Ümübeele village, on the Eke day in the 6<sup>th</sup> week of the eighth month (mböshī Eke n’ime izu n’eshii önwa asatö). So, the sequence is: Akpütakpü (Eke), followed the next day by Ovbuvbe (Oye), followed the next day by Ugwu Nwoköjī (Avbö), followed by a day of rest (Nkwö), and then follows the eating of new yams by Ngene (Eke).

Appendix G contains data and schedules (2011 – 2022) for the four feasts of Önwa Asatö in the Agülü Öka Quarter.

## 5. Conclusion

Some writers have worked hard to find a primordial home for Öka people. This booklet is dedicated to those Öka people who may have been misled to believe that their ancestors came from somewhere and that their descent is in the male line.

Öka tradition has it that:

- (1) Öka ful efu! (Öka grew out of the soil of Öka),
- (2) Enwere vbe nna nna (Their descent is in the female line),
- (3) Onwere ika eshivbe bīa (There is no history that they came from somewhere else).

What? Yes, Öka grew out of the soil of Öka, their descent is in the female line and there is no history that they came from somewhere else! Could this be poetic fancy or verifiable historical fact? Both, because poetic language is used to express a verifiable historical fact! How come? The booklet demonstrates these facts beyond cavil. Simply put, the statement “Enwere vbe nna nna” says that the descent of Öka people is in the female line – not in the male line – the kin being composed of a female ancestor and her children! It is when descent is in the male line that we can have nna nna (father’s father).

Even in today’s Öka patriarchal society, we may ask:

- (1) Why do Öka men continue to genuflect when greeting the daughters of their clan?

- (2) Why do Öka men invite their married daughters (Ümü-Ökpü) to come and settle seemingly intractable disputes in the clan?
- (3) Why do Öka men invite their married daughters (Ümü-Ökpü) to come and pray for the clan when the latter's survival is at stake?

The tart response to these queries is invariably: *Ö dü növbü shite n'igbii* = It has been the practice from time immemorial. This response shows how ignorant we are about the roots of our customs, and provides a perfect idol behind which we hide to mask our ignorance concerning our past!

But the simple answer to these queries is that these practices are a survival of the matriarchate, where the daughter is next to the mother in the rulership of the clan or family. We are now able to fathom the source of the power wielded by Ümü-Ada and Ümü-Ökpü of old. The powerful Awo-mmili women's group was a residue of the old matriarchal epoch. Thus:

- (1) Öka of old was a matriarchy;
- (2) Öka families whose descent is in the female line are the core Öka people – *Ökpülnana, Öka ful efu, Ndü enwere nna nna*, children of the mother!
- (3) Öka families whose descent is in the male line are accretions to the core Öka people – *Öka efuro efu, Ndü nwel nna nna*, children of the father!

Some Öka folks chide their peers (*ulo*) about their descent from a woman, when descent from a man is the true Öka badge of honor. The untutored son-of-the-mother usually developed cold feet and had no argument to counter the humiliating banter of his son-of-the-father peer. Had the son-of-the-mother known the truth, he would have told the loud-mouthed son-of-the-father that:

*Onye e kulu bia lie ivbe ö kwöö aka n'abö,  
Onye nwe nli, ö ga-aghüzi arü?*

When the guest washes both hands before eating, should his host and owner of the food go and take a bath? Yes, because the son-of-the-father is a guest at the table of the son-of-the-mother! In Öka, matriarchy preceded patriarchy and the son-of-the-mother pre-dates the son-of-the-father. It was Ümü-Nne first, before Ümü-Nna.

To conclude, let's ask again: Who are the Öka People? The answer and conclusion to this booklet is that:

- (a) *Öka ful efu!* (Öka grew out of the soil of Öka),
- (b) *Enwere vbe nna nna* (Their descent is in the female line),
- (c) *Onwere ika eshivbe bia* (There is no history that they came from somewhere else).

Öka people are native to where they are found today. Öka communities were generated in an independent or autochthonous fashion during the matriarchate.

The mother was first and our clans were founded by matriarchs, i.e., women. Öka was formed from the successive amalgamations and coalitions of previously scattered and autonomous but neighboring matriarchies leading to the formation of villages, village-groups and clans.

Blood was the ancient life and motherhood the fount of source. Blood was the earliest human tie and blood brothers are men born of the same mother or of two sisters. Blood-motherhood was first. Then the blood-brotherhood succeeded and gradually superseded the blood-motherhood. A group of progenitors, or brothers of the blood, began to usurp the place of the female ancestors as parental powers on the way to finally establishing the patriarchate.

We may now appreciate the fatuity of the tradition of one man fathering a village, village-group or clan. That tradition was invented by the blood-brotherhood – votaries of patriarchy – who subverted the matriarchy. It was a maladroit attempt to hide the great truth of our past from future generations. The great truth that the mother was, before the father!

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## 1. Preamble

Our objective is to explain the concepts back of our worldview. As the various write-ups use terms such as religion, God, Gods, Spirit, Spirits, universe, man, etc., it will be helpful to state what we understand by these terms. It is dishonest for me to ask someone whether he believes in “God” without first telling him what the word “God” stands for. To assume that he should know, since it is “common knowledge”, is bigotry on my part. The fellow will put me in a tight corner if he has the intelligence to ask me for a definition of my “God”, in order to help him decide whether he believes or not in the thing defined.

Religion is the science that relates man to God and the universe around him. As a science, it is a systematically organized body of knowledge about man, the universe and God. Religion teaches us that God is either manifest or unmanifest. The unmanifest God is the Godhead or Infinite Space, from which the manifest and creative God emerges to give itself a body that we call the universe. The unmanifest Godhead is the Infinite Space in which we live and move and have our being. The manifest God is Cosmic or Universal Spirit, manifesting in all and through all as a ceaseless unerring intelligence. The universe is the body of this manifest God.

The manifest God or Spirit is the great river that links the universe to its source in the unmanifest God or Godhead. The Godhead is the source of all that is manifest. The Spirit or manifest God is the agency through which manifestation is effected. The manifest God is the only Son of the Godhead. All things were made by this manifest God; and without It was not any thing made that was made. It is the Word of St. John’s Gospel (John 1:1-4, 9).

The Godhead is the container and Source of all. God or Spirit is the Power that unfolds the inaccessible contents of the Godhead into what we call a manifested universe of creatures. Religion is the science that teaches man about himself, about the universe of which he is a part, and about the manifest God which links everything to its source in the Godhead. Recall that religion comes from re ligio, which means to tie back to a source or to yoke. Worship of God describes the ways we choose to commune with the manifest God and, through It, with the Godhead – the Source. Men worship God in diverse, but equivalent, ways. The God is the same – Spirit, Mmöö – but the rituals or methods for approaching It differ. We may now understand the stupidity of the dichotomy: ndü üka (Christians) and ndü ögö mmöö (spirit worshipers). Whatever the religion, we are all ndü ögö mmöö or spirit worshipers.

What we call religions are actually different, but equivalent, methods of expressing the same science – Religion. It is thus improper and misleading to talk about religions: Christian religion, Moslem religion, Hindu religion, and what not. These are cults at best, but not religions. Religion is a science, not sciences.

In an attempt to explain the origin of the manifest universe, the first verse of the Christian Bible says:

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” (Gen 1:1)

But we may rightly ask:

- (1) In what place did the action of creating take place?

- (2) Had the manifest universe any beginning?
- (3) Where did this creative God come from?
- (4) Where did this God get the materials or stuff with which to create the heaven and the earth?

These four questions constitute a philosophical nightmare for the untutored Christian. No logical explanation of the origin of the manifest universe is possible without logical answers to these questions. We shall provide answers to the questions in accordance with Ancient Wisdom.

- (1) In what place did the action of creating taking place? In Space! To choose any other locus leads to a blind alley and insuperable problems of logic.
- (2) Had the manifest universe any beginning? No! The universe emerges from Space, stays in Space for some time, and dissolves back into Space – ad infinitum. Just in the same manner that ice emerges from a body of water, floats in the water for some time, and dissolves back into the water. It is the serpent swallowing its tail, a circle with neither beginning nor end. Recall the Christian chant: *Etu ö dī na mbüü, öö dī ügbüaa, ö ga-adīgīdee ootuaa, wee luo n’üwa ebighiebi, Amen!* As it was in the beginning, it is now, and ever shall be, world without end, Amen!
- (3) Where did this creative God come from? It is there in Space! Does the bolt of lightning or the tornado come from somewhere other than Space? No! Their home is Space. Space may be empty of objects, but It is not empty. The term “empty space” has no meaning.
- (4) Where did this God get the materials or stuff with which to create the heaven and the earth? From Space of course! Space contains all that is required for the construction of the manifest universe. To create, the God needs some world-stuff because *ex nihilo, nihil fit*, nothing comes from nothing. Creation by sheer fiat is nonsense.

So, Space is the absolute Container of all that is, whether manifested or unmanifested. And Space is that which was, is and will be, whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be Gods or none.

Since Space is the all, we may ask: What is Space?

Nobody knows! It is the undefined and indefinable term in the logic that tries to explain the origin of the manifest universe. It is the same with a term like electricity: what is electricity? Nobody knows! It’s an undefined and indefinable term in physics. To call it energy does not define it! And what is energy? This is an infinite regressus or a circle. We must assume such terms as given, as the basis for ulterior constructions and reasoning. We are mentally stuck without assuming them as given.

Hence, the basic assumption of the Ancients is: Infinite Space is the Absolute Deity, which has neither name nor attribute. It is the Unknown Deity or Godhead. And the differentiation or crystallization of Infinite Space is symbolized in the Hierarchy of Beings that people the cosmogony of all nations.

Space as the Unknown Deity appears clearly in the Christian Bible where St. Paul says the following in the book of Acts 17:23-28 concerning the Unknown God:

23. For as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you:



24. God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands.

25. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things.

26. And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their pre-appointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

27. So that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us;

28. For in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, For we are also His offspring.”

In verse 28 above St Paul tells us, “For in Him [the Unknown God] we live, and move, and have our being.

Question: In what do we live, and move, and have our being?

Answer: In Space of course!

### **1.1. What is God?**

So, what is God? An answer is:

God is Cosmic or Universal Spirit, manifesting in all and through all as a ceaseless unerring intelligence; all nature is the body of God.

And what is Spirit?

For a clue, let us consult Strong's Hebrew and Greek Dictionaries. In Hebrew Spirit is given by Neshamah or Ruach – both denoting the Wind. In Greek equally, Spirit is given by Pneuma denoting the Wind again.

Since Spirit means Wind, we may agree that:

1. Its domain is the whole of Space
2. Its acts are seen and felt, but it is invisible;
3. It is neither female nor male;
4. It moves without feet and grasps without a hand.

The Christian Bible tells us in John 4:24 that: “God is a spirit, and they who worship Him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

We note that the above Bible verse uses the masculine pronoun “Him” to qualify God, which is defined as a Spirit or Wind – neither female nor male. The indefinite pronoun “It” would have been more consistent with the definition of Spirit as Wind. But in its actions, the Spirit takes the aspect it

wills – that of a female or that of a male. In such instances the Spirit is qualified as Mother (“Her”), as Daughter (“Her”), as Father (“Him”) or as Son (“Him”).

If God is Spirit or Wind, why do we spend much time looking for something that we can never “find”? Who has ever found or seen the wind? We saw above that the Spirit is invisible, but its actions can be seen or felt. The Wind is felt, but never seen. Seeing the Spirit is out of question, but feeling it is possible. And we shall see how!

The search after God is worthwhile because we were told above that: God is Spirit, manifesting in all and through all as a ceaseless unerring intelligence; all nature is the body of God. Hence, I am part of the body of God which manifests in me as a ceaseless unerring intelligence.

If God manifests in me as a ceaseless unerring intelligence, common sense would recommend that I discover and co-operate with this intelligence. Such an unerring intelligence at my disposal is a magic wand to solve the knotty problems of everyday living. To discover what manifests in man as an unerring intelligence, let us analyze the phenomenon of sleep. During sleep, man seems to be divided into two parts:

- the heart beats, the lungs function, blood circulates, food is digested, etc., something is awake and working; but
- the human being cannot think and is no longer capable of expressing love or hatred, because the thing which usually experiences these states is resting, asleep.

Now, where is the Mind? Is it the "thing" which is asleep or the "thing" that is awake and working? Everybody answers: during sleep the Mind is asleep. It then follows that the Mind is not the "thing" that accomplishes the intelligent organic functions in the body. What we call Mind is endowed with the faculty to feel, think and will. But this faculty is inactive during sleep, and the "thing" that remains awake is something else which, independently of the conscience, takes charge of maintaining the organism. This “thing” that remains awake during sleep is the unerring Spirit or God.

When man is asleep, the Spirit is active and the Mind is at rest. The part of man which sleeps and wakes up is what we call the Mind; while the part which never sleeps, except at death, is called Life, Spirit or God.

The Spirit is either free or incarnate in forms. It is the universal agent (or effectuating power) of creation. It is the vehicle of ideas and the mother of all forms, visible and invisible. It conserves the images of past, present and future events. In mythology, this Life is symbolized by a snake, or the natural tempter of material forms. It is called Lucifer or light-bearer because it distributes and specializes the primordial Light or Life. It is also called the angel of darkness because it carries good and evil thoughts alike. Being the vehicle of individual life, this Life can serve both good and evil; it can be considered as the Devil or the Holy Spirit. Universal Life is characterized by two opposing forces: attraction and repulsion. It is through this double force that everything is created, sustained and destroyed.

Each organism individualizes a portion of this Universal Spirit which, condensed in the nerve centers, becomes the resident Spirit of this organism and evolves the material members of the given organism. The resident Spirit controls and manages the growth, nourishment and operation of the body – every operation and function of every organ, part and cell being under the control and direction of this Spirit. This life of

the body never sleeps, but attends to its duties while the reasoning faculties are quieted in slumber and rest. The constant work of repair, replacement, change, digestion, assimilation, elimination, etc., is performed by this power in the body, all below the plane of consciousness. The intelligent work of the cells, cell-groups, ganglia, organ intelligences, etc., is under the superintendence of this indwelling life of the body.

Since the spirit of any organism is simply a modification of the universal spirit which circulates in our world, the resident spirit is always in contact with this universal spirit for the maintenance of its properties, in exactly the same manner that the resident spirit itself maintains the properties of the organism under its control.

When man is asleep, the spirit is active and the mind is at rest. Thus, man is a triune entity comprising the body and the mind solidly held together by the spirit. In our book titled “This Is What We Are!”, we stated that the mind or soul is a system of related awareness made up of consciousness, the content of consciousness and the power that relates consciousness to its content. We also indicated there that the human soul has a greater proportion of consciousness, relative to the content and power aspects of its triune constitution. The soul is seated in the brain, from where it thinks, plans and imagines. The brain, which is in direct contact with the outer world, uses the sense organs to reflect external images. Thus are generated the activity and content of the mind – thought, imagination, memory.

To understand the hidden constitution and workings of man, the analogical method allows us to study the constitution and workings of any object we deem analogous to man. Our object of analogy will be a horse-drawn cart. Consider the composition and workings of a horse-drawn cart. This assemblage is made up of:

- A cart
- A horse harnessed to the cart to make it move
- A driver who directs the horse
- The reins that link the driver to the horse.

The horse is harnessed to the cart so that the horse can pull the cart; the driver sits on the cart and holds the horse reins in his hands. To move or stop the cart, the driver acts on the horse using the reins; he does not act directly on the cart. Applying the above image to the human being we find that:

- The physical body is analogous to a cart;
- The spirit within is analogous to the horse which pulls the cart;
- The mind is analogous to the driver of the cart;
- The autonomous nervous system is analogous to the reins.

The corresponding and analogous parts of the moving cart and a human being are given in the following table:

	Moving cart	Human being
1	The cart	The physical body
2	A horse harnessed to the cart	The resident spirit harnessed to the body
3	A driver	A mind, monad or soul

4	The reins	The autonomous nervous system
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The constitution and workings of the human being and the horse-drawn cart are analogous or follow the same laws, and what is true for the horse-drawn cart is also true for the human being as shown below.

The cart cannot move on its own without the intervention of another element; and this is the fundamental characteristic of the physical body.

Harnessed onto the cart by the shafts and linked to the driver via the reins, we find the general intermediate principle: the horse. The driver uses the reins to act directly on the horse, which then acts on the cart. The mind uses the autonomous or sympathetic nervous system to act directly on the spirit, which then acts on the body. The horse is physically stronger than the driver, but the latter has to guide it to the desired destination. The same is true also for the human being. The indwelling spirit is more powerful than the mind, but the latter has to guide it to a desired objective.

The driver is clearly the directing element, but he needs the power of the horse to pull his cart to the desired destination. With the reins, the driver directs and controls the horse. By analogy, the driver illustrates the general characteristics of the superior part of man: the mind or soul. So, we observe that the driver (mind) acts on the horse (resident spirit) and the latter acts on the cart (the physical body). The mind cannot act directly on the body; it acts on an intermediary, and it is this intermediary which reacts on the body. It is via the resident spirit or life at the disposal of the human will that the mind is capable of influencing the life of any other creature, visible or invisible.

The horse represents the life of man, and human passions are modalities of this life. The common attribute of passions is to suffocate the efforts of reason (the mind), thereby leading man to his destruction in spite of the actions of the mind, which becomes powerless. Anger is remarkable in this respect. Once it takes root in a weak person, all blood circulation seems to be wholly located in the head. The face is hot, the eyes are red, and the mind (reason) tries in vain to influence the spirit which has taken control of its house: man no longer knows what he is doing, he is now capable of doing anything. The indwelling life has overpowered the mind. In this case, the spirit has invaded the whole system. Although he is mentally better armed but physically weaker, the driver is overpowered. The cart carrying him is moving at frightening speed in the direction chosen by the horse which is now the master; the end is a fall into some obstacle which destroys the assemblage.

Two things can be noted at this point. Firstly, the driver (Mind) must be attuned to his horse (his Spirit or God) to be able to guide and direct it. Secondly, the driver (Mind) must interact correctly with the horse (his Spirit) so that the latter will not turn left when the driver wants it to turn right. Thus, the horse (the God within) is subject to interference on the part of the driver (Mind). This interference may be for good or bad, according to the nature of the promptings (suggestions or mental pictures) passed on by the driver (Mind) to the horse (the indwelling Spirit). We may note in passing that the driver normally whips the horse to make it move faster; man uses stimulants to obtain the same results from his Spirit within. But a horse can go wild if beaten too much, and the same is true of an over-stimulated Spirit of man.

The effect of alcohol is remarkable in this connection, because God and man are both cheered by wine! (Judges 9:13) Observe a fellow who is really drunk, but still awake. His mind is a bit stunned, but he has no Ego – he is blissful as a child and his spirit is in full control. When he is again sober, the mind and its Ego take the front seat, while the spirit is relegated to the back seat.

The layman wanting to act on the organism always attempts to modify the physical body and will be obliged to continually fight against the Spirit within which, following a fatal course, always seeks to re-establish the disturbed balance; whereas the magician who acts on the life within will modify the plan of action and, consequently, the physical body with little or no effort.

To understand psychic influence, imagine a stranger (a hypnotist) mounting on the cart, tying-up the driver (the Mind) and taking over the reins (the autonomous nervous system). The poor driver watches helplessly as this stronger-willed stranger (the hypnotist) leads the horse to wherever he wishes. The horse (personal life) will always obey the holder of its reins, be it its owner or a stranger. However, although the driver is tied up, he can still use his voice (summon extra willpower) and call on his horse to stop. The horse, recognizing its owner's voice, stops instantly.

Under certain conditions, the individual life can momentarily leave the physical body, just as a non-harnessed horse can stroll away from the cart. The cold body remains immobile but the Mind keeps watch. The Mind guides the indwelling life to any place it wants, because time and space no longer exist for it. The reins held by the driver are so elastic that they can be stretched without limit, and this explains the origin of conscious astral travel and apparitions of great masters in distant places. The physical body remains perfectly still, since the individual life is now solely connected to the Mind.

In another case, the driver (Mind) falls asleep. The horse, free from its reins (released personal life) wanders about freely, but remains connected only to the cart (the physical body). This is an unconscious exit of the personal life that happens in cases of mediumship or during sleep. In an unconscious exit, the personal life is exposed to external influences which could overpower it (other lives or forces).

In the case of physical death, the cart (physical body) is destroyed and the driver (Mind) mounts the horse (indwelling life) for his journey to the higher mental plane from where it was initially taken by the spirit and incorporated into physical form.

We are told that man is a Microcosm (a small world) compared to the Macrocosm (the Universe, great world or God). We are also told that the Microcosm is the exact image or analogue of the Macrocosm. Both worlds are constituted in the same manner, function according to the same laws, and mutually influence each other through their corresponding parts as shown below:

	Microcosm (Man)	Macrocosm (Universe or God)
1	Physical body	Physical Universe
2	Indwelling Spirit (personal life)	Universal Spirit (Universal Life)
3	Mind, Monad or Soul	Universal Mind or Soul

Knowledge of man's self begins with the recognition of the above realities. The driver must learn to guide and control his horse which is capable of doing wonderful things. The Kingdom of God is indeed within. Once we find it within, everything will be added unto us. Remember, the little horse within relates with the Great Horse without, from whence it came. The Great Horse without is God the Father/Mother and the little horse within is God the Son, the Messenger and Word of the Father/Mother. As above, so below; as within, so without.

It is the above analogy between the Microcosm (Man) and the Macrocosm (Universe or God) that we meet in the Scriptures, where we are told that Man was created in the image and likeness of God (the Universe). The Ancients considered God and the Universe (the Body of God) as synonymous.

Continuing our search for this God manifesting in us as an unerring intelligence, let us consider the process of human reproduction.

One day, my father and my mother made love. The sperm from my father mingled with the egg that lay dormant in my mother's womb and a silent miracle began. The next day, Mom and Dad forgot the lovemaking affair and went about their usual business. Some time passed and Mom complained that she felt funny, kind of weird – as though some strange power had taken hold of her. Dad took her to the doctor who told them that she was pregnant with a child.

A child? Yes! But neither Mom nor Dad put a baby into Mom's womb! How come a baby is forthcoming then? That's the silent miracle we mentioned above. Within Mom's womb the sperm from Dad and the egg from Mom are being transformed into a living, beautiful human baby. And the baby will come out after nine months or thereabout. Who is doing this transformation in Mom's womb? Who is transforming the gifts from Dad (the sperm) and Mom (the egg) into a baby? We are told that this creative power is called Life or Spirit – the only Power in existence.

Mom's belly grew bigger with the growth of the baby under construction in her womb. After nine months, Mom gave birth to a beautiful human baby and the miracle that began in the darkness of her womb stood out before a puzzled world – a living image of Mom and Dad.

And the power that constructed the baby in Mom's womb? Where has it gone, now that the baby has come out of the womb? We said the power is called Life. And the baby is alive. So the power resides in the child's body. This power creates the body from the Dad-Mom substance, sustains that body by dwelling in it, and dissolves the body by withdrawing itself later in what we call death.

And where does this creative power come from? We are told that the power resides in Space and permeates everything in manifestation. It is the power that creates the Universe by the transformation of the Universal Dad-Mom substance that is latent in Space. The Universal Dad-Mom substance is consciousness and its content, held in the mutual embrace of latency by the power called Life, Love or Spirit. Periodically, this creative power separates and then joins the Universal Dad-Mom substance to produce the Universal Baby or the manifested Universe, called the Universal Mind. Thus Life creates the manifest Universe from the universal Dad-Mom substance, sustains that Universe by dwelling in it, and dissolves the Universe by withdrawing itself back into Space in due time.

We thus discover that the same power that builds, sustains, and dissolves the universe also builds, sustains, and dissolves the body of man. The spiritual unfoldment of man culminates in a conscious alignment of this power within him with the same power that permeates and runs the manifest universe. Then and then only does man realize that his body is the temple of a living God. The key to the mystery of magic lies in the conscious coupling of the life resident in man with the Life resident in Space.

In fine, Man is constituted as follows:

- ❑ The Body or form composed of Minds lower than the human Mind in the hierarchy of being – the Monads of the physical, desire and lower-mental levels.
- ❑ The human Monad, Soul or Mind, which ingresses from the higher-mental level into such a body and becomes the organizing intelligence of that body. Note that the universe of form is built by the Spirit hierarchies. The ingression of the human mind actually refers to its incorporation into form by the Spirit.
- ❑ The Power or Spirit that creates the body from the Dad-Mom substance, sustains that body by dwelling in it, and dissolves the body by withdrawing itself later in what we call death.

To further buttress our assertion that the Spirit that dwells in man's body is his God and Creator, we may read Psalm 139 and note well verses 13 to 15:

1. O LORD, You have searched me and known me.
2. You know my sitting down and my rising up;  
You understand my thought afar off.
3. You comprehend my path and my lying down,  
And are acquainted with all my ways.
4. For there is not a word on my tongue,  
But behold, O LORD, You know it altogether.
5. You have hedged me behind and before,  
And laid Your hand upon me.
6. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;  
It is high, I cannot attain it.
7. Where can I go from Your Spirit?  
Or where can I flee from Your presence?
8. If I ascend into heaven, You are there;  
If I make my bed in hell [the grave], behold, You are there.
9. If I take the wings of the morning,  
And dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
10. Even there Your hand shall lead me,  
And Your right hand shall hold me.
11. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall fall on me,"  
Even the night shall be light about me;
12. Indeed, the darkness shall not hide from You,  
But the night shines as the day;  
The darkness and the light are both alike to You.
13. For You formed my inward parts;  
You covered me in my mother's womb.
14. I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;  
Marvelous are Your works,  
And that my Soul knows very well.
15. My frame was not hidden from You,  
When I was made in secret,  
And skillfully wrought in the lowest parts of the earth.
16. Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed.  
And in Your book they all were written,  
The days fashioned for me,  
When as yet there were none of them.

17. How precious also are Your thoughts to me, O God!  
 How great is the sum of them!
18. If I should count them, they would be more in number than the sand;  
 When I awake, I am still with You.

Indeed the Psalms of the Christian Bible are various dialogues between man and his Lord or the indwelling Spirit. The Ancients called the indwelling Spirit “the Lord” of the body. In Greek cosmogony, the cosmic Zeus is the One life. He is the great Breath of Life and the all-pervading Fire. In the words of the Orphic hymn:

“Zeus, the mighty Thunderer, is first, Zeus is last,  
 Zeus is the head, Zeus the middle of all things.  
 From Zeus were all things produced. He is both man and woman;  
 Zeus is the depth of the earth, and the height of the starry heavens;  
 He is the Breath of all things, the force of untamed Fire.”

But Zeus in man is the indwelling Life or Spirit, which actuates all the faculties, and which builds up the physical body. He is therefore styled “the Father of Gods and Men.” It is with this human, microcosmic, aspect of Zeus that Prometheus, the chained Titan (the Monad) is at enmity. The man who would achieve true freedom must indeed come to terms with his indwelling Spirit; a task so arduous that only by the cumulative effort of many incarnations can the attunement or at-one-ment be accomplished.

The message of the Ancients is clear: Infinite Space is the Absolute Deity, which has neither name nor attribute. It is the Unknown Deity or Godhead. And the differentiation or crystallization of Infinite Space is symbolized in the Hierarchy of Beings that people the cosmogony of all nations.

The Ancients tell us that this Space in which we live is a delimited portion of Infinite Space. They call the Space we live in Bright Space. And Infinite Space they call Dark Space or Darkness.

Infinite Space is living Being, and periodically gives birth to the Bright Space of manifestation and existence. Since all that is born must die, the Bright Space is re-absorbed into Infinite Space in due season.

We are told that Infinite Space is a fused triune Reality comprising consciousness, the content of consciousness and the power that relates consciousness to its content. Periodically, this relating power chooses a portion of Infinite Space for a separation of the fused consciousness and its content into subjects related to objects. This separation results in the birth of a system of reflective awareness, a Mind. A discrimination is made between Self and Not-Self, Light and Darkness, subjectivity and objectivity. Thus Bright Space or Universal Mind is born from the Darkness of Infinite Space. Hence, Bright Space is like a gigantic sphere floating in Dark Space; a mighty jellyfish floating in a boundless ocean.

With this birth, a Ring of Power now delimits the extent of the Bright Space of manifestation within the all-containing parent of Infinite Space. In due season, the Ring of Power collapses and existence is resolved back into non-existence. And Bright Space melts back into its parent Infinite Space.



Next, the Power that brought about the primal subject-object separation within Infinite Space fills that Bright Space or Universal Mind with four categories of simple triune existents or individual Minds, called Monads. A Monad is an entity made up of the three primal principles of being, which under a specific set of circumstances will produce a specific form and/or sequence of events. Thus a Monad here means the first possible and most simple existent, and no entity can exist that does not partake of the three primal principles of being, i.e., consciousness, the content of consciousness, and the power that relates consciousness to its content.

These four groups of Monads or fragments of the Universal Mind are distinguished by their modes of operation which appear as mineral, plant, animal and human types of conscious activity. In other words, the oceans, the Earth, everything we see manifesting as mineral, plant, animal and human forms are all crystallized Space. And this crystallization is achieved by the same Power that effected the initial subject-object separation.

The four levels of the Universal Mind are the modes of being described as:

1. Higher Mind or level of Individuation made up of Monads of Selfhood. In the triune composition of these Monads, the consciousness aspect is proportionately greater than the content or relating power aspects.
2. Lower (or Sense) Mind or level of Differentiation made up of Monads of Sense Powers. The content aspect of the triune constitution of Monads is dominant, relative to the other two, in this category of Monads.
3. Desire Nature or Formative level made up of Monads of Instinctive Life. The power or life aspect of the triune constitution of Monads is dominant in this class of Monads. The exuberance of the vegetable kingdom results from this almost unrestricted sway of Life demonstrated by this class of Monads.
4. Elemental Nature or Physical level made up of mineral Monads. The three aspects of the Monad – consciousness, the content of consciousness and their relating power – are proportionally balanced.

These are the four categories of the Monads of the Universal Mind. Life then proceeds to assemble these Monads into form: mineral, vegetable, animal and human.

The physical level Monads are the bricks, bound together by the mortar called Life to obtain the class of minerals. Desire level Monads ingress into the mineral forms to evolve plants; lower-mental level Monads ingress into the vegetable class to evolve animals and hominids; while higher-mental level Monads ingress as single units or individuals into the animal class to evolve men or human beings. Recall the meaning we have given to the word “ingress”: it is the incorporation of Monads into form by the Builder-Spirit.

The human Monad is thus a guest in a complete animal vehicle, where it plays the role of an organizing intelligence. The constitution of the human Monad – greater proportion of consciousness relative to content and power – justifies the organizing role given to it by Life in the human psycho-physical organism. The human psycho-physical organism is depicted as: the human Mind or Monad at one end of the scale, the body, including the brain, at the other, and between them the spirit or subtle intermediary vehicles of the sense powers, recorded memories, and instinctive forces which link the Mind to the body. In other words, the psycho-physical organism is made of the human Mind, the Body and the connecting Spirit.

We thus learn that the sparks or Monads of the Universal Mind constitute a finite though countless multitude of conscious individuals that will go into the constitution of entities ranging from atoms to stars, from amoebae to men. By whatever name we call them, they are the ultimate “bricks” of the universe, conscious bricks which will be built into the numerous grades of being that go to make up the manifest worlds. Life will move them into position in accord with the cosmic harmony. They are the basis of “matter”, the only “matter” in the universe, yet a “matter” that will be composed of empatterned organizations of energy around these individualized points in or of consciousness.

The Ancients also tell us that human body is a form composed of Minds lower than the human Mind in the hierarchy of being – the Monads of the physical, desire and lower-mental levels. The human Mind, located at the higher-mental level, is then placed in such a body by the Spirit and forms the organizing intelligence of that body. Indeed, everything in the manifest world is a particle or a combination of particles of the Universal Mind, which is the first manifestation within Infinite Space.

A Mind is thus defined as a system of reflective awareness, made up of a subject who is aware, an object of awareness and a power of awareness that relates the subject to the object. Hence, the Universal Mind is the first setting apart or differentiation, within Infinite Space, of the two primal poles of being – the Subject and the Object poles. This differentiation is effected by the same power that held the two poles together, within Infinite Space, before their separation in the being of the Universal Mind.

The manifest universe is thus Mind through and through; from the smallest particle of dust to the greatest suns, all is Mind.

According to the Zohar, “The narratives of the Doctrine are its cloak,” and cloaked by this narrative of the genesis of the universe and man, there is indeed an important teaching: the secret of the genesis of man. But this is not a secret in the sense that a piece of concealed information is called a secret. It is secret in the sense that its true nature cannot be transferred from one man to another, whether in words or any other symbols. Whatever other secrets there may be, the mystery of our own being is the most profound. Nothing can replace that integral experience of our total being through which alone we can uncover both the mystery of our origin and the mystery of our goal.

No writer may do more than attempt the restatement of the old truths in new symbols. Yet the constant reaffirmation of these truths is essential to humanity lest the ever-present lure of temporal values lead us to forget the utter meaninglessness of things temporal except in relation to their eternal and unmanifest source – which is ... Space!

## **1.2. More Light on the Concept of God**

Ancient Scriptures are the literary heritage given to humanity by men grown to the stature of divinity. We shall some day laugh at the blunder of mistaking religious myth, drama and allegory for true history. We have taken the spiritual dramatizations of ancient sages regarding the experience of the human Spirit on earth for objective narratives. As 3<sup>rd</sup> century A.D. ignorance converted mythical typology to objective history, the task is now to convert the alleged objective history back to mythology, and then to interpret it as enlightened theology. The sacred Scriptures of the world are more precious as myths than as alleged history. As myths, they illumine and exalt the mind to unparalleled clarity, while as assumed history they are either nonsensical or inconsequential.

Universal observation shows that infant life is everywhere parented. The period of helpless infancy is safeguarded by parental oversight. The elder generation is at hand to protect, nurture and instruct the young of every kind. The human race was likewise parented. It was not left to struggle through its helpless infancy without guardianship. Prehistoric lore teems with stories of heroes and men of divine nature, demi-gods and sons of God who mingled with humanity, and who left codes of laws and manuals of civilization.

Ancient knowledge stated that man is himself a triune being made up of a Body, a Spirit and a Soul or Mind. At the summit of man's nature was the principle of conscious Mind; on the lower level was the Body, with its twofold equipment for sensation and emotion. Bridging the gap between the two was the divine and immortal Spirit. It could span the gap between the Mind and Body, because it stood between them and possessed affinities with both of them, which they lacked with each other. Man's indwelling Spirit also spanned the gap between man and God or Universal Spirit, because it possessed affinities with both of them. Early Christian revolt against esotericism threw down the ladder of linkage between man below and the Universal Spirit or God above, and now Christianity has no resources to diagram the steps of the possible communion between man and God. The gap left vacant had perforce to be filled in by theology with the single figure of the historical Jesus as mediator between man and his God. A historical personage was called in to implement a function that was originally assigned to one of the principles of man's own constitution – his indwelling Spirit.

When theology wisely guided the effort to relate man to the god within, it was the central pursuit in the life of the world and stood at the apex of dignity and importance. But the loss of vital premises of understanding blinded following ages to the value of spiritual culture, and theology and philosophy now go abegging for recognition, bereft of their former kingly renown.

The human Spirit was described as a “portion of cosmic Fire imprisoned in a body of earth and water”. It was described as “more ancient than the body”, because it had run the cycle of incarnations in many bodies. The mutual relation of the Spirit to the Body in each of its incarnate periods is the gist of ancient philosophy, and the core of all Biblical meaning.

Man is a god functioning in the body of a human animal, and this situation is typical of all other existent life, and a key to the comprehension of all. Religion is that field of effort in which man strives to relate a divine element to a body in which it is tenanted. Religion is designed to re-fashion the natural man into the likeness of a glorious spiritual being, the cosmic man of the heavens.

The crux of the religious problem is the conception of deity in a form that is constantly available for man in his own nature. This conception is the core of all religious theory, and loss of it has been the cause of doubt, confusion and despair. To the ancient sages the task of handling the Supreme God without his pantheon of lesser divinities was like trying to deal physiologically with a man without consideration of his arms, feet, head and several organs. The gods of ancient religion were the active manifest powers, faculties, organs of God himself. The ancient system of wisdom did not think it blasphemy to delineate the organic structure of deity to explain to human grasp the cause and nature of the world. Back of the word “Army” we discover a multitude of functional parts: infantry units, armored units, engineers, signal, marines, airborne units, etc. These are the organs, arms and limbs of the “Army”. Similarly, back of the word “God” we find a multitude of functional parts: the gods. Reverence was not withheld from even the lowest sub-division of Godhood. And God organically apprehended was to be better adored than God as an abstract “no-thing”.

But some strange philosophic revulsion against the function and nature of matter caused the theologians to deem it a blasphemy to give God a body, parts and divisions. The mind could only be saved from defiling God's purity by keeping him as an empty abstraction. Unknowable and Absolute, he was to be kept ineffable. But the astute Greeks kept the one without foregoing the other. They revered the One as beyond the reach of thought, yet portrayed his emanations in the field of manifestation. And they ranked themselves as his sons. They deemed it not dishonoring to God to recognize his being in all things. They saw him in nature, and not abstracted from nature. And they studied nature as the body of God or the living garment of God's immanence.

Therefore, though the monotheistic concept has a place in man's thought problem, it is to be appraised in its final utility to religion as having no practical value. The human mind cannot think of God without the concept of First Cause, and God must stand in the thought problem to fill this need. It has this dialectic or logical utility. But it must ever remain an abstraction without content. As such it turns out that the chalice of divinity that the Church offered to nations as the supreme gift of religion, was an empty cup. And engrossing the mass mind with a philosophical concept that is non-assimilable and meaningless, ecclesiasticism perpetrated the far worse crime of condemning to disuse that more realistic conception of resident deity which alone is charged with pregnant power to deify human life. Holding out a supreme Ineffability to its followers, it withheld from them at the same time knowledge of that deity that is lodged immediately within their own bodies. Giving them a God who is utterly inaccessible, it blocked their approach to the god who was closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet.

It may shock traditional piety to hear that the concept of One Supreme God can never be of great practical utility to man. But apart from its offices in generating in us perpetual wonder and awe, our dealing with it ends when we have placed it in the thought problem where the mind demands the postulate of First Cause. Beyond that it has little service to render us. Give it form, substance, content, description, we cannot, without destroying its necessary being. Whatever good will flow from our knowing that the Unknowable is back of all phenomena is ours. We can hardly love or worship what we cannot know. The boundary of our reach is wonder and speculation. Our attempts to worship it are the flutterings of a moth about the light we dare not look at.

Ancient religion was suspected of having left the monotheistic God out of its picture. It did not leave it out, but it had the discretion to leave it alone! The sage revered it by a becoming silence! Communion has never been established between man and an Absolute God in the cosmic heavens. But the pagan world provided a contact with a god dwelling immediately within the human body. No reaching after the moon of the Absolute diverted conscious purpose from actual touch with the god who stood at one's elbow. The seers of old held it as a sacrilege for mortals to worship any power outside themselves. And this implied no spirit of vaunting humanism or affront to deity. It was just the recognition of deity at the point where it was accessible. The real heresy and apostasy, the gross heathenism, is to miss deity where it is to be had in the blind effort to seek it where it is not available.

Deity for man is at home, not afield in distant skies. The kingdom of heaven and the hope of glory are within. Divinity lies buried under the heavier motions of the body and the incessant scurrying of the mind. It is the still small voice, drowned out mostly by the clamor of material and mental interests. It is a pure, mild Presence, awaiting the day when the mind will give more heed to its quiet speech. The Supreme God is not available; but within the quietude of his own body every man may find a fragment of that same God, made personal in his own individuality. This is the burden of the lost wisdom of antiquity. Other than potentially, God in his wholeness is not present with man; but he has not left man

without that measure of his grace that man can utilize. He has placed in our nature a portion, a share, of his own life. He has apportioned amongst all his creatures that measure of his ineffable power which each is capable of receiving. Chi or Oke-Chikwu (my share of God) is the name given by the Igbo of Nigeria to this share or portion of God given to all creatures. Yet potentially he has lodged the whole of himself in every man, for the share of his divinity that he has implanted in every creature is a portion of the whole of his being. In man the divine indwelling spirit is the Christos, the son of the Almighty Father/Mother. This portion of divinity within the body is all of God that man can possibly absorb. The cosmic God is hardly an object of worship by humanity; but that segmented portion of God that is lodged within the flesh of mortals – that is the actual divinity assigned to receive the attention, homage and worship of mankind, and to be eaten sacrificially.

The in-dwelling god is itself being brought to birth within the womb of humanity. Each individual is gestating a divinity within his own body. Christianity has exhorted us to look into the high heavens to find the unapproachable God. All the while the infant deity slumbers unheeded within the body. Christianity has largely nullified the force of St. Paul's almost frantic cry to us: "Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is within you?" (2 Cor. 13:5)

The seers of old distinguished between the Unknowable God of the thought theorem and the actual Presence in the human construction by denominating the former "God" and the latter "the god". Intermediate deities were called variously "the Gods" and "the gods". The object of attention in philosophy was the "god", the personal daemon of the individual. On the plane of all practical living value, it was useless to look to higher evolutionary forms of deific expression unless and until that god within was brought from infancy to maturity of function, since its qualities had to be assimilated into human nature before anything higher could be received. The vital concern of ancient religion was with the god lodged within the human body. If man missed contact with deity there, he missed it utterly. The deity that needs exaltation is that which is struggling within the bodies of the sons of the earth. In exalting Jesus in unique magnificence, Christianity lets the divinity in every man's body lie fallow. The enthronement of Jesus is the disinheritance of common man. Taught to look outside ourselves for the source of power and grace, we ignore the real presence within us that pleads for closer recognition. The historical Jesus blocks the way to the spiritual Christ in the chamber of the body.

The knowledge that a fragment of the Cosmic Spirit was implanted in the body of each son of man to be his spirit and god was the golden secret imparted by the hierophants in the Mystery Schools to their qualified pupils.

Christianity cannot shake off its pagan parentage. In spite of the almost complete dismantling of the esoteric interpretation, the system retained practically all the outward vestments of the hidden truth. For Christianity, the only salvation from the increase of neglect and scorn is a franc admission of its outgrowth from pagan antecedents, and a willingness to reconstruct its interpretation in relation to them. It must manifest a disposition to lift the stigma of "heathenism" from off the ancient faiths and restore them to their high place of nobility and worth. For in elevating its sources it will exalt itself. It thought to win high status by disparaging its parentage. The outcome has been disastrous.

The name of *Pagan* is a term derived from the Latin *Paganus*, which signifies a rustic, a peasant. When Christianity had entirely triumphed over Greek and Roman polytheism, and when by the order of the Emperor Theodosius, the last temple dedicated to the gods of the nations had been destroyed in the cities, it was found that the people in the country still persisted a considerable time in the ancient cult, which caused them and all their imitators to be called derisively *Pagans*. This appellation, which

could suit the Greeks and Romans in the fifth century A.D. who refused to submit to the dominating religion in the Empire, is false and ridiculous when one extends it to other times, and to other peoples. It cannot be said without at once offending chronology and common sense, that the Romans or Greeks of the time of Caesar, of Alexander, or of Pericles; the Persians, Arabs, Egyptians, Indians, the Chinese, ancient or modern, were *Pagans*; that is to say, peasants disobedient to the laws of Theodosius. These are polytheists, monotheists, mythologists, whatever one wishes, idolators perhaps, but not *Pagans*.

Religious books have been written in cryptic form, with truth heavily veiled under the garb of cipher and symbol. Figures and glyphs had to be devised that would convey meaning to the initiated, but conceal it from the uninstructed. We have mistaken symbolic language for direct speech. The stories were devised to convey cosmic history or cosmogony, theogony, anthropogenesis, and finally individual experience of humans in the psycho-physiological development of mortal life. The whole cycle of the history of unfolding divinity in humanity was dramatized for stage enactment in the annual round of Mystery festivals.

Portions of this drama have filtered down into the ritualism of practically every religion in the world. The epic of the human spirit in earthly embodiment was the theme of every ancient poet and dramatist. Each strove to dress out the elements of the struggle in a new allegorical garb, with a new hero, whether Achilles, Hercules, Horus, Jason, Buddha or Jesus, enacting the central role of the divine genius conquering the animal nature. The theme was the pilgrimage of the spirit through the gamut of the elements. In one type of adventure after another the many features of the history of the divine Spirit in its progress from earth back to the skies were allegorically portrayed. Every aspect of the experience had its appropriate myth.

Religion is far more than a posture of mystic feeling; it was in origin a series of codes, principles and practices given by the demi-gods to early mankind to awaken the torpid genius of our actual divinity. In a true sense it was designed to wield a semi-magical influence to transform animal man into the divinized human! Its rites were formulated with a view to arousing man's memory of his essential deific character. It was in no sense merely worship. It was the most intensely practical and utilitarian culture the world has ever known. We must approach religion with the realization that it is the psychic means designed for the use of humanity in charting its way through the shoals of the particular racial and evolutionary crisis in which it was involved.

If God is to multiply himself, his tree of life must reproduce on its branches a numerous progeny, each child bearing the potentiality of renewing the parent life in its fullness, and of carrying its eternal unfoldment one step ahead. As no living thing can subsist save as a result of a linking together of spirit and form, a unit of spirit must be incubated as the god in a body of material structure. This divine economy gives every creature its spirit, which is its god. In the long chain of linked lives, from God down to mineral crystal, no being is deprived of its possibility of immediate communion with deity, up to the border of its capacity. But the "arm of the Lord" that is potent to bless and to save is within, not without. It is Emmanuel, God with(in) us, the hope of our glory. God is everywhere, within and without; but his son, the Christos, is only within. If he is not sought there, he will not be found. His inner presence is the provision of life that no entity should be bereft of instant contact with its parent god, who dwells in its very body. Man's deity is not a personage in a distant land and time, but he is closer than breathing and nearer than hands and feet. No man can fail in his effort to touch his divinity, but failure of his knowledge that his deity is in himself may paralyze his effort to arouse its latent faculties.

The great doctrine of the “descent” or “fall” can now be clearly envisaged. Deity, in the form of its portion, must leave its own home, its father’s house, and go out into another country, where it will be an exile and a stranger. And like the youth going out from home into a rough world to make a fight of it under temptation and gross influences, he must undergo a long toilsome trial and testing and crucifixion to become an eventual victor and return with laurels. Said Jesus: “I came forth from the Father and am come into the world”.

The tradition of man having lost a Paradise, having been cast out of heaven and thrown into a prison, a dungeon, a pit, a lake of pitch, a dark cavernous underground where suffering was intensified by fire, was almost universal in the background of theological belief over a long period. This wide possession might have remained highly instructive had most people not lost the signal knowledge that the fallen angels, the rebel hosts, the armies of Satan-Lucifer were, collectively, man himself, and that the fiery lake into which they were hurled was just our good earth! This tradition was the far-trailing descendant of the ancient Mysteries, in which the entire drama of man’s evolution was enacted at the great annual festivals.

Looking at the Christian Bible we shall find in plenty the features of the same myth. There is first the well-known declaration of God himself (distorted into a reference to the historical Jesus) that he sent his only-begotten son into the world that all believers might have everlasting life. Then there is the pronouncement in the Gospel of John (3:13): “No man ascendeth into heaven but he that cometh down from heaven.” We read in Revelation (21:3): “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he shall dwell with them ... and God himself shall be with them and he shall be their God.”

The implications and the moral of these traditions of rebellious and outcast angels are these: our divine spirits (for we are the rebellious deities) fled under karmic pressure from heaven to earth, and we have carried the same stubbornness down in our racial history. We refused at first to incarnate in the animal forms, and we still are rebellious in our refusal to take full charge and assume complete mastery over the “animal” segment of our composite nature.

Sacrifice (Latin: *sacra* and *facio*) means “to make sacred”, and has no immediate correlation with the denial to oneself of benefits. If privation came in the process of incarnation, it was incidental, not inherent. The angel legions descended to make a lower order of life holy. Their labor was to sanctify with the gift of divinity the mortal race, and make it immortal and divine.

So severely curtailed were the spirit’s powers in bodily life that it was denominated her incarceration. The spirit was captive, caught in a prison, the doors of which were clamped fast on it. Its jailer was the body with its sensuous nature. And like Paul in prison at Philippi, the spirit would have to convert its jailer and transform his nature to the likeness of its own, to gain its release.

The implications of this cardinal item for ethics, pietism and spirituality are of the highest moment. For all philosophies, which seek escape from the rigors of incarnation by a sheer fiat of philosophical thought, and look to a disembodied state for immediate bliss, this principle is very directly an antidote and corrective. It points clearly to the false premises of all philosophies of “escape”. We cannot escape our obligation to the animal who is lending us his body for our own advancement. We came hither to transfigure these brute bodies, and such a miracle demands the exercise of the highest philosophical virtues and the fixed habits of theoretic contemplation of the beautiful and the good.

Everywhere throughout antiquity earthly life was depicted as our death! The words “death” and “the dead” are used in the old scriptures to refer to living humanity in earthly embodiment. We scurrying mortals are “the dead” of the Bible and other sacred books, and the “death” spoken of there is our living existence here.

To be sure, it is death in a sense to be understood as dramatic and relative only. And this death pertains to the spirit in man, not to the body. Life and death are ever as the two seats on a see-saw. As the one end goes to death the other rises to life. The death of the body releases the spirit to a higher life; conversely, the “death” of the spirit as it sinks into the body opens the day of life to that body. The theological death of the spirit in incarnation is a death that does not kill in any final sense. It is a death from which it rises again at the cycle’s end into a grander rebirth. It is a death that ends in resurrection.

For animal man the advent of the gods was advantageous; indeed it was the very antithesis of death. The plunge into carnality that brought death and woe to the spirit, brought life to animal man. That was part of its purpose. The gods came to “die” that we mortals might “live”. They came that both they and we might have life more abundantly, but at what cost to themselves – a long walk through the valley of the shadow of death. Theirs was the death on the cross of flesh and matter.

The incarnation, for the spirit, was its death and burial. But it was a living death and a burial alive. It was an entombment that carried life on, but under conditions that could be poetically dramatized as “death”. To incarnate was to be plunged into, baptized or immersed in the watery condition of the body! This is the meaning of baptism in ancient theology! Incarnation was regarded as a continuing experience, the periodical release from the body no more breaking the sequence of lives than does our nightly sleep break the continuity of the experience of the days. But as our waking days are the important parts of our earthly activity, the nights being but interludes of repose and renewals of strength, so the positive incarnate periods of our larger lives are the primarily significant phases of our mundane history. The post mortem existence of the spirit was only the hidden side of the life on earth, and regarded as comparatively inconsequential to the larger process of conscious living.

Theologically, “death” was the bodily life on earth, but comprising its two aspects of sleeping and waking, living and dying, in its comprehensive unity. Activity in the body during the waking phase of the “death” was alone determinative of destiny. By unfortunate diversion of the original cryptic sense, the unimportant portion of the experience, the interlude between lives, became the locale to which practically all religious values were shunted when esoteric knowledge was lost. The meaning of all religion has in consequence fled from earth, where it properly belongs and where alone its true value is realized, to heaven, where present focusing of meaning has little utility for man.

And a most significant verse from Isaiah (53:9) can be rescued from mutilation and sheer nonsense only by the application of the new meaning of “death”. Speaking of the divinity, it says that “He hath made his grave with the wicked and the rich in his deaths”. In one incarnation the Christ spirit is cast among the wicked; in another among the rich. And his body is his grave.

St. Paul says some man will ask how the dead are raised and in what body do they come (1 Cor. 15:35). And Christian theology has stultified the sanity of its millions of devotees by giving the answer in the words of the Creed: “The resurrection of the body” – leaving the untutored minds to understand the physical body, or the corpse. Paul states in the verses immediately following that the dead will rise in a spiritual body (1 Cor. 15:44).



The allegory of the birth in the stable or cave was devised to keep mankind in exultant memory of its divinity. Alas! It speaks no more of our divinity. It exalts the godly nature of but one. The hymns of sacred hilarity that are raised for the birth of our Savior are appropriate and efficacious only as that Savior stands as a symbol of the glorious birth within ourselves. Long ago Angelus Silesius, a Christian mystic, admonished Christendom:

“Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,  
But not within thyself, thy soul will be forlorn;  
The cross on Golgotha thou lookest to in vain  
Unless within thyself it be set up again.”

If the birth of the god in each individual body is not the interior meaning of the Nativity, then we celebrate the event to no purpose. No amount of adoration accorded to a newborn king in Judea will avail to redeem a single wayward heart if the Christ Child is not eventually domiciled in the body of the individual. The King of Righteousness must be cradled in the manger of each human body before the myth can work its magic in the world.

This miscarriage of the vital significance of the event has come about through the disuse of the doctrine that may be denominated by God’s dismemberment. The reconstruction of lost wisdom cannot be achieved without the rehabilitation of this great doctrine. Sunk entirely out of sight, its restoration to its office in the body of theology will enable that science to function again with the semblance of its former power.

For God came to earth not in his entirety, not in his single deific unity, but torn into hosts of fragments. How could he hope to enter every mortal life, to tabernacle in every form, if he came as one unit? This is just the mistake that Christian doctrinism made, fatal to humanity at large.

It is a matter of simple logic. To be the divine guest in every human body he had to suffer fragmentation into as many portions as there were to be mortal children for him to father, in order that each might possess a share of his nature. Man on earth could never implement and incorporate the full power of God. The embodiment of superior force in less capacious vehicles is accomplished by the partition of that upper unity into fragments, after the analogy of the seed-bearing plant in its annual production of many embryonic units of its potential nature, each of which, when incubated in the mothering womb of the soil below it, is capable of regenerating its dying parent. And so every divine son of God raises his Father from the dead. The god in man cannot move across the dividing line between the kingdoms, stepping from the divine level down into the human, without suffering a dismantling of his integrity and a partitioning of his “body” into a multitude. The gods could not transplant their full and mature selfhood into man, but only the seeds of its next cycle of growth. Indeed all descent of deity into matter is in embryonic form. The spirit is sent out to take root in matter, there to have its cycle of new growth. The analogy of the seed-bearing plant and its seeds leaves nothing wanting for understanding of the evolutionary method. And it clarifies for us the incarnation, as being the planting, germination, budding and flowering in mortal life, of the seed-germ of divinity. Jesus is the embryonic deity, born in the crib or crypt of man’s body.

If life is to proceed from primal unity to manifest multiplicity and diversity, there is no way for the One to multiply itself save by an initial division of itself. Life proceeds from oneness and identity of nature into number and differentiation, and logic requires that multiformity arise from unity by partition of that unity. The One must break himself into pieces, tear himself apart, and this is the

meaning of the mutilations and tearing to pieces of the gods. The One must give himself to division. And with division comes addition of forms, multiplication of units and combinations, but subtraction of deific power in the divided parts.

Buried within each form, then, is the hidden lord of divine life, and from no one is he absent. He dwells there to be the guide, the guardian, the comforter and informing intelligence of the organism. He is the holy spirit, the flame, the lamp unto our feet. Says St. Paul (1 Cor. 4:7): "For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts ... but we have this treasure in earthen vessels." The ancients often termed this presence the daemon or guardian angel. He is that attendant monitor who stands behind the scenes of the outer life, instant to bless, ready to save, a never-failing help in trouble. His counsel is never lacking, if one seeks it or has not previously stilled its small voice. It reasons with us until many times seven. It abides within our inner shrine, patiently awaiting the hour of our discovery and recognition of its presence.

Twelve baskets of fragments in the New Testament miracle; twelve legions of angels ready to come to assist Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane; twelve stones set in the midst of the Jordan when Joshua led the Israelites from the desert into the Promised Land; twelve fragments of the spirit's dismembered life in the story in the 19<sup>th</sup> chapter of Judges! If the literalist insists that Judges is talking about a concubine in the flesh, and not a principle of partitioned divinity in Greek philosophy, the all-sufficient answer is that he thus keeps the incidents of his Book on a level where they mean nothing and hold no instruction or appeal for the mind of man. And the proof of this is that on the level on which he keeps them nobody pays attention to them. Only through Greek philosophy can we lift much neglected allegories to a height of impressive significance.

The "miracle" of the Lord's feeding the five thousand with the loaves and fishes in the Gospel narrative is a repetition of the dramatization of the Eucharistic rite minus only the accompanying statement from the Christ himself that the loaves were his own body, broken for the multitude of humans. We have set the stage for the full comprehension of the meaning of the gathering up of twelve baskets of fragments by the disciples. In multiplying the bread, he dramatized the doctrine of dismemberment, which was in twelve main sections or groups.

But Christian intelligence is not aware that in the very heart of its own chief rite of formalism this great doctrine lives in unsuspected completeness. St. Paul makes a specific announcement in 1 Corinthians (11:23):

"I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself, namely, that on the night he was betrayed the Lord Jesus took a loaf, and after thanking God he broke it, saying, 'This means my body broken for you; do this in memory of me'."

Here is the fragmentation of the god announced at the heart of the Christian Eucharist! The body of the Messiah broken for us! Jesus dismembered the bread as the indisputable outward symbol of the cosmic truth of his fragmented body of spirit. Christian theology would be beautified and strengthened if this cardinal doctrine could once more be adequately envisaged and included in living presentation. But, the true meaning lost, and the spiritual signification deeply buried under the outer debris of the myths, the Church has nothing more sublime to offer its devotees than the picture of a physical body suffering alleged laceration on a wooden cross! Such a body could not rise and be reconstituted. But the unit of deific virtue, distributed out into myriad earthly vessels of human life, broken thus and buried piecemeal in the soil of mortal flesh, could be re-assembled and re-united in the increasing brotherhood

of humanity. There is no truth in ancient scripture outside of a spiritual rendering of the material. As soon as the Church returns to the true original meaning of the “broken body of our Lord”, it may take up again its prime function as nourisher of the souls of men.

Incarnation brought dismemberment; but this was not the only form of diminished power and beauty incurred in the process. The god also suffered many kinds of disfigurement. Dead and buried in matter, he was typed under a variety of figures representing his suffering and deformity. Isaiah has a touching portrait of the suffering servant in reference to his disfigurement in chapter 53:

“His visage was so marred, more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men. Disfigured till he seemed a man no more, Deformed out of the semblance of a man.”

Theological confusion over the ancient use of bread and wine and various foods as types of spiritual nourishment calls for some clarification. All such figures – heavenly manna, bread, wheat, ambrosia, nectar, meat, corn, wine, honey, barley – are forms of typology suggestive of the deific life offered to mortals for their immortal nutriment. The body of Christ was the intellectual bread broken to make it edible and assimilable by our lower range of digestive capacity. We could not eat the god in his wholeness, or his rawness.

The breaking of the bread and the libation of the wine are simply emblematic of the partition of the unified energy of the god’s life, for distribution to the races of men. The banquets of the gods, the Passover feasts, the funerary meals, the last suppers and the Totemic repasts were all forms of a primary Eucharist. Man was given the transcendent privilege of feeding upon the life of the gods!

Man is literally to eat his Lord’s body; only it is not a physical body. The eating is literal and real enough, but neither it nor the body eaten is physical. We have to picture how we can partake of a spiritual essence or body of divinity. The absorption and transmutation of currents of deific life in our own nature is as possible as our digestion of food. The physical rite was only a symbol and, its higher meaning once apprehended, its efficacy is secured. The eating of bread and drinking of wine outwardly dramatize the inner reality, a transubstantiation which can be literally, though not physically, true. Says St. Paul in 1 Corinthians (10:14-17):

“Shun idolatry, then, my beloved [doubtless the material sense of the symbols]. I am speaking to sensible people: weigh my words for yourselves. The cup of blessing which we bless, is that not participating in the blood of Christ? The bread we break, is that not participating in the body of Christ? (for many as we are, we are one Bread, one Body, since we all partake of the one Bread).”

But the nauseous wrangling over whether the bread and wine were the body and blood of a historical Jesus, or merely symbols of them, points to the frightful desecration of the wholly spiritual and figurative nature of the drama. The inner sense of this mighty typology passed out of ken with the submergence of Greek wisdom under canonical literalism. The body of Christ, emblemed by bread, wheat, ambrosia, meat, flesh or other forms of solid food, can mean nothing but the substantial essence of divine nature; the blood, wine, nectar, ichor, honey and liquid forms of nourishment can mean only that same divinity when liquefied to be poured out in streams of nourishment for man. The cutting of meat is to render it macerable; the grinding of grain is to render it edible; the crushing of grape for wine is to liquefy it for drinking. In every case there is the destruction of the bodily integrity of the food, and a fragmentation for better assimilation. The ritualism of Christianity thus still dramatizes the principles of Greek philosophy, which it persists in denying as part of a true religious system. If we

were to eat the body of Christos and drink his blood, the body had to be macerated and the blood liquefied.

Briefly, solid food typified divine essence on its own high plane, the more ethereal states being the more substantial! Liquid forms emblemized the same divine nature poured out in streams, “rivers of vivification”, for the feeding of “secondary natures”. Also in its descent godhood became admixed with the “watery” elements of life down here and was further liquefied thereby. Solid food was the emblem of stability; liquid food the sign of that mobile essence which was to run out in blessing.

The body of Christ could not be mystically eaten in its wholeness and unreduced power. It had to be crushed and bruised, broken and mutilated, so that from its deep gashes would flow out the living streams. If taken literally, the wounded side is not only gruesome, but carries only a feeble suggestion of its grand meaning. And herein lies the spiritual meaning of all blood sacrifice and “shed blood”. There is no truth found in it until for “blood” (of the gods) we read “divine spirit”. Had early theology made it clear that the “shed blood” of God connoted spiritual force, which we must embody in our lives, there would have been a vastly less amount of actual “bloodshed” in European history. The god shed his life essence for us out of his earth-bruised body of spirit essence.

In Heb. 9:22 we read: “And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.” Few Christians can tell why it was that the human race had to be redeemed by the blood of an innocent victim poured out for its guilt. There could be found no ground of fitness in the necessity that made a being of higher rank, a god, come down and shed his blood gratuitously for our sins. With its linkage to evolution and anthropology cut totally away from it, there was no way to connect the doctrine with elucidative reference. The picture of a blood-lustful God (killing his only son) terrifies us. But such revulsion is gratuitous. What might cause abhorrence is that blood as a symbol should have been taken for blood as substance, and that alleged civilized history has been deluded with the picture of a human personage buying unearned redemption for a race by the gruesome act of pouring out the blood of his physical body on a wooden cross! To a degree distressing to contemplate, religion has befogged the mind of the world by converting the forms of ancient tropism (i.e. figure of speech) into a sense repugnant even unto the intelligence of children.

The entire theological theme of blood sacrifice, so literalized in the Old Testament rites, reduces itself to the one simple meaning of divine life poured out to circulate vitally through the mental and physical veins of man on earth. Mortal man underwent a transfusion of deific “blood”. Divine energies of consciousness course and thrill through our life. This higher infusion regenerates us, makes us new. The lamb slain on the altar was but the ceremonial token of this meaning. The bull-bath of Mithraic rites was the washing away of sin in the blood of the Tauric emanation of deity (the bull). On the other side, however, the consuming of the animal on the altar by fire that flashed down from heaven was the token of the transfiguration of the animal nature in man into immortal purity by the aeonial “burning” of the godly fire in life after life. Man was nourished in the blood of the gods; but the god was refreshed and nourished in the substance of animal life, as the candle flame feeds upon the animal tallow below it, converting it from gross substance into divine flame. That a race of people could for centuries believe that God demanded the killing and burning of actual animals on actual altars for his sensuous delight of sniffing the odors of roasting flesh – a sweet savor unto his nostrils – almost destroys faith in human intelligence. The imputation of gory sensualism to supreme deity, the unconscionable assumption that he would delight in the slaughter of billions of his own creatures, and that he would discharge man’s sins by accepting the suffering of a lower order of his creatures as yet

incapable of sin, form a list of theological aberrations that have gone far to throw the general mind into nearly barbarian pigheadedness.

The cleansing power of the blood was in part borrowed from the fact of the menstrual process. The ancient allegorists did not hesitate to employ the generative functions in the way of cosmic analogues. Each incarnation in earthly bodies subjected the spirit to a sort of menstrual purification, working, so to say, a lot of bad blood out of the system of god-man. It linked him with a body of flesh which came “under the law” of periodicity and purgation.

We commemorate our partaking of the Lord’s body and blood to remind our sluggish sense that there dwells in us a god, whose nature is compounded with that of a beast. In the drama the Lord assigned a pointed reason for his institution of the rite. When the Christos concluded his injunction to eat the broken fragments of his body and to drink the flowing stream of his life-blood with the command: “Do this in memory of me”, he set Plato’s great doctrine at the very heart of Christianity. But Christianity could not catch the relevance of the statement because it did not have the correlative tenets of the dismemberment and disfigurement. The restoration of memory can be understood only in relation to a previous loss of it. Paradise regained must follow Paradise lost. So “rememberment” is the repairing of dismemberment. Reminiscence is the recuperation of shattered memory. Death must have its resurrection. Divine spirit, dispersed into all forms of divulsion and enfeeblement, torn into fragments, with the links of connection lost, condemned to wander blindly in murks and shadows, must be re-integrated in the end. “My reason returned unto me”, says the reconstituted Nebuchadnezzar. The Prodigal Son remembered his forgotten Father’s house on high. Away off in that “far country”, the Vale of Lethe and Land of Oblivion, the exiled spirit begins to recover from its amnesia, and the divine nostalgia sets in to lead it back home.

When, therefore, Jesus breaks the bread and sips the wine in token of his death till he come – his being torn to pieces and dismantled – he is dramatizing the necessity of their “remembering” his scattered selfhood in their lives.

Out of the consideration of the divine food here elaborated there should accrue to the modern mind a new and grander sense of Christ’s ordinance: “Do this in memory of me.” And an elevated consciousness arising from the double sense of the word “remember” should lift humanity once more to an awareness of its mission. This mission is to bind up the broken and dismembered body of the Lord of Hosts, by welding together the nations in the spirit of a lofty humanity. In the light of restored sublimity to the doctrine, every individual will know that the appeal to remember his deity comes not from an isolated figure in ancient Judea, but from the living god within. This god within is begging all to drink the cup of communion with him and thus hasten to forge that recollection of him which alone will effect his release from the dreary grave of the body.

The spirit or god in man has been represented as in actuality the fetus of a great divine being in the womb of earthly nature and individually in the body of each human, awaiting delivery. The task of evolution in the human round is to bring this embryo to the consummation of its pre-natal period, and to give it birth at last into the kingdom of the celestials. Birth is delivery from some womb. Matter is the mother of the gods and the body of physical man is the womb of the god who is struggling to come to being in it. All nature is in labor to optimize the growth of the spiritual principle. Paul says that “even we ourselves groan within ourselves”, waiting for our redemption through the new birth. The apostle adds that the body is the temple of the living God, and emphasizes that “the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are” (1 Cor. 3:17). With all this direct force of literal statement to empower his

utterance, a stupid world has never seemed to grasp that Paul was delineating an actual physiological fact. He finally shrieks at our dullness with the cry: “Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is within you?” (2 Cor. 13:5)

The ancient Messiah was a representative figure coming from age to age, cycle to cycle. The constant repetition of type was the assurance of its unfailing fulfillment. For the ancients, the idea of a fulfillment “once for all” would have been to accept the possibility of stopping dead the march of the universe. And for one to be saved in a final sense for all eternity would have been to drop out of step with the rhythmic pulse of life. To them salvation meant to consummate the present step or cycle and keep marching on with nature. The coming of the Messiah was taking place in the life of every man at all times. Each man had his evolutionary solstice, his Christmas; and he would have his Easter. The symbols were annuals; the actual events they typed in mankind’s history were perennials. In nature every process is but typical and repetitive. But it is typical of all other process and of life in its entirety.

The coming of ancient Christs was not historical. They did not come as persons, but as principles. They come to transubstantiate the body that is host to them. Life is immortal, but its immortality is won by the effort of an endless succession of cycles of birth and death, manifestation and retirement. Immortality is through repetition of cycle; and that is why the cycles of nature that are repeated before our eyes are set as the symbols of our life.

“Before Abraham I was” simply states that the spirit is more ancient than the body. The womb of nature that the spirit enters is a new formation; but the entering spirit is a spark of primordial fire that existed from beyond time itself.

We find the sleeping god called upon to awake and rise up in the Psalms. “Arise, O God, and awake for me” (Ps. 7:6). “Awake; why sleepest thou, O Lord? Rise up for an help” (Ps. 44:23). “Then the Lord awaked as one out of a sleep and he smote his adversaries backward” (Ps. 78:65).

From the above analyses, we believe a lot of progress has been made in our quest after God, or Universal Spirit, manifesting in all and through all as a ceaseless unerring intelligence. We now know that man’s indwelling Spirit is:

- His share of God, Chi or Oke-Chikwu in Igbo;
- His Creator in his mother’s womb;
- His Sustainer;
- His Shepherd and unerring Guide, if the Mind would only listen.

### **1.3. Worship of God**

Worship of God describes the ways we choose to commune with God. It could be through prayer, homage, reverence, adoration, meditation, etc. Whatever the method chosen, the objective is a coming together of God and Man.

Which God is man trying to commune with through the ritual of worship? Is it the Universal Spirit or the Spirit that dwells in his body? The answer is:

Since God is Spirit and those who worship It must do so in spirit, the communion is between Spirits – the individual Spirit and the Universal Spirit. Access to the Universal Spirit must necessarily pass

through the individual Spirit, because no one goes to the Father save through his Son. So, man must first commune with his resident God or Spirit. The resident Spirit then communes with the Universal Spirit.

Hence true worship or communion is a deliberate effort by the Mind to interact with the Spirit within the Body. All petitions of the Mind are addressed to the resident Spirit, whose duty it is to consider or ignore them. An old prayer to the resident Spirit runs thus:

Grant us good whether prayed for or unsought by us;  
But that which we ask amiss, do thou avert.

Noting that the worship of God is a Spirit to Spirit process, we may note that the outer ritual that accompanies worship has little relevance. It is a device used to create the appropriate mental state necessary for communication between the Mind and the resident Spirit. The required state of mind may be obtained through: isolation, silence and meditation; chants and incantations; music and dancing; etc. Hence, the Spirit tells us:

However done, whatever the form of your worship, you all worship me.

Men worship God in diverse, but equivalent, ways. The God is the same – Spirit – but the rituals or methods for approaching It differ.

Be humble if you wish to obtain wisdom, but do not debase yourself. Humility is not slavishness; reverence is not fawning. How can God take pleasure in abasement, which a noble-minded man could never view without pity?

For how can the Body or Mind be debased? Each is most honorable in its own domain and only dishonorable in proportion as it fails to do its duty in sacrifice to the Spirit, whose grace or good-will is its very life and being. It is the duty of man to worship the Spirit and not to grovel; to present that which is worthy to the Spirit, and not to delight in debasement; to value rightly or search out the true worth of the Divine, of whom he is, and in whom he lives and moves and has his being.

“Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.” Phil. 2:12-13.

And if that Worker is the Divine Spirit, what reason is there that It should humble Itself, or debase Itself? For the very Power that makes man work out his own salvation is that Spirit Itself.

#### **1.4. Prayer**

We note that back of the word “Army” is found a multitude of functional parts: infantry units, armored units, engineers, signal, marines, airborne units, etc. These are the organs, arms and limbs of the “Army”. Similarly, back of the word “God” or “Spirit” we find a multitude of functional parts: Gods or Spirits.

The man who knows himself (the Initiate) is conscious of the realities of the Spirit within him and of its solidarity with the Universal Spirit or God. He knows that his own Spirit can commune with other Spirits.

He therefore feels the need to obtain inspiration, impulsion or support from the Spirit. He requests the assistance of his Spirit or the assistance of other Spirits: he prays.

Prayer is a willful and mental act. Can you mentally see what you are saying in words? This is the secret! The spoken word is only a mantle with which the Initiate clothes his mental images.

The effect of prayer is to lift the Mind towards the Spirit within. Can you, at will, stir up your Spirit? The goal of prayer is to momentarily join the Mind and the Spirit through the action exercised by an idealized sentiment (or mental image) on a magically developed human will. The duo of mental visualization and willpower provide the key to success in prayer. Hence, a trained imagination and an unwavering concentration are basic. The strain on the nervous system should be evident to whoever has investigated the issue. The act of true prayer is of so great importance that it should not become a habit. Excessive exaltation of our Spirit is akin to burning our candle from both ends and a breakdown of the nervous system is a possible end-result.

The Mind prays:

- (1) in order to supplement its inadequate insight with insight from the Spirit;
- (2) in order to get guidance on the appropriateness of its plans;
- (3) in order to vivify its internal potentials, which will later sustain its efforts.

In Matthew 6: 6-8, we are requested to pray to our “Father who is in the secret place”:

“6. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.

7. And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.

8. Therefore do not be like them. For your Father knows the things you have need of before you ask Him.”

After the above, a sample prayer is given and is called: The Lord’s Prayer. We are told:

“9. In this manner, therefore, pray:

Our Father in heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.

Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done  
On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts (to You),  
As we forgive our debtors.

And do not lead us into temptation,



But deliver us from the evil one.  
For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.”

With fasting, Matthew 6: 16-18, the emphasis is again with respect to the “Father who is in the secret place”:

“16. Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

17. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face,

18. so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.”

Further, the Lord’s Prayer is addressed to “Our Father in heaven.” And we are also told that the kingdom of heaven is within us. Indeed, we find in Luke 17: 20-21:

“20. Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation;  
21. nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

Hence, the “Father in heaven” to whom prayer is addressed is within us: It is simply our resident Spirit.

We are asked to bless our food before eating it. This is generally done by saying some prayer – with outstretched fingers – over the food we are going to eat. Few understand that by uttering a prayer – to our Spirit – with our fingers stretched over a plate of food, we are simply asking our Spirit to flow out of our fingertips and bless the food we want to give the Body. The same is true in the imposition of hands to heal the sick. The healer transfers some of his Spirit-force to beef-up the Spirit-force of the patient. We shall have more on this later.

In the well-known dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus, the latter asks the question, “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter his mother’s womb and be born again?” And Jesus proceeds to suggest the required approach: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.”

And where is the “Kingdom of God?” Jesus himself declares, “It is within you!” Then why have we so persistently and illogically continued to locate it in the skies? The Kingdom of God is within the body, and a consciousness of it is attainable only by a rebirth of the mind.

In conceiving of this regeneration of the mind as some mystical process, sanctified by the rite of baptism, as the church has taught, the world has lost sight of the most marvelous, scientific principle in human life – the principle of mental renewal or regeneration. The Alchemists knew better, as shown by the process described in their Great Work (see section on Mental Alchemy).

According to John 4:22, “You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship!” Christ is the indwelling Spirit, incarnate in all forms. Christ is not a name but a title, designating the person who was anointed by his Spirit through the initiation of mental regeneration. Christ, from the Greek Christos, means the “anointed one”. The Master’s name is Jesus, who won the title of a “Christ” after

his regeneration and baptism by John the Baptist. He thus became “Jesus-the-Christ” or “Jesus-Christ”. Hence, Christ as a particular, divine personality never existed, but as an eternal, divine principle that awakens in worthy seekers, Christ always exists: “Before Abraham was, I am!” (John 8:58). In John 6:51, Christ tells what he is: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.”

Let us note well that it is this same bread from heaven that we ask of the “Father in heaven” in the Lord’s Prayer:

“Our Father in heaven  
Give us this day our daily bread (from heaven!).”

Thus the Father, bread and heaven in question are all within the body! Here we have an open road to immortality in the flesh, if only we are able to discover the significance of this “living bread.” That there was a secret doctrine, not openly given out, is declared both by Jesus himself and by some of the apostles. Jesus says in John 16:12, “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.” To many of his parables he appended the remark, always indicative of some mystic meaning, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!” Again he says in Mark 4:11, “To you” (his seekers) “it has been given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those who are outside, all things come in parables.” Paul also declares the word of God to be “a mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations.”

In Colossians 1: 26-27 (KJV), we read concerning the mystery of Christ:

“26. For ages and ages this message was kept secret from everyone, but now it has been explained to God's people.  
27. God did this because he wanted you Gentiles to understand his wonderful and glorious mystery. And the mystery is that Christ lives in you, and he is your hope of sharing in God's glory.”

To know Jesus as the personification of this mystery, and to know that the mystery is directly connected with human life or Spirit, the life or Spirit of every man, puts one mentally on the way to the solution of the mystery, while to think of Jesus otherwise, is to bar one mentally from the correct conception.

Prayer and worship relate to a sincere dialogue between the human Mind or Soul and the indwelling Spirit. “When shall I come and behold the face of God?” (Ps. 42:2) and “Praise the Lord, O my Soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name!” (Ps. 103:1).

“Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord!” (Isa. 51:9); “Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion!” (Isa. 52:1). Man should ask the Lord within him to rise up, to rouse him, to stir up his sleepy Soul; and should call on himself to cooperate actively with the inward grace of his Spirit, to “rekindle the gift of God that is within” us (2 Tim. 1:6).

Jesus, your own Spirit, sleeps in your belly, as he once did when he was in the ship with his seekers. But they, fearing to perish, woke him and he quickly saved them from the storm. In the same way do you rouse him by prayer and wake him with the cry of your desire, and he will quickly arise and help you.

The Ancients teach that we should shift our locus from the head to the heart (the solar plexus). This means a shift from meditation and praying with thoughts at a superficial level, to a deeper, more affective prayer of communion with God. Man must descend from his head into his heart; he should feel more and think less. And to concentrate the Mind in the heart means to establish the attention in the heart, and feel the ever-present and invisible Spirit. Let us go back to thinking in images or symbols. The Spirit understands only the language of images – it creates in the image and likeness of something!

During prayer and worship, as my Spirit rises up and my Mind or Soul descends, there is in the heart a meeting of the Self with the Lord. I find my center and I find the Lord. In Revelation 21:3, we read:

“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God himself shall be with them.”

In John 3:3, we read: “Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Endure, and there shall dawn within your breast eternal rest. We are told that:

Like the kingdom of Heaven, the  
Fountain of Youth is within us;  
If we seek for it elsewhere,  
Old shall we grow in the search.

Peace is in the silent flow  
Of solitary thought;  
In calm, half-meditated dreams  
And reasonings self-taught.

As you know God, you have faith in Him. And according to our knowledge so is our faith or trust.

In Mathew 3:2, we read: “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” When we repent, we repent about a certain act. Our repentance is always in reference to certain acts, but the repentance spoken of in the Scriptures is not about certain acts – it is about our being. It is a question of what we have been, instead of what we have done. We have been asleep and unconscious; we have lived in darkness instead of the inner light of our Spirit. When they say, "Repent!" they mean repent for the whole way we have lived up to now, the way we are. It is not a question of asking forgiveness from somebody; it means a returning. The word “repent” originally meant return. In Aramaic, which Jesus and John the Baptist used as their language, “repent” means return – return to your Spirit or source, come back to your original being.

By continuing to wear the mask of the Ego, we have become hypocrites. We continue to fight the Spirit within and we resemble the legendary four monkeys:

- (1) The first monkey covers its ears with both hands, refusing to hear the truth.
- (2) The second monkey covers its eyes with both hands, refusing to see the truth.
- (3) The third monkey covers its mouth with both hands, refusing to speak the truth.
- (4) The fourth monkey covers its genitals with both hands, to hide its pleasures.

The hypocrite is against God because he refuses to listen to or manifest his Spirit.

“Repent” means drop all the masks that your Mind is wearing, dissolve your Ego. It is not a question between you and others, it is a question between you and your Spirit or God. “Repent” means drop all the masks and stand before your God in your original face – the way he has made you in your mother’s womb. Let that be your only face – the way he wanted you to be. Be yourself! Empty your boat or Mind.

This is what Jesus means by conversion. It is not moving from one religion to another, because there are not two religions in the world. There cannot be two: religion is one. Religion (re ligio) means: To bind back to the source. Hear a simple illustration of Religion:

A mother ties a cord about her child, holding the cord-ball in her hand. The child is free to run hither and yon because the wise mother lets the cord play through her fingers as far as the child desires to run. Of course the child grows up thinking that he is his own master; to tell him that his mother has him tied with a string would anger him. But when the day comes, as it surely will, when he turns his face toward his mother and sees the cord and realizes her wisdom and love, and he accepts it with joyous understanding, then he has found Religion.

The mother in the above illustration is our Spirit and the child attached to the chord held by Mother-Spirit is the human Soul or Mind.

Religion and science are very similar, in the sense that both are experimental. In science we have the separate components of the experimenter, the object experimented upon, and the experiment; while in religion the experimenter, the object of the experiment, and the experiment are all combined in the experimenter or individual himself.

In Revelation 22: 12-14, the Spirit says:

12. And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work.

13. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.

14. Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city.

Finally in Revelation 22: 17, we read:

17. And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Noting that the Universal Spirit is what the Alchemist calls the Bride, we end with this call of the Incarnate Spirit and the Universal Spirit:

17b. And the (indwelling) Spirit and the Bride (Universal Spirit) say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.

Remember that we are told in John 7:38 that this water of life is in our belly: “Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water”. Let us then return to the Spirit within – our Father and Mother – and

follow Its unerring prompts. Thus shall we drink from our own well and grow from within outwards. This is the road to happiness and true salvation.

### **1.5. Healing**

The action of a spiritually attuned Mind upon other Minds is very marked. The strong influence which pure Minds exert over other Minds, without the use of spoken words and independently of the ordinary channels of communication through any of the five senses, is a subject of importance to the seeker.

The system of mental healing is not new in either its philosophy or practice. It is one of the fundamental principles of Christianity: the doctrine of salvation by faith in our Father. It is said in Matthew 21:22: "And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

As noted earlier true prayer is not a repetition of words, but a certain receptive state of trust, a child-like attitude of the Mind of man, in relation to the indwelling Spirit. The promise is: "Ask, and it will be given to you." That of which we form a conception, and which we long for and desire, becomes a living reality, a real thing in the ambient universal life; and what we thus ask in trust is soon reflected back to us somewhat as a sound is returned in an echo, or evaporated water in raindrops to refresh the earth. Hence, that which we ask in trust with an aspiration, or breathing out of our Spirit into the all-surrounding Universal Spirit is returned to us as an inspiration or inbreathing. This is the secret of all occult phenomena: action and reaction. "As you sow, so will you reap."

In all our mental and physical ailments, there is help at hand, through our Spirit. When man reaches up, his Spirit or Christ reaches down; for in the dynamics of Mind, psychological effects can be produced and thoughts and ideas communicated from Mind to Mind or from Spirit to Spirit. The wonderful cures by gifted men are not miraculous, but form part of a great Art, with which we have not become fully acquainted.

Much in many cases is achieved through vivid imagination. From mesmeric experience imagination may be designated as the Spirit center or starting-point of reality. If there were no imagination there would be no reality, either spiritual or material, for the Spirit must imagine before it can create. It creates in the "image and likeness" of something.

Every Mesmerist knows that physical effects may be produced on sensitives through the imagination only; effects that will compare in every respect to physical effects produced through physical causes. He can accelerate or lower the beatings of the heart, make his sensitive hot or cold – really not in imagination but through the imagination. Imagination is so powerful that we might say it glides or condenses into materiality. The sections above on imagination could be read again for further insight.

When any complaint returns after treatment by faith or Mind-cure, it is caused by the Mind dwelling on the reminiscences of the past complaint, and thereby creating the disease afresh, through the agency of the very same power that cured it.

When a faith-healer, ignorant of the elementary laws of mesmerism performs a cure, he always leaves the patient's imagination at the very same exalted pitch which was necessary when performing the cure. He thus leaves a door open for the return or creation of any disease that the patient can most vividly imagine, which is of course likely to be that from which he has just been relieved.

The imagination being left in this exalted condition, the patient is in the very same condition as a sensitive under mesmeric influence, almost at the mercy of any operator.

After a cure, therefore, the operator should extract a promise from the patient that there shall be no return of the complaint. This promise given, spiritual resistance is awakened, and its material effect will follow.

The potent force which in different periods has posed as magic, mesmerism, hypnotism, electro-biology, psychic force, and a score of other names, is really Spirit-force which plays so important a part in every phase of existence.

The fountains of spiritual healing, or the systems of healing through faith and laying-on of hands made known through Christ, can never be drawn dry, but will always well up from the overflowing springs of universal life.

Expectant attention will do much, but it often happens that physical changes are set in motion by the operation of an external will, which shows that Mind is a force to be reckoned with in all curative processes. This is the general principle taught by Pythagoras, and one of great antiquity. The key to all this is to establish a continuous identity of molecular vibration between the indwelling Spirit of man and the ambient Universal Spirit. We polarize the resident Spirit relative to the Universal. When man reaches this octave of vibration, he raises the magic wand of his will and quiets the tempest. This is the true radiation of atmosphere. The full understanding of the dual force – the Spirit within and the Bride without – is the secret of will. We may re-visit the sections above on polarization of the Mind's attention and mental regeneration.

The human will has the same effect on the ambient Life that the magnet has on iron. If the Mind of the physician is properly attuned to his Spirit, he can project his mental creations across miles of space, for distance is nothing in the ambient spiritual world.

The best method of learning the true principle of mental healing is to commence the regeneration of our Minds by the calm and silent work on ourselves, with a view to giving our Minds the required opportunity to wed itself to the Spirit and thereby grow to the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Many diseases may be cured by harmonizing the rapport between Mind and Spirit. When a man gains even a few glimpses of his true nature, and perceives intuitively that the Spirit is immortal and cannot be physically diseased, he feels in himself a renewed impulse toward the externalization of that idea. Thus he "puts on Christ," the Christ within, which, when discovered to the consciousness of the mind, seeks to clothe itself with an atmosphere and a body that is harmonious to it. This leads to health and truth; while error, which is disease, is thus thrown out.

When called to act upon a patient with the spiritual remedy, endeavor in silence to calm him that he may become receptive to your magnetism. Then in your own mind silently form a mental image of the patient, as you would want him to be – healthy; and if he is in any degree receptive you will inaugurate a change within him and his whole inner being which, sooner or later, will work itself outward into a bodily expression. Thus the operator plants in the patient's mind the germ of light which will soon illuminate it, bearing a living seed of a higher and better condition. This will develop into consciousness within him and work itself outward, dispelling all error and disease. Revisit the sections of this book on mental imagery and projection.

If the mental images of the operator are vivid they will be projected onto the mind of the patient, who becomes conscious of them, and these ideas ultimately become a physiological impulse in the direction of health and strength. This is the power of Mind and Spirit over the body and its diseases.

My Chiropractor<sup>25</sup> has the following statement on his complimentary card:

1. “The power that made the body heals the body.”

He has also written the following statements on the walls of his Center:

2. “The circle of life revolves around the spine.”
3. “Look well to the spine for the cause and correction of Dis-ease.”

In line with the last two statements, the Doctor’s diagnosis and treatment of disease are centered on the spine. He rightly asserts that the human Microcosm is healthy if and only if the spine is healthy. To see the truth in this assertion we shall provide some more information on the spine and its properties (see also our book: *This Is What We Are!* – Trafford Publishing).

For the first statement, “The power that made the body heals the body,” we have already seen what that power is – the indwelling Spirit! So, let us proceed to the second and third statements relative to the spine and its properties.

The spine or vertebral column runs through the span occupied by the head, the chest and the abdomen. It contains all the nerves that link these centers together. It is the keyboard of man’s sympathetic nervous system – the habitat of the Spirit within. The spine in man is made up of thirty-three segments or vertebrae that are generally counted in five groups:

1. The cervical vertebrae, being 7 vertebrae making up the bones of the neck; the first cervical vertebra is appropriately called the atlas as it supports the head.
2. The thoracic or dorsal vertebrae, being 12 bones attached to the ribs, completing the rib-cage and making up the trunk bones.
3. The lumbar vertebrae, being five bones in the small of the back or loins.
4. The sacral vertebrae, being five bones in the rump [buttocks], lying between the two haunch bones, and forming the back-wall of the pelvis; in the adult these are fused into a triangular bone called the sacrum (holy bone).
5. The coccygeal vertebrae, being four small bones forming the coccyx.

The spine encloses the spinal cord.

We may recall from our book, *This Is What We Are!*, that the sympathetic nervous system comprises a chain of nerve centers running from the brain to the base of the spinal cord (inside the spine), and a peripheral series of nerves and ganglia (on the spine itself) connected by a network of nerve-fibers known as plexuses. The ganglia of the sympathetic nerve system are grouped into twenty-six pairs as follows:

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- ❑ Three pairs of cranial ganglia lying along the trigeminal nerve.
- ❑ Three pairs of cervical ganglia connected to the heart.
- ❑ Twelve pairs of dorsal ganglia connected to the lungs and the solar plexus.
- ❑ Four pairs of lumbar ganglia which are also connected to the solar plexus and, thence, to the stomach, small intestine, liver, pancreas and kidneys.
- ❑ Four pairs of sacral ganglia, connected to the rectum, the genital organs and the bladder.

These twenty-six pairs of ganglia in the sympathetic nerve system are, like the vertebrae, divided into five groups corresponding to the five virtues represented by the pentagram: purity, justice, love, wisdom and truth.

Purity is linked to the four pairs of sacral ganglia at the base of the chain of ganglia, for purity is the base, the foundation.

Justice corresponds to the four pairs of lumbar ganglia (located in the region of the kidneys that are related to Libra, the symbol of equilibrium) which are connected to the digestive organs (stomach, liver, intestines, etc.). When someone does not eat wisely, the balance is upset, the two pans of the scales are no longer level and the resulting problems show that justice has intervened to restore order.

Love is linked to the twelve pairs of dorsal ganglia. Love is a force that expands one's being (this is reflected in the act of breathing); a force that links us to all other beings, to the whole universe, symbolized and represented by the twelve Constellations of the Zodiac.

Wisdom is connected to the three pairs of cervical ganglia that are linked to the heart (the blood pump) and solar plexus (the true heart) by means of the cardiac nerves: true wisdom comes from the heart.

Truth is linked to the three pairs of cranial ganglia, for truth is the goal of all our endeavors. Truth is above everything else.

Truth, wisdom, love, justice and purity are our points of contact with the harmonious forces of the universe from which we receive so many blessings. Each one of these virtues enhances the functioning of the ganglia or organs to which it is linked, just as each and every fault against these virtues upsets that functioning.

For a very long time it was believed that there was no direct connection between the brain and the sympathetic nerve system, but we now know better. As the brain cannot act directly on the internal organs, it uses a conductor, the spine and the sympathetic system; and the heart or solar plexus is the principal center of this system. Those who know themselves endeavor to raise this link between the solar plexus and the brain to the level of consciousness, for once it has become a conscious collaboration the rest is easy: by means of the solar plexus they can communicate with their physical organs and control and fortify them.

Our psychic condition is very closely connected to our physical condition. Sorrow, for example, acts on the sympathetic system and triggers the vasoconstrictor function, causing the walls of the arteries to contract. This contraction caused by sorrow reduces the flow of blood and, consequently, affects digestion, respiration and so on, and then one feels pressured, ill-used and neglected. The feeling may not correspond to reality at all, but it is the impression one has! If, by contrast, we want to trigger



reactions that expand and relax, we must call on joy and love. Instead of waking up every morning feeling depressed and thinking, “I have no money. The woman I love is unfaithful to me. I still haven’t got that letter I have been waiting for, etc., etc.”, we must do our utmost to cultivate positive, happy thoughts. A true seeker gets up every morning with the following thought addressed to his Spirit, “Lord God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, thank you! I am alive and well, I can breathe, walk about, sing, see and hear – You have given me all these priceless gifts. Thank you, thank you, thank you!” We should get up in the morning joyfully, with a heart full of gratitude to our Spirit – the Lord. If human beings grow old so quickly it is because they don’t know how to call on joy to be their constant companion.

The heart or solar plexus is an extremely important center, and we must be careful to avoid whatever makes it tense because this, in turn, leads to the contraction of the blood vessels and other ducts and canals of the body. And if the blood and other body fluids cannot circulate fast enough, waste products build up on the walls of the ducts and can lead to serious health problems. The thing, which most seriously upsets the solar plexus, is the chaotic, tempestuous exaltation of the Spirit within, through fear, anger, jealousy and sexual passion. And as the solar plexus is the reservoir of our life forces, this loss of harmony deprives us of our magnetic energies. When one receives a severe shock or a sudden fright, one feels that all the strength has gone out of him; his legs give way beneath him, his hands tremble and his head feels completely empty. This is a sign that one’s solar plexus has been drained of its energy.

The solar plexus and the brain are two key poles: the one masculine and emissive (the solar plexus) and the other, feminine and receptive (the brain).

And how do the two poles communicate? Through the bridge and keyboard of the spine coupled with the autonomous nerve system!

The Soul is domiciled in the head, while the Spirit is centered in the belly (solar plexus and base of the spine). The spine and the related autonomous nerve system provide the bridge for the harmonious communication between the Soul and the Spirit – the heart or solar plexus being the bridal chamber for the Soul’s wedding with the Spirit.

The Book of Revelation ends with St. John’s vision of the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, and a description of the walls, the foundations and the twelve gates. Through that city flows a great river:

“And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the middle of its street, and on either side of the river, was the tree of life, which bore twelve fruits, and yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree were for the healing of nations.” (Rev. 22: 1-2)

How can the tree be on both sides of the river? If we take this description literally it does not make sense. In reality, of course, the tree astride the river is a symbol; it exists also in us, and the river, too, flows through us. For it is we who are the city, and in the middle of its street – the spine – flows a river with a tree growing on its banks. The solar plexus represents the tree growing on either side of the river and the river designates the currents and vital forces flowing through it from the throne of God and the Lamb at base of the spine. And where are the roots of this tree? The roots are the twelve pairs of dorsal ganglia and nerves: twelve branches which produce twelve fruits a year and they, in turn, are linked to the twelve signs of the Zodiac.

The roots of the Tree of Life which St. John describes as being on both banks of the river, therefore, are the groups of nerves and ganglia on either side of the spine. The spine is the link between the head and abdomen – our heaven and our earth. The river, says St. John, takes its source at the top of the mountain, “proceeding from the throne of God”. In man, the top of the mountain, heaven, the center, is in his belly, at the base of the spine.

For the moment, man’s spine has a purely anatomical, physiological function; its spiritual potential is still dormant. So far, only Adepts have succeeded, thanks to the powers of their Spirit that they have awakened, in mobilizing the spiritual potential of the spine and in using it to accomplish tremendous spiritual and magical work in the world. We saw above that the new birth resulted in the marriage of the mind in the head with the Spirit rising from the base of the spine.

In the Bible the spinal cord and the spine are spoken of as “the rod and the staff” of the Lord. We find this in Psalm 23, where we read:

“Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,  
I will fear no evil;  
For You are with me;  
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”

In Isaiah 14:5, we find:

“The Lord has broken the staff of the wicked, and the scepter of the rulers.”

And in Jeremiah 48:16-17 we read:

“16. The calamity of Moab is near at hand,  
And his affliction comes quickly.  
17. Bemoan him, all you who are around him;  
And all you who know his name,  
Say, ‘How the strong staff is broken,  
The beautiful rod!’”

If the rod, scepter and staff spoken of above were just some kind of shepherd’s crook or some emperor’s wand, it is evident that the breaking of such an object by the Lord would be of no consequence to the wicked person or a ruler. If, however, the rod, scepter and staff refer rather to the spine and spinal cord, then the breaking of them by the Lord is indeed a calamity for whoever is concerned.

From the above, we can now see the truth behind the two statements on the walls of the Tema Chiropractic Center, viz.:

“The circle of life revolves around the spine.”  
“Look well to the spine for the cause and correction of Dis-ease.”

Let us remember that the spine and its related nerve system provide the basic network over which the Spirit moves to ensure the harmonious functioning of the body and mind. The spine and its related

nerve system are analogous to an electric network and the Spirit is analogous to the electric current which plays across the network. Let us then conclude this section by asserting with the Chiropractor that the human Microcosm is healthy if and only if the spine is healthy. Refer to our exercise under Care of the Body.

Continuing our clarification process the following is a brief description of the levels of Being from the Godhead to the universe of forms. We provide here the basics for the understanding of Pagan philosophy, which is at the foundation of Christian religious thought.

### **1.6. The Godhead**

This is the unmanifest origin of all things. It is Non-Existence, because ex-ist-ence signifies a standing forth. This is the level of Being in latency, which is named Chaos, Darkness, Unknown God, or Infinite Space. It is the fused state of the triune aspect of Being comprising: Consciousness, the Content of Consciousness and Power (the Spirit or Will) that relates Consciousness to its Content. Manifestation or creation is the cyclical unfoldment of the fused Godhead, resulting in a living universe. Dissolution follows unfoldment, ad infinitum. Just as day follows night, it is worlds without end or the serpent swallowing its tail. Between manifestations all is withdrawn into the Darkness of Non-Existence. The Spirit is the power that holds together the two poles of the Godhead and, in due season, the same Spirit unfolds the fused contents of the Godhead to produce a living universe. It is this unfoldment that we call creation. This Spirit is the Breath, Will or Word (Logos) of the Godhead. It is the outgoing Son of the hidden Father-Mother, the One Life, the Intelligent Electric Entity.

### **1.7. Manifestation: From the invisible to the visible**

St. Paul says: “That which may be known of God is manifest; for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood from those things which are made, even his eternal power and Godhood.” (Rom 1:20)

Thus, man needs only to look at the world of outer things and their phenomena to see a perfect replica of all higher things, the realities of the super-world of spiritual being. If he longs for truth, he has only to open his eyes on the world outside him to behold the forms and norms of truth materialized in living concreteness before him.

To be sure, he must be taught to pierce through the opacity of the form before him to discover the structure of truth that is there in living reality. This art can be acquired, although it is an art demanding the highest philosophical astuteness. It requires not so much the exertion of brilliant genius as the intellectual sincerity of naïve directness. It takes not the sophistication of intellect but the straightforward candor of the mind in registering what one sees. It is an opening of the eye to clear seeing. It must be urged to discovery by the antecedent knowledge that nature is such an open book, whose pages, paragraphs and sentences are the phenomena in every field, wood, lake, brook, garden, hill and glade. For the true doctrine of the Omnipresence is that God is present in all Its parts in every moss and cobweb.

The significance of this principle is found in the Hebrew Talmud, where we read: “If thou wilt know the invisible, open wide thine eyes on the visible.”

If man will not open wide his eyes on the visible he will have no basic model or pattern by which to sharpen his apprehension of truth. Through his immersion in the actual world he has the opportunity to acquaint his mind with the divinely certified forms of truth. He can never generate a faculty for the recognition of truth unless he lets life train his mind in her school of contact with the living forms of that truth which she presents in profusion. This instruction is part of the purpose for which spirits and souls are sent out among the planets. How would life teach her children if she did not furnish them with models of the things they are to learn? In short, how can one study unless one looks at what is to be studied?

Man's only sure road to apprehension of the sublime things of the invisible worlds, the laws, principles and structure of the cosmos, is to travel the highway of the visible world he is a native of. All pursuit of knowledge at a high level can result in gain for him only through his power to interpret data on the basis of his own experience with reality. Higher things can have meaning for him only on the grounds of their reference to what he knows through his living contact with the actual. If higher truth takes him into a world of things intellectually exotic, bizarre and unrelated to his normal frame of recognitions, such truth will only bewilder him. Supernal truth must come to have relevance for him in the light of what has made sense and meaning to him in his experience with palpable things. If it totally transcends his known world, it will have no message for him. Truth is but one system, and its forms of manifestation in any world, kingdom or plane of life are microcosmic or macrocosmic reduplications of its form in the world of archetypes. The phenomena of physical life in our world make a graphic panorama of all the fundamental archai or principles of being. The Greeks said that if man would come to know himself, he would by that know all the secrets, laws and meanings of the universe. For man himself is a miniature eidolon of the macrocosm, as a seed is the entire structure of its parent tree or plant in potentiality.

We may liken the idea of manifestation to that of a builder who desires to build a great Palace, viz.:

1. He grasps in his mind the plan of the whole building. The manifest God proceeds likewise by setting out the Divine Plan, which is the Absolute form of all that exists. This is the source of all forms, the Deific Form, the Celestial or Archetypal Man, the Adam Kadmon of the Hebrews.
2. Our builder then considers the way according to which the work shall be done, that it shall correspond to the plan. He maps out the building team in accordance with the plan. Similarly, the manifest God or Spirit shares out Himself, creating a hierarchy of Spirits who will build the Universe according to the Divine Plan and then inhabit it. These Spirits are pure Breaths or Essences, the Immortal natures.
3. Then the builder considers the material needed for the construction. The steel rods, binding wire, sand, stones, bricks, mortar, planks, etc., must be assembled. In the same manner, the Spirit needs some stuff to construct the visible Universe. It needs some world-stuff because *ex nihilo, nihil fit*, nothing comes from nothing. Creation by sheer fiat is nonsense. While reading the Bible in school I found in Genesis: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." (Gen 1:3) Neither my Sunday school priest-teacher in primary school nor my Bible Knowledge teacher in secondary school was able to tell me where God got the light from. I was, instead, reprimanded for my impertinence in questioning the content of the Bible and the omnipotence of God. In retrospect I feel sorry for these teachers who, because the Bible says so, propagated lies about a God they knew nothing about. The omnipotent first creates the world-stuff, ensouls it with a part of itself and sets it into a vibratory motion that produces light. Continuing our builder analogy, the Spirit creates the abode of Minds, i.e.,

triune entities (consciousness, spirit and content of consciousness). This is the needed world-stuff or material for the construction of forms, the mortal natures.

4. Finally, the builder effects the actual construction with the relevant workers and building materials, in accordance with the plan. Similarly, the Spirit creates the abode of spirits united with minds and form, all in accordance with the archetypal models.

Let's explain further the ideas contained in the four points above.

Within the Godhead of Infinite Space, the Spirit delimits a portion whose content will furnish the basis of future differentiations. This portion of space earmarked for manifestation is thus bounded by a spirit-ring or firmament. The waters of space are thus divided into those above this firmament (outside the bounded space) and those below the firmament (within the bounded space). The Spirit lays out the prototype of the forthcoming manifestation – the model of things to come. And then shares itself out into hierarchies of effectuating powers who will, using the enclosed triune content of the Godhead, produce and run a universe in accordance with the given prototype. This is the creation of the Gods. This sharing out of the Spirit provides us with the various essences which build, animate and rule the universe from within. It is the Universal Spirit, the Sons of God (Fiery Sparks) who build forms and ensoul those forms as incarnating spirits. They are the Prodigal Sons and Eternal Pilgrims, who go out into the worlds to suffer and cause suffering.

The divine worker has chosen a portion of space for the manifestation of the Godhead. He has laid out the plan of the universe, a plan brought from the Darkness. He has shared out himself in accordance with the work ahead. Since the mortar is already available (the Spirit itself), we need living bricks to move forward with the construction of a living universe.

The living bricks come from the first differentiation of the enclosed portion of the Chaos resulting in the birth of Universal Mind – a system of related awareness. Thus, in the circumscribed portion of Infinite Space the Spirit brings to birth the Universal Mind, also called the Great Monad or Great Soul of the universe. A portion of the fused Chaos is now set apart or differentiated into a relation, or Mind, made up of: Consciousness, the Relating Power (Spirit), and the Content of Consciousness.

Consciousness is the Knower or Subject pole of the knowing process, the Relating Power (Spirit) is the process of Knowing, and the Content of Consciousness is the Known or the Object pole of the knowing process.

The Spirit then divides Universal Mind into component minds and groups the latter into four functional levels, i.e., the One Mind (Great Monad, or Soul) becomes Many Minds (Monads, Souls). This is the creation of the world-stuff and these minds are the ultimate “bricks” of the universe, conscious bricks which will be built into the numerous grades of being that go to make up the manifest worlds. The Builders will move them into position in accord with the archetypal model. These monads are the basis of matter, the only matter in the universe, yet a matter that will be composed of empatterned organizations of energy around these individualized points in or of consciousness. The levels of the Universal Mind are, from the lowest to the highest:

- (1) Physical level: For minds on this level the three aspects of Mind are proportional.
- (2) Desire level: For minds on this level the power aspect dominates the other two.
- (3) Lower mental level: For minds on this level the content aspect dominates the other two.

- (4) Higher mental level: For minds on this level, the consciousness aspect of Mind is greater than the power and content aspects. Minds from this level are incorporated into form as individuals. The mind of man – the thinker – comes from this level of the Universal Mind.

Note that the Spirit is the first manifestation from the Godhead. It is called the Logos or Word of the Father/Mother hidden in the darkness of the Godhead. It is the manifest and knowable God, as against its unknown and unknowable status in the darkness of the Godhead. This is the Word spoken of in the first chapter of St. John's gospel. The identity of Spirit and Word is seen by replacing "Word" with "Spirit" in the relevant verses of St John's gospel in the (KJV) Bible: John 1:1-4, 9

1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
2. The same was in the beginning with God.
3. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
4. In him was life; and the life was the light of men.
9. That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

The beginning refers to the pre-manifestation fused state of the Godhead. The Spirit is the first to emerge from the Godhead, delimiting a portion of it with a view to unfolding its contents into a living universe. All things were truly made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. The Spirit creates the Universal Mind, differentiates it into component minds, builds forms with the differentiated elements and ensouls the forms with its Sparks; it is thus the true Light, which lighteth every man (and thing) that cometh into the world. It is Life.

The first-born of the Darkness, the Spirits, are the Life, the heart and pulse of the universe. The second are its Mind and the third are its Body.

### **1.8. Formation of Worlds**

Using monads from the four levels of the Universal Mind as building blocks, the universe of forms is built and inhabited by the hierarchies of the Spirit. We may note that the builder-spirits create forms in accordance with the prototypes in the archetypal world described above. The prototype is perfect, but the builders reproducing it are many and diversely talented. As a result, some copies of the original may be defective. Each form is the tabernacle of a spirit to which is attached a self-reflective apparatus or mind. The spirit, being breath, is given a body for action and a mind to embrace the universe in which it dwells. Every form in the universe has a resident spirit, a mind and a body. The universe is made up of solar systems, subject to universal law of hierarchical government. In our solar system our sun is a form endowed with a spirit and mind; the same is true of the planets of our system. The spirits of these planets are subservient to the spirit of the sun.

The elements (Earth, Water, Air and Fire) are made from the world-stuff above and inhabited by appropriate sparks from the spirit hierarchies.

On our planet Earth the forms are, from the lowest to the highest: Minerals, Plants, Animals, and Hominids.

From the above, we note that:

(1) Consciousness, the content of consciousness and the power that relates them (the spirit) are the three aspects of the Godhead, the Great Monad, and the Monads.

(2) Within the Godhead, the formed universe floats in the Universal Mind which, in turn, floats in the Universal Spirit.

(3) Forms are built and dissolved within the Universal Mind. At the close of the cycle of universal manifestation, the Spirit first withdraws itself from the universe; and the minds composing the latter return to their levels in the Universal Mind and resolve back into an undifferentiated mass. Finally, the firmament or Spirit-Ring around the Universal Mind collapses; and the waters above and below the firmament become one again. Cosmos returns to Chaos, its source. Existence returns to non-existence. Deity goes to sleep for a period equal in duration to the period of manifestation.

(4) The Universal Mind is the Father of the multitude of minds that make up its four levels. The four grades of Mind are the children of the same Father. But the minds of the higher mental level are called "Sons", because they are used as individual units in the construction of forms. They are "men" when compared to the minds at the three lower levels of Mind. The mind of man – the thinker – comes from this level of the Universal Mind. When this mind merges itself with its associated incarnating spirit (the Christos), then an anointment and at-one-ment takes place and Christ is born in us. Thus the divine spirit, by this marriage with its associated mind, converts the latter to its own nature. This conversion is the object of the incarnation of spirit in forms. In his *Timaeus* Plato gives us the remarkable speech of the Demiurgus (Creative God) to the "junior Gods," who were the divine beings commissioned to come to earth and be the Gods embodied in an animal race that had no chance of reaching the next level of evolution without such tutelage. In it the Demiurgus enjoins the deities to come to earth and "unite mortal with immortal natures," promising them that they would "never be dissolved." The Ancients symbolized this at-one-ment of the personal spirit and mind by the winged globe: a solar disc (the spirit) with two wings (the bi-polar mind). The senior Gods are those who have achieved this at-one-ment through hardwork and repeated incarnation. The following Bible extracts from the Book of Revelation refer to this at-one-ment and its associated rewards:

- (1) Rev 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.
- (2) Rev 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.
- (3) Rev 2:17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.
- (4) Rev 2:26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:
- (5) Rev 3:5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

- (6) Rev 3:12 Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.
- (7) Rev 3:21 To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.
- (8) Rev 21:7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

The statements “To him that overcometh,” “Him that overcometh,” and “He that overcometh” all refer to this aeonial task undertaken by the spirit to weld a mind to itself and become self-conscious. The incarnation of the Gods was really a sacrifice on their part. But sacrifice (Latin: *sacra* and *facio*) means “to make sacred”, and has no immediate correlation with the denial to oneself of benefits. If privation came in the process of incarnation, it was incidental, not inherent. The spirit legions descended to make a lower order of life holy or sacred. Their labor was to sanctify with the gift of divinity the mortal race, and make it immortal and divine. But why is this at-one-ment so important for the incarnating spirit? Well, because the mind is the spirit’s drawing room or workshop and sole instrument of reflective awareness. Since creation is always in the image and likeness of some model, the spirit uses its mind to create the requisite models. Concrete forms result from the accretion of the world-stuff around these models. See the author’s book “The Second Birth. The Mind is a Bag. How Loaded is Yours?” It contains a complete description of this wedding of the spirit and mind.

(5) Manifestation may be described as creations as follows: (1) Creation of the archetypal form of the universe; the plan. (2) Creation of the Gods. It is they who build, inhabit and run the universe. (3) Creation of Mind and its partition into minds or world-stuff. (4) Creation of worlds or solar systems that compose the physical universe.

(6) The creations on Earth are those of Minerals, Plants, Animals, and Hominids including Man.

### **1.9. Our Solar System**

Each form is the tabernacle of a spirit to which is attached a self-reflective apparatus or mind. The spirit, being breath, is given a body for action and a mind to embrace the universe in which it dwells. Thus, every form in the universe has a resident spirit and a mind. The universe is made up of solar systems, subject to universal law of hierarchical government.

In our solar system we find our Sun at its center, with planets and their moons orbiting this central Sun. As noted above our sun is a form endowed with a spirit and mind; the same is true of the planets and moons of our system. Our solar system is a micro-cosmos relative to the macro-cosmos of the great universe. And our micro-cosmos is an exact image or analogue, a miniature eidolon of the macro-cosmos. Both worlds are constituted in the same manner, function according to the same laws, and mutually influence each other through their corresponding parts.

The universe is bounded by a spirit-ring-pass-not. So is our solar system bounded by a spirit-ring that controls exchanges between our solar system and other solar systems. The universe has its grand archetypal world. So does our solar system have its archetypal world, which accords perfectly with the grand design.



Like the universe, our solar system has its spirit hierarchies and the world-stuff for the building of forms. The entire universe being subject to hierarchical law, the same holds true for our solar cosmos. The spirits of the planets in the system are subservient to the spirit of the sun, their Lord.

Our planet Earth, like all forms, has a spirit endowed with a mind and a body. The spirits of everything living on Earth are subservient to its spirit. The spirit of man is subservient to the spirit of the Earth and the spirit of the latter is subservient to the spirit of the Sun. After the God in man (his spirit), the next God available to him is the God of the Earth. It is through the God of the Earth that man may have access to the God of the Sun and the Gods of other planets in our system. It is the neglect of this hierarchy of subservience that brought about the failure of solar religions or cults. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, says Jesus. Only the cult or religion of the Earth God has the slightest chance of making any headway on the planet.

As indicated above, the elements (Earth, Water, Air and Fire) are made from the world-stuff above and inhabited by appropriate sparks from the spirit hierarchies.

On our planet Earth the forms are, from the lowest to the highest: Minerals, Plants, Animals, and Hominids (including man).

### **1.10. The Basis of Morals**

Thus the component parts of man are: Body (Soma); Mind or Soul (Psyche); Air, Wind or Spirit (Pneuma). The first element in man is the spirit or divine breath, which is equivalent to the pneuma of the Greeks (from pneo, "to breathe"), the Latin spiritus (from spiro, "to breathe"), and the Sanskrit atman (from an, "to blow, to breathe"). Spirit is the first "breath" from the Godhead. The second element is the mind. It is comparable to the Greek nous, the Latin mens, and Sanskrit manas. It is ruled by and forms the throne or vehicle of the spirit. The third element is the physical body, which corresponds to the Sanskrit sthula-sarira, the Latin corpus, and the Greek soma.

In every living form resides a manifesting spirit. All forms – whether stars, men, beasts, or the stones underneath our feet – are tabernacles for spirits, vital breaths, portions of the same Universal Breath or Spirit. And man sees truth when he realizes that he is one-in-spirit with all that is. This realization is the basis of ethics or morality.

In Matthew 22:34-40 we find Jesus giving the true basis of morals to the Pharisee lawyer:

34 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Note that verse 37 above talks about "the Lord thy God" (the personal spirit) and not "the Lord God" (the Universal Spirit). Concerning the personal spirit, the Bible (KJV) says: "Know ye not that ye are

the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1Cor. 3:16) “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1Cor. 6:19) The spirit built the body and rules it jealously. Read and meditate Psalm 139, for further insight.

Through self-acceptance or self-love we accept or love ourselves as we are, i.e., as we have been created by our individual spirits. The first and great commandment is therefore to love yourself, by acknowledging your own spirit or god, with all your mind, whole-heartedly.

And the second great commandment is like unto the first: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The spirit in you and the spirit in your neighbor are children of the same Universal Spirit. When you accept yourself as your spirit has created you, then you will be able to accept others as their own spirits have created them.

The commandments are thus: (1) Accept and love your personal spirit or god; (2) Extend this acceptance and love to the spirit or god in your neighbor and in all things.

Violation of these great commandments is the unforgivable “sin against the Holy Ghost.”

This was well known to the ancients. The Stoics expressed it and taught it in their magnificent philosophy. The Stoics of Rome and of Greece originally expressed it by what they called theocracy. Theocracy has a compound meaning – theos, “a god or divine being,” and krasis, meaning “an intermingling” – an intermingling of everything in the universe, intermingling with everything else, nothing possibly separable from the rest, the Whole. It is the cardinal heresy of the Oriental religions today, notably in that of the Buddhists, if a man thinks that he is separate or separable from the universe. This is the most fundamental error that man can make. The early Christians called it the “sin against the Holy Ghost.” If we look around us and if we look within, we realize that we are one entity, as it were, one great human host, one living tree of human life, woven inseparably into and from nature, the All.

One way of discovering the resident spirit is by “emptying the mind,” pouring out the trashy stuff it contains, the illusory beliefs, the false views, the hatreds, suspicions, carelessness, etc. By emptying out all this trash, the temple within is cleansed, and the light from the God within streams forth into the mind. For more on this, see the author’s book “The Second Birth. The Mind is a Bag. How Loaded is Yours?” Trafford Publishing.

The God you can know is right there in your body. You need no guru nor complicated yoga stuff to discover It. A realization of Its presence is all you need and the “ahaa!” phenomenon grips you. Let me explain with an example.

When we are asleep:

- (a) The blood circulates, the heart beats, the food we ate is digested, our lungs function, the body tissues are repaired, etc. The power in charge of these activities rests only at what we call death. That power is our God!
- (b) We cannot think, we cannot express anger or love, etc. The power in charge of these activities is the mind. It tires and rests. It gets its fuel from the power in (a).

If we grasp the above distinction, then we can say “ahaa! is that all?” It is so simple. This mental acceptance of a power that we already have is the first step on the path of knowing our God progressively. And the more we know our God, the more we trust It and are ready to venerate It.

If you fail to find this God within you, then God to you will remain an empty word. And words are not worth fighting for. I am showing you the elephant, not its footprints. But we are free to choose what we want to see: the elephant or its footprints.

What about the government of the world? Since there is mechanical action in the universe, there is government or mechanics at work, producing the movements of the mechanism, in accordance with Divine Plan. In other words, the Gods are behind the Cosmos, spiritual beings, spiritual entities – the name matters nothing. Not God, but Gods.

Nature is imperfect, hence of necessity makes mistakes, because its action derives from hosts of entities at work – what we see around us all the time is proof of it. Nature is not perfect. As mentioned above, the prototype is perfect, but the builders reproducing it are many and diversely talented. As a result, some copies of the original may be defective.

### 1.11. Adam, the Apple & the Original Sin

The Bible tells us in the 3<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Genesis that Adam was sent packing from the Garden of Eden because he disobeyed Jehovah and ate some forbidden fruit from a tree which is in the middle of the garden. That crime is called “The Original Sin”, from which our world is yet to be redeemed! Now, what is this mysterious tree that grows in the middle of a garden? My Christian theological mentors tell me the tree is simply the sex organ located right at the center or mid-point of the human body. And the apple shared by Adam and Eve was simply sexual intercourse. But this explanation is unsatisfactory, because (1) the sex organs used for the act were given to them by those who fashioned them – Jehovah and the other Gods or Elohim and (2) the purported omniscience of the Christian Jehovah becomes questionable, since he could not foresee the future actions of his creatures. Without despairing, and as a worthy Christian, I went to the Bible texts and read them again to discover the hidden – but open – truth myself. Let’s note that the Serpent is another name for the Devil, Lucifer (the Light Bringer), and Satan. Please read the relevant verses of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Chapter of Genesis with me. We have chosen to call the Serpent Lucifer, following original texts.

1. Lucifer said to Eve: Is it so that God has said, You shall not eat of every tree of the garden?
2. And Eve said to Lucifer: We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden. But of the fruit of the tree which is in the middle of the garden, God has said, You shall not eat of it, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.
3. And Lucifer said to Eve: You shall not surely die, for God knows that in the day you eat of it, then your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as God, knowing good and evil.
4. And when Eve saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasing to the eyes, and a tree to be desired **to make wise**, she took of its fruit, and ate. She also gave to her husband with her (Adam), and he ate.
5. And the eyes of both of them were opened.
6. And Jehovah God said, Behold, **the man has become as one of Us, to know good and evil.**
7. Therefore Jehovah God sent him out from the Garden of Eden.

The reason for throwing Adam out of the garden stands out clearly in item 6 above:

**Behold, the man has become as one of Us, to know good and evil.**

So the ability to know good and evil was the only quality that made Adam inferior to his creators – Jehovah and the other Gods or Elohim. Now, the Mind is the faculty used for discernment, i.e., to tell the difference between two or more things, such as good and evil. Jehovah and his group of Gods who looked after Adam could use their Minds, but their creature Adam was forbidden to exercise the same privilege of using his Mind.

And Lucifer – the Light Bringer – comes over and saves Adam and Eve from the damnation of eternal infancy by convincing them to use their Minds. They did and their Minds woke up – their eyes opened – and they became as the Gods.

We may note that humanity is still groaning under the yoke of “The Original Sin” committed in the Garden of Eden by our Biblical forbears – Adam and Eve. Our modern-day Jehovahs and their hosts – the vested interests – still work very hard to prevent us from using our Minds in ways that are beneficial to us, the owners of those Minds. Recall the Parable of Talents in the Gospel of Matthew 25: 14-30? The Mind is the unique talent given to man by his Chi. But our so-called “civilized society” has done everything possible to force man to bury this talent, thereby preventing him from developing and using it for his wellbeing.

This write-up is thus a call on all Öka to wake up and start using their Minds, in spite of the overwhelming presence among them of those same Garden-of-Eden-like forces of darkness. Their forbears were rational people, republicans and true patriots. They abhorred monolithic and obscurantist modes of thought. Unless we reclaim our birthright – freedom to use our Minds – the good work of salvation commenced in the Biblical Garden of Eden by Lucifer (the Light Bringer) would come to naught. The Mighty Savior cannot do more than He has already done: He has brought the Light and shown us the way to true salvation. Our job now is to walk the walk! That is – use our Minds! Would you expect the stout-hearted Archangel Lucifer to give you a wife/husband and a mat for both of you to sleep on? Then we will never grow up, and that’s where a majority of people find themselves in the world. Meaningless praying has supplanted constructive imagination and thinking – using the Mind. And when nothing positive happens after years of wasted breath, we blame our neighbors or relatives for using witchcraft or something to frustrate our non-effort. Ibe anyi, ka anyi chihgaliani uche. Ka anyi mugheeni anya, na taa vbü gboo! It’s not yet late to make a start and begin to use our Minds.

### **1.12. A Virgin Shall Conceive?**

The Christian Bible in Isaiah 7:14 says: Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

This verse of Isaiah is used as a prophecy in Matthew 1:18-25 to justify the virgin-birth of Jesus. Let’s read Matthew 1:18-25 together:

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

21 "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying:

23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife,

25 and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

The dictionary tells us that:

virgin = someone who has never had sex, especially a girl or young woman.

And the above verses from the book of Matthew present the same dictionary view that:

virgin = someone who has never had sex.

But the conception of the "virgin" as someone who has never had sex is erroneous and misleading. The virgin-birth of Jesus-the-Christ has been grossly presented by the Bible and bibliolaters alike. Had the word "virgin" been properly explained and placed in context, virgin-birth would have been seen as a fact in natural genesis. How?

The two phases of the female nature are prepubescent and pubescent, girlhood and womanhood; the virgin and the mother. So, we have:

- (1) virgin = pre-pubescent girl, that cannot yet conceive
- (2) mother, woman = pubescent girl, that can conceive

When Isaiah says, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel", his use of the future tense – "shall conceive" – shows that he is evidently speaking of a prepubescent girl (virgin), who will later become pubescent and can thereafter conceive and bear a child. The precise rendering of the verse becomes:

"Behold, a virgin shall become pubescent (i.e., a woman) and conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

The dogma of a virgin-mother originated in this natural reality. The girl was changed into the woman at the time of puberty. And female nature of itself divides into the two phases of girlhood and womanhood; the virgin and the mother.

Note that our definition of "virgin" is applicable to males and females, viz.:

virgin = pre-pubescent boy or girl  
 man, woman = pubescent boy or girl

### 1.13. Satan or Devil, Ekwensu

Does our theogony exclude Ekwensu, the Devil or Satan? It doesn't, since that God, Satan or Devil, is also a Son of God. Satan as a Son of God belongs to the hierarchy of Ruling Gods.

But what do the Christian Scriptures say about Satan the Tempter (or the Devil)? Let us consult the biblical texts.

Jehovah is synonymous with Satan, as a comparison of II Samuel 24:1 and I Chronicles 21:1 shows. We have:

- II Sam. 24:1 "And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah."
- I Chron. 21:1 "And Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel."

In the Book of Job, we are told how God authorized Satan to tempt Job's faith; and how Job overcame the temptations and had his blessings doubled. The key chapters and verses are as follows:

- ❖ Job 1 verse 1: "There was a man in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil".
- ❖ Job 1 verse 6: "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them".
- ❖ Job 1 verse 12: "And the LORD said unto Satan: Behold, all that Job hath is in thine power; only upon himself put not thy hand."
- ❖ Job 2 verse 1: "Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the LORD, and Satan came also among them to present himself before the LORD".

We are told that Satan destroyed Job's family and property, but Job sinned not nor charged God foolishly.

- ✓ Job 2 verse 6: "And the LORD said unto Satan: Behold, Job is in thine hand; but save his life."
- ✓ Job 2 verse 7: "So went Satan forth from the presence of the LORD, and smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown."

This second time, we are told, Job's faith in God was unshaken in spite of his sufferings. In Job 42, the text relates how God accepted Job and doubled his blessings.

In the Gospels, St. Matthew gives the account of the temptation of Jesus in the wilderness as follows:

Matthew 4 verse 1: "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil." [The word Satan is used in Mark 1: 13].

The text gives an account of the three temptations that Satan proposed to Jesus and the answers Jesus gave to the tempter. Having successfully passed Satan's test, the account concludes:

Matthew 4 verse 11: "Then the Devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him."

Thus, from the Books of the Christian Bible, we discover that:

- (a) Satan is synonymous with Jehovah;
- (b) Satan is one of the sons of God, a Benai Elohim;
- (c) Satan's job is to tempt;
- (d) In spite of Job's holiness, God allowed Satan, His accredited tempter to test Job's faith. Job passed the test and God doubled his blessings;
- (e) Before Jesus started his ministry, the Spirit of God brought him before Satan for a test. Jesus passed the test and his ministry began;
- (f) Neither Job nor Jesus asked God to spare them from being tempted;
- (g) Temptation is crucial in life and particularly in spiritual evolution: it serves to determine what we are capable of.

Satan and his Host constitute the Cosmic Judiciary and Armed Forces. They are the keepers of the Book of Life. The spirits of this hierarchy are responsible for Cosmic Order and the application of incurred Karma. The spirits of vengeance belong to this hierarchy. The Devil or Satan is Ekwensu in Igbo. A smart Igbo philologist gave the following analysis of Ekwensu:

Ekwensu = E kwe n su = E kwe m su = E kwe o su = E kwe ya e-su

Let us consider the key terms in the name:

- (1) "E" is the Igbo impersonal subject marker, e.g., E deli = One wrote. E meligo vbe = An unspecified subject has defeated them.
- (2) "Kwe" is the Igbo verb "to agree", e.g., Kwe na i ga-abia = Agree that you will come.
- (3) "Su" is the verb "to begin suddenly" "to break out", usually a commotion, e.g., Agha esu = War breaks out.

The name Ekwensu, therefore, means: If one agrees (E kwe), then something breaks out (n-su). The Laws are there and they are equally applicable to all. If you decide to break a law, then you have agreed to the commotion that breaks out inexorably. Ignorance of the law does not annul the consequences that accrue from its violation. Ignorance of a law may attenuate, but not annul, the consequences of its violation. One would, for instance, get a sentence of three months of public utility service instead of twelve months behind prison bars.

The God Satan or Devil has a shrine at Anakü (Ekwensu Anakü) in the Ayamelum Local Government Area of Anambra State. Legend has it that folks render themselves invulnerable after a visit to this shrine.

We repeat: Satan and his Host constitute the Cosmic Judiciary and Armed Forces. They are the keepers of the Book of Life. The spirits of this hierarchy are responsible for Cosmic Order and the application of incurred Karma. You may break Nature's Laws and count, as the Christian priest says, on the Blood of Jesus to save you from Satan and his Host. But remember that your Jesus had to pass before this mighty God before he began his ministry. I have heard deluded Christian relatives fighting the Devil or Satan with the Holy Ghost Fire. But the Devil or Satan is exactly the Holy Ghost Fire. So, what a great fight folks!

## **2. Reincarnation**

### **2.1. What is Reincarnation?**

Each form is the tabernacle of a spirit to which is attached a self-reflective apparatus or mind. The spirit, being breath, is given a body for action and a mind to embrace the universe in which it dwells. Every form in the universe has a resident spirit and a mind.

A spirit builds typical forms, dwells in those forms, and uses those forms to achieve its principal objective in the general scheme of evolution: to unite mortal with immortal natures. When the human mind merges itself with its associated incarnating spirit (Chi, the Christos), then an anointment and at-one-ment takes place and Christ is born in us. Thus the divine spirit, by this marriage with its associated mind, converts the latter to its own nature. This conversion is the object of the incarnation of spirit in forms. The Ancients symbolized this at-one-ment of the personal spirit and mind by the winged globe: a solar disc (the spirit) with two wings (the bi-polar mind). We mentioned above that sacrifice (Latin: *sacra* and *facio*) means "to make sacred", and has no immediate correlation with the denial to oneself of benefits. If privation came in the process of incarnation, it was incidental, not inherent. The spirit legions descended to make a lower order of life holy. Their labor was to sanctify with the gift of divinity the mortal race, and make it immortal and divine.

When a form is worn out, the spirit leaves it and moves on to build a new one. This exit of the spirit is the "death" of the form. Later, this same spirit builds another form in which it dwells, while pursuing its objective. Thus, over time, a spirit incarnates in many forms. A human spirit builds human forms, just as a given tree spirit builds the corresponding tree form. The same is true for all forms – from the speck of dust to suns.

The human form in which a human spirit dwells today may be given a name, say Udo – a man. This spirit uses that form for, say, 100 years. After 100 years the form is quite old and worn out – Udo Anaagö is an old man. Effective action through this worn-out form becomes more and more difficult for the spirit and it decides to get out of it, in order to build a new and more vigorous form. In due season, this spirit builds and dwells in a new human form, to which the name Emmanuel is given. Thus the spirit (Chi) which built and dwelt in a human form called Udo sometime in the past, builds and dwells in a new human form now called Emmanuel.

This movement of a spirit from one form to another is what we call re-incarnation – repeated incarnation of the same spirit over time.

The Ancients understood the process of reincarnation and had a ritual (*mgba Agü*), done by wise ones, for determining the nature and origin of the spirit that has reincarnated in the form of a new human child. We will see in the section on the *Agü* ritual why the origin of the incarnating spirit is important.



The ritual also provided guidelines on what the spirit has come to achieve – the field where the child will excel. The child is not forced to study philosophy when his spirit loves music or some other art. The Christian Bible, in Luke 2:21-32, provides a potent example of this ritual applied to Jesus by the wise one Simeon.

To say that I am the reincarnation of my great-grandfather simply means that the spirit that built and dwelt in the form I label “my great-grandfather” built and dwells in my current form labeled “Emmanuel”. A child often inherited the name of some long-dead relative because the same spirit (Chi) that dwelt in the long-dead relative had re-incarnated in the child. A Dicie Avba once told me: Onye üwa ghĩ vbü Chi ghi. Shiel onye üwa ghĩ ite na shiel Chi ghi ite vbü ovbu ivbe. The person whose reincarnation you are is your Chi or God. It is the same thing to cook a meal for your Chi or for the person whose reincarnation you are. My immediate reaction was: But how can a person who died long ago be my Chi or God? The wise Dicie’s words constitute a perfect conundrum until we recall that it is the Chi that moves from one form into another in what we call reincarnation. Chi Emma = Onye üwa Emma, because Onye üwa Emma was the name of the form in which Chi Emma dwelt in Its last incarnation in form.

The ritual for determining which spirit has “come back” generally takes place when the child is one year old. This invaluable ritual has fallen into disrepute because of our so-called civilization, where the healthy practices of our ancestors are desecrated in the name of modern science and pseudo-religion.

Education must be re-visited, because crime is the fruit of a perverted system of education. When crimes occur at home or school, there is need to review our method of education. The child being father to the adult, the adult’s mentality is rooted in the child’s education. A child unaccepted as he is, can’t accept others as they are. Self-acceptance is self-love. He who hates himself can’t love others! Healthy education first empowers the mind by developing its capabilities – attention, memory, imagination, thought, will – before stuffing it with concepts and techniques for doing.

What is education? Does the word educate mean:

- (a) To empower the mind, by developing its latent capabilities (attention, memory, imagination, thought, will)? or
- (b) To stuff the mind with concepts, techniques, tricks and methods of doing?

We all agree that the soil must be prepared before planting anything in it. Without the prior development of the latent capabilities of the mind, the assimilation of concepts and techniques is difficult and destined to fail. But what do we observe in our system of education? We start very early to implant ideas into the unprepared mind of the child. Thus, we stifle the development of the latent capabilities of his mind. It is the lack of this prior preparation of the mind that explains the present dilemma of our system of education – high failure rates, cheating at examinations, recourse to charms, juju, futile prayer sessions, sale of certificates, etc.

Should we not re-think our method of education? In the light of the disappointing results of the current system of education, good common sense advises us to combine the two methods given above, that is:

- (1) First, empower the mind, by developing its latent capabilities (attention, memory, imagination, thought, will). This is basic education – the preparation of the soil before planting the seeds.

- (2) Next, teach the mind concepts, techniques, tricks and methods of doing. This is professional education – the actual planting of seeds on the prepared soil.

This approach has the merit of focusing primarily on the maximal development of what is common to all human minds – attention, memory, imagination, thought, will. Prepared in this manner, the youngster will face professional education with a lot of confidence in himself. He will understand, very early, that he is solely responsible for his failure or success. He has a clear idea of what his worth is and comports himself accordingly. He will, thus, no longer have recourse to the usual shortcuts – cheating, powerful success charms, jujus and prayers – which are all snares for the sleepwalker.

Recall that man is made up of a body; a mind, with which he thinks, imagines, decides, etc; and a spirit (Chi), which owns his body and without which he becomes a corpse.

Concerning the spirit, the Bible (KJV) says: “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1Cor. 3:16) “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” (1Cor. 6:19) The spirit (Chi) built the body and rules it jealously. Read and meditate Psalm 139, for further insight.

St. Paul tells us, in Romans 7:22, 23 and 25, that the human mind (verse 25) is subject to two laws: (1) The law of God after the inward man or spirit (verse 22); and (2) The law of the body or the law in my members (verse 23).

The mind should learn to understand and not repress sense stimuli. Those stimuli are promptings from the spirit which, like a wind, blows where it wants. Hunger, thirst and sex are prompts from the spirit. To deliberately repress these promptings is to declare war on your own spirit. And your God will punish you indeed! For the mind to influence the body in any way, it must learn and understand the ways of the spirit who owns that body. Co-operation with the owner of the body – the spirit – is the only way for the mind to have beneficial commerce with that body.

For quite a long time, the civilized world has considered self-control as the key to the eradication of social dis-ease. Physical and mental gymnastics have been devised, with a view to using the will, without the consent of the spirit, to control the body and its senses.

But what degree of self-control has been achieved so far? None! Hypocrisy is the order of the day. Might is right and nations, in spite of international law, engage in armed robbery. Has social dis-ease been eradicated? The reader should judge for himself. Violent crime is rife. The prisons and mental hospitals are packed full of misfits that society has created with its spirit-repressive laws. Is it not time to re-think the social codes that we inherited from our civilized colonial masters, with a view to bringing the left-out human spirit into the picture?

Ten children from one mother are actually created and inhabited by ten different spirits (Chi). The Öka say: Ovbü nne na-amü, mana ö vbürö ovbu Chi na-eke. Any system of education for these ten children must be flexible enough to take due account of their ten different spirits. Each Chi is unique! A standardized system will always generate misfits and dropouts. The social dis-ease will never be eradicated. The change of approach is worth trying, for the gradual improvement of man and the world he lives in. Let society empower its citizens by helping them bring out what they have within. Education is not mind stuffing to silence the rebellious spirit. Each spirit has something important to

contribute in the general construction of the universe, and it takes revenge on society whenever its expression is denied or repressed.

The individual spirit is denied and everybody receives the same training. Mind-stuffing has replaced education. Education comes from “educer” and means to draw out what is within – the spirit. The current mind-stuffing by our systems of education has nothing to do with education since the system takes no account of the individual. The individual spirit, Chi, is so repressed that society is choking with neurotics; hideous crimes abound and punishments for such crimes provide no lasting solutions. The prisons are full of the “criminals” that the society has fabricated and stupid wars rage around the world.

Man has been hypnotized, by vested interest groups, to fight against his own spirit. The result is simply disastrous for all. Well ... the spirit is patient and takes its revenge, in due season, on man and his society. We reap what we sow! Provide true education – not mind stuffing – to the children and reap the youth and adults who can love themselves and others. Accept people as they are, and they are forced to reciprocate. The old should guide, not rule, the young. The young must live, experiment, make mistakes and learn from their mistakes. The generation communication gap is eliminated by cultivating mutual trust. Trust the child and he will trust you. And when the child trusts, he communicates, asks questions and thus provides the opportunity for the adult to advise him.

When the reality of reincarnation is asserted, Christians protest and say that they have always been taught that man has only one life to live. They were told that after their death, they will go and sit beside God because they went regularly to church, or that they will go to Hell and roast for eternity in the Devil’s cooking pot because they did not go to church. If only it was so easy to go and sit at the right hand of God! Why deceive human beings in this manner? In order to console them? But they do not need to be consoled; they simply need to be told the truth.

Belief in reincarnation is basic in ethics or moral law. As long as human beings are not informed about the law of cause and effect which prevails from one existence to the next, all the sermons aimed at changing them for the better will be in vain: they will not change. Whereas if a man knows that the problems and difficulties that come his way in this life are the result of transgressions committed in his previous lives, he will not only accept these difficulties, but he will choose to work for good in order to improve his future incarnations.

## **2.2. Reincarnation in the Christian Scriptures**

An interpretation of a few passages in the Scriptures will show that Jesus himself knew and accepted reincarnation. You could object and say that you have gone through all the Gospels and that the word “reincarnation” was nowhere to be found. But you will be told that it is not surprising that an explicit mention of the word “reincarnation” was unnecessary at a time when everybody believed in it. How could the Evangelists imagine that they should have spoken specially about reincarnation in anticipation of an epoch when people will no longer believe in it? Their accounts of events are so concise that there was no need to dwell on an issue that was part of the tradition.

Let us consult the Gospels and study some of the questions asked by Jesus or his disciples as well as the answers to these questions.

One day, Jesus asked his disciples: “Whom say the people that I the Son of man am?” [Matthew 17:13-14; Luke 9:18-19]. What does this question mean? Have you ever seen people asking: “Who do people say

that I am?" They know who they are and they do not ask themselves what others say about it. To ask such a question, belief in reincarnation must be implied. Now consider the reply of the disciples: "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias (or Elijah); and others, Jeremias or one of the prophets". How can one say that a living person is this or that individual who died long ago if the idea of reincarnation is not implied?

At another time, Jesus and his disciples came across a man who was blind from birth, and the disciples asked: "Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?" [John 9:2-3]. Here too, how could one ask such absurd questions if one did not believe in reincarnation? When could this man have sinned in his mother's womb? Either the question is just stupid, or it implies the belief in a previous life. Jesus replied: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him". In other words that, passing through this place, I will heal him and the people will believe in me. And he explained to them: You have been taught that men receive punishment for two reasons: either they have sinned and are punished, or else, having committed no sin, they pay for the sins of others, they sacrifice themselves in order to grow spiritually. But there exists a third category of people whose spiritual evolution is complete, they are free and not obliged to come back to earth. But quite often, they come back in order to help humanity. This man born blind belongs to this third category. That is why Jesus said: "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents, he came down to earth with this infirmity so that I may heal him and all will believe in me". In this manner, this man born blind would have saved a lot of people.

One day Jesus was informed that John the Baptist was in prison, and the text simply states: "Now when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee". [Matthew 4:12; Mark 1:14]. Shortly afterwards, John the Baptist was beheaded by Herod. After the transfiguration, the disciples asked Jesus: "Why then say the scribes that Elias (or Elijah) must first come?" And Jesus replied: "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed". And the text adds: "Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist". [Matthew 17:10-13; 11:14]. Thus, it is very clear that John the Baptist was the reincarnation of Elijah. In addition, the Gospels also tell us that when an angel appeared to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, to inform him that his wife Elisabeth will give birth to a son, the angel told him: "And he shall go before God in the spirit and power of Elias". [Luke 1:5, 11, 13, 17].

Now let us study the life of Elijah (or Elias), the prophet of fire, in order to find out what he did to merit being beheaded when he reincarnated later in the person of John the Baptist. The story of Elijah and the prophets of Baal is long (I Kings, chapter 18), but here is an extract: "And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word." [I Kings 18: 21] "Then said Elijah unto the people, I, even I only, remain a prophet of the LORD; but Baal's prophets are four hundred and fifty men". [I Kings 18: 22] Having defeated the prophets of Baal in a fire contest [I Kings 18:23-39], the biblical text records that Elijah said unto the people: "Take the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and Elijah brought them down to the brook Kishon, and slew them there". [I Kings 18: 40]. Here is the reason why it was to be expected that Elijah will, in his turn, have his throat cut. Because there is a law which Jesus announced in the garden of Gethsemane when Peter drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant: "Put up thy sword into the sheath, for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword". [Matthew 26:51-52; John 18:10; Luke 22:50; Revelation 13:10]. However, the truth in these words is not always recognized during one lifetime. And Elijah, precisely, how did he die? Not only was Elijah not slaughtered by anybody, but a chariot of fire was sent to him and

he went up by a whirlwind into heaven. [II Kings: 2:11]. But he received the punishment for his mistake when he came back to earth in the person of John the Baptist. Jesus knew who John was and the fate that awaited him. That is why Jesus did nothing to save him, and did nothing because justice had to follow its course. We now understand why Jesus left the country when he heard that John was thrown into jail: because he was not allowed to save John the Baptist. The law is the law. Each person must carry his cross. [Matthew 10:38].

Jesus said: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect”. [Matthew 5:48]. How could we view this sentence? Either Jesus speaks without thinking by requesting highly imperfect human beings to achieve, within a few years, the perfection of the heavenly Father; or else, he is totally ignorant of who the heavenly Father is and imagines that it is easy to become like Him. In either case, it does not speak well of Jesus. In reality, this sentence also implies reincarnation. Jesus did not think that man was capable of becoming perfect in just one lifetime, but he knew that by constantly wishing for this perfection and working hard to obtain it during many reincarnations, he will eventually attain the goal. The perfection is achieved when man becomes as one of the Gods, i.e., when his mind weds his spirit.

And Moses, what did he write at the beginning of Genesis concerning the creation of man? “And God said: Let us make man in our image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle... So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him.” And where is the likeness gone? No doubt, God had the intention to create man in his image and in his likeness, that is perfect as Himself, but he did not do that. He only created man in his image, with the same faculties, but without giving man the plenitude of these faculties or the likeness. Man is in the image of God in that he has wisdom, love and power but these faculties are so small in comparison with the wisdom, love and power of the Creator. But one day, when he develops himself – with time – man will be in the likeness of God and will acquire the plenitude of these faculties. Thus, the passage from the image to the likeness implies reincarnation. God said: “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness”, but He did not do so. “God created man in his own image, in the image of God created He him”: it is in the absence of the word likeness and the repetition of the word image that Moses hid the idea of reincarnation. [Genesis 1:26-27].

We may gain further insight by going back to what we said about the reincarnating spirit being a “junior God”, who later evolves into a “senior God” by the acquisition of a self-reflective mind. At the beginning of its incarnations the “junior God” is made in the image of the “senior Gods”: it has a mind like them. When this incarnating “junior God” welds its mind onto itself and is fully self-conscious, it becomes as one of the “senior Gods”: it has acquired their likeness. We can now assert that this accomplished “junior God” is made in the image and likeness of the “senior Gods”.

Without reincarnation, nothing can be meaningful in religion or in ordinary life. Go to the priests or pastors and ask them: “Please explain to me why one man is rich, handsome, intelligent, strong, why he succeeds in all his ventures, and why another man is sick, ugly, poor, miserable and stupid”. They will tell you that it is the will of God. They may also tell you about predestination and grace, but all that explains nothing to you. In any case, it is the will of God. Let us analyze the above reply. Since God gave us some brains, we should not let it rust away.

Thus, the LORD is capricious, He does what He likes. He gives everything to some people and nothing to others. Good, we understand, He is God, it is his will, it is marvelous, we bow. But we fail to understand why later on He is unhappy, furious and outraged when those to whom He gave nothing good make mistakes, become wicked, unbelievers, criminals. Seeing that it is God who gave human beings this

mentality, this lack of intelligence or heartlessness, why does He punish them? He who has all the powers, could He not make them good, honest, intelligent, wise, pious, splendid? Not only is it His fault if they commit crimes, but in addition, He punishes them for these crimes! This is where there is something wrong. He has all the powers, He does what He wants, we agree, no one can blame Him for that, but why then is He not more consistent, more logical, more just? He should at least leave human beings alone. Well no, He will throw them into Hell for eternity! And there too, one is stupefied; let us ask ourselves: “For how long did these people sin? Thirty years, forty years? Fine, let them stay in Hell for forty years, not more. But for eternity..., this is incredible cruelty!” We should reason a bit.

Whereas if we accept reincarnation, if we study and understand it, then everything changes. God truly becomes the Master of the universe, the greatest, the most noble, the most just, and we accept that if we are poor, stupid, unhappy, it is totally our fault, because we did not know how to use all that He bestowed on us at the origin, we undertook expensive experiments; and as He, the LORD, is generous and tolerant, He let us get on with it saying: “Well, they will suffer, they will break their heads, but that does not matter, because I will give them again my wealth and my love... they have many reincarnations at their disposal...they are my children and, one day, they will come back.” Thus, He let us have our way, and now all the misfortunes that we encounter are of our own making; it is all our fault.

Until the 4<sup>th</sup> century A.D., Christians believed in reincarnation, just like the Jews, the Egyptians, the Hindus, the Tibetans, etc. But the Church Fathers probably felt that this belief was not quickly producing the expected impact on people, since nobody was visibly in a hurry to improve; and they wanted to push them towards perfection in just one lifetime by suppressing the belief in reincarnation. Moreover, the Church gradually invented horrible things to frighten people, to the extent that in the Middle Ages the only valid belief was in the Devil, in Hell and eternal punishment. Thus, belief in reincarnation was suppressed so as to get people to improve through fear and dread; however, the people did not change, but rather became worse and ignorant above all! It is, therefore, necessary to reintroduce this belief; otherwise, nothing is in focus, nothing jives: life is meaningless, a crazy scheme, and the LORD, who Jesus presented as our Father, appears to be a monster, etc.

The time between two incarnations of the same spirit could be long or short. The Igbo Ögbanje (Gbaa nje = come again), he who returns many times, aptly depicts rapid reincarnation. A child is born today and dies shortly after. The mother gets pregnant again and gives birth to another baby who also dies shortly after. We suspect an Ögbanje is at it again. So, the elders gather and give the dead baby a good cut on its small butt before burial. The mother gets pregnant again and gives birth to a third baby who, o! miracle, has the scar of a good cut on his little butt. And the unmasked ögbanje child will stay, this time around.

The phenomenon of Ögbanje simply shows us that life on Earth and life in a Spirit Guild are analogous. As we have playmates here on Earth, so do we have playmates there in our Guild. When we incarnate in human bodies we miss our pals back there and they miss us. The link is sometimes so strong that the incarnate spirit exits its body to join its friends back home in the Guild. But the Rulers of the Guild would continue to send the returning spirit back into incarnation until it realizes the futility of trying to avoid the lesson to be learned on Earth. There are other methods, other than cutting some part of the dead baby's body, for handling the Ögbanje phenomenon. Dibia Ögbanje resolves the issue very rapidly. He identifies the child at birth as Ögbanje and immediate action is taken to avoid the child's inexorable death. The action may consist in unearthing and destroying the Ögbanje pebbles (mpkülü iyi). The child may also receive long razor marks (Nki) on his cheeks, so that his visiting playmates from the Guild would no longer recognize him.

We have noted that spirits are organized in functional hierarchies. Two children from the same hierarchy tend to get on well. The Igbo concept of Ndü Otu (belonging to the same Guild) refers to this functional character of spirits. Otu Ndü Mmili, for instance, refers to the Guild of Water Spirits. The various Igbo Gods (Alüshī) also have their Guilds from which spirits may incarnate in human beings. I have my granduncle Nweke Udo, whose spirit came from the Spirit Guild of Ovbuvbe Amudo, Öka. His mother hails from Amudo village and he was better known as Nweke Alüshī. Spirits from Imöka Öka have incarnated in many Öka children, who pay homage to It before the annual festival. The same is true of Agünaabö Ümüzööcha, Öka. When the spirit of a child comes from an Alüshī Guild, no ancestor shows up during the Agü ritual. This prompts the astute Dibie to turn to the Alüshī for an answer. A lot is cast (jie ogu) to decide if the reincarnating spirit (Onye Üwa) is ancestral or of the Gods. The search is further narrowed by, determining through the lot, where the God's shrine is located – at the father's or mother's place, Imöka, etc.

It happens also that a living human being could be the Onye Üwa of another person. This is still the Guild phenomenon. The spirit of a living Onye Üwa is simply a very powerful member (say, a Ruler) of the Guild from which the spirit of the baby under investigation has come. Just as Imöka shows up when we interrogate the spirits of many babies, so also would a ruling incarnate spirit show up when we interrogate subaltern spirits from the same hierarchy.

### **2.3. The Chi and Its Celebration**

It is the spirit (Chi) that uses the father's sperm and the mother's egg to form the baby in the mother's womb. It is thus my Chi that created me the way I am, in my mother's womb. This personal God or Chi that creates human forms is indeed almighty. It deserves celebration, praise and worship. And that's exactly what our astute ancestors did before Christianity and other imported religious cults came and messed-up our mindset. Today folks no longer celebrate, praise and worship their Chi. They celebrate, praise and worship Jesus, Mahatguru or some other crap.

The birthday is the day on which that spirit (breath, Chi), encased or incarnate in form, comes into the physical world for the purpose of ... mastering its mind.

My mother said she gave birth to me on April 4, 1945. Hence my birthday occurs on every April 4, starting from 1946. The distance from the date of birth to the current birthday enables one to do the following self-assessment:

“I have been in this world for, say, twenty years. How far have I progressed in my destined purpose of mastering my mind?”

It is meaningless to celebrate the passing of twenty years that we have spent doing everything except what we are here for – to perfectly master our minds!

Generally the birthday party celebrates the passage of time relative to a date of birth, instead of the event and purpose of the incarnation of spirit (Chi) in form. We throw exquisite birthday parties because we are 1 year, 10 years or 100 years old on this good planet Earth! What have we achieved relative to the purpose for which we, as spirits (Chi), incarnated in human form? Well, we claim to have mastered everything except our own minds. A curious mastery indeed!

The spirit (Chi) will keep re-incarnating in form until it acquires total mastery of its mind. That's the gist of evolution or the sojourn of the spirit (Chi) in the world of form.

That the Chi is key in Igbo theogony is evidenced in such expressions as: Chi onye anöghü n'izu, ivbe anara emie (No cabal will prevail against you unless your Chi is part of that cabal); Chi na-edu (It is the Chi that guides); Chi m egbuo m-oo! (My Chi has abandoned or killed me!); Onye na Chi ye (To everyone his/her Chi). Chibuuzo (It is the Chi that leads). In these examples the use of Chi is preferred to that of Chikwu or Chineke, because Chi is closer to man than Chineke or Chikwu. The Dibia Avba always says Kenee Chi ghi (Thank your Chi, personal God, share of God) and never Kenee Chikwu/Chineke (Thank Chikwu/Chineke or God). Shiel Chi ghi ite! Cook a meal for your Chi!

Birthday celebrations are supposed to be Eucharist feasts in honor of the Chi: nshil Chi ghi ite. Alas, our birthday celebrations are meaningless shows to remember a date.

## 2.4. Dibia and Avba

"Dibia" was what Europeans called "native doctor" or "medicine man". Avba is divination. There are three kinds of Dibia in Öka, namely:

- (1) Dibia Avba – These are the Dibia-diviners who ascertain the wishes of the Gods. They use different means to do this: some work with sand – making marks on a small heap of sand, and finding answers to questions from the marks; some work with peculiar seeds or mirrors – they are called “ose n’abö” or “asaa n’abö” – they stare at these peculiar seeds or into their mirrors and reveal the wish of the Gods; others use “ükpükpa” – the shells of Ögbönö seeds – which are strung together on a thin rope, and flung on the ground: the Gods speak through the manner in which the ükpükpa shells fall, some falling face up and some falling face down.
- (2) Dibia Aja is a specialist in performing rituals or sacrifices as requested by the Gods and revealed by the Dibia Avba.
- (3) Dibia Ögwü gives medicines to cure illnesses (herbalist) or knows the art of preparing talismans (magus).

A Dibia of any kind serves apprenticeship for seven years or more.

An Öka adage says: Ö dü na njö, a chövba Dibia! i.e, we seek the Dibia when the situation is desperate. Generally, the Dibia Avba identifies the problem and indicates the appropriate sacrifice to be effected by the Dibia Aja or the appropriate ögwü to be prepared by the Dibia Ögwü. So, the important elements in Ödünana are: the Dibia, our Chi or personal God, the Alüshī or functional Deities, Chineke whose portions are the Chi and Alüshī, and Chikwu or the all-containing Godhead (the infinite Space we live in).

Some people have asserted that avba (divination) is just common sense or plain hocus-pocus. But avba is neither! Let me explain the avba philosophy a bit.

Divination involves five elements: the diviner, the instrument of the oracle, the oracle, the client, and the unknown (God or Spirit). If the diviner is the client, then we have four elements.



Please note that the oracle is different from its instrument. To better understand let us consider divination with the four-lobed kolanut or Tarot cards. When thrown, the spread of the lobes of a four-lobed kolanut gives an oracle, while the four-lobed kolanut itself is the instrument for obtaining an oracle – any spread of the lobes. Again, the Tarot pack is the instrument for the expression of Tarot oracles, while a given spread of those cards provides an oracle for interpretation. So, an oracle is any disposition of the avba instrument (cowries, four-lobed kolanut, ùkpükpa, special seeds, Tarot cards, etc.) through which the Chi expresses its will. Changes in the will of the Chi are followed by changes in the disposition of the oracle when reconstituted and recast. We obtain a new spread when the four lobes of the kolanut are assembled and thrown again or when the Tarot cards are re-shuffled and a new set of cards are drawn from the complete pack.

The oracle provides codes through which the invisible communicates with the diviner and his client. The meaning of each code is fixed and the diviner must master these codes and their meanings. Divination boils down to interpreting the codes provided by the oracle and adapting them to the question at hand. Thus, the diviner is required to have a cultivated imagination and intuition, in order to capture the subtle movements of the Spirit through the codes.

The role of Dibia Avba in Ödünana is primordial. People complain that majority of them are liars and cheats. Maybe! But one sage told me: Dibia niine na-ashī ashī, mana ï vbü Dibia nya shīal ghī ashī maka na üvbödü ashī na-avbü ezi okwu. The Dibia are liars, but when you come across a Dibia tell him to lie for you, because some lies are true. The Dibia is a trained seer, just like a trained Tarot card reader. The Tarot cards have fixed meanings. The position of each card in a spread also has a fixed meaning. The only variable element is the sequence in which the consultant picks the cards from the Tarot pack. Assume we are using only the twenty-two major trumps to interrogate the invisible. I shuffle the twenty-two cards and place them facing down on a table. I then ask you to pick four cards, one at a time, and give them to me without looking at the image on the card. I place the cards on another table in the form of a cross, the cross spread. The second card faces the first across the short arm of the cross, while the third and fourth cards are placed opposite each other at the top and foot, respectively, of the long arm of the cross. A fifth card, which is a summary of the four cards, is placed in the center of the cross.

When you went to pick the cards, “something” moved your hand to blindly pick a card among twenty-two cards. The same “something” moved your hand when you blindly picked the three other cards. But the “something” that was blindly moving your hand is simply your Chi or God within your body. Your Chi knows the answers to your queries. It uses the cards that you choose and the sequence in which you choose them to answer the relevant query. The Tarot reader simply reads out what your Chi is showing through the cards. The same is true of the Dibia Avba.

An avba session usually starts with generalities concerning the client and his/her family. A good Dibia Avba is able to use his oracle to identify good news or problems in the family/office without any lead from the client. Remember that the Dibia Avba does not have all the answers. We listen to the Dibia without surrendering our reason. Ask questions, if you don't understand what the Dibia is saying. Onye ajüjü anara evbu uzo. He who asks questions never misses his way. The implementation of his recommendations must be dependent on our sole judgment. That's why my folks say: a gbachaa avba, a chiköö uche. Deliberation must follow the avba session. A minimum of three different Dibia avba should be consulted for important issues. A comparison of the three oracles would give a good indication of what to do. Remember: in avba, it is your Chi talking to you via an oracle that the Dibia avba interprets for you.

Does it mean we can't dialogue directly with our Chi? We can, but we indulge in so much mental chatter that we cannot hear or feel the promptings of our own Chi. Hence the need for the Dibia and his oracle as the mouthpiece of our Chi. The object of yoga/meditation is to eliminate this mental noise, with a view to hearing or feeling the prompts of the Chi that resides in our own body. When you master your mind, then your Chi or Spirit will talk to you "face-to-face". But before we acquire that mastery, the Dibia and his oracle are there to help us out. Knowledge is power and to be forewarned is to be forearmed, says the sage. So, consult the Dibia avba whenever important issues are at stake. Forget about your jeering, untutored relatives and friends. Remember that true salvation is a solo thing and in your own hands. The Öka say: Anü kal obu, na-ebu n'ödö ajü! Only stout-hearted animals live in the open ajü grassland! Because the world we live in is indeed a vast Ödö Ajü! Avba is common to the Igbo, though its practice is as varied as the Igbo language – Igbo na-asü n'onu n'onu!

### **2.5. The Agü Ritual – Mgba Agü**

My ancestors understood the process of reincarnation and had a ritual (Mgba Agü), done by the Dibia or wise ones, for determining the nature and origin of the spirit that has reincarnated in the form of a new human child. But why was it so important to know the nature and origin of the incarnating spirit? The nature of the spirit provided guidelines on what the spirit has come to achieve – the field where the child will excel, his karma, etc. The spirit of a child may come from the father's clan, the mother's clan or some other Spirit Guild. Only spirits from the father's clan can inherit the father's Övbö na Alö and officiate the clan's Ödünana rituals. Spirits other than those from the father's clan are strangers to the clan and must go through the ritual of Ngo üwa (purchase of onye üwa from the clan) in order to be admitted into the clan. To lead a family, it is not just sufficient for a man to be the eldest son of his father. It is also necessary that his spirit comes from his father's clan. The wisdom of the Agü ritual is evident. No stranger to the clan will head the clan or serve the Gods of the clan, without the appropriate adoption rituals. The Agü ritual tells us who is who in the clan and who can do what for the clan.

I have organized the Agü ritual for all the members of my family. Note that the ritual may be performed for a physically absent candidate. The candidate's Igbo name is the most important element as we shall see shortly from the case below concerning my family. For me and my eight siblings, the items required for the inquiry concerning nine persons (three males and six females) were:

- (1) The Igbo names of the nine persons, e.g., Kaanaenechikwu Anazövba
- (2) About eight Igbo names (males and females) from the father's side and the mother's side.
- (3) Dibia Avba: two Agü specialists.
- (4) Cash: fifty-four Naira (six Naira per person).
- (5) Cash: nine 50 kobo coins (4.50 Naira)
- (6) Old calabash: broken into nine large pieces. Each piece is crushed with the heel at the end of the ritual.
- (7) Rope: nine pieces.
- (8) Ömü (tender yellowish palm frond): one bunch.
- (9) Kolanut (four-lobed): nine for the ritual, but there were twenty kolanuts available.
- (10) Yam: eighteen tubers. To the nine tubers used for the ritual proper are added tubers from the remaining nine for the pounded yam to be eaten at the end of the ritual. The unused tubers were given to the Dibia.

- (11) Chicken: three cocks and six hens. Beef to supplement the chickens, ögbönö and requisite soup items.
- (12) Gin (njenje): two Congo bottles.
- (13) Palmwine (nkwü enu): six gallons (atüma n'atö).
- (14) Igbo salad: aküovbele (leaves of the small version of the garden egg, chopped), ükpaka (finely sliced and slightly fermented oilbean seeds, roasted), azü mkpö (smoked catfish), palmoil, pepper and salt. This salad is consumed before the meal of pounded yam and ögbönö soup.

The Agü process goes like this. The two Dibia sat on skins placed on the floor and spread out their working tools. The interrogation tool or oracle (ükpükpä) has four elements. Each element consists of a set of four small wooden saucers threaded onto a strong cord. Dried fish vertebrae and metal rings are threaded onto the cord between two saucers. The two Dibia would simultaneously throw their respective oracles and jointly interpret them. My Ümübeele and Ümüanaga relatives sat facing the Dibia. My senior brother, Emeke, and I were the only children present. Emeke was called to come forward and “naa Onye Üwa” (take his incarnator). He gave his name as Chikwuemeke Anazövba and touched the horn (mpu mgbada) held out to him by each Dibia. Names of men from my clan were examined one after the other, but the two oracles could not agree on any name. We then gave names from Ümüanaga, my mother’s village. The two oracles agreed on Özö Ezenwa (Ezeamaal (na ö ga-echi)), my mother’s father, and disagreed on the other names. So, it was decided that Özö Ezenwa is Emeke’s Onye Üwa. Or that Emeke is a reincarnation of Özö Ezenwa.

For my absent brother and sisters a man or woman from my clan stood in for them. For my junior brother, Cyril, I touched the horns and gave my name as Uchenna Okwuchikwu Anazövba. My aunts Ekegboo Nweke (Alüshī) and Nwaamu Nweke (Alüshī) stood in for my six sisters. At the gate of the compound and for each of the nine persons, a piece of the calabsh is crushed with the heel, a branchlet of ömü (the yellow palm frond) and a piece of rope are dropped, and the feathers of the cocks and hens are deposited. A slice is cut from each of the nine tubers of yam and dropped at the compound gate. Note that for the physically present candidates, the ömü branchlet and rope are first tied to the arm and immediately removed, as a symbol of liberation from bondage and admission into the class of freeborn citizens of Öka. Thereafter, the ömü branchlet and rope are deposited at the gate of the compound.

Let us recall that Udo Anaagö was a priest of the Ana Deity or Ezeana. This explains the source of his most senior son’s name Anazövba (May Ana protect me, us). Öka has Ana, not Anī. Anizöba is simply a corruption of Anazövba. And Anazövba = Anazöö.

The complete results of the Agü ritual are given below:

- (1) Rose Chinwe Anazövba: Her Onye Üwa is Nwaküeri Anazövba, our paternal grandmother. She was alive when Rose was born. Recall what we said about this type of reincarnation and about Nwaküeri in the next chapter? She was an indomitable pioneer of the women’s liberation movement. She was titled “Eze eje ögü, ö chīlī ndü aghīa wīa” (Unable to go to battle, the king/queen sends his/her warriors). Rose is our Nnekwuada (Great Daughter), the rock on which my family rests. Do Rose and Nwaküeri have common characteristics? A lot! But let those who know Rose meditate on the issue, in the light of what we have written below on Nwaküeri.
- (2) Joy Nneka Anazövba: Her Onye Üwa is Adaeze Ezelagbö, Nnajide’s sister. Sister Joy, Chief Mrs. J.N. Nwokoye (Omelöra), is an accomplished retired Civil Servant.

- (3) Godfrey Chikwuemeke Anazövba: Emeke's Onye Üwa is Özö Ezenwa, our maternal grandfather. Brother Emeke is a retired Quantity Surveyor.
- (4) Mabel Ögöegbune Anazövba: Her Onye Üwa is Onyenweenu Umeerie, Anazövba's mother (my great-grandmother) from Amudo village, Awka. Mrs. Mabel O. Anaje is one of the kindest people I have ever met. She is also an accomplished retired Civil Servant.
- (5) Margaret Azüka Anazövba: Her Onye Üwa is Nwamgboli, wife of Okoye Onyeemeto. Margie is a professor at Unizik Awka, an accomplished intellectual.
- (6) Emmanuel Kaanenechikwu Anazövba: My Onye Üwa is Özö Udo Anaagö Mmadiagwu, my greatgrandfather. He is the Aböshī-udughudu-ngagwu-dü-Igbo-egwu.
- (7) Josephine Ivbeeyinwa Anazövba: Ivbeeyi's Onye Üwa is Onyenweenu Udo, Anazövba's sister. Mrs. Ivbeeyi Okocha is an accomplished retired Civil Servant.
- (8) Dorothy Abümchikwu Anazövba: Dora's Onye Üwa is Anyankwö Nwobu, the lady who brought Agwü Udo from her mother's home (ikwunne) at Mbaukwu. She was a priest (Ezenwaanya). Dibia Avba have asked me why Dora is not Ezenwaanya. They assert that she will accomplish nothing except she becomes Ezenwaanya. Agwü Udo has promised to help her if she decides to begin implementing her destiny as Ezenwaanya. She confirmed having the fiber of an Ezenwaanya, which she was using in some Christian water cult (üka mmili). I hope she would wake up to see that unscrupulous Christian priests are exploiting her natural powers. She is a priest whose God is Ana and whose church and altar are in her own house. Let her note that our Agwü will destroy whatever she builds outside her calling as Ezenwaanya. Some family members have suggested that she could accomplish the same function as a Christian priest. I replied that she might as well try to wash away the lines on her palms with soap. If she fails to do the Ezenwaanya in this incarnation, she will have to do it in the next. Ö dü n'övbö! This is the Law, in spite of the say-so of the Christian priest.
- (9) Cyril Okwuchikwu Uchenna Anazövba: Cy's Onye Üwa is Onyeama Ezenwa. He is Özö Ezenwa's most handsome son. He was a playboy, he had blue eyes and died celibate.

The above shows that the spirits of my two brothers, Emeke and Cyril, come from my mother's clan. Emeke and Cyril will remain strangers (they are inlaws!) to the Anaagö clan until their admission into the clan through the "ngo üwa" ritual. Folks are surprised to see me breaking the kolanut and pouring libation at the Obu altar, in the presence of Emeke, my senior brother. I simply tell them that ö dü n'övbö, it is in line with the decree of Ndiichie. Should I recount the reincarnation and Agü rules given above, just to satisfy the curiosity of a pseudo-Igbo, Igbo n'önü nkīti? No. A tüöl ömal, ö mal; a tüöl ovbeke, o vbekewie ishi n'ovbia. Confronted with a riddle, the initiate understands while the non-initiate divagates into the bush. To avoid unnecessary questions about this situation, I simply present the kolanut tray to him for a blessing touch. And he just says "gaa n'iru" (go ahead).

The following concerns my children.

- (1) Rose Nneamaka Ada Anazövba: Nne's Onye Üwa is Nwaagö Udo, Anazövba's sister.

- (2) Alexander Chikwuemeke Nwavbüishi Anazövba: Emeke Jr. has Nweke Udo (Nweke Alüshĩ) as Onye Üwa. Hence both Emeke Jr. and Nweke are incarnations from the Ovbuvbe Amudo Spirit Guild. We have Eucharist feasts with Nweke at the family Obu and pay courtesy visits to the shrine of Ovbuvbe at Amudo village, Öka.
- (3) Joy Nkemakonam Anazövba: Nkem's Onye Üwa is Anyankwö Okoye Onyeemeto. Anyankwö was very gorgeous and was known as Öchömma. She refused to marry and died celibate.
- (4) Robert Chikwukammadi Özöemene Anazövba: Chika's Onye Üwa is my father, Godfrey Nwavbüishi Anazövba.
- (5) Moses Obinna Anazövba: Obinna's Onye Üwa is my grandfather, Anazövba Udo.

We must stop here, since every story has an end. Deeme nu-oo! Thank you!

### 3. Ödünana: The Igbo Religion

#### 3.1. Gods are the creative fashioning Powers

Ödünana = Ö dü n'ana = A way of life that is rooted in Ana. And we recall that Ana (the Earth) on which we live and move and have our being is the physical body of a Spirit or Deity, whose name is Ana. Our physical bodies, which are provided and sustained by Ana, return to Ana at what we call death. So, Ana nwe mmadi! Ana owns all of us!

Some of my readers accuse me of borrowing heavily from Christianity and of providing little or no documented local evidence to back my assertions concerning Ödünana, the Igbo religion. I reply that research has shown that Christianity is Ödünana – disfigured and varnished. This is the modus operandi of Christianity: the torching of the library of Alexandria, the razing of Pagan temples, etc., were all intended to mask the origins of the doctrines presented by ascendant Christianity as divine revelation. Having discovered what Christianity did to Ödünana and how it happened, polemics on the issue would be futile. By carefully removing the varnish and interpolations that Christianity has used to mask its parenthood, I am able to recuperate the beautiful, rational and robust cult of my Igbo ancestors – Ödünana.

The person who believes the words and teachings of St. Paul, has no right to pick out from the latter those sentences only that he chooses to accept, to the rejection of others. St. Paul teaches most undeniably the existence of cosmic gods and their presence among us:

- (1) “For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many and lords many.”(1 Cor. 8:5)
- (2) “For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.” (Col 1:16)
- (3) “To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God” (Eph 3:10)

Gods are the creative fashioning Powers. And the Christian Jehovah is one of the Gods or Elohim. To make of him, as the Christians do, the Infinite, the One and the Eternal God, is philosophically

unacceptable. Of tribal Gods there were many; the One Universal Deity is a principle, an abstract Root-Idea which has nothing to do with the unclean work of finite Form. We honor and venerate the Gods as beings superior to ourselves. In this we obey the Mosaic injunction, while Christians disobey their Bible – Missionaries foremost of all. “Thou shalt not revile the gods,” says one of them – Jehovah – in Exodus 22:28; but at the same time in Exodus 22:20 it is commanded, “He that sacrificeth to any God, save unto the Lord, he shall be utterly destroyed.” Now in the original texts it is not “God” but Elohim – and we challenge contradiction – and Jehovah is one of the Elohim, as proved by his own words in Genesis 3:22, when “the Lord God said: Behold the Man has become **as one of us**,” etc. Going by the Christian Bible, both those who worship and sacrifice to the Elohim, the angels, and to Jehovah, those who revile the gods of their fellow-men, are great transgressors.

In every living form resides a manifesting spirit (Chi). All forms – whether stars, men, beasts, or the stones underneath our feet – are tabernacles for spirits (Chi), vital breaths, portions of the same Universal Breath or Spirit (Chineke). And man sees truth when he realizes that he is one-in-spirit with all that is. This realization is the basis of ethics or morality. Without this realization mutual love and brotherhood are just words.

That Chi is key in Igbo theogony is evidenced in such expressions as: Chi na-edu (It is the Chi that guides); Chi m egbuo m-oo! (My Chi has abandoned or killed me!); Onye na Chi ye (To everyone his Chi). In these examples the use of Chi is preferred to that of Chikwu or Chineke, because Chi is closer to man than Chineke or Chikwu. The Dibia Avba always says Kenee Chi ghi (Thank your Chi or God) and never Kenee Chikwu/Chineke (Thank Chikwu/Chineke or God). Shiel Chi ghi ite! Cook a meal for your Chi! Birthday celebrations are supposed to be Eucharist feasts in honor of the Chi: nshil Chi ghi ite. Alas, our birthday celebrations are meaningless shows to remember a date.

From the above analyses, we are now able to establish the following table showing the key components of Igbo theogony and their approximate English equivalents.

Igbo	English	Comment
Amaamaamachaamacha, Chikwu	Godhead, Infinite Space	The unmanifest and unknown God, The Great God
Chineke, Mmöö, Ndü	God, Spirit, Life	The manifest, creative God or Spirit
Alüshī, Ndü Mmöö, Chi, Okechikwu,	Gods, Spirits	Spirit Guilds, Spirits incarnate in form, Spirit-share
Uche	Mind	Thought is Echiche
Arü	Body	
Mmadī	Human Being	
Ana	Earth, Earth God	The planet as body of the Spirit Ana
Obunana (O bu n’Ana)	Earth spirits	Earth God and Its Hosts
Ödünana (Ö dü n’Ana)	Ana Cult	Earth-based way of life
Önwa	Moon	
Anyanwü	Sun	
Üwa	World, Solar System	Also the great universe

The awareness of a community is dependent on the awareness of its citizens. Do you know yourself and accept yourself as you are? Only he who accepts himself as he is can accept others as they are. You and I have a Chi or Spirit-share (Oke Chikwu). Your Chi and my Chi were given to us by the manifest creative God (Chineke). Your Chi and my Chi come from the same source (Chikwu), and that

is what unites us as children of one God (Ümü Chikwu, Ümü Chineke). Your Chi and my Chi are here on different missions, and that is why we behave differently. This is the foundation stone of the healthy Igbo brotherhood and spirituality.

The Igbo venerate or worship the God of the Earth and Its Hosts of spirits (Ana). Ödünana or Omenana describes this method of venerating or worshiping God. Recall that worship of God describes the ways we choose to commune with the manifest God and, through It, with the Godhead (Chikwu) – the Source. Men worship God in diverse, but equivalent, ways. The God is the same – Spirit, Mmöö, Ndü – but the rituals or methods for approaching It differ.

Ödünana is the religion or cult dedicated to the Earth God, in the same manner that Christianity is the religion or cult dedicated to the Sun God. Sun Day or Sunday is the day set aside for the Christian worship of the Sun God.

This write-up is a modest gift to Ndü Igbo (the Igbo) aimed at helping them clear up the mental cobwebs that have tried but failed to choke out their religion. Ödünana is eternal and unfailing! The song “Omenani na Üka” by Özöemena Nsugbe should inspire repentance into the Igbo. By repentance I mean a change of mind or a mental purge.

The robust Igbo religion places God in Nature, where Deity is readily available. We are told to embrace the God in us (Chi) so that the latter will embrace the Creative God (Chineke), which already embraces the Great God (Chi-ukwu or Chikwu). Onye övbüna maküö Chi ye, ka Chi anyi wee maküö Chineke vbü onye makülü Chikwu. The Earth (Ana) is sacred, keep it holy. Ana dü nsö, devbie nsö. Anyi na-asö nsö Ana be anyi. May Ana protect man and woman. Ana zövba nwoke na nwaanya. A mortuary song says that we all belong to the Earth. Ana nwe mmadi niine. Our ancestors knew that the God or Spirit (Chi) of any thing on Earth is subservient to the Spirit or God of the Earth (Chi of Ana = Ana). The latter is subservient to the Spirit of the Sun (Chi of Anyanwü = Anyanwü). By venerating or worshiping Ana our ancestors showed their wisdom concerning the hierarchical structure of the inner government of the world. Those who worship the God whose body is the Sun have put aside a day, Sunday, for Its worship. But this God is the God of the Gods of the planets in our solar system. The inhabitants of Earth have access to the God of the Earth, Ana, and cannot have direct access to the solar God, Anyanwü. Solar religions on Earth have all perished because men have tried to reach the top of a strict hierarchy without going through the basic and intermediary stages. Give unto Caesar what is his, says Jesus. Give Ana Its due and life becomes blissful. The Earth owns us all. Ana nwe mmadi niine!

### **3.2. The Temporary Loss of Ödünana**

No pen or tongue will ever record the monstrous fatuity involved in the spectacle of people looking into the wrong world and waiting with sanctified stupidity for the fulfillment of values that have slipped through their clumsy hands.

The collapse of true religion is ever marked by its turning for its real experience from earth to mystical heavens. When religion gave up its effort to realize values in the life here and fixed despairing eyes on heaven, it signaled the decay of primal human virtue and a sinking back into mystical fetishism. This is the sad fate of Christianity!

Colonialism brought Christianity to Nigeria. With the arrival of Christianity in eastern Nigeria came the Igbo “loss of nerve” and the turning from earth to heaven for the realization of hopes ground to dust on earth. This shift of philosophical view let the ground of Igbo culture lie fallow, and bred the rank growth of religious mummery that has almost covered the whole cultural terrain.

Ödünana is the primeval revelation given to early races for the guidance and instruction of all humanity. It is a sobering realization for all of us that this primeval revelation given to early races for the guidance and instruction of all humanity has missed entirely the world for which it was intended!

The scene of critical spiritual transactions is not “over there” in spirit land, but here on Earth in the inner arena of man’s mind. Life’s accounts do not remain suspended during our active experience on earth, to be closed and settled when the exertion is over. We are weaving the fabric and pattern of our re-creation of ourselves when we are awake on earth, not when we are at repose in ethereal heavens. The droning cry of lugubrious religionism for centuries has been to live life on earth merely as the preparation for heaven. But there is no logic in the idea of making preparation for rest! It is the other way around: rest is a preparation for more work. The positive expression of life is the exertion of effort to achieve progress. Rest is just the cessation of the effort, and needs no preparation. Rest is in some degree correlative with the effort. Still the logic is indefeasible, that we work to achieve our purposes, and not to gain rest. The presumption that this life is of minor consequence and has value only as the stepping-stone to another where true being is alone achieved, is one facet of that enormous fatuity of which we are holding orthodox Christian indoctrination guilty. It is the last mark of the miscarriage of primal truth in the scriptures that its meaning and application have been diverted from that world it was intended to instruct, and projected over into another where its code can have no utility whatever. The offices of religion have fled to heaven, and must be brought back to earth, the scene of the judgment, hell, purgatory and the resurrection, and the seat of all evolutionary experience. This return can be effected only by the retrieval and dissemination of the lost tenets of Nature religion or Ödünana.

The colonialist came to the Igbo with his technology and his Christian religion. We should have accepted his technology and politely rejected his ineffectual and mind-warping religion, as did the Chinese and the Japanese. We did not, and this was the Igbo “loss of nerve”.

Can the damage be repaired? Yes, since it is entirely mental. Mental garbage can be thrown anytime we realize our error. The mind is a bag, uche vbü akpa, into which we have ignorantly stuffed thrash. We simply throw the thrash when, through knowledge, we realize the mistake. My morning starts whenever I wake from my night’s sleep. Mgbe onye ji-tete üla vbü ütütüüa. Let us mentally go back to our roots in Ana so that It will start protecting us again. Ana ga-ebidokwe zövba anyi!

Is the Igbo a polytheist? Yes, and he is closer to the truth about God than the sneering, ignorant monotheist. We saw above that God is both one and many, just like the Army. The Army is a Unit with functional sub-divisions. The same holds true for God. It is one Spirit, one Unit whose functional parts are Gods or Spirits. The functional parts of the Army are hierarchized. The same is true of the Gods. It is meaningless to assert that I applied to the Army for help to put out a fire in my house. The correct statement is that I applied to the Fire Brigade of the Army for help to put out a fire in my house. It is the Fire Brigade of the Army, not the whole Army, which handles fire-fighting. Similarly, we apply for help to a God in charge of a particular function, say, procreation (Akwali Ömümü). To pray to a God makes sense, but it is foolishness and ignorance to pray to God. To worship or venerate God is inefficacious, but to worship or venerate a God yields immediate results. Our ancestors knew this and that is why they were ögö olee. Their prayers to a given God always yielded the desired result.



We repeat: Before the advent of Christianity in our midst, the Igbo mindset was that God is both one and many, just like the Army. The Christian mind-warping strategy was to assert that there is only One God, the Christian God, which is the God of all Gods. Man's salvation lay in venerating and worshipping this Christian super-God. But the sober truth is that the Christian God is just one among the many Gods. The attempt to reject the Gods and cling to some super-God unsettles the mind because that mindset goes against all our observations. Can the world in front of our eyes be the creation of one super-God? No! Nature confirms the reality of Gods or fashioning powers, but not the reality of one super-God.

To get a people under your control in order to exploit them, you must get total control over their bodies and minds. Military might takes care of the physical control. Religious indoctrination with mind-warping dogmas takes care of the mental control, because it destroys whatever mental strength the people draw from their local belief systems. A people thus mollified and rendered docile may be exploited with great ease. This is the ageless, all-time colonization strategy. Ödünana was the Igbo religion before the arrival of the colonialists. The observed attempt by our colonial guests to destroy Ödünana is simply an application of the ageless colonization strategy: mollify us and render us docile in order to exploit us. The colonialist military might took care of physical control and the job of mental mollification and stultification was given to Christianity, the religion of the colonialist. Ödünana had to be sabotaged and destroyed from within. The Igbo woman is responsible for the care and upbringing of children. In wealthy polygamous families the children lived with their mothers in the latter's residences, mkpuke. Christianity recruited the required saboteurs from the womenfolk. Women from wealthy polygamous families were choice recruits for the Christian missionaries. The other fertile ground for the recruitment of saboteurs of Ödünana was the group of local underdogs: women who felt crushed by a male-dominated society and men who felt they were unjustly ostracized by a society to which they rightly belonged (Oru, Osu). Oru could be a slave or an indentured servant, and the community has appropriate rites to de-bond those affected. The Osu issue is a bit more complex than that of the Oru. The Osu system was abolished in 1956 by the then Eastern Nigeria government. So, why has the system persisted? Because no one has accurately explained what the Osu is. The explanation below is an attempt to further clarify the Osu concept, with a view to finding lasting solutions to the Osu dilemma. So, what is the Osu?

The Osu is a person owned by the Alüshī. This ownership may be voluntary or involuntary on the part of the Osu.

Voluntary Osu: Faced by some grave danger, a man could take refuge at the shrine of the Alüshī. He thus puts himself and his descendants into the care of the Alüshī.

Involuntary Osu: One may also hand himself over to the Alüshī by deliberately destroying the Alüshī's property. A very Christian lady got into trouble by deliberately smashing the Imöka Öka tortoise with her fufu pestle (ödü nli). Her refusal to perform the propitiation rites transformed all the members of her family into Osu Imöka. There is also the case where two people go before the Alüshī to swear as to the veracity of their ownership claims on, say, a piece of land. The terms of the oath may:

- (1) Limit the action of the Alüshī to the two people who take the oath. Punishment by the Alüshī affects only the oath taker that lied.
- (2) Extend the action of the Alüshī to the descendants of both parties. This option requires the physical presence of the families of the two people when the terms of the oath-taking are spelt

out and when the oath is actually taken. So, your family will stand behind you and hold your waist while you are swearing. Ndü be ghi ga-amado ghu aka n'ukwu. Punishment by the Alüshī affects the oath taker and those who stood behind him.

Things could get complex depending on the nature of the Alüshī. If the Alüshī is O gbuo ö kpöl mgbo (it kills and takes all property), then the risk is enormous. Some deluded criminals have brought disaster to their folks with this type of oath-taking. They were convinced that their ötümökpö ndagbu iyi (Alüshī neutralizer talisman) would protect them. Alas! The mighty fell and brought untold hardship to their undiscerning folks.

The Osu, his family and property belong to the Alüshī which owns the Osu. By taking a woman from an Osu family without the consent of the Alüshī, one forcefully takes something that belongs to the Alüshī. And that's neither elegant nor wise! Because the Alüshī will go looking for Its stolen property. Onye mal ivbe ga-ese okwu, nya emenie. If you know that an action will bring trouble, don't do it.

Is the Osu at the shrine a monk? No. The Osu at the shrine is simply a servant of the Alüshī under the superintendence of the Eze Mmöö, who is the gatekeeper of the Gods. Nwaaka-Nrī, not Osu, are the monks from Nrī who cleanse abominations, mkpü alü.

The Osu label is not indelible. Osu is Ödünana-based. The community and Alüshī owners have appropriate rites to straighten out such issues. Those who want to eradicate the Osu system should take a leaf from the above explanation, which provides the reason for the failure of the 1956 legislation to abolish the Osu system in Ana Igbo. In Ödünana, the way up is the only way down (ibe e shi-aligo ka e shi-alitu). To ignore this rule is to court disaster and unnecessary trouble. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, says Jesus.

In line with the above, I will now recount the temporary loss, through a woman, of Ödünana in my family at Ümübeele village, Öka, Nigeria. Our story began circa 1899 when my father was born and is still unfolding. Here it is!

My great-grandfather, Udo Anaagö, had the Özö title and was the high priest of Ana (Eze Ana) in the Agülü community of Öka. The community comprises the following villages: Ümüanaga, Ümüögbü, Ümübeele, Ümüenechi, Ümüike, Ümüörüka, and Ümüjagwo. The Ana shrine (Aja Ana) still exists at the Ümübeele Avbö market/village square.

Within his compound at Egbeana Ümübeele, Udo Anaagö had his Obu (temple), a miniature Ana shrine (Aja Ana), and the following Alüshī or Gods: Agwü, Ngwu, Okuku. Agwü can be mapped into the Greek God Hermes, the wise and wily messenger of the Gods. We note that Ana is the head of the Alüshī. Every prominent Alüshī shrine has its Agwü or messenger. Some families have the Agwü too. In any ögü e ji övbö (fight for right) the complainant first goes to Ana (Aja Ana) and then to the Alüshī. The Alüshī then sends its Agwü to harass the accused, if he is found guilty. The tormented accused then consults a Dibie Avba, who advises him to go to the Alüshī for a settlement. The symbol of Agwü is the Ogilishi tree, while a tree from the acacia family symbolizes Ngwu. Okuku is symbolized by the sacred corked calabash with its mysterious contents. My family's Okuku has three corked and padded calabashes placed in a long oblong basket (ükpa<sup>26</sup>), Övbö, a horn (mpu mgbada) that the priest blows at the close of the Eucharist ritual. Okuku is familiar to the Agbaja people and

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<sup>26</sup> See picture in my book Ngü Arö Öka: The Öka Lunar Calendar, 2010 – 2021.

points to my family's Agbaja ancestry. It belongs to Anaagö Mmadiagwu, Udo's father. We also have an Akwali Ömümü, the God of fertility, procreation, and protection but It is located in the Obu at the compound of my great-grandfather's grand-mother, Ashii Nta Nwüwaöma, behind Obu Beele Anwünya (Beel Önwü) at Enugo Ümübeele. Members of the Ashii clan, Ümü-Ashii, of Ümübeele village are the direct descendants of the Matriarch Ashii – Mmadiagwü, Ana (Anaadüpanyi) and Mgbechi.

When Udo Anaagö passed on his eldest son Anazöö Udo, my grand-father, took charge. My grand-mother, Nwaküeri Obulinjö, was one of his three wives (the first!). She was a daughter of the well-known Oti Anagbögu of Ümüdiöka village, Öka. This woman made history in my family and in Öka. She was tall and very strong. She had, as we say, a single bone (ovbu ökpükpü) in her arm. In the usual polygamous family brawls, she would floor her two co-wives and sit on them. She had such physical strength that her husband and neighbors could not move her away from the human chair made of her co-wives. My father, Nwavbüishi Anazöö (1899 – 1964), was her only child. As fate would have it, Anazöö's other two wives had no male issues. My father, Nwavbüishi, was thus the only hope his father had of a successor to take on the symbols of ancestral power, övbö na alö, when he passed on. The Övbö is the wand of power and the Alö is the staff of authority. The Alö is a combination of a spear and a bayonet linked by a common handle. When a son accepts the övbö na alö from his dying (or dead) father, he is duty-bound to take care of the family, its Gods and the Obu where there is one.

Disaster struck my family when my grand-mother, Nwaküeri, got baptized into Christianity by late Reverend Dr. G.T. Basden of the Church Missionary Society (CMS). Her Christian name was Joana. My grandfather was outraged but he kept his cool because of his infant heir, my father, who was Nwaküeri's only child. But my grandmother put a cherry on the cake by showing up in a blouse given to her by the Anglican missionaries, to hide her "nakedness". This was an unpardonable abomination on the part of an Öka woman. In those days maidens walked about naked or with a few rolls of beads (jigida) around the waist, while the married women dressed quite scantily. Nudity was natural to my ancestors until the repressed and vicious missionaries showed up in our midst. Thus did my grandmother become one of the pioneer Christian converts and the first woman to wear a blouse in Öka.

My grandmother got baptized by these white strangers and put on their clothes, without my grandfather's prior approval. Pushed to the wall by his unreflecting wife, my grandfather struck back. He handed her a humiliating separation package. The village assembled in my spacious compound and the men dragged her out into the courtyard. Her legendary physical strength was useless against the men of the village. They would have beaten her into pulp had she attempted to resist them. Arrangements were made by my folks to accompany, to the Öbibia River just behind the compound, any of her missionary friends who dared to come to her help. But they wisely stayed away. My grandmother was smeared with charcoal, dressed in rags, dry banana leaves, snail shells, little bells, and what have you. She was transformed into a weird masquerade-like mad person. A big crowd of young men and women made music with drums, gongs, cymbals, and empty tins. With my little father in one hand and a bag of personal effects in the other hand, my grandmother was forced to dance at the head of this curious village brass band. The crowd sprayed her with sand as she danced through the seven villages of Agülü, before proceeding with the musicians to her father's house in Ümüdiöka village. My people handed her and her son over to her bewildered folks. The Oti family and the Ümüdiöka people felt humiliated, but swallowed their pride in the light of the abomination committed by their daughter. The treatment meted out to my grandmother is the famous ögba n'ajilija (sand spraying) punishment. It is the ultimate in public disgrace. My father grew up with his mother at

Ümüdiöka and, with time, uninformed Ümüdiöka people thought he came from their village. He had real bow legs and was a powerful wrestler. He was cool, ruthless and swift like a leopard. His mother's folks have a leopard (agü) cult into which their meritorious sons were initiated. They nicknamed him Ödabalagü Ümüdiöka, probably because he was naturally endowed with the qualities of that big cat without being a member of the leopard (agü) cult.

The CMS missionaries took Nwaküeri and her son to their base at Nteje. My father entered the primary school while his mother received training as a midwife. He later went, at his expense, to the Government Teachers Training College at Warri. The money he earned during school vacation by fishing and trapping bush meat was enough to cater for his school fees and pocket money. His father regularly sent for him, just to see him and know how he was doing. My father moved back to his father's house at Ümübeelee before leaving for training at Warri. Life with his father was rough. He cooked for himself in the absence of his mother, since he would not accept anything from his mother's heathen co-wives. His father was busy with his herbal medicine, iron works and elephant tusk business. My father's peers at Warri were: Mr. B. Umerah from Ümüenechi village and onetime Headmaster of Government School Öka, where I was a pupil from 1952 to 1956; Mr. Udeözö from Amenyi village whose residence is beside the Nkwö Amenyi market square.

My father was also baptized into Christianity and was given the name Godfrey. But is the name Godfrey actually God-Free or Freed by God? Yes, I would go for Godfrey = Freed by God in the light of what recently happened to him and his mother. My family at Ümübeelee was a stronghold of Ödünana, which the wily Christian missionaries saw as the Devil's kingdom to be taken by violence. The Christian missionaries deluded my grandmother into believing that her humiliation and divorce was the mighty work of their God, who had freed her and her son from the Devil's lair. Hence the name Godfrey or God-Free given to her son at his baptism. But what the cruel and scheming Christian missionaries failed to tell my grandmother was that she was being used as a potent weapon against her husband's religion, Ödünana. By removing the sole male heir to my grandfather, the continuation of Ödünana when he passes on was no longer assured. Separated thus from his father, my father had no preparation on how to take care of the family Obu or on how to officiate Eucharist rituals for the ancestors and elders (Ndiichie) or the family's Gods (Alüshi). Although he visited his father during his stay at his mother's village (ikwu nne), his mindset and the duration of such visits were inappropriate for meaningful talk on Ödünana. His stay with the Christian missionaries had almost stultified his reason and his visits were brief. Knowing his father's ruthlessness, he was careful in his dealings with him. His father was also wary, to avoid losing his sole heir for good. The fact was that he left his father as an infant and came back after college as a complete stranger to the customs of his ancestors. But my grandfather was confident saying that the penis of the warrior never gives birth to a coward, utu dike anara amü onye üjö. The Obu may kneel down, but it never crumbles, Obu na-egbu ikpele mana ö nara elu ana.

After his training at Warri, my father got a job as a Government School Teacher. He saved money and, in the early 1920's, spoke to his father about bringing back his mother and getting married thereafter. His father was elated about the marriage idea but gave him two conditions for the return of his mother. The two conditions were:

(1) My grandmother may come back but she will not live in the same house with him. My father proposed to build a brick house in which he will live with his mother, while his father stayed alone in his three-bedroom house. His father agreed.

(2) My grandmother will go through the traditional apology ritual (nkü di), ö ga-akü diye. She will bring a castrated goat (mpipi), a cock (egbene), eight yams, a Congo bottle of gin (njenje), two gallons of toddy palm wine, a day-old chick to cleanse her with (ntiche arü), kolanuts, alligator pepper (ose örö), ten smoked catfish for prayer (amalile) and for preparing soup for the ritual, sundry soup items. The ritual takes place in the family Obu in the presence of my clansmen. On the appointed ritual day, she just ties a wrapper to cover her body from the breasts down to the knees and then walks barefoot into the Obu. Kneeling down and facing the sacrificial altar (iru mmöö), she repeats the relevant apologetic phrases pronounced by the officiating elder (priest). The priest then cleanses her by touching her all over with the day-old chick, which is set free thereafter, outside the compound, to carry away her sins. The priest then breaks a four-lobed kolanut and asks, before throwing the lobes onto a wooden tray, our ancestors (Ndiichie) to indicate their opinion through the pattern displayed by the kolanut lobes thrown onto the wooden tray. The kolanut lobes are then thrown onto the wooden tray and all elders in the Obu are invited to come forward and see the resulting pattern. I was told the ritual went well, so I suppose the four kolanut lobes were all facing up, lying on their broad and flat outer sides. The priest then filled the altar cup (buffalo horn, mpu atü) with palm wine, tasted it, poured some of it onto the altar face and objects (iru mmöö, övbö, okpenshi, ikenga), and gave the cup to my grandmother to drink up whatever remained. The gin came next and a small tumbler or shot was used. After this the members of my clan came and helped her to her feet, embraced her and welcomed her back into the clan. She then left the Obu and my male folks continued the ritual.

A six bedroom bungalow having a large parlor and two verandas was put up. One face of the cement blocks was smooth and the opposite face was decorated with beautiful flower designs. The faces of the blocks with flower designs formed the outer part of the walls, while the smooth faces formed the inward part of the walls. By 1925, the house was roofed with corrugated sheets, the floors were plastered with cement, wooden doors and windows were fixed, but it had no ceiling yet. The house was habitable! And what of the toilets? There was a bath cabin and a pit latrine behind the house. The pit latrine had a wooden seat on top of the small pit entrance. Cute, eh!

My father was now past twenty-four years of age and his father came up with the urgent request for him to get married without further delay. He replied that he needed to seal the new house to keep off owls, snakes, and giant red-head millipedes (esu nwa-ala). My family compound is the last on the Öka-Nibo road before the Öbibia River. The dense forest between my compound and the river was home to diverse flora and fauna. Some of the fauna regularly found their way into the compound. His father asked him to leave the visitors from the forest for him to handle and to use the resources for the ceiling to pay the dowry and effect the marriage rites. Asked how he would take care of the forest dwellers, his father told him that the Udo family had a cult of all the forest dwellers. For the snake (agwö) or the long thing (ivbe ogonogo), the family had a cult of the long thing (anyi na-eme ivbe ogonogo), which was part of the greater cult of forest dwellers. The forest and the bordering part of the Öbibia River belong to Udo Anaagö, my great grandfather. That is why the portion of the river spanned by the Öka-Nibo bridge is called Öbibia Ezi-Udo; the square right in front of my family compound belongs to Udo Anaagö and is called Ezi-Udo. His Ögbü Chi is still standing at the square (in 2011!).

Having completed his mother's apology ritual, my father brought her back to occupy and take care of the new house.

In 1931 my father married Josephine Agbomma Ezenwa (1912 – 2005), one of the daughters of Özö Mmööto-anya Ezenwa of Ümüanaga village, Öka, a wealthy business man who lived on the street bearing his name (Ezenwa Street) at the commercial town of Onitsha. She was fair complexioned,

pretty and, above all, daughter of a wealthy Ödünana-rooted business tycoon. The eagle-eyed Christian missionaries at Onitsha spotted her and the young Agböm̄ma yearned ardently to become a Christian, as the fable goes. The scheming missionaries must have seen the Holy Ghost Fire right on top of her head! She even used to attend church services secretly. It had to be secret because Özö Ezenwa was deep into Ödünana, as a visit to his Ümüanaga compound would convince anybody. His richly decorated Obu had no less than four canons (ogbondu). His Agwü is still there although his Christianized descendants are planning to wreak havoc on the remaining relics that show their strong Ödünana ancestry.

“Soon after her marriage, Josephine went for training at the Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA) Onitsha. She was trained in domestic and literary arts designed for young Christian women. Thus, young Josephine was well trained and brought up as a virtuous, Christian woman of the Anglican Communion, enjoying a happy, fulfilled married life with her husband Godfrey, with the support of Mrs. Joana Nwaküeri Anazövba, a famous Christian mother-in-law. Josephine maintained her Christian faith throughout most of her ninety-three years from her teenage till her death.”<sup>27</sup> With three ardent Christians (my father, his mother and his wife) planted in the heart of my family – an Ödünana stronghold – Christianity was jubilant. With a thoroughly bred Christian couple in full control of my family after the passing on of my grandfather, Ödünana would simply die a natural death from sheer neglect. They only had to be patient and visit the farm while the yam matures, *ka a na-eje n’ubi ka ji na-aka*.

Just before his death in 1944, my grandfather called a meeting to settle the issue of his succession at the head of Udo’s compound. The Obu and all the Alüshī in the compound belonged to seven<sup>28</sup> families, Udo’s children (*ndü be Udo*). The rule has been that whoever succeeded an elder inherited the elder’s responsibilities to the extended family. My father’s refusal to receive the symbols of leadership and power (*övbö na alö*) from his dying father meant he would lose the right to live in his father’s compound. His father would have renounced him before my kinsmen and Ndiichie and he would have been thrown out as an outcast. He would be cut from his roots for good. My father was quick to sense the looming disaster. He recalled the trauma he went through because of Christianity and his mother’s lack of discernment. And like the reconstituted Nebuchadnezzar<sup>29</sup>, “my father’s reason returned unto him”. He pleaded that he would take the *övbö na alö* from his father as his sole heir, but that he was ill prepared to assume the incumbent Ödünana responsibilities. He reminded my kinsmen that the events that took him away from his roots were not of his making. It was pathetic! A solution was eventually found. He swore before his father, the elders, Ndiichie and Obunaana that he will ensure the physical integrity of the compound, Obu and Alüshī. His cousin, Okoye Nnajide (*Avbülükwe*), was appointed to handle the Ödünana aspects of his inheritance. My father’s share in contributions for rituals that involved the clan was handled by his cousin using funds left with him by my father. Thus, the great Ödünana lamp that Christianity sought to snuff out of existence has remained alight.

As a Government School Teacher, my father served at Issele-Ukwu, Ögwashī-Ukwu and Irrua, all in Delta State; Ajali and Öka in Anambra State; Afikpo in Abīa State. I was born at Ajali in April 1945 and the family visited our Öka home in 1950 during my father’s annual leave. I met my grandmother and I still recall her features as if our meeting took place yesterday. Her height and bulk were

<sup>27</sup> Culled from her profile, prepared by two venerable daughters and read at her funeral rites in August 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Eight families with the Mbanugo family that attached itself to the Udoh family.

<sup>29</sup> Dan 4:36 “At the same time my reason returned unto me; and for the glory of my kingdom, mine honour and brightness returned unto me; and my counsellors and my lords sought unto me; and I was established in my kingdom, and excellent majesty was added unto me.”

impressive. She was very gentle and kind. My mother was a pygmy beside this unique woman. She smoked a black pipe. She was indeed special and radiated the aura of a quiet force. When I grew up someone told me that my grandmother punished her impertinent co-wives by blocking their doorways with her body, keeping them prisoners in their houses. Recall the incident where she held down her co-wives, coolly sat on them and defied even her husband who tried to intervene. She was summoned by the elders (ümü nna) and forbidden to engage in brawls with her co-wives. But how would she handle her foul-mouthed co-wives who verbally came after her for a yes or a no? Before the ban by the elders she would quietly walk up to the co-wife that looked for her trouble, floored her and sat on her belly. The choking co-wife naturally started wailing for the help of their husband and neighbors. Neighbors, Nwaküeri is killing me ooh! Agbata Obu, Nwaküeri egbukwee m-oo! With a ban on brawls imposed by the elders, she devised a new and lethal strategy. A co-wife forgets herself and looks for her trouble? Unlike her usual self, she does not react immediately. This nonchalant posture gives the co-wife the false impression that nothing will happen (gīnī ga-eme?); that the sea has dried up (orimili atago). But the co-wife is in for an unpleasant surprise. Early the following morning, this co-wife wakes up to find my grandmother sitting coolly in her (the co-wife's) doorway. The co-wife finds herself imprisoned in her own house. She must simply forget about going to the toilets or kitchen until she presents a loud apology to the human wall sitting at her doorway. To call for help from their husband or neighbors made matters worse, because my grandmother considered such appeal as a sign of impertinence. You look for trouble and when you find it you start screaming for help from others. My grandmother passed on in 1951 and was given a grand burial by my family and the Anglican Church. My father wanted to bury her in the family's compound, but the Anglican Church authorities at Öka refused and asked him to seek the permission of their Bishop at Onitsha. My father chartered a vehicle and went to Onitsha to see the Bishop, who turned down his request. Shattered, he came back from Onitsha and watched helplessly as the priests and lay members of the Church prepared to take away the remains of his mother. The muscles of his face twitched uncontrollably but he managed to subdue the sobs that oppressed his voice. He looked with dismay at my kinsmen who could not stop the proceedings, because her mother's corpse was declared "Church property" (ozu üka). They placed the coffin in a pickup van and headed in procession to the Öka Anglican (CMS then) cemetery, the current Öka market at the beginning of Achala Road. Prior to the coming of Christianity burial rites were handled by the children and kinsmen of the deceased.

My father was bewildered by the treatment he got at the hands of his Church friends. Henceforth, he stayed home on Sundays. My mother took us to Church and conducted fastidious early morning prayers at home before we could rise from our mats. We had to kneel with the elbows on the pillow and the butt in the air. I always dozed off in this weird position. She closes the prayer session with "Ka amala nke onye nwe anyi bü Jisus Kraist na mmekö nke ndi-nsö, nönyelü unu mgbe niine mgbe niine" (May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the communion of the Saints be with you all for ever and ever). We reply, "Amen!" Then she adds "Onye öbüna binie ötö!" (Everybody, get up!) And we all rise from our mats and greet her in English "Good morning Maa!" Her name was Maa to all of us. If you had dozed off and slept during the long prayer session and still have your butt in the air when the others had risen to their feet, Maa will give you a good slap on your butt. It was already difficult for me to wake up early in the morning. A jolting slap on my butt for dozing off and sleeping during a prayer session that meant nothing to me was a bit too much for me. I noticed that my father never went to Church with us and never took part in those early morning prayers. I simulated a belly ache on one Sunday and stayed home with my father while the other children left for the Church with my mother. When my father brought Milk of Magnesia for me to drink, I told him the belly ache was gone. Intrigued by the magical recovery, my father gazed into my eyes gently asked me to tell him what was bothering me. I told him I hated being forced to go to Church on Sundays and being woken up early in

the morning for my mother's prayer sessions. I told him about the butt-slaps I received from my mother whenever she caught me sleeping at the end of her prayer sessions. I also asked him why he never went to the Church with all of us. What I said startled him. I was just seven years old. He laughed gently and said I could stay home with him on any Sunday that I did not feel like going to the Church. For the early morning prayers, he assured me that nobody would disturb my early-morning sleep, henceforth. On the issue of not going to the Church with all of us, he told me that he had school chores to handle during the weekend and that he was free to go or not to go to Church on Sundays. The explanation sounded reasonable to me, coupled with the relief he gave me about my exemption from morning prayers and Church attendance. Nobody dared to wake me up for prayers the next morning and I happily stayed home with him on the next Sunday. My father never reprimanded my mother in our presence and my mother never said anything out of ken to my father in our presence. I deduced that he had left my mother with very strict instructions on the issues and just kept my cool.

I remember Ajali for some mind-boggling events that marked my life. Government School Teachers had their residences strung together in a given area, away from the indigenes. It was a Sunday. My father had gone out and would be back in the evening. My mother had gone to some meeting involving wives of Teachers. The neighbor's daughter, of my age, came by and we sat and played on the mud bench (ikpo) in the kitchen. I was wearing a khaki jumper and she had a gown. Both of us had no underpants because of our tender age – about two years. We fondled our genitals and I had an erection that intensified as the play proceeded. The door on the compound's fence suddenly burst open. Led by my mother, the teachers' wives strolled into the compound and, passing in front of the kitchen, proceeded to enter our house through the rear door. My playmate and I were now sitting quietly on the mud bench. My mother looked around, found us sitting, and came to the wide kitchen entrance. She beckoned me to stand up and asked: *Ö gīnī ka unu na-eme n'īkaa?* (What are both of you doing here?) I said: *O nweree!* (Nothing!) The other women came and joined her and my playmate's mother was among them. Without any warning, my mother lifted my jumper and, lo! my erection was still there. She hit me on the face and shouted: *Ökwa ī shī na onwere ivbe unu na-eme!* (You said you were doing nothing!) She held up my jumper exposing my erect and vibrating penis for her colleagues to see, saying: *Biakwanū solu m vbülü! Nwaa ga-aduwakwa akpa nwamili nwa mmadi!* (Come and see this with me! This boy will soon perforate the urine sac of someone's child!) My playmate's mother ordered her to go home and wait for her punishment. I could not understand why my stubborn erection was causing so much trouble and why my mother had to show my erect penis to her friends. Humiliated, I sneaked into my father's room and hid under his bed. I was still there when my father came back in the evening. My mother told him about how I vanished into thin air after what happened that morning. It was getting dark and my father went in search of me. Unable to find me with my usual playmates, he came back home. He had searched our house except under his bed. He came into his room and found me huddled up and asleep under his bed. He woke me up and asked me to come out. I was hesitant and he assured me that there would be no more trouble about what happened that morning. I crawled out from under the bed. He helped me clean away the dust on my body and jumper and led me to the parlor. He sat me down and asked me to tell him what happened and I did. I told him everything, from the mutual fondling to the incident created by my mother. Then he asked for why I had gone to hide under his bed. I told him my mother's friends were occupying the parlor and stared at me each time I passed by, as if I had done something wrong. I went under the bed to stay out of their sight. He laughed in his peculiar fashion, without showing his teeth (*amu nkpukpuli*). He told me it was natural for a man to have an erection and that I should be careful not to get caught with my female playmates. We had dinner together and the incident was forgotten. But this incident strained my relationship with my mother.



Two years later another sex-related incident took place. A much older girl invited me to their farm, close to my house, to help her do some weeding. It was hot and we soon took cover under a small leafy tree, from where we saw people passing along the road without being seen. I jumped up when she touched my genitals and told her I was leaving, because my mother would beat me for allowing anybody to touch my genitals. She chuckled and said: “But your mother is not here. She will not know unless you tell her.” She had a point there and I sat down again beside her. She pulled down my shorts, fondled my genitals and I soon had an erection. Shortly after, she was on her knees straddling my thighs. I was amazed to find my hard penis inside her vagina. She noticed my surprise and told me to be calm, that all was fine. Not quite sure where my penis was, I looked down. She leaned backwards to let me see where my penis was. It was warm inside there and I felt her vagina was spasmodically gripping and letting go my penis. She smiled at me and asked me to urinate inside her vagina. I tried with all my force and no urine came. She stood up and asked me to urinate in the grass and I did so without any problem. She stopped me midway and asked me to urinate into her vagina in the same manner. I still had my erection and we resumed our coitus. After sitting on me for a while, she asked me to go ahead and urinate inside her vagina. I strained hard to urinate but no urine came. We separated again and I urinated without problem. We went back to coitus and no urine was forthcoming. We tried many times without success and I just gave up. It was getting late and I had to be at home before six in the evening. We separated, promising to let nobody know what happened. I left the farm first and she found her way home long after I had left. I found my mother and two sisters at the house entrance peeling yam for dinner. I greeted my mother and moved past them toward my room. My senior sister, Margie, asked me: Kedi ibe i shi-abata? Where are you coming from? I stopped in my tracks and snapped: Ö gbasaa ghi? Is it any of your business? I went to my room and lay quietly on my bed facing the wall, contemplating my adventure with that girl at the farm. This idea of urinating in her vagina intrigued me and I thought I would try it someday when I grew up and became stronger. My mother came to my room and said: Nkee arü jüchaa ghü oyi, udo dükwa? İ ga-elikwe añashi? You don’t look bright. Are you alright? Won’t you have dinner? Still facing the wall, I told her that I was fine and not to bother about dinner. I was not hungry at all. My experience at the farm crushed out any desire for food. I was happy in my little inner world where nobody could reach and start making unnecessary trouble.

The Ajali-Akpü war affected me too. My house was beside the school palm plantation from which emerged blood-stained Ajali men who were wounded in battle. In the morning, Ajali warriors went to Akpu through this palm plantation with machetes, bows, arrows and a few daneguns. They streamed out before dark with their casualties, who bore open and bleeding wounds. Some wailed for their fallen comrades, whose bodies the enemy had taken away.

In 1951, my father was transferred from Ajali Government School to the one at Öka. His specialty was math, which he did everything to get into my dumskull. I attended the Government School with my father, while my sisters Margaret and Ivbeyinwa attended St. Paul’s Practicing School (PS) which was quite close to our home. Getting to Government School from my Egbeana Ümübee home was tricky because I had to cross the tarred Enugu-Onitsha road at the Ukwuöjü junction adjacent to the St. Paul’s Teacher Training College compound. This tarred Enugu-Onitsha road was known as “wire road,” “uzo waya,” because of the telephone poles with wire lines, which dotted one side of the road from Enugu through Öka to Onitsha. Although motor vehicles were rare on the road, safety instructions were given at school and home.

My five-year stay in Öka was exciting, instructive and traumatizing. For the exciting part, I fished in the Öbibiä River with friends, caught giant rats (eyi) with metal traps (mkpakala), and hunted birds and

lizards with a rock-propelling catapult (rubber). I learned to prepare a fishing rod: tying a cotton thread around the metal hook (ukpoo), fixing a lead sinker (oze) around the line, passing the thread through a floater (mgba-ama) and tying the thread around a threaded end of a dry, strong bamboo rod. The bamboo rod had to be really dry to provide some protection against the paralyzing discharges from the electric fish (elughelu). The sluggish, pulpy fish with leopard spots looks quite innocuous. But touch it, and your hand will be paralyzed by a powerful electric discharge. Caught by your fish hook, this unique fish obliges you to drop your fishing rod by sending a powerful electric discharge to your arm via the line and the dry fishing rod. With a fresh bamboo rod the shock is devastating. One day, the fish swam past my bathing team in the river. No one saw it but the water around us suddenly became electrified. We scampered out of the water shouting, *Ö kwani elughelu-oo!* (It's the electric fish!). We all headed for our homes not daring to go back into the river. The size of the fish is irrelevant, since the smallest among them is as lethal as the big ones. Legend has it that the mother of the electric fish armed her children with the ultimate power because of the mistreatment that was the lot of their specie. *Mmegbu mmegbu a na-emegbu elughelu ka nne elughelu ji wee kawaa nnwiya ishi.*

The instructive part came from my observations concerning the *Ödünana* rituals conducted in the compound by my kinsmen. The goings-on at the *Obu* were fascinating. I ran errands for the elders who came to celebrate rituals at the *Obu*: I bought snuff (*ütavba*), kolanuts, and gin (*njenje*) from my grand uncle's wife who lived right behind the *Obu*. My father had no objections but my mother was dismayed. She sternly warned me not to accept food or drink from those heathens. There were other boys of my age who came with their fathers. We became friends and worked together for the elders, who were pleased to see me among them. I took my share of food and meat in a plate and secretly gave them to my new friends. When I went into the house to wash my oil-stained hands my mother was furious with me, convinced that I had eaten the Devil's food. I assured her that I had tasted nothing and had given my share of the food to the boys who worked with me. My father called me and congratulated me for giving a helping hand to my kinsmen. Unknown to me, he had watched the whole event from his seat beside the verandah window facing the *Obu*.

An unforgettable event about the *Obu* was the case of the son of one of our daughters (*nwa di-ana*) who had only female children from his wife. He consulted a *Dibie Avba* on the issue. The *Dibie* told him to go for relevant prayers at the *Obu* of his mother's kinsmen (*Obu ikwu nne*). He was to request male children, since he already had three in a row, from the *Ndiichie* of his mother's clan. He should go with a cock (*egbene*), one gallon of toddy palm wine (*nkwü enu*), a bottle of gin (*njenje*), eight multi-lobed kolanuts (*öji Igbo*), eight yams, smoked catfish (*azü ishi*) for prayers (*amalile*) and the ritual soup, and soup materials (*ivbe ovbe*). The man (*nwa di-ana*) came on an *Eke* market day and I opened the *Obu* to let him deposit the ritual materials he came with. *Okoye Nnajide* (*Avbülükwe*), the officiating priest, soon came in to arrange the altar objects (*övbö, okpenshi, ikenga, etc.*). My kinsmen arrived and the ceremony began. As an errand boy I sat near one of the *Obu*'s two entrances, from where I could hear what was said in the *Obu*. The priest sat facing the altar. At his left were the items brought by *Nwa di-ana*, and at his right was a small stool for his assistant. *Nwa di-ana* was called to the altar and asked to kneel down beside the priest and face the altar. The priest asked him to tell the *Ndiichie* and the clan the object of his visit. *Nwa di-ana* said he wanted male children, since he has had three females in a row. He had brought a cock, but promised to bring a goat (*mpipi*) if his wife gave birth to a male child. Having said why he came, *Nwa di-ana* was asked to rise and go back to his seat. The priest then took the *övbö* in his right hand and repeated what *Nwa di-ana* had requested as well as his promise of a goat, if his prayer was granted. To close his speech, the priest asked: *Nwa di-ana, ö kwa nöövbü-ee?* (*Nwa di-ana* have I correctly rendered your prayer?) *Nwa di-ana* replied: *e-e oo!* (Yes!) The priest called on *Ndiichie* and *Ibe anyi* (the clan) and said: *Ibe anyi-ee, anyi ga-elini nyavbü*

iwu-oo! (My people, we shall eat the goat promised by Nwa di-ana!) Then everyone shouted: Isee! Ka anyi göl ka ö ga-ele! (Amen! Our request will materialize!) The ritual then proceeded with the breaking of the kolanut, the palm wine and gin libations, the killing of the cock whose blood was sprinkled on the altar door (iru mmöö) and altar items (övbö, okpenshi, ikenga, etc.) and whose soft feathers were placed on the blood-stained altar items, the cooking of the food and its presentation in front of the altar, the tasting of the food by the priest, the placing of some soup-soaked lumps of food and four small pieces of the cock's gizzard (eke ökükü) on the altar and an altar item (okpenshi), the sharing-out and consumption of the food, the closing prayers (ngö odenigwugwu). I had forgotten the whole event when the same Nwa di-ana showed up and wanted an appointment with my clansmen to give them the goat he promised them a year earlier, because his wife has given birth to male twins. He later came with the goat and the usual Obu Eucharist ritual items (a cock, yams, kolanuts, etc.). I told my mother about what happened to the Nwa di-ana. She was full of disdain, saying that it was a coincidence and that only the Christian God can give children. She reprimanded me, a Christian child, for entertaining the thought that the Obu and its carved idols could give children to anybody. This was in 1953 and I was just eight years old. But the same Nwa di-ana came back in 1955 to announce that his wife had given birth again to male twins. I told my mother that her coincidence had happened again and that this Nwa di-ana has had four boys in a row since he came for prayers at the Obu. She was furious and forbade me to tell her about the transactions at the Obu or any Alüshī in the compound. I turned to my father for an explanation of what was happening and told him how my mother denied the possibility of such miracles coming from a heathen Obu. He said the Obu and Alüshī had a lot of powers that he is unable to explain, given his Christian upbringing. By 1960, this Nwa di-ana had eight boys in a row. He was frightened and came to see my people saying that the boys would one day beat him to death (vba ga-eji aka tigbu m). He now wanted some more female children so as to have sons-in-law. My folks laughed and told him to bring a hen (nnekwu) along with the usual items for the Obu Eucharist ritual. The hen shall be used for the sex-reversal ritual that will change the sex of the coming children from male into female. Just as a cock was used to reverse the sex of the coming children from female into male, a hen will now be used to revert back to females. He did as he was told and had three more girls in a row. He had a total of fourteen children, eight boys and six girls.

For the Agwü, I watched the elders trim Its ogilishi tree and drape its trunk with a piece of white cloth. A day-old chick was tied to a nail on the tree trunk. The little bird's leg was tied to the nail with a thread. It chirped and struggled helplessly. We were told that whoever released the chick incurred the wrath of Agwü. It usually died on the tree at the wake of the day following the Agwü celebration.

For the Okuku, we mentioned above that my family has one with three corked and padded calabashes placed in a long oblong basket (ükpa), Övbö, a horn (mpu mgbada) that the priest blows at the close of the Eucharist rituals. Okuku is familiar to the Agbaja people and points to my family's Agbaja ancestry. It belongs to Anaagö Mmadiagwu, Udo's father. The Okuku ritual takes place in the backyard (azü owele), at the base of a giant iroko tree standing at Anaagö Mmadiagwu's grave. This vast backyard can only be officially accessed through a carved wooden door (mgbo) that opens backwards into the living area of the compound. The area around the iroko tree was regularly cleaned by the wives of Anaagö's sons. As mentioned earlier, Anaagö's compound is the last on the Öka-Nibo road before the Öbibiä River. It is bounded by a deep gully that runs down to the Öbibiä River, the Öbibiä River itself, and a strip of land that stretches from the cassava ponds (mgboko) before the Öka-Nibo Öbibiä Ezi-Udo bridge to Okavbö Egbunönü Mgebechi's compound wall, to the end of Ümüökam land that has the same southern limits as Mbgechi's compound, to Mmadika Nwözöbial Udo's backyard that contains the giant cotton tree (Akpü Anaagö) and Nwanna spring, to Nwövbö Nwokweghi Udo's backyard, to Nwammöö Udo's backyard, to Nnajide Nnavbüeze Udo's backyard,

to the backyard of the central compound occupied by Anazöö and his brother Nweke Udo. A carved iroko door at the back of this central compound is the only official entry point into this vast Anaagö's backyard. Anyone entering the land from any other place than this carved wooden door and without permission from the occupants of the central compound exposed himself to great dangers at the hands of the forest people. Any injury sustained in this backyard during unauthorized entry will not heal until the culprit confesses and comes to the Obu in the central compound for a cleansing ritual. I vividly recall the case of Mrs. Nwaadü Öñuzulike whose head was nearly severed by the bamboo tree she tried to fell without permission from my father, the head of the central compound. Özö Öñuzulike was my father's senior and a member of the Anaagö family. He ought to have known the rule of entry into this land. Why then did he allow his wife to do what she did? Maybe they thought that the sea had dried up, orimili atago. She was in hospital fighting against a death that would have followed, if her husband failed to engage the apology and cleansing rituals immediately. My clansmen surrounded him and told him that he was responsible for his wife's mishap and will be held responsible for her death. To complicate matters they reminded him that his brother-in-law, Nwövbö Nnörüka, was a boss in the terrible Ümüjagwo Mgbedike cult. No informed and intelligent person would look for the trouble of this quiet but feared man. He was married to my maternal blue-eyed aunt, Nwinyinya Nwövbö (nee Ezenwa). Özö Öñuzulike and my clansmen hastened up, the necessary apology and cleansing rituals were done at Obu Udo Anaagö and his wife was discharged from the hospital. She recovered rapidly and life went on as if nothing serious had happened.

Now back to the Okuku ritual. On a ritual day (Eke or Avbö), the priest brings out the oblong basket with its numinous contents. The basket is placed on the ground at the foot of the iroko tree, while the Övbö is placed on Ogilishi leaves in front of the basket. The elements used are: a day-old chick (uliom) or a frog (awö) for cleansing (njücha) the altar and the contents of the oblong basket, a ram (ebunu), and the usual Eucharist ritual stuff. But the palm wine is of two types: the standard one mixed with some water (akülü mmili) and the special one with no water (atü mmili or örü elu ana). This special palm wine is called örü elu ana, because the wine tapper's collecting gourd does not touch the ground when he comes down from the palm tree. In other words, someone waits for the wine tapper (di ochi) at the foot of the palm tree and receives the wine-collecting gourd from him in mid-air while he is still on the tree. Normally, a special order for this palm wine is placed with a reliable tapper and it is more expensive than the standard type. One liter of the special would yield more than ten liters of the standard type. We have wine producing palm trees at our backyard. A wine tapper usually exploits these trees for a token annual fee and gives us a free gallon of the standard type every fortnight. When the special brew is needed, his collecting gourd is checked to ensure it contains no water before he climbs up a tree. Whatever the tree has yielded will be taken from him in mid-air before he alights from the tree. The wine thus obtained is the unadulterated yield of the palm tree (ivbe nkwü gbatal). The special brew is used at the altar, while the standard brew is served to everybody. Strangers and women do not participate in the Okuku celebration. Any edibles remaining at the close of the celebrations are left at the foot of the iroko tree. The officiating priest sounds the antelope horn to end the feast and the men chant while striking buffalo horns against each other (ekwe mpu) and dance around the iroko tree. At the end of the celebrations the priest replaces the övbö and mpu in the basket, which is accompanied to its place on a rack in the Obu. The carved door connecting the central compound to the backyard is closed and bolted. On the day following the ritual, all types of vulture arrive at the foot of the iroko tree to clean up whatever was left there. There were vultures with a bronze ring on one leg. We may note that the vultures generally arrive when the cock and goat are being cleaned in the fire to remove feathers and hair. If they do not come on their own, the priest loudly beckons them to come with the shout "Uku lide!" (Vultures come down!), while throwing around a few pieces of meat. They arrive shortly after the calls of the priest. Their refusal to come

indicates that something is wrong with the ceremony. The ceremony could proceed to its close in the hope that the vultures would eventually come before nightfall. If they fail to come at nightfall, the ceremony is repeated after consulting a Dibia Avba to find out what went wrong. The vultures reappear and descend naturally when the problem is solved and the ceremony is repeated. Legend has it that: *achüö aja ma shi avbürö udene, ivbe mel na be mmöö* (something is wrong in the spirit world, if the vultures refuse to show up during a sacred ritual). Let us conclude this section by adding that Okuku is the God of justice and valor that scares the warrior into the bush (*öchübal dike övbïa*). In the face of injustice inflicted on my clansman by a more powerful person, my clansman will not engage his offender in ruinous confrontations. There will be no physical or legal fights. He is instructed to come home and present his case before the Okuku. The priest and elders use the four-lobed *kolanut* method to confirm the veracity of his case. If his case is true, he offers an unbroken *kolanut* to Okuku (*nzefu öjï*) and promises to bring a ram after his vindication. Thereafter, news always reached the clan that the injustice had been repaired with appropriate apology from the offender and his folks. The action of the God is swift and thorough. We call It by many names such as: *otigbu onye na-etigbu onye sö ya kwü* (protector of the weak), *nne elughelu* (mother of the electric fish), *ebi ogwu* (the porcupine), *agwö atagh ata, ö jüö ödüdü* (the snake that hits with its tail when it doesn't bite).

Three events traumatized me during my stay in Öka. The first incident occurred one moonlit evening when my sister, Margie, kneed my genitals because I was rude to her. My mother was sitting a few feet away but she did not see my sister's kick. I gave a sharp scream and fell into epileptic jerks on the sandy floor of the courtyard. My mother rushed to the scene and in her panic, asked my sister what was wrong with me. My sister said she did not know. My father came out too. Then my breath came back with an excruciating pain in my genitals. I wailed loudly in a staccato. I was fanned with a hand fan (*nkuche, nkuuvbele*) and I gradually regained my wits. Then my father asked me what was wrong and I said: *Margie gbal m ikpele n'amü* (Margie kneed my genitals). She tried to justify her act by saying that I was rude to her. Before she could finish, my father's folded fist landed on her head (*nke ökpö*) and she started weeping. My father thundered: Shut up! And like magic, Margie stopped weeping. He ordered her to stay away from me or face his legendary cane whip (*atülaña*). We all went to sleep and the pain was gone by the end of the following day. The event shocked me, because I thought I was going to die. In retrospect I can now understand how an accident forces the spirit or wind out of the body.

The second incident happened when I stole a sixpence coin (*shishii*) from under my mother's pillow. I had raised the pillow and found many coins underneath. I took the sixpence coin which was the smallest in size. I bought a few sweets and chewing gum that I shared with my playmates. My mother noticed that a sixpence coin was missing from her treasury. She confirmed with my sisters Margie and Ivbeyi that they had no hand in it. She hid a whip under her mat on the mud bed in our kitchen's veranda and waited for my return after dark. The doors from the veranda to the kitchen and adjoining rooms were locked. My father was absent from the house. As soon as I came in and was walking to my room, Margie called me to come and see Maa in the veranda. I went in and as I walked toward her on the mud bed, Margie locked the veranda door behind me. My mother said: *I wel shishii n'ishi akwa m?* Did you take a sixpence coin from under my pillow? I kept quiet. She added: *Agara m eti ghi ivbe ma i gwa m ezi okwu.* You will not be punished, if you tell me the truth. I confessed that I had taken the smallest of the coins under her pillow to buy candy and chewing gum. She grabbed me with her left hand and brought out the whip from under her mat. She rained strokes of the cane on me as we ran around the narrow veranda. There was no road for escape since all the doors leading out from the veranda were locked and Margie blocked the veranda's small window with her body. The flogging went on until the cane split in shreds, one of which got into my left eye. I fell on the floor holding my

left eye and shouting *anya m-oo! anya m-oo!* (my eye! my eye!). Sister Margie shouted: *gbakwĩa nkĩti, ö mü üma eme ka i wee-rafüüya!* Don't mind him, he is pretending so that you will stop flogging him! The cane was completely shredded and broken by now. She left me on the floor and went back to the mud bed. I opened the veranda door, went outside, washed my face and went to my room. My left eye smarted at my touch and I fell asleep exhausted. The next day was Saturday and my mother left early for Onitsha. My sister, Ivbeyi, was the only one around. My father asked her about me and she said I was, quite unlike me, still sleeping. I had bolted the door from my room to the veranda where my father sits. He came into my room through my mother's room and found me under my blanket shivering and groaning (*na-ama jijiji na-asü ude*). He turned me round and could not believe what he saw – my left eye was closed and swollen. He asked: *Kedi onye mel ghi ivbee?* Who did this to you? I said: *Ö-ö Maa!* It was my mother! He summoned my sister, Ivbeyi, and asked her to run to Ezi Ekweelu on the Öka-Onitsha road and tell our mother to cancel her trip and come home immediately. Ivbeyi left and my father came back to my bed and sat beside me. He asked for the reason why my mother had injured me so badly last night and left me for Onitsha without any care whatever. I told him I had stolen her sixpence coin and confessed to the crime when she had promised no punishment, if I told her the truth. He was furious and asked: *maka shishii ka e ji-ghülü mmadĩ anya?* How could anybody pluck someone's eye because of a sixpence coin? He gave me some aspirin and mopped my swollen eye with a towel soaked in cold water. Ivbeyi soon came back and reported that my mother had left for Onitsha before she got to the bus stop at Ezi Ekweelu. My mother came back in the evening and my father took her straight into his room. We heard nothing as usual, but my mother looked shaken when she came out. She later came into my room and tried to mend fences but I remained cold. My father's words came to my mind: *maka shishii ka e ji-ghülü mmadĩ anya?* Something snapped inside me and I saw my mother as some cruel Nanny employed by my father to look after us. She never hit me again after this incident. I procured a pebble catapult (*egbe mkpume*, rubber) and told my father that anyone who injures me again will lose an eye through a pebble from my catapult.

The third incident was a mistreatment, in 1956, by Mr. B. Umerah, my godfather and Headmaster of Government School, Öka. I was ten years old and in Standard 5. We had ended a meeting of teachers and students. We stood in rows, grouped by class. Mr. Umerah asked us to close our eyes for prayers and had said a few words when I screamed because a bully, Lawrence Anekwe, had hit me hard with a whip. I was standing in the back row beside Lawrence, who was twice my age and for which we made fun of him. The Headmaster stopped praying and ordered whoever had screamed to come forward. I moved forward showing him the whip that Lawrence had dropped after hitting me, and told him that I had screamed because the bully flogged me with the whip. He asked me to give him the whip. He then grabbed my hand, took the whip from me and gave me not less than twelve lashes all over my body. He thundered that I had no business disrupting his prayer session with my stupid scream. The teachers and students were scandalized by what happened. My father was there but just watched what was happening. The injustice shown to me by this man was incomprehensible. I was hurt by a bully right in front of this Headmaster and he does nothing to reprimand the culprit. Instead, he gives me, the victim, a severe flogging. The world must be upside down, I thought. I wailed loudly, rained insults on him, opened my ten fingers towards him and said "waka". When my father came home in the evening, I asked him why he did or said nothing to protect me from such a wicked man. He said that he could not intervene, because the man was his boss and could have used that incident to lure him into a conflict that might cost him his position. He said that he had a hard talk with the Headmaster and assured me that a repeat of such an incident, in or out of his presence, was, henceforth, impossible.

My father stayed in Öka till the end of 1956 when he was transferred, as Headmaster, to Government School Afikpo. Life in Afikpo was full of surprises. The town is full of gravel and it was excruciating in the beginning to walk barefoot. We lived on the school campus, situated on a hill along a gravel road leading to the Catholic Mater Hospital. The teachers lived in houses built around the classrooms. The school had a farm and palm plantation behind the Headmaster's house. We fetched water from a superb spring in a deep valley behind the Magistrate Court. From the spring, gravel paths led uphill to the Police Station by the right and straight-on to Number Two, a quarter for non-indigenes. The prison yard, prison staff quarters, residences for civil servants were all at Number Two. The Government College was located behind Number Two and the District Officer's (D.O.) residence.

I was impressed by the inter-village wrestling contests and went to watch them at the Ngodo village, which was close to my home on the school campus. Some of my classmates wrestled in the junior category. A winner in a contest was carried shoulder high by his village folk and bare-breasted damsels wearing rolls of beads around the waist as sole clothing, danced to glorify his victory. Wrestling is an art for these great people. I got into a brawl at school with an Afikpo boy of my age. A crowd of pupils gathered around us. I had superior boxing skills acquired from gang brawls back at Öka, while my opponent was a good wrestler. He floored me twice at the start, but I kept him at bay with jabs on the face and never allowed him to get a grip on me. One of my jabs cut his lip and he was spitting blood. My father, the Headmaster, suddenly showed up. The big boys came and separated us, and we were asked to state how the fight came about. Each person gave his version of the events. My father sternly reprimanded us, reminding us that fighting was forbidden in the school. To reconcile us he ordered us to entertain those present with a wrestling contest. I was dismayed because my opponent had a superior knowledge in the wrestling art, although he was of my age. I managed to put on a brave face and moved into the circle of spectators. He put out his hands, stooping slightly, to engage me. I took the same posture, in line with the rules of the art, and moved towards him. With a swift movement, he seized my hand and forcefully drew me to himself. Feeling the resistance in my counter-pull, he pushed me back and let go his grip. My counter-pull and his push worked like magic. I fell backwards and landed on my butt. The crowd roared with laughter. We were allowed a second contest, probably in the hope that I could win it and get even with my classmate. Intent on not letting him get hold of my hands, I raised them so high that he was able to get hold of my torso, with his arms under my armpits. Before I could figure out what was up, he folded his left leg around my right leg and, still holding my torso, lifted our entwined legs from the ground pushing slightly in my direction. I simply crumbled to the ground with my opponent on top of me. I was thoroughly humbled and my father stopped the contest. I embraced my opponent and shook his hand as my father ordered and we became good friends thereafter. He later taught me the two wrestling techniques he used against me. He made me promise never to use the leg-twining technique outside a sandy arena, to avoid breaking someone's arm in the unavoidable fall associated with the irresistible technique. He observed that a victim of the technique tries to cushion his fall with the arm. A fracture might result when both wrestlers fall together on the cushioning arm.

My indigenous classmates officially stayed away from school during the harmartan months of January and February, to participate in the initiatory masquerade and puberty rites (Ogo and mbe ugwu). Note that bee [HH] = cut, ugwu [HL] = prepuce, bee ugwu = cut-off the prepuce = circumcise, mbe ugwu = the rite of circumcision. The Afikpo boy became a man only after the masquerade and circumcision (mbe ugwu) rites. He had access to the spirit temple (Obu Ogo) at the village square and could take a wife when he became an adult. We sometimes came across our classmates undergoing the initiation. Their only clothing was a loincloth covering the genitals in front and most of the butt at the back. They moved silently in a single file, one behind the other. They had walking sticks with swollen ends with

which they struck the ground when they walked along the road. Women moving around during the initiation months chanted “lee, lee” to signal their presence to the student-initiates. On hearing the women’s chant, the students leave the road and hide in the bush or behind some house. They come back to the road to continue their trip when the women have passed them by. I was told they are forbidden to come face to face with women, to avoid the situation where a boy meets his mother or sisters along the road. The boy undergoing initiation can have contact with his family only at the end of his stay at the initiation camp. He belongs to his community during his stay at the initiation camp. If he dies during the rite, he will be quietly buried without ceremony and a bunch of the tender yellow palm leaves (ömü) are deposited at the back of his father’s house. His mother checks the back of her house daily to see whether the portent had been deposited there the previous night. If she finds the dreaded palm leaves, she does not weep to the hearing of neighbors. When asked about her son, absent from home long after the end of the initiation period, she says he has gone to Panya (Fernando Po, Espagna).

In 1957 I failed the West African School Leaving Certificate examinations. As a result, I could not take secondary school entrance examinations. One of the teachers, Mr. Okonkwo from Ajali, took charge of my studies and I made a distinction at my second go at the examinations in 1958. In 1959, I took and passed the entrance examinations for: King’s College, Lagos; Government College, Afikpo; Merchants of Light Secondary School, Öba; Okongwu Memorial Grammar School, Nnewi; Okuku Boys High School, Obudu. For the interviews, there was none for Okuku Boys High School because I was admitted right at the entrance examination hall. White Catholic reverend fathers invigilated the examinations at the Catholic Primary School opposite Mater Hospital, Afikpo. A Mathematics test came first at eight o’clock in the morning and we had two hours for the test. About an hour into the test, one of the fathers came and stood by my side and watched me answering the questions. I looked up at him and he smiled and walked away towards the table behind which sat another elderly father. I continued writing and finished well ahead of the allotted time. I checked my answers again and proceeded to submit my write-up. The elderly father looked at my write-up and asked me to go home and inform my parents that I have been admitted into the school. He said it was unnecessary to wait for the English test, since my performance in the Math test was sufficient proof of my ability to enter the best secondary schools around. My admission letter was to follow shortly through the post. I went home and told my parents what happened. My mother was indignant about the idea of her CMS-born son attending a Catholic school. She was sure I would come back the next vacation as a baptized Catholic. I had secretly attended a Catholic Candlemass with the sons of Mr. Onyemenam, a Government Teacher from Obosi, whose son, Ephraim, was a pioneer first-year student at Okuku Boys High School. But for the intervention of Mrs. Onyemenam, I would have taken the Eucharist wafer when the congregation singly walked up to the priest and opened their hand or mouth to receive the blessed wine-soaked wafer. She warned me not to leave my seat and charged her sons to make sure I did not move. I could not understand why she was so worried and tense. The Mass was exquisite: the odor of burning incense, the array of big and small candles, the chanting of the priest and the songs of the reverend sisters that gave me goose-bumps. I thought the communion wafer was some candy to fortify the congregation during this special Mass that started at midnight and ended around six o’clock the next morning. The attitude of this woman disgusted me and I just went outside and sat with people under a tree in the Church courtyard. It was late in the night and I could not go home alone. When the day broke I joined the group of mass attendants going towards the Government School campus. I got home, sneaked into my room and fell asleep. I was woken by Mrs. Onyemenam’s voice lamenting my disappearance from their company at the night Mass. My father came into my room through the door linking our rooms, confirmed that I was fine and left. Mrs. Onyemenam was very upset that I had ventured to eat the Eucharist wafer and warned that I should avoid her children and never come to her



Church again. It was okay for me and I stuck to her injunctions. If she crossed my path I would mumble a greeting and move on. I had to greet her because she was a good friend of my mother and could create unnecessary trouble for me. If I saw her coming to our house, I would go bird-hunting with my catapult in the palm plantation beyond our backyard. We shall have more on this lady later, because she will play a cruel and terrifying role in my life.

For its interview, King's College sent a letter proposing the sleeper-class roundtrip train ticket from Afikpo Road railway station to Lagos. My mother turned it down on the grounds that Lagos would simply destroy her rascal of a son. She pointed to my two sisters who were at Queen's College Lagos and attended immoral unchristian ballroom dance parties, where unmarried men and women shamelessly fondled each other, and practiced wanton fornication. She insisted I should go to Government College, Afikpo, which was close by, for her to have an eye on me. She added that Government College, just as King's College, offered the same scholarship to the children of Government Teachers. To put the issue to rest, she said that the Government College Principal's wife, Mrs. Mbotto, was her friend and member of their Association of Government Teachers' Wives. She would talk to her if necessary, since my father had warned that he would not lift the smallest finger to push his children into school or job. His father never intervened for him when he was young, why would he do such a degrading thing as going to beg a favor from a man like himself. If a child cannot make it through competition with his peers, let that child stay at home until he is able to make it. It was thus agreed that I should just relax, study and attend the Government College interview. Why go to Lagos to get a thing that is also available on the shelf in front of us? A na-achö ivbe dü n'uko ana n'uko enu? A co-pupil, Sunday Akpabio, living next door with his Teacher-uncle, left to Lagos for the interview. On his return, he told me of his train journey from Afikpo Road railway station through Kafanchan, Zaria, Jebba to Lagos and his stay at King's College. He later got his admission letter with the offer of a scholarship and he entered King's College at the beginning of January 1960. I went for the interview at Government College campus where we spent two weeks learning boarding house habits and table manners, particularly eating with a fork and a knife. I was startled to see the students eating rice with a fork and a knife. I thought it was some sort of subtle punishment to force anyone to eat rice with a fork and a knife. Getting the rice together to stay on the fork was already a feat. And getting the rice-loaded fork into the mouth was a greater feat, since most of the rice fell back into the plate. Dropping the knife and eating the rice with only the fork was also forbidden. Even the chicken wing served with the rice must also be eaten with the fork and knife. Many of us found our chicken parts, in a bid to escape the fork and knife assault, flying onto the top of the dining table or the dining hall floor. Eating with the fingers was out of question and punishable. For the interview proper, we had an individual chat with the Principal in his office. He asked about my parents and how I was getting ready to come to his school. He complimented me for my entrance examination results and bade me goodbye with greetings to my parents. He said the admission letter would follow through the post. I went to the dormitory where I stayed with other would-be students, collected my belongings and walked home. I told my father about what happened during the two-week stay at the Government College campus for the interview. He was satisfied and we all relaxed and waited for the arrival of my admission letter through the post.

Concerning the interview for Merchants of Light Secondary School, Öba, my mother said there was no need to bother about the school, because my elder brother Emeke attended the same school and had devilish encounters with some students. She said some students from Öba had deadly talismans and charms (ajö ögwü) that they used against fellow students. Lightning had struck a dormitory and killed a student from Öba, in whose locker was found a powerful charm. A general search revealed that almost all the students from Öba had some charm in their lockers or suitcases. She was happy that

Emeke finished his studies and came out of the school in one piece. I was her second boy and nothing would make her support sending me to that Devil's kindergarten, where children manipulated charms that adults feared to touch. Thus was my going to Öba laid to rest.

It remained the interview for Okongwu Memorial Grammar School (OMGS), Nnewi. Eight days before the OMGS interview date, I had no news from Government College, Afikpo. Worried, I went to my father and told him: "All my classmates who attended the Government College interview with me have received their letters of admission. I have not received mine and I am scared. What would happen if the Government College disappointed me and I failed to attend the OMGS interview just around the corner?" My mother was summoned and asked to find out from her friend, Mrs. Mboto, the wife of the Principal of Government College, why I had not received my letter of admission, while my classmates who attended the same interview with me had all got their letters. She met Mrs. Mboto, who told her to come back after four days, to give her time to find out what happened from her husband. My mother went back after four days and came back with sad news. My admission was cancelled after Mrs. Onyemenam paid the Principal, Mr. Mboto, a courtesy visit to discuss the wisdom behind the idea of admitting me into his prestigious school. Mrs. Onyemenam presented me as a Devil incarnate that would irretrievably stain the reputation of Government College, Afikpo. The frightened and God fearing Mr. Mboto yielded to Mrs. Onyemenam's wicked machination against a child of fourteen. And this woman had many children! I can recall her male children: Francis (the photographer), Ephraim, Cyril and Oli. I had promised to come back to this woman, because she marked me mentally. Here she was, her hideous face unmasked! I went to my room, bolted my door and sobbed bitterly. My father was speechless. He joined me through the door between our rooms, sat beside me on the bed and told me that men rarely shed tears. He said that at fourteen years, a boy has become a man and should cultivate manly attitudes. He asked me to forgive Mrs. Onyemenam and retain the lesson that people wear false faces and are not what they seem. He told me to get ready and leave the next day for the interview at OMGS. His words woke me from my torpor. I looked at his face and said Yessa! (Yes Sir!) We addressed my father as Papa, but used Sir to address him when he asked questions or gave instructions.

As agreed, I left Afikpo by road for Nnewi in the evening of the next day. The journey lasted the whole night with an Onitsha-made tinker bus driven by a stout, fair-skinned and bearded man nicknamed Uduaghiriġha. The bus had a long snout (iru munchi) which housed the engine and the large cabin for the driver, his conductor and passengers was nicely crafted by the famous Onitsha-based Obiefuna and Sons. It had two exits, one in front opposite the driver's seat and the other on the same side towards the back of the bus. We left Afikpo around seven o'clock in the evening and the journey took us to Okigwe, Isiekenesii, Amaraku, Ekwulobia, Awka Etiti, and Nnobi. We hit Nkwö Nnewi at five o'clock in the morning. Since I had to go back the next day with the same bus, the kind driver personally told me to be present at the spot where I stood, before five o'clock the next morning. The bus would take me to Onitsha to collect passengers and then come back to Nnewi and continue to Afikpo. It was the only bus linking Afikpo to Onitsha every two days. The road from Afikpo to Nkwö Nnewi met the tarred Onitsha-Owerri road at the Nkwö Nnewi junction facing the Post Office. I had dust all over my body and looked like someone dug out of a heap of ash (onye a vötal na ntü). My bag-like cane basket contained my small tinker school-box, whose sole contents were two pens, a khaki shorts and a beige short-sleeved shirt. I had no shoes. To reach OMGS, a trader who was opening his shop told me to follow the tarred road in the direction of Owerri. He added that the school was on the right side of the road, not far from the Nkwö market. The day was breaking fast and my interview was at nine o'clock that morning. I took off in a trot and soon reached the Otolö-Ümüdim junction close to Ödümegwu Ojukwu's compound. I stopped to catch my breath and a compassionate old man inquired where I was

running to with all the dust that covered me from head to toe. I told him I had an interview at nine o'clock that morning at OMGS, and had no idea where to find the school. He confirmed it was along the road, but about two kilometers from where we stood. He asked me to go down to the stream at the bottom of the sloping tarred road and continue uphill on the opposite slope. At the end of this slope was OMGS with an imposing signpost in front of the school compound. I quickly located the school's secretariat. I told the male secretary that I had come for the interview straight from Afikpo and showed him my letter of invitation. He said I looked awful and asked if I had some clothes to change the dusty ones on me. I told him I had a clean shirt and a pair of khaki shorts, which happened to be the school's class uniform. He gave me a jug of water to wash my legs, hands, face and head. I quickly changed there in everyone's sight, stuck my dirty clothes into my tinker box, and went off with the secretary to the Principal's house a short distance up the road. There were only two students remaining on the interview queue. I sat with them and the secretary went into the Principal's office. He later came out and told me to relax and wait for my turn with Mr. Evans, the Principal. I went in when my turn came and the gentle white man gave me a seat opposite him across a big table. We talked about my father's profession and my family. He then showed me paper cuttings which, when correctly assembled, formed a circular pie. He said I should watch him assemble the scattered pieces and create the pie. He did this twice, scattered the pieces, and asked me to create the pie. To his surprise, I quickly recreated the pie. He scattered them again and, with the same ease, I recreated the pie. He was delighted and told me that I have been admitted to OMGS. He sent for the secretary and asked him to prepare my admission letter for his signature. By four o'clock in the afternoon, I had an envelope for my father containing the admission letter, the list of books for the first year, the list of clothes and shoes (a pair of canvas shoes and white socks, a pair of Bata shoes and sandals, some pairs of stockings). I thanked the secretary for his kindness and set off on foot again back to Nkwö Nnewi to catch my bus the next morning. At Nkwö Nnewi, I quickly identified the trader that I met at five o'clock in the morning when I came down from my bus. Quite cleaned up now, the man did not recognize me until I told him of our encounter that morning. He was delighted that my interview had gone well and gave me a bench to sit down. He sold me a sixpence loaf of bread and that was my first meal since I left home. I had refused to take any food or drink for fear of having to go into the bush to ease myself when the bus stopped for those who wanted to ease themselves. I was fine; the anxiety created by my ordeal took care of the need to ease myself. Soon it was dark and the kind trader invited me to his place promising to make sure I caught my bus at five o'clock the next morning. I thanked him for the offer which I politely declined. I begged him to let me sleep on the bench he had offered me earlier, to ensure that I would not miss my bus which stopped right in front of his shop. He said it was risky because of mad people (ndü ala) that sleep in the market and night marauders (abanī dü egwu). I was undeterred and he agreed. I sat up most of the night and the few people who came around bolted away when they came too close and heard a boy's voice cooling asking them what they wanted. Worried about my safety, the kind shop owner came around four o'clock in the morning and was happy to find me in good health. He gave me a mug of water from his shop to wash my face and clean my mouth. He kept me company until my bus arrived at five o'clock. He took my basket, led me to the bus and bade me safe journey. The bus left Nnewi for Onitsha to collect passengers and goods for the return journey to Afikpo. We left Onitsha late in the afternoon, got to Nkwö Nnewi around six in the evening and proceeded to Okigwe and Afikpo. We got to Afikpo early the next day. I told my parents what had happened and they were happy. My father had his annual leave in December 1959 and the family traveled to Öka, from where I took off to OMGS in January 1960.

Life at OMGS was rough from day one. There were six dormitories going from House A for ruffians to House F for lambs. Each student had a kerosene lamp. From the tarred road, we had House A followed by the Assembly Hall, then came Houses B-D in a straight line, then the dinning hall stood across the

space between Houses D and E, facing the direction of the tarred road, and House F came after House E on the same straight line. The two long non-partitioned bathrooms and the bucket latrine cabins were behind House D, as well as the footpath leading down a steep hill to a beautiful spring at the foot of the hill. House A later became Ojukwu House. Each House had two compartments. The large outer compartment was an open hall for students in Classes 1-4. The small compartment was for the House Prefect and Class 5 students. The Class 4 students resided in cubicles at the four corners of the large outer compartment, while the Prefect and his Class 5 colleagues occupied cubicles in the small compartment. The day started at five in the morning with Christian prayers and song from a hymn book, all under the supervision of the House Provost. The House Prefect showed up only when he had some message for all. Water fetching from the spring was shared out among Classes 1-4 students. Class 5 students had errand boys from Class 1 who fetched water for them and the school had a laundry service. Students marked their initials on their clothing with indelible Kandahar ink for ease of identification at the laundry tray. The breakfast bell sounds at seven in the morning and late comers are locked out and their food shared out (massacred!) to those present in the dining hall. The same fate befalls the food of those who go late for the afternoon and evening meals. Classes began at eight in the morning and ended at two in the afternoon. Late afternoon was used for sports, water fetching and other chores. Evening studies (Prep) came after dinner, followed by prayers at the assembly hall and the lights were put out at twenty-one hours. I learned to carry three buckets full of water at the same time: one on the head and one in each hand. I dropped one bucket at the dining hall tank, used one for my bath and kept one under my bed as drinking water.

I met despicable as well as wonderful people at OMGS. The wonderful ones that I recall are: Lawrence Onyewuenyi, my House Prefect and a just man who detested bullies and protected weak students; Önüöra Achukwu of the Achukwu Öchanja family, Onitsha, owners of Achukwu Hall near the Denis Memorial Grammar School (DMGS) roundabout; Emma Obuerika; Fabian Okeke; Ūba Okonkwo (Kano), a quiet genius; David Enemchukwu, the boxer and defender of the weak. The despicable ones were sexual perverts who sodomized weak students who were unable to bear the infernal rhythm imposed by the powers that be at OMGS. Sodomy was called the Vaseline Experiment. Some teachers, Prefects and Classes 4-5 students transformed weak students into sex slaves in return for protection from harassment. If you refuse to yield to these fellows, you might spend all your time doing unwarrantable chores and punishment for imaginary offenses cooked up by a senior student or Prefect. Some Prefect would storm into the dining hall, pick up and ring the bell. Before you are able to put down the fork and knife in your hands, he is already pointing at you to mount on your seat. Before you say anything he thunders and punishes you to wash all the dining plates used by the students from your House. The punishment has no basis whatever and is simply intended to break the victim and send him on his knees to the all-powerful Prefect. When the victim meets the Prefect and accepts to be one of his sex slaves, the punishment is nullified. The first year students have no protection whatever against this abuse. To whom would the victim complain? Everyone in a position of power – the teachers, Prefects and students above Class 1 – seem to be participants in this sordid business. I once complained to a Prefect from Öka Province that a Class 4 student was sexually harassing me. He called the student and warned him to stay away from me. But the savior-Prefect turned around to ask me for the same business for which he had chastised my Class 4 tormentor. I told him I'd rather leave their rotten school than do such a degrading thing.

The injustice I saw around me and suffered came to a head in March 1963, when the Library Prefect seized my lamp for reading after lights-out in a vacant Class 5 student's cubicle. I lost three months of classes after my father's road accident and hospitalization. I stayed home to take care of my little sister and brother while my mother was in the hospital with my father. On my return to school I had to catch

up with a backlog of lessons using the notes of my classmates. The only time I could get their notes was at night when they were not using them. My House Prefect saw my plight and gave me the unoccupied Class 5 cubicle for the purpose. He promised to cover me if any Prefect showed up to check those who had their lights on after the lights-out bell. The Library Prefect was adamant to the explanations given by his colleague. He grabbed my lamp and left. At breakfast he stormed into the dining hall and ordered me to wash the plates used by all the students in the school. My House Prefect did nothing to help me and my brakes snapped. I simply walked to the dormitory and lay prostrate on my bed. By lunchtime the plates remained unwashed, provoking a crisis: the students had no plates to eat with. During Prep classes that night, I went to the Library and told the Prefect that the Senior Housemaster, Mr. Efobi, wanted to see the two of us immediately. The Senior Housemaster lived opposite the school just across the tarred road. The Prefect followed me and I mugged him just in front of House A. After a hammer-blow at the back of his head, he screamed, ran a few meters from me and collapsed. I threw the hammer into a bush near the carpentry workshop, from where I had taken it. I quietly walked into my dormitory, packed my belongings and waited for the worst. When students rushed out to see what was going on, I was lying quietly on my bed. Mr. Prior, the Principal, brought his car and they rushed the unconscious Prefect to Onitsha. When he was revived, he recounted what happened. The students were summoned to the assembly hall where I was summarily dismissed from the school. In addition I was condemned to come back and repeat Class 4. I quietly walked out on everybody, went to my corner, took my belongings and left for my home at Öka. I told my father what happened and mentioned my decision never to go to a boarding school again. He said I should go into my room and get some rest, while we awaited the return of my mother who was absent. We had a meeting when she came back and I was asked about what I intended to do. I replied that schooling was over and I was going to become a motor vehicle mechanic. My friend at OMGS, Önüöra Achukwu, had finished the year before and was running his mechanic workshop at Onitsha. My mother was distressed at the idea that I would not go to the university like my senior brother who was at the Enugu College of Science and Technology. I left for Onitsha and discussed my decision to become a mechanic with Önüöra. He agreed and obtained the okay of his father, Achukwu Öchanja. I stayed with Önüöra and his junior brother, Bomboy, who was also working at Önüöra's workshop. Two months after leaving home, my mother came to see me at Onitsha. I was at the workshop, but she met Mr. Achukwu, Önüöra's father. On our return from the workshop, Mr. Achukwu called me and told me about my mother's visit. He said my mother had wept and begged him to send me back home, where she had got admission for me into Igwebuikwe Grammar School (IGS), Öka. Mr. Achukwu pleaded with me to go home and come back after completing my secondary school education, to continue my training to become an auto mechanic. I left for home and went to see the Principal of IGS. This was in early August 1963 and the school year was more than half-spent. Here is the deal that the IGS Principal had for me: Class 4, into which I was admitted was already full and I was to attend classes as a clandestine student. If a school inspector was around, I should escape from the class and school compound. If I passed the year-end examinations, I would move on to Class 5. If I failed, then I could come back and repeat Class 4 the following year. To reject this proposal would have hurt my parents, particularly my father who was sick. It was also better than the unique option of repeating Class 4, if ever I chose to go back to OMGS, Nnewi. It was no small challenge, because I had just three months to assimilate the Class 4 syllabus. I thanked the Principal, Mr. Ekwoanya, and walked home. I told my parents that the deal was fine with me and that my brilliant passage to Class 5 would vindicate me concerning the sad events at OMGS, Nnewi.

I immediately left home for the IGS boarding house, where I slept on a mat between the beds of two students; I was a late-comer and the school's dormitories were fully booked. The promotion examinations came up in November 1963 and I was 19<sup>th</sup> out of thirty-six students. The Principal and

my parents were pleasantly surprised by my performance. I moved to Class 5 with my classmates who had also passed the promotion examination. In April 1964, the Class 5 students registered for the Secondary School Leaving Certificate examinations organized by the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). The 1964 school fees were overdue by May and the students in arrears, including myself, were sent home to collect their fees. It was Imöka Day and Öka was agog with whip-wielding masquerades followed by expert flute-blowers (ökwö öja) and a host of ebullient young men. Öka indigenes do not travel on Imöka Day and the town was in a festive mood. My mother was absent and the fees would be available the next day. I went into the Obu and met a raffia masquerade (ukwuajü) which proposed going to the Imöka shrine to join the masquerades and men in the mutual whipping (nkü agba) show of force. The sound of the irresistible masquerade's flute (öja mmönwü) was all over town. My masquerade rushed out of the Obu and I followed it, hugging a bunch of whips (anyachü). We headed for the Ukwuöjü junction to join the mass of masquerades and young men that had welcomed our Ümüokpu brothers at the Ngene-ükwa Bridge between Öka and Amawbia. The atmosphere was charged and the town was rowdy (obodo dü ragaa). As we organized ourselves to move up to the Imöka shrine at Nkwö Amenyi, I noticed one IGS teacher, dressed in white, walking with his bicycle along the footpath linking the CMS Bookshop to the Ümüenechi-Ukwuöjü road. The teacher, as a non-indigene, was supposed to stay home as the Imöka preparation announcements had advised all non-indigenes. Given the large number of masquerades around, good sense should have told him to seek refuge in the nearest compound to his right. It was stupid for him to have kept walking toward a formidable crowd of masquerades and peped-up young men. Sensing the danger, I rounded up a few masquerades and men and rushed to protect the unreasonable teacher. The crowd was dense and before we could reach him a masquerade dancing toward him whipped him on the left shoulder. The flexible whip struck his shoulder and backside with such a force that the bicycle fell from his hands. He was on his knees with raised arms begging the masquerades and men around him for mercy. The same masquerade that had whipped the teacher surged forward to deliver another stroke, but my small group grabbed it and formed a protective shield around the unfortunate teacher. My men picked up his bicycle cleaned the dirt on his clothes and led him into the side road beside the present Co-operative Bank, Öka at Ezi Ekweelu. They advised him to find his way home and avoid contact with masquerades along the roads. The teacher did not see me, because only initiated persons could see those who accompanied the masquerades. A few other skirmishes happened on our way to the shrine. I recall a non-indigene tailor who was standing at the entrance of his workshop on the ground-floor of Mr. Akavbögi's house at Ezi Ekweelu, opposite the Total petrol station. A masquerade whipped him and he attacked the masquerade. The masquerade bolted away and the tailor went after it. My group went after the tailor and masquerade. The masquerade ran into the bush just before Mr. Adigwe's compound and the tailor followed. That was a big mistake on the part of the tailor. The masquerade stopped and faced the tailor who was advancing angrily towards it to start a fight. My masquerade barked (machaa) and the tailor turned around. Before he realized which way was up, my masquerade's flexible whip hit him hard on his head, the flexible whip striking also his backside. He lurched forward to grip my masquerade and the later simply bent down and raised the tailor in the air like a baby. Before we could restrain my masquerade, it floored the tailor so hard on the ground that the fellow passed out. We left the tailor in the bush, came out to the tarred road and continued our march to the shrine. The sound of the masquerade flutes charged the atmosphere so intensely that a sort of "high" seized both masquerades and men. We felt a sudden invulnerability and leaped over walls without knowing how it happened. We next came across some non-indigene butchers selling meat at Eke Nwüida, the current Kenneth Dike Park. They were requested to escape immediately before the compact group of men and masquerades arrived. They refused to listen and threatened us with their knives. We surrounded their stalls and some strong men and masquerades mounted on the roofs of the stalls. A light masquerade dance (nzö ökika) on the roofs sent the stalls crashing onto the butchers

below. There was stampede and we simply captured all of them. They were thoroughly thrashed and left prostrate with some raw beef in their mouths. Sensing that some non-indigenes were out to create trouble and some unlucky ones could be killed by the irate youth and their masquerades, the organizers of the festival requested that all should trot to the shrine and remain on the tarred road. We did as instructed and passed quickly through Ümüogbunu, Ümüükwa, Ümüdiöka, Ümüzööcha and arrived at the shrine at Nkwö Amenyi. When the mutual whipping (nkü agba) show began, the masquerades and their companions exposed their faces in accordance with the rules. Women do not watch this show of endurance and the closest male spectators stood across the tarred road, where Özö Petrol station now stands along the road to Obi Orimili Ndigwe's compound. The companions of masquerades checked themselves out to ensure that none was wearing more than one pair of trousers. Then the bout started. I would put out a leg to receive the whip of some fellow who reciprocates in turn. Men and masquerades filled the Nkwö Amenyi square and traded strokes of the whip. It was getting late and I told my masquerade it was time to go back to the Obu. We covered our faces, crossed the tarred road, and headed home through inter-village shortcuts. We got home in less than forty-five minutes. The masquerade went back to its home in the Obu, while I went into the family house where my fellow human beings dwelt. Being a spirit, the masquerade returned to the spirit world through the Obu altar door (uzo ndü mmöö). It would not accept to come with me because human beings and spirits cannot live together (mmöö na mmadi anara ebuko önü). The next morning I got my school fees and went back to school. I later heard that the butchers we had manhandled called in the police and arrested our senior masquerade (nnekwu mmönwü) that had come for the festival's closing ceremony. The arrests took place a few minutes after my masquerade and I crossed the tarred road on our way home.

The school was abuzz with news when I got back. The IGS teacher flogged by a masquerade had reported the matter to the school authorities and a search was underway to find the culprit. The Principal sent word around to find out whether some IGS students participated in the festival. Some Öka students, whistle blowers, who were at the shrine during the mutual whipping show testified they recognized my face in the crowd. Unknown to me and my friends at the mutual whipping arena, the IGS games master, Mr. Akpadiok, had taken photos of the unveiled masquerades and their companions during the mutual whipping show. My face appeared clearly on one of his photos and he presented it to the Principal as the ultimate evidence of my culpability. The Principal summoned me to his office, showed me the photo and asked why I had whipped an IGS teacher. I gave him the whole story, stressing how I had saved the man from probable death at the hands of irate men and masquerades. He asked me to go and check my conscience properly and see him the next day. I saw him the next day and he said: "Please tell me the whole truth. Did you whip the teacher?" I repeated my story of the previous day and added: "I had no reason to whip this man. I have had no contact with him since he lectured Classes 1-3, and I was in Class 5." He seemed convinced but added that my case would be difficult to defend at the school Board in the light of my history at OMGS, Nnewi. He said that my Christian godfather, Mr. B. Umerah, the all-powerful Chairman of the IGS Board and a staunch opponent of heathen festivals, would not even listen to my defense. In spite of my innocence, I would still be expelled from school for attending a pagan festival. The sanction fell on my head two days later: I was summoned to the dining hall and summarily dismissed in front of the whole school. Since I had registered for the WAEC test, I would come from my home to take the exams. Before the Principal said the closing prayers, I walked out on everybody. I gathered my stuff at nightfall and walked home. My mother was downcast. She went to see Mr. Umerah, the all-powerful IGS Board Chairman. She said that this friend of the family and my godfather had thoroughly humiliated her in the presence of his wife that she had no legs to leave his house (avbürö m ökpa m ji-füta na bie). I later went to Mr. Umerah's house and he told me that the masquerade that whipped the teacher had been identified by the organizers of the festival, but that my expulsion was being upheld for my

participation – a Christian child and his godson – in an abominable heathen festival. He said all this in the presence of his wife. I was outraged that in spite of my recognized innocence, this Christian bigot wanted to punish me so as to deter Öka youngsters from celebrating the culture of their ancestors. I looked him in the eyes and gave him a good piece of my mind. I told him he could go hang and that Imöka would kill him if he does not stop his bigotry. He was gasping but the look on my face scared his wife who asked him to take it easy and hear me out. I told him that I will come from home to take and pass my WAEC papers to show him that Imöka cannot accept the unwarranted disgrace of Its children. I told him to forget his godfather crap and look at his hypocrite face in a good mirror. I reminded him of how he had mistreated me in 1956 at Government School, Öka, where he was the Headmaster. I was in Standard 5 and ten years old. We had ended a meeting of teachers and students. He asked us to close our eyes for prayers and had said a few words when I screamed because a bully, Lawrence Anekwe, had hit me hard with a whip. I was standing in the back row beside Lawrence, who was twice my age and for which we made fun of him. The Headmaster stopped praying and ordered whoever had screamed to come forward. I moved forward holding the whip and told him that I had screamed because the bully flogged me with the whip. He asked me to give him the whip. He then grabbed my hand, took the whip from me and gave me not less than twelve lashes all over my body. He thundered that I had no business disrupting his prayer session with my stupid scream. The teachers and students were scandalized by what happened. I wailed loudly, rained insults on him, opened my ten fingers towards him and said “waka”. In 1956, Mr. Umerah whipped an eleven-year old mercilessly for disturbing his Christian prayer session, just to prove to the students that his mummery could not be disturbed without the sky coming down on the head of the impertinent culprit. He had to show an example, even with an innocent person. History repeated itself eight years later in 1964 when the same boy, then aged nineteen, was unjustly expelled from secondary school by the same all-powerful Mr. Umerah, Chairman of the IGS Board of Directors. Mr. Umerah had again punished an innocent youngster as an example to show others that participation in pagan rituals was an unforgivable sin against the Holy Ghost. He was startled by my recollection of my encounter with him in 1956 and was unable to hold my gaze. I was bitter against this godfather of mine and stood up to go. His wife was dumbfounded by what she heard, particularly my ability to recall minute details. Her husband tried to offer further explanations, but I gave them one cool look and left. The WAEC papers came up in mid October 1964. My father’s body died on October 26, 1964. The WAEC results came out in 1965 and I bagged a Grade 3 pass, to the amazement and befuddlement of my detractors.

With my father gone I was thrown back onto myself. I entered the Civil Service in 1965 after bribing a group of civil servants headed by my uncle, Jerry Ajaana Nnajide, who was a Senior Lands Officer at the Ministry of Lands and Survey, Enugu. Prominent among this group of white-collar criminals was one Mr. Chukwuraa, whose Öka residence is next to Mr. Igweze’s (Nwokoye Nweeji’s) blacksmith workshop (ünö üzü), going from Dike Park towards St. Faith’s Church. He was the group’s cashier. We had taken some entrance test, supervised by Uncle Jerry and his group. I waited in vain for the result. Then I approached my sister, Mrs. Joy N. Nwokoye, who sent me to Mr. Chukwuraa to find out what was going on. The man told me that I had been recruited because my result was good. But he added that a fee of two pounds must be paid before I could get my engagement letter. I had no money but I desperately needed a job. I proposed to pay the sum immediately after my first pay and he agreed. I told Uncle Jerry about this bribe thing and he said it was the rule. I got the job and paid the bribe after my first pay. I worked at the Land Office opposite Kingsway Stores Enugu. I later joined the Biafran Army at Enugu in July 1967. We camped and trained at the Enugu prisons. The daily footing itinerary was: Ogbete-Coal Camp-Uwani-Ogui-Ogbete. We later joined Colonel Ifensö’s 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Batalion at Mfuma, along the Abakaliki-Ogoja road. When part of this Batalion left for the Midwestern Nigeria campaign, Captain Aneke took charge of my Company, which stayed behind at Mfuma. The Mfuma



Bridge was destroyed by the Biafran Army, with a view to preventing a surprise Nigerian offensive from the Ogoja axis. From Mfuma, Capt. Aneke sent me to Umuahia for an interview to attend the School of Infantry at Ihite, Okigwe. The interview panel sent me to IGS Öka to collect my WAEC transcript from the school. My principal, Mr. Ekwoanya, was shaken when he saw me in army uniform. His turbulent student had become a fear-inspiring soldier. I had no weapon but my features were intimidating. He was visibly scared. I saw his problem and calmly assured him that I had forgiven everybody for what happened in 1964. I had come for my transcript, which was required for my entry into the Biafran School of Infantry. His face relaxed and he asked me to come the next day for the transcript. At the Ihite Okigwe School of Infantry, I had a small group of ebullient friends who had also come to the school from the battle front. We were bored because we saw the school as a place to train intellectual and cultured soldiers. The battle was ragging out there and here are soldiers strutting around and talking grammar. I wondered how officers from this school could lead other soldiers into battle. We broke all the school's rules and the authorities decided not to commission us. Unfortunately for them, mercenary Major Rolf Steiner of the Biafran Commando Unit came looking for volunteer cadets for the formation of his new Commando Division. All the cadets were assembled at a parade and Major Steiner's interpreter explained the implications of being a commando: high death rate and a slim chance of coming out of the war alive, the special training, the special dangerous operations with small units, etc. At the end of his explanations he asked fifty volunteers to step out of the ranks. All members of my gang of ebullient cadets stepped out. Major Steiner inspected us one after the other and selected the ones he wanted. The inspection consisted in standing in front of a volunteer and looking at the pit at the base of the throat just above the breastbone. He read the person's pulse in this way. Colonel Adeleke, the School Commander, commissioned us the next day and we left Ihite Okigwe for the Ihite Orlu Madona High School Commando headquarters. After intensive training at the Madona Camp, I was deployed to the 12<sup>th</sup> Commando Batalion at Afikpo. The Batalion was commanded by Major Steve, a white mercenary. He was a quiet, ruthless and tenacious soldier. The rest of my army career is history and I hope to pen something about it someday. Let's go on with what is linked directly to Ödünana.

My senior brother, Emeke, was studying in Britain and the family had no adult male to sit in for my dead father. I was not bothered about Ödünana since uncle Avbülükwe was in control. But the situation changed rapidly after the Biafra war. We shall now recount the efforts made since the end of the war to recover and revive Ödünana in my family.

### **3.3. The Recovery and Revival of Ödünana**

We shall now describe the recovery and revival of Ödünana in my family. It started with the reconstruction and consecration of the family Obu that knelt down but did not fall during the Biafra war. I was in the Biafran army and the Nigerian soldiers who took Öka went round to identify and destroy the homes of Biafran soldiers. They bombed my family's brick house and the Obu, but spared my grandfather's mud house. This house was roofed with corrugated sheets and had a ceiling, the floor of which was made of white-ant-resistant planks from the trunk of the ubulu palm tree. Access into the ceiling was achieved with a movable ladder through a secret manhole on the surface of the ceiling. My great-grandfather's Ödünana relics were stored in this ceiling and survived the war: his özö staff (ngwu-agiliga), oche ajaghija (ajaghija title holder's chair), a brass sword, battle shields (ekpeke) and a lot more. All the walls of the Obu collapsed except the one bearing the Iru mmöö (the holy of holies). In accordance with my father's pledge to ensure the physical integrity of the Obu and family Gods, my senior brother, Emeke, rebuilt the Obu. Dibie Avba guided us during the restoration process and helped us prepare the ritual objects – Övbö, Ikenga, Okpenshi, etc. As mentioned earlier, the Obu is located in

my compound but belongs to seven families – the direct descendants of Udo Anaagö, my great-grandfather. After the Obu came the family Deities – Agwü, Ngwu, Okuku, Akwali Ömümü. My Ümünna were involved – they made symbolic contributions, but I happily bore the brunt of the financing.

Something remarkable happened after the restoration and consecration of the Obu. My uncle, Jerry Ajaana Nnajide, the then Sole Administrator of Onitsha, had problems with Navy Captain Madueke, the Governor of Anambra State. Jerry was arrested and detained. His assets were confiscated and his retirement benefits were cancelled. He pulled all the available human and spiritual strings to no avail. Then we met at the Obu during a family meeting, where his plight was one of the items on the agenda. He had been to the end of the world in search of some God to pull him out of the lion’s mouth, but found none. A cousin of mine and a good friend of Jerry took the floor and said: Ndü be anyi, a shi na ö nyizia Igbo, Awüsa agwövba. My people, it is said that we resort to the Hausa Dibia when the Igbo ones have failed. Ikwu nne m dü Igala. Unu ma na ivbe-okike dol vbe anya. My mother is Igala and we all know how good they are in the art of “tying” or how spiritually powerful the Igala are. Anyi nakwakü nje ikwu nne m, ka e jee vbü ishi okwu. We are preparing to travel to Igala to solve this problem for good. I took the floor and asked Jerry for his permission to plead his case before our ancestors in the Obu. I said: “without prejudice to your trip to Igala, permit me to offer our ancestors kolanuts and a bottle of whiskey immediately, with the promise of a ram, if your dignity is restored quickly.” He agreed and I repeated my prayer in front of the Obu altar, with the kolanuts and a bottle of whiskey in my hands. The officiating priest broke the kolanuts, offered a piece to the ancestors and we ate the remainder. The whiskey made the round of the Obu, while the meeting continued. The trip to Igala was scheduled to take place twenty-eight days after our meeting and I went back to Abidjan. Two weeks later, I called my folks at Öka to see how they were doing and they were jubilating. Uncle Jerry was free, his assets were restored to him and his pension benefits were reinstated. The Anambra State government published the good news in its gazette. Thereafter, Governor Mmadueke was removed from office. The trip to Igala was cancelled. Did Uncle Jerry show any appreciation to our ancestors and the Obu? No. He had become a strong member of the Father Ede craze and would have nothing to do again with Dibia or Ödünana. When I came home with my family on vacation, I reminded my folks of my promise to Ndiichie when Uncle Jerry was in the lion’s mouth. The ritual was fixed to take place seven days hence. My cousin who was to take Jerry to Igala was sent to inform him about the ritual. Jerry failed to show up or justify his absence on the appointed day. We went ahead without him. There was a ram with powerful coiled horns, yams, kolanuts, plenty of palm wine, etc. I told the ancestors that I was fulfilling the promise I made to them regarding Uncle Jerry, when he was in the lion’s mouth. I thanked them and requested their understanding for his absence at the ongoing ritual. We had our feast and all went home singing (na-adü ugoli). Uncle Jerry’s attitude did not bother me. I, not Uncle Jerry, made the request and promise to Ndiichie. Ndiichie have done what I requested of them and I have fulfilled the promise tied to my request. Öya naa ovbeke, o chezoo ögwü. Upon recovery from an ailment, the undiscerning forgets his medication. Ö dü na-njö, a chövba Dibia. When really cornered, we look for the Dibia. A promise to Ndiichie is a debt to be cleared as soon as we have the resources to do so. Why? Because, who knows: the frog may trip, fall and break its belly. Anara amaama ükwü akpöö nwa awö ö daa tibee avbö.

We have already spoken at length about the Eucharist rituals and we shall not dwell on them again. We shall focus on the post-war reconstitution of some outmoded rituals. Revival of Ödünana should be high on the agenda of the enlightened Igbo. By the enlightened Igbo I mean those that have seen through the lie of Christianity concerning Ödünana. Christianity has done and continues to do untold damage to the mind of Igbo children by the intense desecration and disparagement of Ödünana. The

family, the Christian priest and the school stuff the mind of youth with lies about a God the liars know nothing about. The Igbo youth can hardly think for themselves – the Christian priest and the Bible do all the thinking for them. I had around me a few young Bible pundits who have made at least five unsuccessful attempts at the JAMB<sup>30</sup> hurdle; they wasted useful time and energy at Bible classes, all-night-vigils, prayer warrior sessions and church work carefully elaborated by the scheming priests. The church harvest envelopes reached the extended family through these slaves of priest-craft.

Revival of Ödünana in my entourage combines mental housecleaning with ritual. On weekends a few young as well as elderly folks gather at my family Obu and we chat about philosophy and religion. There is toddy palm wine (nkwü), raffia palm wine (ngwö) and the usual Obu hot drink (njenje, kaikaï, akpülüachiaa, nkwü igwe or iron wine). Since our young pundits read the Bible with closed eyes I have placed a KJV Bible in a corner of the Obu, just in case we have to re-read some portions together with open eyes. A philosophical or religious question is raised by a member of the group. Members propose answers and explanations. The young and old give their views. The best-fit answer or explanation normally gets majority approval. One such question was the difference between Ndü üka (Christians) and Ndü ögö mmöö (followers of Ödünana). I told the audience that we are all Ndü ögö mmöö since Chineke is Mmöö. The only difference is in ele e shi-agö nyavbü mmöö, the ritual. Chineke or Mmöö is one, but the ways of communing with It are many and equivalent. Ödünana is the Igbo way that suffices unto itself. Seeing the positive impact of my explanation on the young ones, I invited them the next Sunday to my periodic Eucharist with Ndiichie in the family Obu. There was plenty to eat and drink, and every step in the ritual was explained for the benefit of the youngsters.

Chi, reincarnation, sex, sin, the devil, and mgba agü (the ritual to determine who has reincarnated in a child) are some of the regular topics of discussion. The best part of the revival effort is that once the youth have thrown the mental thrash of mind-warping religious indoctrination, they never go back to the foolishness of wasting their good time on meaningless religious mummery. They spend their time usefully in creative play, work or rest. They read and cultivate the mind above all. They now read the Bible with open eyes and query its contents, if they don't understand. They discover that true prayer has everything to do with their personal Chi in their bodies and nothing to do with the Christian Jesus or some God in the high heavens. They take their lives into their hands instead of depending on unscrupulous and scheming Christian priests.

Ödünana has been a men's affair. This segregation pushed our women and young male children into the hands of Christianity. The Ödünana ritual fixed on an Eke Sunday shows the lady of the house leaving for the church with the little ones, since there will be nobody to look after them in her absence when the Eke-related ritual moves into gear. By the time the boys reach the age of taking active part in the rituals, we discover that the Christian virus has taken root in them. To such children Ödünana is simply crass superstition, idol or devil worship.

The role of women in Ödünana is under study, with a view to bringing them back into the fold of Igbo religion. In this connection, we have had Avba sessions with Dibie Avba in the family Obu. For the issue of women cooking for the Ödünana rituals, we had two pieces of paper for nji ogu. On one piece we wrote "women can cook for Ödünana rituals" and on the other piece we wrote "women cannot cook for Ödünana rituals". The two pieces of paper were rolled into balls, taken outside the Obu, and bound to speak the truth by spraying aja ana (sand) on them. Thus blessed, the two balls of paper were

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<sup>30</sup> Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board conducts Matriculation Examination for entry into all Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education (by whatever name called) in Nigeria.

dropped on the Obu floor in front of the seated Dibia Avba. He took the paper balls in turn and eventually presented us with one of them asking us to follow whatever is written on it: unu ga-eso ugu nkee. We unfolded the paper ball which read “women cannot cook for Ödünana rituals.” Next we asked: Can the women serve anything during the Ödünana rituals? The answer was again negative. Finally, we asked, almost in despair: Can women eat the Ödünana meals – azü amalile (blessed smoked catfish with pepper, salt and palm oil), kolanut, wine, food? The answer was YES! The new dispensation is: The men cook and serve during the Ödünana rituals. The women are invited to come and celebrate with their husbands, brothers and sons. Later research on the issue of women not cooking for Ödünana rituals showed that the restriction applied only to the men-only rituals for the Ngwu and Okuku Deities. Women were free to cook, but not serve, at the rituals for Ndiichie, Agwü and Akwali.

My grand-uncle’s wife, Nwanyanwü Nweke (Özala) from Ümüzööcha village, Öka, had her Chi altar comprising a water-filled terra cotta plate (ökü) placed at the base of an ögbü tree (ögbü na-enye ndo!). She venerated her Chi every year and always asked me, in the absence of elders, to break the kolanut and kill the cock for her. I was in primary school then. For the feast, she offered us roasted yam and chicken. She told me that the Chi is her sole guardian when, because of marriage, she left her maiden home. N’ije di, ö vbü sö mü na Chi m yī-eje. This powerful lady helped me trace my origins. She gave me an elaborate family tree that included women – a rare feat, since only the men count in our genealogy.

On the village and town levels the various Aliüşhi are getting moral and material support.

I tell my folks that Ödünana is eternal. Greed and ignorance have pushed our dumskull brethren into the abomination of destroying the symbols of Ödünana with the help of scheming Christian priests. Well, the temerarious fools destroy the symbols but not the indestructible thing symbolized – Spirit. The visitation of Ödünana on these fellows has been immediate and dolorous. Some go nuts and wander through life zombie-like, na-eje evburu m evburu m. Some lose their lives. The repentant ones replace the destroyed objects and do the necessary purification rites. I know of no family that ever had peace after destroying Ödünana symbols with the help of Christian priests. And what is the retribution for the marauding priests? Practically none, since they are guests invited by our people. The Christian priests know their trade and always act on engineered invitation. Some of my folks have ears, not for hearing, but as decorative outgrowths. Their bodies hear better than their ears, arü vba ka ntī vba anü ivbe. And they learn the hard way.

I repeat: We can see the symbol of a spirit, not the spirit itself. The tortoise is an apt symbol of the Öka God Imöka. But the tortoise is not the God Itself. The God is breath, spirit or wind, and cannot be seen! But this breath can momentarily take hold of and use the body of a man, python or tortoise. It is then the unseen mover of the man, python or tortoise.

I have advised my friends who want to remove the symbols of Ödünana left behind by their ancestors to employ the services of Dibia Avba and avoid creating clutter with the Christian priests. Using a Christian priest to destroy Ödünana ritual objects assumes that the priest knows how those objects were made and consecrated. We might as well disarm a land mine by pouring holy oil and water on it. In Ödünana, the way up is the only way down (ibe e shi-aligo ka e shi-alitu). To ignore this rule is to court disaster and unnecessary trouble.

My people say: Ö bial be onye abägbunie, ö navba mkpu afükwanä n’azü. Bring no bad omen to the house of your host, so there will be no crying and wailing when you depart. Emebinekwe avba ghī;

maka na ezigbo avba ka ego. Drag not your name in the mud; because a good name has greater value than money. It is this profound philosophy that explains the legendary Igbo sense of hospitality.

Christianity has trampled and continues to trample this Igbo philosophy and sense of hospitality underfoot by attacking our roots in Ödünana. We know that Christianity, as our guest, will go someday. Since this marauding and undiscerning guest has brought us a bad omen, there will be plenty of crying and wailing when it departs from our midst. Misery and death is the lot of those who desecrate Ödünana. Ana says: tiful mu mkpu, mana rafül mü ögü. Speak out in my defence but leave the fighting for me. So let me ask the Igbo in whose midst the Christians are attacking Ödünana without any justification: I tifugol Ana nkpu? Have you spoken out in defence of Ana? He who remains silent consents. The snake of retribution bites the direct perpetrators of evil and whips the silent consenters with its tail. Agwö atagh ata, ö jüö ödüdü.

### 3.4. Ödünana and Sex

The Igbo was a natural person until Christianity arrived with its mind-warping dogmas. Women were scantily dressed: the married woman had one piece of wrapper tied above the breasts; the wrapper is secured further by a cloth-rope (mgbado) tied around the waist. Her underwear was a miniskirt (ögödü imeukwu) made of a heavy darkblue cotton cloth (agbö). The unmarried woman left her breasts open and covered her genitals with a few rolls of beads (jigida) around the waist. The young man had a loincloth covering the genitals in front and most of the butt at the back. The tying of this cloth was an art. When properly tied, it was impossible to rip it off the wearer by simply pulling at it. During the full moons, boys and girls play (egwuönwa) together at the village square. They sing, dance, and do hide-and-seek (nzuzo). The seeker is blindfolded by someone who chants: nzuzo nzuzo-oo, o zol ka o zol zoshikwee ike-o, agü na-arakwaa m nya-o (hidding, oh hidding, the hidden should hide very well, because I am letting go the leopard). Meanwhile the playmates disperse to hide in nooks and corners around the square. The blindfold is now removed and the seeker goes in search of the hidden playmates. The girls took pleasure in pulling at the boys' loincloths to see which ones would come off. He whose loincloth comes off attracted ridicule and opprobrium; his name would figure in the moonlight songs of mockery. The youth played together and were used to their bodies. There was no lust because the joys of sexual intercourse were the privilege of married couples. The boys were thus groomed to bide their time until they reached adulthood at around twenty-two years of age. The girls underwent training on how to woo their husbands, take care of the home and raise children.

Adultery occurred only when a married woman got pregnant for a non-member of her husband's clan. A married woman getting pregnant for a member of her husband's clan is considered a blessing because the bloodline is the same. In such cases no one makes trouble because ishi mkpi ka-dü n'akpa mkpi, the he-goat's head is still in the he-goat's bag. Most of such cases arise when, for professional reasons, husbands leave their wives at home for long periods. It is customary for some clansmen to remain behind in the village to take care of the families of the absent clansmen. They guard the clan and their duty is called nchedo ünö (watching over the clan). This is why the woman married into the clan is called nwunye-anyi, our wife. Divorce occurred only when the married woman violates some rule that is sacred to the clan. Some examples are: grabbing, pulling and squeezing her husband's testicles; getting pregnant for a non-clansman; desecrating the clan's sacred objects and shrines. The divorce is never total because there are rituals for apology and reconciliation. Marriages in Öka may break but they never come to an end. (Di Öka anara avü avü)

Nudity was natural to my ancestors until the repressed and vicious missionaries showed up in our midst. Recall how my grandmother became one of the pioneer Christian converts and the first woman to wear a blouse in Öka. To these missionaries, she was naked and irresistibly alluring. They had to cover her beautiful body before her magnetism pulls out their repressed sexuality. Poor repressed missionaries, they would burst asunder with all the exquisite nudity surrounding them. Their repressed sexuality surfaced with full force and they were going nuts. Just imagine a bunch of Christian priapic priests doing their indoctrination job with a permanently erect penis. They had to cover the source of the distraction. Free clothing was distributed to our womenfolk! And Great Priapus went underground, biding Its time.

The subject of sex was taboo in my family. My mother, who was in charge of our education, did not tolerate any discussions concerning sex. A Christian child must avoid such babblings (nkwu ovbege, nkö öñü evbu). It was sin and punishable by God. While in secondary school, I once invited a girl to my room. My mother had gone to the market. The girl, on her way in, had greeted my father who was sitting under a tree. He seemed not to be bothered about the girl's visit. So, I bolted my door and relaxed beside my visitor. We reviewed my pile of photo albums and listened to music. Our strategy was that my visitor would leave before my mother came back from the market. But time passed so quickly that none of us realized it was already late afternoon. We suddenly heard my mother talking to my father in the outer court. The girl was frightened but I reassured her. I told her that there should be no problem, since my father was aware of her presence and we had done nothing wrong. My mother went to her room, which was next to mine. Hearing the music and conversation coming from my room, she tried to enter my room through the door that linked our rooms. But the door was bolted from my end. She left her room, went into the parlor and came to the door that linked my room to the veranda. Finding this door also bolted, she banged repeatedly on it shouting: İmaniel, kpöghee uzo-nünwa ösö-ösö! (Emmanuel, open this door immediately!). I had anticipated her move and had my hand on the bolt when she started banging on the door. I opened the door wide enough for her to see the girl. I then closed the door behind me and walked towards my mother. She was startled by my behavior and stepped backwards. Seeing that she was probably scared, I stopped walking towards her and asked her why she was so upset by the presence of a girl in my room. She said it was a sin for unmarried men and women to lock themselves up in a room. She was hysterical, saying that the girl must leave immediately. I agreed and asked her to relax while I went into my room to ask the girl to leave. When the girl and I emerged from my room, my mother was waiting for us. She gave the girl some verbal lashing and forbade her to visit me again. She wanted to know who her parents were, in order to go and warn them about her visits to my home. The humiliation was too much for me and I dragged the girl away before she had time to give her identity to my enraged mother. I escorted the girl out of the compound and both of us sat under a tree to cool off a bit. When I came back to the house, my mother called me and wanted to talk about the issue. Without saying a word, I simply rose from my seat and walked to my room ignoring her orders to come back for her sermon. After this incident, I decided to meet my girlfriends everywhere except in my home.

Whatever I know about man-woman relationship came from friends. Key among these friends are Fabian Okeke, Emma Obierika and his cousin David Enemchukwu, the kind boxing champ at OMGS Nnewi. They are all from Nnewi. It was in 1961. I was in Class 2, Emma and Fabian were in Class 3, and David was in Class 4. The school was on a two-week midterm vacation. Most of the students had gone away and the four of us were among the few who stayed on campus. Emma, David and I were in House A (Ojukwu House, later). Emma and I were friends. He grew up in Lagos and was broadminded. It was a Saturday. Fabian had visited Emma and they were looking at some photos of girls Emma had met during the last long vacation. Emma invited me to join them. I asked him to

explain how he managed to have such an array of beautiful girlfriends. He said he talked to them and struck up a tie of friendship, which he kept alive with letters. If a girl caught his fancy, he would walk up to her and strike some conversation (tune her up!) and follow-up with further meetings. I was speechless. He asked me about my girlfriends and I said I had none. He laughed and promised to fix something for me. He promised to ask David to lecture us the following day on the subject of stopping a girl and talking to her. We had breakfast on Sunday morning and assembled at David's cubicle, whose window faced the tarred Nnewi-Owerri road. David sat at his study table, while Emma, Fabian and I sat on his wooden bed facing the window. Our dormitory windows were hinged onto the top of the window frames and wooden poles were used to push the windows outwards, away from the base of the frame. The shortest pole allowed you to open a window in such a way as to see people outside without being easily seen. David started with the most difficult part: making contact with the girl and engaging in some dialogue.

His first recommendation was to be natural in all situations. This is a game that you may win or lose. If you win, it's fine. If you lose, just thank the girl for having given you attention and move on till some other time. The opening sentences would go like this:

Excuse me for disturbing you. Your face looks familiar. Are you not from my hometown, Öka? My name is Emma.

Now wait for her reaction. If you interest her, she will open a dialogue with you and introduce herself, eventually. Get her co-ordinates and fix a rendezvous to continue the discussion. If she shows up at the rendezvous, propose friendship to her. Flow with events and don't push too much. In case of resistance on the part of a girl, ask for an appointment to give her time to think about your proposal.

I asked David about when to talk to a girl about sex. He explained that it came naturally with the development of the friendship between a boy and a girl. He said: start with friendship, the girl will propose sex when the time comes. To reach the top of a hill, we must first get to its foot. Mgbe ndü be anyi ji wee-lüvba ugwu Ömüko aka, vba alikpügü. When our folks start pointing at the Ömüko hill, they will surely get to its summit. The lecture was brief and straight to the point. While we talked David looked out of his window and saw a girl standing under a Melina tree close to the school gate. He asked for a volunteer to try out his lecture on this girl. We looked out, saw the girl and sat down looking sheepishly at each other. David said: So I have just wasted my time lecturing a bunch of cowardly kids on how to become men. I stood up and told them I was going out there to bring the girl with me. I walked up to the girl and said:

Good morning. The school is on midterm break. Have you come to visit some relative of yours? My name is Emma.

She thanked me for being so kind and a dialogue ensued. She lived at Onitsha and her brother was a fellow student at OMGS, etc., etc. I asked her to come and have a soft drink before catching a bus back to Onitsha. She accepted. As both of us turned from the tarred road and walked back to the dormitory, I noticed my friends ducking away from the window. The cubicle was clean and empty by the time I got there with the girl. I made her comfortable, explained that the cubicle belonged to a friend that I would introduce shortly. David, Emma and Fabian came in and I introduced them as my friends. She also introduced herself and I left to get some soft drink and snacks across the tarred road. I entertained her, took her co-ordinates and accompanied her to catch a bus back to Onitsha. My friends were enchanted and proud of me. David was particularly happy that his crisp lecture had worked its magic with such

promptitude. I was simply elated! Emma, Fabian and I formed a formidable team of Don Juans. Sex was not the issue. David's lesson worked like magic: if the girl proposes sex, fine; if she doesn't, relax and flow with events. The bliss came from having a retinue of girlfriends, who enjoyed my company. We had a common hobby: music and dancing. My outings with Emma and Fabian took us to the hottest night spots of Onitsha, particularly Dolphin Café Hotel with Rex Lawson and Central Hotel with Celestine Ükwü.

It was at Central Hotel that I met a woman who gave exquisite and requisite sexual instruction to me and my friends. We had gone to Onitsha on a Friday evening and stayed at Fabian's place. Around nine in the evening, we set off to Central Hotel hoping to get a free ticket to the dance hall. I was a champion twist (egwu-ökü) dancer! We were hanging out in front of the hotel when a lady called out to us from a window on the first floor of the hotel. We looked up but it was not clear who she was calling on. Emma pointed at himself, but the lady shook her head sideways. He pointed at Fabian and she did the same thing. I looked elsewhere thinking it was a joke, but Emma shook me and pointed at the lady. She was beckoning me to come to the gate where the guards were screening those going into the hotel. When I got to the gate, she was beside the guards who ushered me in. I gave her room number to my friends from the window through which she had called me. She lived alone and the photo of a boy who looked like me adorned her bedside table. I took a good look at this beautiful, fascinating and fair-skinned woman. She said: You and your friends must be students looking for fun in town. Have you had something to eat yet? Let me give some food and drinks to you and your friends and then we can talk. I told her to consult my friends outside and to give me just a small bottle of stout. She soon came back with the small stout for me and a bottle of star beer for herself. She sat on the bed while I took the chair close to the bed. She looked into my face and both of us smiled, like old acquaintances. Pointing at the photo on her bedside table she said: That's my junior brother and you look just like him. She was training the boy in secondary school but no member of her family knew where she lived and what profession she exercised. She was intrigued to see someone like him around her place of work. She thought maybe the boy had located her and had come to see her. We laughed and embraced each other. She gently grabbed my genitals during the embrace and moved away towards her wardrobe. She undressed and asked me if I liked her body. It was a stunning sight. She helped me to undress. I was on fire. She showed me a pair of dark spots under her arms close to the armpit, which helped her to detect clients with sexually transmissible diseases. She receives an electric shock whenever she touches the genitals of a carrier of disease. She had checked me out during our embrace. She taught me foreplay and restraint to avoid premature ejaculation. I then lay on my back and she made love to me. She was seated on me. We held hands and I just had to squeeze her hands to signal any impending orgasm, so that she could stop all movement and enable me to calm down. I got lessons on sexual hygiene and a licence to visit her on any Sunday that I chose. I could come in the morning and go back to school with a night bus. She forbade me to hang out with schoolgirls or any other woman in the hotel. She said school girls know nothing about sex hygiene and could get pregnant for me. She said: Come here anytime you feel like and just face your studies. It was almost daybreak when she let me go. She came to the window to apologize to my friends and asked us to come together on any Sunday morning. We did, and she gave us mind-blowing lessons on the art of sex. And she never took money from any of us. This woman was a Prostitute to the world around her, but she was a Goddess of love and wisdom to me and my friends. It was after meeting her that the meaning of the words of my farm companion at Ajalī dawned on me. Recall that the nymph had asked me to urinate inside her vagina. This idea of urinating in her vagina intrigued me and I thought I would try it someday when I grew up and became stronger. But the urination and the urine in question all came naturally after puberty. I was just four years old when a woman (a girl) took me to the door of the



temple of the sex Goddess. Twelve years later, the Goddess herself came to the temple door and took me to her Adytum and finished off my initiation.

The colonialist came to the Igbo with his technology and his Christian religion. We should have accepted his technology and politely rejected his ineffectual and mind-warping religion, as did the Chinese and the Japanese. We did not, and this was the Igbo “loss of nerve”.

Colonialism is a crusade for political power and the colonization strategy is:

- (1) Use military might to subjugate foreign lands and their peoples.
- (2) Use mind-warping religious doctrines to mollify the conquered peoples and render them docile.

Fear has been used as a potent weapon to mollify man and render him docile. Once a man is full of fear he loses trust in himself and he is ready to submit. Then he is ready to believe in any stupidity. You cannot make a man believe in nonsense if he has self-trust.

The above facts explain the observed governance tandem involving the politician and the priest. The priest produces the mollified and docile man, which the politician uses for the achievement of his selfish objectives. And that is how man has been exploited down the ages. This is the very trade secret of the so-called religions: make man afraid, make man feel unworthy, make man feel guilty, make man feel that he is just on the verge of hell.

How to make man so afraid? The only way is: condemn life, condemn whatsoever is natural. Condemn sex because it is the fundamental of life; condemn food because that is the second fundamental of life; condemn relationship, family, friendship, because that is the third fundamental of life. We find the following in the Christian Bible’s Gospel according to Matthew:

Mat 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

Mat 19:29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

The above verses are some of the mind-boggling words put into the mouth of Jesus by the scheming priests who compiled the Christian Bible. Whatsoever is natural to man, condemn it and say it is wrong: “If you do it, you will suffer for it. If you don’t do it, you will be rewarded. Hell is going to descend on you if you go on living naturally and heaven will be given to you if you go against life.” That is the message of the so-called religions, particularly Christianity.

This means that God will accept you only if you are suicidal. If you slowly commit suicide in the senses, in the body, in the mind, in the feeling or heart, and you go on destroying yourself, the more you succeed in destroying yourself, the more you will become beloved to God. This has been the whole teaching of the religions. This has contaminated, poisoned and warped the mind of man.

And the greatest way to create fear is to make man feel guilty about natural things. He cannot drop them, and he cannot enjoy them because of the fear of hell, so he is in a double bind. That double bind

is the basis of man's exploitation. We cannot just drop our sexuality because some stupid priest is saying that it is wrong. It has nothing to do with our idea of right and wrong; it is something natural, something in our very being. It is the wind of the spirit blowing wherever it wills. We have come out of it. Since saying is not doing (okwukwu abürö omume!) we cannot drop sex just by saying. But we can start repressing it, and by repressing we go on accumulating it in the unconscious part of the mind, and that becomes a wound. And the more we repress, the more obsessed we become with it. And the more obsessed we become, the guiltier we feel. It is a vicious circle. Now we are caught in the trap of the priest.

And the priest himself has never believed in it, neither has the politician ever believed in it. These things were for the people, the masses, the idiotai, the rabble; the masses have been fooled. The stories say that kings used to have hundreds of wives, and so was the case with priests. And it is a miracle that people continue to believe in these charlatans.

There is an old saying, "Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me." But the priests have been fooling us down the ages, and they have fooled us so long that it is now almost an accepted phenomenon. It has been so ancient that we take it for granted; nobody thinks that they are being fooled.

The priest goes on inventing more and more tortures for us. He has not allowed us to enjoy anything. Dance is wrong because it is bodily. Laughter is wrong because it depicts weakness of character. Jokes are wrong because life is a serious matter. The body is the enemy. Music is wrong because it is sensuous. All is wrong!

If a man is eating healthily, he does not indulge in eating. If he is enjoying his food he does not indulge, he does not eat too much. In fact because he loves his body, he loves his food, and he remains very careful. To stuff the body too much is not the sign of a lover of the body, it is a sign of the enemy. The body can be killed in two ways: either by starvation or by over-stuffing it – but both are the ways of enmity. The lover of the body, one who respects his body as his God's gift, cannot do either. He will neither fast nor indulge in food.

And the same is true about sex and about everything.

Indulgence is created by the priests because they create repression. Once you create repression people start indulging. The more a desire is repressed, the more it wants to assert itself. It becomes mad, it becomes aggressive!

When it is allowed its natural flow, when it is accepted, when there is no fight with it, there comes a balance.

And the man who enjoys his food never eats too much; he cannot, it is impossible. Have you ever come across wild animals who are fat? Now, nobody is teaching them naturopathy, dieting or fasting. You never come across a fat wild animal.

We are deliberately saying wild animal; we are not talking about the zoos, because it is different in zoos. The animals start imitating man. In zoos you can find fat and ugly animals, but not in the wild state. Why? – because an animal simply loves, enjoys his body, eats to the point where the body is satisfied, not a bit more.

And yes, sometimes it happens that the animal fasts too, but not according to any religious rules. If he feels that the body is in such a state that it cannot take food, he is ill, and it is harmful to load the body – these are natural instincts, prompts from the spirit within – he does not eat. Sometimes even the animal may try to vomit, to unburden. A dog will go and eat grass; that helps him to vomit. And you cannot persuade him to eat till he becomes healthy again. These are natural instincts or prompts from the resident spirit.

Priests have contaminated man so much that he has forgotten all his natural instincts. Now he lives by memorized ideas. He has to fast because he follows a certain philosophy of fasting. He does not listen to the body; the body is hungry and he fasts. And then sometimes the body is not hungry at all and he eats. He goes on losing contact with his body and the spirit that runs that body.

Memory is only a part of the mind. It is the archive or store-room of the mind. And whatever the mind stores in memory is supplied by the senses. The priest conditions us to live in the archive or memory. By so doing, we completely ignore what the senses are telling us. The body is hungry and, instead of feeding it, we present it with the fasting idea pulled from the archive. But the body cannot be fed with such stupidities. We need to come out of our archives into the pooling area where the senses meet the mind. The gate connecting the senses to the mind must be re-opened. For more on this, see the section on Mental Alchemy or 2<sup>nd</sup> Birth below.

The body is beautiful and divine. Let's come back to the body. Let the body become alive again, and it will take care; we need not worry about it. The body has a built-in program to keep us healthy, alive, vibrant, young and fresh. The body has a built-in program and we need not learn anything about it from books and teachings.

Let us close this section with a review of the four phases in man's life:

From 0 to 7 years: At this stage, the child is self-centered and auto-sexual. When the child is born he is a narcissist. He knows and loves only his body. By just sucking his own thumb, he is in such euphoria. By playing with his own body, such as taking his toe into his mouth, he makes a circle of energy. When the child takes his toe into the mouth a circle is created and his energy starts moving in a circle. The spirit circulates naturally in the child and he enjoys, because when the spirit circulates there is great joy inside.

The child plays with his own sex organ not knowing it is a sex organ. He has not yet been conditioned; he knows his body as one whole. And certainly, the sex organ is the most sensitive part of his body. He utterly enjoys touching it, playing with it.

And here is where the society, the poisonous society, enters into the mind of the child: "Don't touch!" "Don't" is the first dirty, four-letter word. And out of this one four-letter word comes many more: can't, won't – these are all four-letter words. The child is told "Don't!" and the angry parent, mother or father takes child's hand away from his genitals, which are naturally very sensitive. He really enjoys it, and he is not being sexual or anything. It is just the most sensitive part of his body, the most alive part of his body, that's all.

But our minds have been conditioned! He is touching a sex organ? That is bad, and we take his hand away. We create guilt in the child.

Now we have started destroying his natural sexuality, poisoning the original source of his joy, and creating hypocrisy in him. He will become a diplomat. When the parents are there he will not play with his genitals. The first lie has entered and he cannot be true. Now he knows that if he is true to himself, if he respects himself, if he respects his own joy, if he respects his own instinct or spirit, then the parents are angry. And he is helpless against them, he is dependent on them, his survival is with them. If they renounce him, he will be dead; so the question is of choosing whether he wants to live. The condition is that if he wants to live he has to be against himself, and the child has to yield.

The child is the most exploited person in the world. No other class has been so exploited as the child. He cannot do anything: he cannot make unions to fight with the parents, he cannot go to the court, and he cannot go to the government. He has no way to protect himself against the parental attacks.

And when the parents stop him, they are stopping him because of their own conditioning; their parents had done the same to them. They are very much embarrassed by the child's touching his own sex organ and playing with it, and so unashamedly.

Now the child knows nothing of shame, he is innocent. The "don't" has entered; the energy or spirit recoils. The first trauma has happened. Now the child will never be able to accept his sexuality naturally, joyously. Repression has happened and the child is divided in two; his body is no more whole. Some part of the body is not acceptable, some part of the body is ugly, some part of the body is unworthy to be part of his body; he rejects it. Deep down in his mind he starts castrating himself, and the spirit recoils. The spirit will not be flowing as naturally as it used to flow before this "don't" happened.

And the natural outcome of this stupidity that has been perpetually practiced on humanity is that the child is no more a natural being, hypocrisy has entered. He has to hide something from the parents or he has to feel guilty.

Many people remain stuck at this auto-sexual phase of life. That's why so much masturbation continues all over the world. It is a natural state. It would have passed on its own, it was a growing phase, but the parents disturbed the spirit's growth surge.

The child becomes stuck: he wants to play with his genitals and he cannot. Repressing, repressing, one day it is too much and he is possessed by the sex energy. And once he has started masturbating, it may become a habit, a mechanical habit, and then he will never move to the second stage.

And the people who are responsible are the parents, the priests, and the politicians.

Now a man may remain stuck at this stage, which is very childish. He will never attain to full grown-up sexuality. He will never come to know the bliss that can come only to a grown-up sexual being. And the irony is that these are the same people who condemn masturbation and make much fuss about it. And they make such statements that are very dangerous: they have been telling people that if you masturbate you will go blind, if you masturbate you will become a zombie, if you masturbate you will never be intelligent, you will remain stupid. Now all the scientific findings are agreed upon one point: that masturbation never harms anybody. But these suggestions harm. All the psychological researches agree that masturbation never harms anybody. It is a natural outlet of energy. But these ideas – that you will go blind – may make it dangerous to your eyes, because again and again you will think that you

will go blind, that you will go blind, that you will go blind.... So many people are using glasses, and the reason may not be in the eyes; the reason may be just somewhere else. So many millions of people are stupid, and the reason may not be that they are stupid – because no child is born stupid, all children are born intelligent. The reason may be somewhere else: in these baseless, negative suggestions. And so many people are afraid, trembling continuously, have no trust in themselves, no self-confidence, are continuously afraid, because they know what they have been doing – masturbating.

We repeat: masturbation has never harmed anybody. But the moment when a person masturbates is a very sensitive and delicate moment; his whole being is open and flowing. In that moment if some suggestion is dropped in his mind – and he himself will drop the suggestion, “Now what if I go mad? if I go blind? if I remain always stupid?” – these constant auto-hypnotic suggestions are the cause of a thousand and one illnesses, of a thousand and one psychological problems and perversions.

Who is responsible for this? The parents, priests and politicians!

If the child is allowed the natural phase of auto-sexuality, he moves on his own to the second phase, the homosexual – but very few people move to the second phase. The majority remain with the first phase.

From 7 to 14 years: The child becomes eccentric, a great questioner and a homosexual. Few people move to this second and natural phase. The child loves his body. If the child is a boy, he loves a boy’s body, his body. To jump to a woman’s body, to a girl’s body, would be too much of a big gap. Naturally, first he moves in love with other boys; or if the child is a girl, the first natural instinct is to love other girls because they have the same kind of body, the same kind of being. She can understand the girls better than the boys; boys are a world apart.

The homosexual phase is a natural phase, the phase of true friendship. There, society helps people to remain stuck again, because it creates barriers between man and woman, girls and boys. If those barriers are not there, then soon the homosexual phase fades away; the interest starts shifting into the hetero-sex, the other sex. But for that, society does not give chances – a great wall is put between the boy and the girl. In the schools they have to sit apart or they have to be educated separately. In the colleges they have to live in separate hostels. Their meeting, their being together, is not accepted.

Homosexuality is perpetuated by the society and condemned by the same society. These strategies have to be understood. The same society condemns the homosexual, calls him perverted, criminal. And it is the same society that creates it!

We place man and woman in watertight compartments. And when the man wants to love he cannot find a woman, and the woman wants to love and she cannot find a man. Then, whatsoever is available will do. She starts falling in love with a woman and he starts falling in love with a man. And it is not satisfying either, but it is better than nothing. Nature has to find its way. If you don’t allow the natural course, it will find some roundabout way. Otherwise homosexuality is a natural phase; it passes by itself.

From 14 to 49 years: This is the hetero-sexual phase. Sex arises at fourteen and the child is interested in the other sex. The hetero-sexual phase lasts till the age of forty-nine years. Sex energy is on the ascendant from 14-35 years of age. The period of 14-21 years is torrid, with ambition and adventure coming up during the period of 21-28 years. At 27 years a balanced hetero-sexual attitude arises if we

let the sex energy flow naturally. We transcend the touch and go aspect of hetero-sexuality. It is time to settle down in security and comfort. It is time for marriage to a partner. Hankering after sex is now history. A partner is enough and perfectly okay. Love can now happen because the man and woman are mentally and sexually mature! For love to happen, the man and the woman must be mentally and sexually mature. They must have gone beyond the first two stages and the torrid stage of hetero-sexuality; only then can love happen. And very rarely are there people who are mature men and mature women. So nothing happens; they make love, but that love is only superficial. Deep down they are auto-sexual or homo-sexual. At the most, they are at the torrid hetero-sexual stage.

The torrid hetero-sexual phase is a natural phase, the phase of knowing what the other sex looks like. This is the phase where a man can make love with a woman all-night-long, till-day-break (TDB). The bliss of sex is such that a man feels no sleep and has an almost permanent erection without taking any aphrodisiac. My people say: *i solu ütö örü, i gbajie utu* (If you follow the bliss of sex, you will break your penis). But there again, society helps people to remain stuck, because it reinforces the existing barriers between man and woman, girls and boys. Sex for adolescents in the 14-21 years age bracket is called defilement, punishable by imprisonment of the boy. If those barriers are not there, then soon the torrid hetero-sexual phase fades away; the interest starts shifting into the consolidation phase, the marriage phase. Our high divorce rates result from the bungled implementation of the torrid hetero-sexual phase. We jump hurriedly into marriage, only to hanker after the hetero-sexuality we ought to have transcended. The women out there that I do not know must be different from the wife I know. If the torrid hetero-sex phase is allowed its natural course we transcend the tendency to jump from one partner to the other.

Torrid hetero-sexuality is perpetuated by the society and condemned by the same society. The same society condemns the torrid hetero-sexual, calls him perverted, criminal. And it is the same society that creates it! The dirty old man and woman run after mates who could be their children, simply because they failed to complete the torrid hetero-sexual phase before jumping into marriage. The married woman hides behind religion in order to complete an uncompleted torrid hetero-sex phase. Religious and social conditioning prevented her from going through the natural phases of life. She is sexually repressed and the various religious retreats and all-night religious vigils provide propitious terrain to catch up on lost ground. We can always steal a snatch behind the statue of some saint or on some remote corner of the angel field! You just need to be smart. Because she did not experience certain phases of life, she would not tolerate her children experiencing them. If she did not experience the torrid hetero-sex phase, then no child of hers should even try it. Ogene Ìkpaachì Agukwu Nrī says: *Ivbe onye emeghi n'okolobia o mee na nka* (Whatever you fail to do in your youth, you will do in your old age).

The torrid hetero-sex phase is dangerous because of the diseases associated with promiscuity and the risk of unwanted pregnancy. But the knowledge of the menstrual cycle was basic in the upbringing of the woman. Our grandmothers knew when it was safe to have sex without getting pregnant. They associated their periods of ovulation with the phases of the moon. They listened to their bodies and watched the phases of the moon. Sexual hygiene boils down to washing the genitals with clean water after sexual intercourse.

Having settled down at the age of 28 years the mature couple accept themselves as they are and love develops naturally. They get into marriage for the same reason: to build a family. They are all for the government, rules, regulations and discipline. From 42-49 years of age, our energies start declining, we

are interested in religion, and sex subsides. Soon the hetero-sexual phase fades away entirely; the interest starts shifting into the celibacy phase, the no-sex phase.

From 49-56 years of age, we move inwards in meditation to find the God within all of us. Then the fourth and ultimate phase, celibacy, comes. This is real celibacy; not the celibacy of the monks – that is not celibacy at all – but the celibacy of enlightened men and women. Sex has disappeared; you don't need the outer woman, you don't need the outer man. Now your inner man and woman have fallen into a union, and this union is not momentary. This is real marriage; your mind and spirit are welded together. The spirit inundates the mind and body. Now to be orgasmic is your natural state. An enlightened person lives in orgasm continuously; he breathes in and out in orgasm. In the period of 56-63 years of age, we withdraw from all social entanglements. From 63-70 years of age a re-birth of the mind takes place and we become as little children: self-centered. We achieve the goal of incarnation: to unite the mortal mind with the immortal spirit and become as the legendary winged globe. We become as one of the Gods! The program for this re-birth of the mind is described in the section on Mental Alchemy. Next, we move further inwards, ready to die at the age of 70 years.

The above are the four stages of sex.

A man who has repressed his sexuality for his whole life will go mad on seeing a naked woman, because it will be like an explosion in his being. But a man who has not repressed any sexuality will not even take any note of seeing a naked woman; or he may simply think, "What a beautiful body!" – and that is that. He does not want to grab or possess it. This was the case with my ancestors before Christianity came. Just as we look at a rose flower: the rose flower is naked, and we don't put clothes on the rose flower. We don't put clothes on the animals.

While picking pepper in her garden, my granduncle's wife had seen me through her fence fumbling a girl's breasts. The girl and I were sitting behind the Obu and facing her compound. I was on the point of putting one of her nipples into my mouth when she cleared her throat behind the thick fence foliage. The girl quickly hid her breasts and we escaped. The old lady called me later and jocularly asked: Nnwa m, i na-elikwu nli-nnwa gböö? My son, do you also eat baby food? As I seemed not to understand, she added: I mara na ivbe i chölü nsüia n'onü mgbee vbü nli-nnwa? I ka-vbü nnwa? Don't you know that what you wanted to put into your mouth a while ago is called baby food? Are you still a baby? We laughed and I left her. I did not fully understand at that time, because a woman's breasts always fascinate. The sexually repressed youth would go haywire in front the naked breasts of a girl. But the lesson was clear: why should a boy still be grabbing and sucking a woman's breasts? That's something for babies!

Whom do we think we are deceiving with our repressions? Our repressions are bound to take revenge on us from the back door. The whole hypocrisy can disappear from the world if sex is accepted naturally. Ninety-nine percent of hypocrisy is dependent on sex-repression.

Now, religions go on giving us double-binds. They first say, "Be authentic, be true," and all that they teach makes us inauthentic, untrue, hypocrites. This is a double-bind. They say, "Believe in truth, believe in God"; now this is a double-bind. Belief simply means you don't know and still you are believing; it is untrue. If one has to be true, one has to seek and search and only then believe. But they say, "First believe in God, and then you will be able to find Him." But to begin with belief is to begin with a lie.

And God is truth, and we begin in lies. Life is truth, and we begin in hypocrisy. If we go on missing, it is no wonder. We are bound to miss all joy.

In the past, this antagonism towards sex has been exploited for one more reason. First, the priest exploited it to make us afraid, to make us tremble. Then he became very haughty, holier than others; he dominated everybody. And the politician exploited it in another way, for some other reason: if sex is repressed, man becomes violent. Now, again this is a scientific finding. If sex is repressed man becomes violent; violence is a perversion of sexual energy. Now, the politicians needed armies, violent people, murderers. The only way to get so many murderers was to repress sex.

If you don't repress sex, who wants to kill? For what? The sword, the dagger, the bayonet are nothing but phallic deep down. The man wanted to penetrate the woman's body and it would have been a beautiful phenomenon if it had happened in love; but it could not happen, it was not allowed. Now he is mad, he wants to enter anybody's body, in any way – with a dagger, with a sword, with a bayonet.

Sex has been repressed and the politician exploited it in his own way. He needed armies. He needed slaves ready to die or to kill. The person who has not lived his life in celebration is ready to die for anything. He is ready to become a martyr for any stupid idea, ideology, scripture, or religion.

The man who has lived the joy and the blessings of a life will not be so easily ready to die. He will say, "Why? Life is so precious. I cannot sacrifice my life just for a piece of cloth called the national flag." "I cannot sacrifice my life," he will say, "just because somebody has burned the Koran. So what? Print another." "I cannot sacrifice my life because somebody has burned a temple. So what? My life is more precious than your temple, because my body is the temple of a living God." But a man who has not loved and who has not lived is always ready. When life is misery it is better to die; any excuse is enough. The politician needed violence; he exploited sexual repression. The priest needed power; he exploited sexual repression.

Up to now no revolution has happened, because ninety-nine percent of hypocrisy, untruth, exploitation, and violence depend on sexual repression, and no sexual revolution has yet happened.

A repressed mind is an obsessed mind. It cannot see reality as it is; it is impossible. Before a repressed man can see reality as it is, he will have to drop all kinds of repressions. A clean mind is needed, an innocent mind is needed.

Man has lived with hypocrisy.

And remember, sex may look like mud, but it contains the lotus flower in it. Sex contains bliss, because life is God. We must move from sex to enlightenment or a re-birth of the mind; this is the only natural and rightful way. We should not get stuck anywhere in sex. Transcendence of sex comes through sex itself. And the people who are teaching repression are not teaching transcendence. In fact, they go on pouring more mud on us. They go on forcing us deeper in the mud because there is no possibility of transcendence if we have not moved through these sexual stages of auto-eroticism, homo-eroticism, hetero-eroticism, and then to transcendence. And the lotus blooms resulting in the second birth. Avoid the priests and the politicians and you can achieve it. They are standing in the way.

But they always wanted it this way. It is good for them; it is not good for anybody else. They have diverted our love. They have taken its natural object from us; then love can be diverted. Now there are



people who are in love with the motherland – what foolishness! What do we mean by “motherland”? There are people who are in love with the fatherland – still more foolish. There are people who are in love with countries, ideologies – communism, fascism, and cultism.

Our natural object of love has been taken away; now our love is frantically searching for anything to become tethered to. If the natural object of love is taken away, one will love money or one may even love his umbrella. One may start falling in love with things: one may start falling in love with flags, countries. All kinds of nonsense is possible once the natural love is distracted.

Let us bring our love back to its natural object – sex. Let our love have a spontaneity of its own; let us allow it to take possession of us, and we will be transformed through it. Sex, when transcended, transmutes into love. And love or sex transcendence as described above is the secret key to mental regeneration, re-birth or enlightenment.

### **3.5. The Basics of Ödünana**

Some Igbo tell me that Ödünana can only be practiced in the village where the ritual ingredients are readily available. But I disagree because Ödünana is a philosophy, and every philosophy is primarily mental before becoming practical. Once we understand the Ödünana philosophy, the ritual aspect of it is easily adaptable to environments and circumstances: we cook our food with the firewood at our disposal. Nkü ndü nwel be vbe na-eghel vbe ite. The wife who wants to embrace her husband uses the hands at her disposal, her hands. Aka nwaanya nwel ka ö na-atükwasa diye! It is the emotion attached to such gestures that personalize them and render them unique. The same is true of Ödünana.

Our ancestors knew that God (Chineke) or Universal Spirit was either incarnate in forms or free. They also knew that the God who governed the planet Earth (Ana) is more powerful than the God who governed the human body (Chi). The God who governs the human body (Chi) is an entity, while the God who governs the Earth is a hierarchized Army or Host of entities having the same origin as the entity that animates man. Religion is a desire to commune with a spirit that is superior to ours. We admire the Nature around us, convinced that the fashioning Gods are truly powerful. This is the origin of man’s reverence for the Gods of Nature. Our wise ancestors venerated God in Nature. They found God in themselves (Chi), in the earth on which they walked (Ana), in the water, in the air, in the fire, in the trees, etc, and in all living things.

Man’s mind (Uche) sleeps and wakes. The spirit (Chi) rests only at the body’s death. During sleep the heart beats, the blood circulates, the food is digested, the wastes are eliminated, etc., the spirit (Chi) keeps watch and directs the operations; but thinking (echiche) has ceased and the mind is asleep. When we wake from sleep the mind takes the front seat, while the spirit moves into the background to continue its ceaseless maintenance of the body and the mind.

Man’s nearest God is his Chi. Next come the Chi of his parents and ancestors. Next in line is the Chi of the planet Earth, Ana. Note that Ana comprises all the Alüshī and Spirit Guilds on Earth. Thereafter come the Chi of the other planets in our solar system. Finally come the Chi of the Sun (Anyanwü) and Its Hosts, at the apex of the Hierarchy that governs our solar system.

In the village, as anywhere else, we live on the Earth. The Gods of the Earth are thus available and accessible everywhere on the planet. We may, therefore, venerate and call on them everywhere on the planet. The Moslem may touch the Earth with his forehead in Lagos or at the North Pole. I can pour

my libation by pouring water or wine on the ground in Öka or any other corner of the world. All depends on the why of these gestures. By touching the Earth with my forehead during prayer, I yoke myself onto the Gods of the Earth. The libation that I pour on the ground is an offering to the Gods of the Earth.

Thus, Ödünana can be practiced anywhere on Earth. Take the example of a student who lives in a hostel or in an apartment in the city. How can he manage practicing Ödünana basics? The starting point is for him to note that it is his spirit or God (Chi) who watches over the health of his body and mind. His Chi is his share of Universal Omnipotence. He should trust his Chi and then appreciate Its power. He will thus start to increase his awareness and express more gratitude to his Chi.

Next he may look for external support to supplement his weaknesses. He may thus appeal to the Gods of the Earth (Ana). Let him take a cup of water, isolate himself a bit, remove his shoes, clearly murmur his desires for the attention of those Gods, pour the content of the cup on the ground or into a kitchen or bathroom sink at the end of his prayer. The magic is mental and the gesture with the water simply reinforces the mental imagery. He should read Psalm 139 and view it as a situation where the mind expresses its gratitude to its God. Let him discover his God through mental silence. This is the goal of meditation and yoga. When he passes his examinations and obtains his certificates, let him not forget to celebrate his God (Chi) and the Gods who supported him. The birthday anniversary should celebrate the God (Chi) of the celebrator. Alas, this Eucharist feast now celebrates a date!

A friend survived a ghastly motor accident. Instead of celebrating the event with his Chi and loved ones, he rushed to the church to donate money to Chineke: tüö mmamma n'ünöüka. As though Chineke, the Great Giver, needed anything! He invited me to the special church service but I stayed home and was frank with him. I asked him how he hoped to get anything from Chineke when he ignores his Chi or share of that Chineke. I told him that he was deluded and had mortgaged his reason to the priests.

I repeat: Ödünana is a philosophy, which is primarily mental before becoming practical. Once we understand the Ödünana philosophy, the ritual aspect of it is easily adaptable to environments and circumstances: we cook our food with the firewood at our disposal. Nkü onye nwel biye na-eghelie ite. The hierarchy of subservience in Ödünana is: my Chi, Ndiichie (dead as well as living male and female parents), Alüshī and Ana. This is the Igbo mindset that colonialism has strived to destroy through the impracticable monotheism of Christianity. There are Gods and the Christian God is one of them, period. Mentally reclaim your Gods and be free again. Venerate and worship Ana and Its Gods wherever you are on the surface of Ana. Walk barefoot whenever you can to keep contact with Ana. Shrines and temples are embellishments in the practice of Ödünana. If you can afford them, fine. Otherwise, don't bother about them. The magic of Ödünana is first of all mental before its concretization in visible phenomena.

### **3.6. Conclusions on Ödünana**

I believe we have reviewed what is required to understand Ödünana, in spite of unsuccessful attempts by our Christian guests to destroy our very roots. We have given a clear and robust conception of Deity, the universe and man, which is the rock on which Ödünana rests. We also saw the efforts being made in my Öka home to revive Ödünana. There is still plenty of mental house-cleaning to be done, but the message is taking hold. Ana is a God and, like all Gods, Its ways are not the ways of men.

The role of Dibia Avba in Ödünana is primordial. People complain that majority of them are liars and cheats. Maybe! But one sage told me: Dibia niine na-ashī ashī, mana ï vbü Dibia nya shīal ghī ashī maka na üvbödü ashī na-avbü ezi okwu. The Dibia are liars, but when you come across a Dibia tell him to lie for you, because some lies are true. The Dibia is a trained seer, just like a trained Tarot card reader. The Tarot cards have fixed meanings. The position of each card in a spread also has a fixed meaning. The only variable element is the sequence in which the consultant picks the cards from the Tarot pack. Assume we are using only the twenty-two major trumps to interrogate the invisible. I shuffle the twenty-two cards and place them facing down on a table. I then ask you to pick four cards, one at a time, and give them to me without looking at the image on the card. I place the cards on another table in the form of a cross, the cross spread. The second card faces the first across the short arm of the cross, while the third and fourth cards are placed opposite each other at the top and foot, respectively, of the long arm of the cross. A fifth card, which is a summary of the four cards, is placed in the center of the cross. When you went to pick the cards, something moved your hand to blindly pick a card among twenty-two cards. The same something moved your hand when you blindly picked the three other cards. But the something that was blindly moving your hand is simply your Chi or God within your body. Your Chi knows the answers to your queries. It uses the cards that you choose and the sequence in which you choose them to answer the relevant query. The Tarot reader simply reads out what your Chi is showing through the cards. The same is true of the Dibia Avba as may be seen in section 2 on reincarnation.

Remember that the Dibia Avba does not have all the answers. We listen to the Dibia without surrendering our reason. Ask questions, if you don't understand what the Dibia is saying. Onye ajüjü anara evbu uzo. He who asks questions never misses his way. The implementation of his recommendations must be dependent on our sole judgement. That's why my folks say: a gbachaa avba, a chiköö uche. Deliberation must follow the avba session. A minimum of three different Dibia Avba should be consulted for important issues. A comparison of the three oracles would give a good indication of what to do.

I repeat: God in manifestation is, like the Army, a Host of fashioning Powers or Gods. Prayer to a God yields immediate results, while prayer to God yields nothing.

To recapitulate, the Igbo venerate or worship the God of the Earth and Its Hosts of spirits (Ana). Ödünana or Omenana describes this method of venerating or worshiping God. Note that worship of God describes the ways we choose to commune with the manifest God (Chineke) and, through It, with the Godhead (Chikwu) – the Source. Men worship God in diverse, but equivalent, ways. The God is the same – Spirit, Mmöö, Ndü – but the rituals or methods for approaching It differ.

Ödünana or Omenana is the religion or cult dedicated to the God of the Earth, in the same manner that Christianity is the religion or cult dedicated to the God of the Sun. Sun Day or Sunday is the day set aside by Christianity for the worship of the Sun God. In line with Igbo theogony, this write-up is thus dedicated to:

Chi Ukwu, Chikwu or Amaamaachaamacha (the Great God, the Unknown Godhead), Chi na-eke, Chineke, Mmöö or Ndü (God the Creator, the Son and Word of the Godhead, Spirit, Life), Alüshī (the Gods and their Spirit Hosts), Ndü Otu (Spirit Guilds of the Elements: Earth, Water, Air and Fire), Chi m or Oke-Chikwu m (my personal God or my share of God and Life).

Ichie Ukwu na Ichie Nta, Ökpü Ukwu na Ökpü Nta (My male and female Parents, dead or alive); particularly my great Mother and Matriarch Ashii; all mothers of the Ashii clan; Madiagwu Ashii; Anaagö Mmadiagwu; my great grandfather Udo Anaagö, high priest of the Earth-God Ana (whose shrine is Aja-Ana) of Agülü Öka, Nigeria; whose re-incarnation I am.

The entire Anazöö Udo family, holders of the Övbö na Alö (the symbols of power and authority) of the Anaagö Mmadiagwu lineage.

My village Ümübeele and my town Öka na-asö enwe (Öka, for which the monkey is sacred).

All lovers of Ödünana or Omenana, the Igbo religion.

My name is Ana zöba m. Ana, protect me. I know that Ana is an unfailing God. He who is with a God fears nothing. I call on all Igbo to repent and return to their roots in Ödünana. It is their only road to salvation.

Ibe anyi-ee! Ibe anyi ekenee m unu-oo! I greet all Igbo people!

### **3.7. Morning Kolanut Ritual – Ngöfülü Ndiichie Öji Ütütü**

The morning kolanut ritual may be performed anywhere, but we shall present its performance in the Obu (temple). The ritual may be broken down into: self-cleansing with a seed of the alligator pepper (ose örö), invocations with the kolanut, breaking of the kolanut and deciphering the oracle given by the spread of the kolanut lobes, removing the “tongues” on the lobes (ile öji) and throwing them outside for the powers that be, eating of the kolanut lobes, libation with njenje (Igbo gin), invocations with a piece of kaolin. I have been advised to open the alligator pepper pod behind my back and to avoid spilling the seeds on the Obu floor. Non-observance of the behind-the-back stuff may give headache to those who eat the pepper. Walking on spilled pepper seeds may provoke unexplainable quarrels among those in the Obu.

I wash my hands with clean water. Taking one seed of the alligator pepper (ose örö or ose öji) between the thumb and the next finger, I touch my forehead, mouth, chest and two legs with the fingers holding the seed, repeating öraakwü füö! (negative vibes, get out!) as I do so. I swing the hand holding the seed four times (for the four marketdays) around my head saying anya m agara avbü ntĩ m, beel sö ma m ji enyo (except with a mirror, my eyes cannot see my ears). I throw the seed out of the Obu. Finally, I chew seven seeds of ose öji to wake me up fully, because ose öji anara eme anyäula (the alligator pepper dissipates sleepiness). This cleansing process with the alligator pepper seed is called nchüfü öraakwü, njücha arü (body cleansing).

The invocations now follow. I have provided English equivalents of the invocations. They are not perfect, but they give some idea of the concepts expressed.

I wash a kolanut with clean water and place it in the wooden kolanut bowl (any flat plate having some depth will do). I hold the bowl (or the kolanut itself) comfortably with the right hand. The invocation for breaking the kolanut follows.

- (1) Chikwu, Amaamaamachaamacha, bĩa taa öjĩĩ n'otu ka anyĩ taa nya n'ibe. (God-the-Father-Mother, The Great and unknown, come and eat this kolanut as one piece so that we can eat the pieces)
- (2) Chineke maal onye ö ga-eke, mana onye ö ga-eke amarĩa, biko bĩa taa öjĩ. (Creator of the universe, God-the-Son, you know your creatures but they know you not; please come and eat kolanut)
- (3) Obunaana bĩa taa öjĩ. (God of the Earth and Its hierarchies, come and eat kolanut)
- (4) Ndü Mmili, Ndü Ikuku, Ndü Ökü, Anyanwü na Agbala bĩakwaa-nĩ taa öjĩ. (Spirits of Water, Air, Fire, the Sun and Rainbow, come and eat kolanut)
- (5) Chi m bĩa taa öjĩ. (My God, come and eat kolanut)
- (6) Imöka Nnomeh, Akeeteögba, Mgbaghanyĩlĩazĩ, biko bĩa taa öjĩ. (Nnomeh's Imöka, Akeete the great python, the baffler of the youth, please come and eat kolanut)
- (7) Ngeneonyeachönam, Nnenwaanya tiyel ike na mmili, bĩa taa öjĩ. (Ngene, the war goddess whose butt dips into the river, come and eat kolanut)
- (8) Alüshĩ niine dü n'Öka bĩa taa öjĩ. (The Gods of Öka, come and eat kolanut)
- (9) Ichie Ukwu na Ichie Nta, Ökpü Ukwu na Ökpü Nta, bĩa-nĩ taa öjĩ. (Dead and living elders, dead and living daughters, come and eat kolanut)
- (10) Ndü ö na-avbü ekuo ö dü mma na ndü ö na-avbü ekuo ö dü njö, bĩa-nĩ taa öjĩ. (Ministering and avenging spirits, come and eat kolanut)
- (11) Maka na ndü övbüna nwel ulu vba na-aba. (Because each group of spirits has its utility)
- (12) Onye övbüna maküö Chiye ka Chi anyĩ wee maküö Chineke vbü onye makülü Chikwu. (Let each person embrace his God so that the latter will embrace the Creative God, which already embraces the Great Unknown God)
- (13) Ashĩ m na nwoke na nwaanya ga-adü ndü, arü eshie vbe ike, uche ezuo vbe oke. (May man and woman live long and be whole in body and mind)
- (14) Maka na üwa anara atö ütö ma a dü ndü, nwee arü ike, mana uche ezurozi oke. (Because life loses its savor when we live long and are strong, but the mind is not whole)
- (15) Ana m ekene maka ivbe unu meel anyĩ, na-ekenekwe maka nke unu ka ga-eme eme. (I give thanks for what you did for us and for what you will do for us)
- (16) Nyenĩ anyĩ nnwa-oo, na anyĩ achörö ümü na-amüchĩa ökü n'ünö. (Give us the child, we do not want ruffians that would torch the house)
- (17) Ashĩ m a müö nwoke nya vbülü nwoke; a müö nwaanya nya vbülü nwaanya ka ö baa ulu nwaanya na-aba. (Let our males be true males and let our females be true females, because females have a special utility)
- (18) Njanja ötü kakwanĩ örü nshĩ mma; maka na amaka ötü ajö njö, nya vbü uzo e shi-abĩa üwa. (The ugliest vagina is better than the anus; for, however ugly the vagina may be, it is the door through which we come into this world)
- (19) Weteni ivbe anyĩ ga-eli, ünü ewetene nke ga-eli anyĩ. (Give us what to eat, not what will eat us)
- (20) Biko weneteni eziokwu na udo, ka ö dükwa ka ö dü gboo mgbe nwaanya na-ala diye. (Please bring us truth and peace, and restore the old dispensation when the woman made love to her husband)
- (21) Maka na ngbe gboo na ö vbü nwaanya na-ala diye. (Because it was the woman who made love to her husband in the good old days)
- (22) Mana ö vbü eri nwoke ji-kete nkwücha nla nwaanya ka chi ji wee-jineri odogwu na mgbaachi. (Darkness befell man at midday since he took it upon himself to start making love to the woman)

- (23) Ivbe dü na ngada dolu nwaanya anya, mana ume nwoke atürīya. (Whereas man is very limited in the science of sex, the woman is a maestro)
- (24) Onye shī ka nke anyī mebie, biko bulunu uzo mebie nke onye-anwü ka ö vbü ka o shi-adü. (Visit evil on those who wish us evil, so they can see what it feels like)
- (25) Avbü m nwata na-aghü arü n'avbö n'avbö. (I am a child that bathes only its belly)
- (26) M wel aka nwata nye unu öjī, biko welini aka ögalanya wee nal m nya. (Accept this kolanut with kingly hands, though my hands be those of a child)
- (27) Maka na nwaakanrī shī na nya adürö mkpümkpü, na ö vbü ike gwülü uto. (The dwarf said that he is not short, but that growth got tired)
- (28) Anyī ga-adü ka echi maka na echi anara agwüagwü. (May we be like the eternal tomorrow)
- (29) Ivbe öma meel anyī-oo! (May good things befall us!)
- (30) Ka m göl ka o lel, maka na önu nwaakanrī vbü önu nnīya vba-oo. (My words shall come to pass, because the dwarf's voice is the voice of his ancestors)
- (31) Iseee! (Amen! Said by the audience only)

The kolanut is now broken and gently thrown into the wooden bowl. The spread of the lobes is a coded message from Ndiichie that may be interpreted by those who know the art. The next invocation concerns libation with njenje (Igbo gin). I take about half a tumbler of njenje and say:

- (1) Ka m göl n'öjī, ka m na-agö na mmianünwa. (What I said with the kolanut applies to this drink)
- (2) Övbö sol övbö lee. (The realization of my present prayer shall dovetail with that of the previous one)

Then I sprinkle the altar and the ritual objects, leaving a small quantity that I can drink or give to some loved one to drink. This is mmīa a tül atü (blessed wine). The libation is poured outside if one is not authorized to do so at the altar. Now we can eat and drink freely after eating and drinking with the Gods and our ancestors. E ligbe, ömīmī anaa! Ill feelings disappear after an Eucharist feast!

Following the libation is the invocation with a piece of kaolin (ntü nzu). This invocation comes last to avoid staining the kolanut with kaolin-stained fingers. The saying of each stanza is followed by the scraping of the kaolin with the thumb and the dropping of the scraped powder on the floor beside you. Ntü nzu (Mma nzu) comes from this dropping or throwing (ntü) of the kaolin powder (nzu). We thus offer kaolin, white earth, to the powers that be. Maa m nzu = Tüö m nzu = Bless me with kaolin.

- (1) Chi m bīa tüö nzu. (My God come and bless us with kaolin)
- (2) Ivbe na-emel anyī ivbe na ivbe anyī na-emel ivbe bīanī tüö nzu. (The powers that work for us and those we work for, come and take kaolin)
- (3) Ivbe öma meel anyī mböshī Eke, mböshī Oye, mböshī Avbö na mböshī Nkwö. (May good things befall us on Eke day, Oye day, Avbö day, and Nkwö day)

I now draw four vertical lines on the floor for the four marketdays of the Igbo week and cross (or encircle) them with a fifth line for my Chi. I finally mark my feet, forehead and one eye with the kaolin.

Note that the thirty-one invocation stanzas given above contain three levels. The first level concerns the invitation of the Rulers. The second level relates to a show of appreciation to them and the third level relates to our requests and comments. The content of the levels could be varied at will, depending

on the circumstances. When there are visitors, the ritual is short and only key verses are said. When I am alone, for instance, I will normally call my ancestors by name and title. It's lengthy. The same would apply to all the Gods of my family, village and town. I would even include non-indigenous Gods and Goddesses that have been propitious to me or my people. The Goddess Raba of Agulu would have been invoked as: Raba Agülü, Nne mülü ömümü, Ezenwaanya, Onyeöcha bu na mmili, Baabaaduudu, biko biakwa taa öji. There are hair-raising verses that I have not included because their use is dictated by circumstances. In times of difficulty my morale would be peped-up by the self-encouragement given in the statements:

Mekete [HHH] mekete [LLL] anara agwü ike (Action tires nobody)

Maka na ö bülü na mekete mekete na-agwü ike (Because, if action was tiring)

Ivbe omume a ka-akwüshī n'aka nnaa vba (Action would have ended with my ancestors)

Nya vbü na ana m eme na nna-nna m mel, nna m mee (So, I am acting because my grandfather acted and my father acted too)

Ö gara aghö m ö gara enu m (My actions will not fail and will not be futile)

These invocations are incantations aimed at giving us the spiritual high required for the day's activities. The words invoke images to stir your spirit, giving it a vibratory power that can move mountains. A good invocation may give goose bumps and even bring tears! Thus this "language" is that of incantations or of Mantras, as they are called in India, sound being the most potent and effectual magic agent, and the first of the keys which opens the door of communication between Mortals and the Immortals. It is not surprising that this ritual is the first thing the Igbo man does in the morning. Indeed, no prayer can be more powerful than a well-crafted early morning incantation voiced in your mother tongue. You mentally see what you say and that arouses your God. The resulting magic is natural and guaranteed. We may now understand why reciting prayers from some prayer book or from memory yields no result whatsoever. It is just a recitation of empty words, i.e., words not associated with the corresponding mental images. It's sheer mummery!

Our ancestors knew how to pray with a view to getting results. They worked with Nature and Nature took good care of them. Christianity has endeavored and still endeavors to give us ready-made prayers that are incapable of stirring the human spirit. When a man's source of spiritual power is destroyed, he is mollified and becomes manipulable. I feel really sad when I see people rushing to some Christian gathering to fight for a drop of holy water or oil. The wily Christian priests have taken and are still taking away our time-tested religious practices. They replace them with mind-warping and inefficacious practices that simply bewilder us.

Wake up, Ndü Igbo! The powerful and result-oriented religion of your ancestors, Ödünana, is still there and alive. Christianity has just covered it with dust. Remove the dust and let the glory of Ödünana shine forth again for our true salvation. The Christian dust is mental and can be thrown anytime we realize that we have been fooled.

Ebunu shī shī-gbaaliya avba ndü, shī agbanaliya avba ude, maka na onye dü ndü ga-edede ude. The ram asked the oracle for information on its future health and not on its future fame, because whoever is healthy will become famous. The Igbo never prayed for fame. They prayed for life because of their belief that whoever is alive shall become famous. We are all here for some purpose and all we need is a healthy body and mind to excel in our various pursuits. The Igbo mindset would be ordered thus: have a healthy body and mind, work hard in your field, and reap the fame that accrues from your hardwork and expertise in your field. In this connection: Nkita shī shī-tüfüliya ökpükpü, ma shī-

rafüliya ivbe nya na ndü mmöö ga-eje. The dog says: throw the bone to me and don't bother about how I will share it with the spirits.

## 4. Mental Alchemy or 2<sup>nd</sup> Birth

We have:

akpa [LL] = bag

- devbe [HH] = suffix used to indicate that the action of the main verb should continue no further

echiche [HLL] = thought

ivbe [HH] = thing; things

jee [HH] = go

jedevbe [LHH] = go only so far; stop going, stop walking

ju [H] = be full;

judevbe [HHH] = filled only so far

jufute [HHH] = filled to the brim; abundant

uche [HL] = mind

okpokolo [HHHH] = empty; okpokolo akpa = empty bag

vböö [LH] = pack full; stock full; squeeze into; stuff

vböjuo [LHH] = pack full; stock full; squeeze into

My folks say of a really fat fellow: Ö dü ka akpa a vböl ivbe! He/she looks like a stuffed bag!

The Mind Is A Bag. How Loaded Is Yours?

Uche Vbü Akpa. Kedi Ka Nke Ghi Shi-Judevbe?

### 4.1. Introduction

We assume that the reader has a physical body, that he has a mind because he thinks and dreams, and that he has a spirit without which he becomes a corpse.

From childhood the mind is trained to be outward-going. Happiness is always associated with external events and objects. We evaluate ourselves only in terms of how others see us. We get bored when we are alone because the mind, finding nothing outside for its attention, is thrown back upon itself. We feel strange because the mind was never trained to turn its attention inwards. We seek the company of others not out of love, but to run away from ourselves.

The child is born innocent and has only one face – he is true to himself. This is the first birth – of the flesh. The parents and society, through so-called education, give the child a bag of false faces. These faces are intended to help the child live conveniently within the society. The innocent child transmutes into a cunning adult. His face shows the exact opposite of his internal states. This bag of false faces is the Ego, which is very useful for survival in the outside world.

When we retire from active life, the mind is bored because there is nothing to do in the outside world. The acquired bag of false faces – the Ego – becomes a burden. No one seems to be interested by our false faces. We feel rejected by the very society that adulated us just yesterday. We feel lonely and depressed. This is why many people die, in spite of a comfortable life, as soon as they retire from active life.



But why should people, in spite of material comfort, die because they are no longer needed in the outside world? Because the mind is thrown back upon itself, since there is nothing outside upon which to place its attention. The mind is forced to look at its accumulated luggage of false faces – the Ego. Looking at its Ego, the mind discovers that it has wasted its life gathering useless dust, which it thought was gold. What to do? Life is far spent and the body is getting weaker daily. What options are available to this mind? Three options present themselves as follows:

- (1) The mind forces itself out of the body through suicide.
- (2) The mind accepts to drag on helplessly with its useless Ego until death claims its body.
- (3) The mind decides to re-create itself through a second birth or regeneration of itself.

Our so-called “civilized world” offers only options (1) and (2), and qualifies these options as the “will of God”. Really? The Ancients knew better and God had no business in man’s salvation. The mind was given the powers to conquer the outside world and save itself from being swallowed by that world. It has conquered the outside world, but refused to exercise the other power to save itself from being swallowed by that world.

And what about option (3)? That’s what true religion and true spiritual education is all about. This option being a life-long project, the relevant education is begun in childhood. Through this training the mind learns discrimination and keeps its luggage to a minimum that can be disposed of easily when the need for mental renewal arises. The mind must be empty for the renewal to take place.

The second birth or regeneration of the mind is the mind’s last achievement before it separates from its body at what we call death. The mind of Jesus was regenerated at the age of thirty years. He was then baptized by John and he became Jesus-the-Christ. After his baptism, he lived for three years and left his body in what we call death.

Today, no religion or public schools offer the curriculum for option (3). The “civilized world” ignorantly calls it magic and witchcraft. Only the secret brotherhoods offer it to their members!

If this second birth is not achieved in one incarnation, the work continues in future incarnations. The second birth starts now. The mind is a bag. How loaded is yours?

This write-up is essentially practical and geared towards self-help in the manifestation of the divinity within us with a view to solving problems. The Christian Bible tells us that we are Gods (Psalm 82:6, John 10:30-34). This is good news, but we are not told what and where the godly powers are and how to use them for the good of ourselves and others.

We have endeavored to show what and where these powers are and how to develop and use them. We are told that Gods create what they desire from “no-thing”. And we are Gods. Hence we can also create what we desire from the same “no-thing”. But we are Gods without experience and some little training and practice will restore us to our lost estate – training and practice make the expert in any field.

We shall, therefore, study some methods to sharpen our understanding and then put those methods into practice, with a view to reaping the attendant benefits. Learn the “tricks” of the Gods and take your rightful place among them – for you are children of the same father-mother, God.

This chapter may be read with profit by any youth or adult, who wants to educate and help himself. Mental imagery developed in childhood helps the youth in his studies at college and higher levels. Folktales, legends and myths are dying out of our culture and the imaginative faculty of the youth is stifled by so-called rational thought. My imaginative faculty was greatly impacted by:

- (1) The folktales, legends and myths I heard at home as an infant.
- (2) The study of Bible Knowledge (BK) and Greek mythology in my secondary school literature classes.

This asset came in handy during my career at the university and thereafter, as may be guessed from my biographical note.

#### **4.2. Care of the Body**

It is essential to cultivate a healthy body and mind. Externally, the body and the clothes we put on it must be clean. Internally, the bowels and other elimination systems must function properly, with a view to ensuring the optimal evacuation of wastes. To drink a cup of water on waking in the morning will enhance health and protect us from tricky stomach problems. Brown rice, black-eyed beans cooked with palm oil, some bran, a fruit or piece of raw cabbage taken before food enhances the digestive potentials of the stomach. Make a soup with okro (30 pods, sliced), fresh tomatoes (6, sliced), onions (3, sliced) and pumpkin leaves (ügü, 2 -3 handfulls); add some salt, crayfish, pepper and palm oil (3 table spoons). Cook tomatoes, onions and seasonings for 15 minutes; add the pumpkin leaves and cook for 5 minutes; then add the sliced okro and palm oil and let simmer for another 15 minutes. Eat soup with boiled yam, rice, unripe plantain, and any fufu. We will rarely strain at stool.

We should solemnly feed the body. Chatting or watching the television while feeding the body simply shows we have no regard for it and its owner – the spirit. Our attention should rest on the action at hand, i.e., feeding the body. This one thing I do – I am feeding my body!

Eat whatever is available in your geographical location. Whatever firewood you have will cook your meal. Tow the middle path in diet. Avoid the extremes of starving or stuffing the body.

The object of physical exercise is to adjust the spine and further oxygenate the body. A long silent walk will suffice, if one cannot afford to jog or do something vigorous. If a walk is not feasible, then try this for the health of the spine – the source and cure of dis-ease:

- (1) Lie on your stomach, on the bed or floor, with a pillow placed under your chest. Place the jaw at the edge of the pillow, making sure that the mouth and nose are unobstructed by the pillow. Place both palms one on top of the other just above the forehead. Let the upper and lower teeth come together naturally, to help support the weight of the head. Let the tongue touch the palate. Put both legs together, with thighs, knees, heels and big toes touching each other. The toes and top of the feet should be as flat as possible on the bed or floor. This is the initial position.
- (2) Tense the muscles of both legs by squeezing the butt and bending the feet downward at the ankles, as if to touch some object with the tip of the toes. This tenses the muscles of the waist, thighs, calf and feet. Do this muscle tensing about five times. You will feel a pull along the spine from the back of the head to the feet. Relax, but don't change the initial position of the body.

- (3) With both legs still touching each other, and without lifting the trunk, gently fold the legs backward at the knees, as if to touch the lower back with the heels. Do this gently for a number of times. Fold back each leg in turn in the same way. Again relax, but keep the initial position.
- (4) Raise the head and chest on your elbows, with the abdomen/genitals flat on the bed and legs touching each other. Observe the pull on the spine from the neck to the lower back. With legs touching each other, gently fold them backward at the knees. Do this gently for a number of times. Gently swing the joined, folded legs sideways and note the pull at the waist. Fold back each leg in turn. Lower the head and chest on the pillow; assume the initial position and relax.
- (5) Fold the arms and cross the palms on the pillow. Place the jaw on top of the crossed palms. Hold the teeth together and let your crossed palms bear the full weight of your head. Gently roll the head sideways, using the jaw as a pivot. This helps to release blocked neck vertebrae with a pleasant rap. Look up and roll your eyes to relax the nerves that go into and out of the brain through the first cervical vertebra – the atlas. Notice the pull at the back of the head and neck. With legs touching each other, gently fold them backward at the knees. Do this gently for a number of times. Fold back each leg in turn in the same way. Stay in this position – with the arms and palms crossed on the pillow and the jaw placed on top of the crossed palms – for about five minutes. Uncross your palms and assume the initial posture, face down, legs touching, with your jaw on the edge of the pillow, mouth and nose unobstructed. Relax. If you fall asleep, then enjoy it. You will wake up a new person!

The above exercise should not take more than thirty minutes, excluding the refreshing sleep time at the end of step (5). We may also lie on the stomach for at least thirty minutes daily, or as often as possible (while reading or watching television) to prevent the spine from becoming bent to one side or the other. The spine as the source and cure of dis-ease is presented in the section on Healing.

### **4.3. The Tongue**

We have probably been accustomed to think of the tongue as the organ of taste, or for moving food around in the mouth, or as an organ of speech. Here is another use of the tongue which is almost magical in its results in making the body magnetic.

When not in use in speaking or eating the tip of the tongue should be in contact with the roof of the mouth.

Why? Placing the tip of the tongue against the roof of the mouth is like closing an electric switch. As a result, the nerve fluid from the solar plexus flows over the nerves that extend from it to the tongue; and from the tongue these vibrations are carried to the brain over the nerves which come directly from the brain to the roof of the mouth. This love vibration relaxes the cells of the brain, awakens them to renewed activity and causes them to draw in more energy from the universe, and to radiate it over the nerves to all parts of the body. Thus, the body is made more magnetic, and increased resistance to heat and cold is assured.

When the tip of the tongue is in contact with the roof of the mouth, the opening from the nose to the lungs is made larger, and the upper lobes of the lungs are more completely filled by air than when the tongue is permitted to lie flat in the mouth.

This practice is beneficial during meditation as it ensures a good flow of nerve fluid between the head and the rest of the body. It is also of very great value to singers and speakers, because it brings the thyroid muscles into greater activity, and makes them stronger.

#### **4.4. The states of the mind**

The outer senses are ruled by the spirit, while the mind is mandated to educate the inner senses with the help of the spirit at its disposal – the attention. This is why the mind has difficulty affecting the outer senses directly with the will. It is only through its spirit component that the mind can impact the body and its senses. The mind need not bother to educate the outer senses, since they belong to the spirit and the latter knows how best they should be.

But ignorance has deluded man to believe that the outer senses can be controlled by conscious effort of will. The mind has thus been engaged in a futile battle against an omnipotent spirit. The result of the battle is the acquisition of the ego, dis-ease in mind and body, social unrest and misery.

The brain is the organ of the mind. The states of consciousness or mind are associated with electrical activity in the brain. This electrical activity is displayed in the form of brainwaves, measured by an electroencephalograph (EEG). The rhythms of this energy are measured in cycles per second (CPS).

The states of mind are waking, relaxed, and sleeping. To these states of mind are associated certain categories of brainwaves. Generally, brainwaves of 15 CPS and above are called Beta waves; nine to fourteen are Alpha; five to eight Theta; and four and below are Delta.

When we are wide awake, doing and achieving in the workday world, we are in Beta, or outer consciousness. When we are daydreaming or just going to sleep but not quite there yet, or just awakening but not yet awake, we are in Alpha, or inner consciousness. When we are asleep we are in Alpha, Theta, or Delta. With some training we can enter the Alpha level at will and still remain fully alert. This is a key step in mind training.

We may note that the above states of the mind can be simply described as depicting the volatility – rate of change – of the mind's attention. In Beta or waking consciousness, the mind is fully alert and the volatility of its attention is maximal. This volatility decreases as we enter the Alpha, Theta and Delta levels of consciousness.

#### **4.5. Silence**

In the individual efforts to study the world within, silence has always been regarded as an aid. It is a true saying that speech is silver, silence is golden, for more can sometimes pass in silence than in speech, however eloquent. Too much, indeed! That is why lovers are afraid of their silences, and why in tense moments people are driven to take refuge in meaningless talk and laughter; their silence would reveal too much. Society owes its existence more to the fear of solitude than to the love of sociability; people assemble because they cannot endure the thought of being left alone with nothing to do. Television, radio, reading, solitaire – these are a few of the devices employed to postpone the inevitable and fateful moment when one must be alone with himself.

If at that moment of aloneness one has the courage to raise the last drawbridge, to interrupt all external communications, and become isolated in his own inmost fortress to re-become at last the Silent Watcher (the Spirit or Witness) that no barrier can keep long at bay, he will unknowingly have taken the first step on the spiritual path.

Silence and stillness of attention have the effect of conserving all the bodily forces usually wasted in unnecessary speech and action. We become for the first time conscious of the rhythmic flow of life's forces, and are able to hear the faint music they make on the harp of the body, inaudible before because of our own noisiness and restlessness. We become aware of having entered a condition of peace wherein our passions lose their power, and the worm in the brain ceases to squirm. It is this conservation of energy carried on over a long period, which gives the true Adept his look of coiled power, of youthfulness, however old in years he may be. But more is involved than the storing up of energy ordinarily uselessly expended. There is the presence of a more subtle and powerful force: psychic energy or spiritual ardor, which can produce phenomena.

#### **4.6. What Is The Second Birth?**

Man is born two times. The first birth is biological, while the second birth is mental. The first birth produces a child, whose mind is an empty bag. He is innocent and lives totally. He shows when he is angry or happy. He has one face, which displays his internal states with utmost precision.

The child is trained by parents and society in the ways of the outside world. He acquires “knowledge” and grows into an adult. He loses his innocence and lives partially – in the head. He acquires many faces and becomes a hypocrite. He acquires a personality or an Ego. He smiles when he is angry, because he has been told that it is unsocial to display anger. His face displays the exact opposite of his internal states. He plays social games and becomes a gentleman, a lady, a good member of the society. He identifies with the outside world, but is lost to himself. He looks in vain for a rest of mind and permanent happiness in the outside world. But he soon discovers that the only permanent thing in the outside world is change. He is frustrated and bewildered. His mind is overloaded with images from the outside world. His Ego becomes a burden.

Having conquered the outside world, earned a big Ego and frustration, the adult has three choices:

- (1) Commit suicide in despair;
- (2) Keep his overloaded mind and drag on till his body dies;
- (3) Empty his mind and be mentally regenerated or born again. Drop his Ego and regain his original mind of a child.

The second birth is the Golden Fleece that the human mind must win to justify its sojourn in the body. If this second birth is not achieved in one incarnation, the work continues in future incarnations until it is achieved.

The second birth starts now. Learn discrimination in order to limit the luggage thrown into the mind, because regeneration calls for the throwing out of mental objects. The mind being a bag, you may check to see how loaded yours is.

In John 3:1-5, we find the following dialogue between Jesus and Nicodemus:

“And there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.

He came to Jesus by night and said to Him, Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher come from God; for no man can do these miracles which you do unless God is with him.

Jesus answered and said to him, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Nicodemus said to Him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born?

Jesus answered, Truly, truly, I say to you, Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Next, in Matthew 18:1-3, we find the following dialogue between Jesus and his disciples:

“At that hour the disciples came to Jesus, saying, Who is the greater in the kingdom of Heaven?

And Jesus called a little child to Him and set him in their midst,

and said, Truly I say to you, Unless you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.”

From the above quotations, we note that the goal of the second birth is to enable us to enter the kingdom of God or heaven, which is within us. Indeed, we find in Luke 17: 20-21:

“Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.”

Why is entry into this kingdom within us so important? It is the abode of our Spirit or Father in our Heaven. That is the only place where the mind can find lasting peace and happiness. The mind left its Father’s house, as a Prodigal Son, to gather experience and things from the outside world. It has acquired perishable treasures, but it was unable to find the lasting peace and happiness of its childhood in its Father’s house. The mind longs to go home and searches for the ways and means. And Jesus says:

- (1) Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
- (2) Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.
- (3) Unless you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven.

The first birth is of water, while the second birth is of the Spirit. To enter the kingdom of God the adult must be converted and become as a little child. The real difference between the adult and the child lies in the amount of mental luggage possessed by each of them. The adult is mentally overloaded, while the child’s mind is an empty boat.

For the adult to be converted and become as a little child, he must empty his boat too. The adult mind must re-create or regenerate itself. By this regeneration, the mind cleans its house by throwing most of its useless luggage and making way for the inflow of the spirit. This is the second birth.

When the mind floods itself with spirit, the animal man transmutes into the divine man. God shines forth through the flesh of man and he takes his rightful place among the children of God. His resident spirit anoints him and makes him a Christ or one anointed by the spirit.

Again, in Romans 12:2 St. Paul tells us: “And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, in order to prove by you what is that good and pleasing and perfect will of God.”

The second birth is “the renewing of your mind.” And this renewal requires that we know:

- (1) How the mind is constituted,
- (2) How the mind works, and
- (3) How the mind is renewed or reprogrammed.

How is the mind constituted?

A mind is a system of related awareness made up of three principles: consciousness, the content of consciousness, and the power relating consciousness to its content. We call this relating power spirit. One pole of the mind is consciousness and the other pole is the content of consciousness. The spirit links the two poles to each other. The knower is the consciousness pole, the known is the content of consciousness pole, and knowing is the spirit that relates both poles.

A spirit builds the human baby in the mother’s womb during a nine-month period. The basic building blocks are the female egg and the male spermatozoa. At birth the builder-spirit dwells within the body. This spirit is responsible for the growth and maintenance of the body.

Man is an animal form to which the spirit adds a mind from the higher mental level of the universal mind. Minds from this level of the universal mind have more consciousness relative to the content and power aspects of being. This special mind of man plays the role of husbandman and organizing intelligence within the human frame. It has powers that it has to bring forth, with a view to participating with the resident spirit in the work of creation and evolution. In addition to the faculties inherent in mineral, plant and animal forms, this mind of man has the additional faculties of thought and speech.

Note that the brain is the organ of the body that the mind uses to express itself. Thus by mind we don’t mean brain.

And how does the mind work?

Each individual mind has the power or spirit aspect in its triune constitution. This power or spirit aspect of the human mind is what we call “attention” – the eye of the mind. The mind perceives only those things to which its attention is directed. What is “absent mindedness”? The body is here but the mind is elsewhere? Yes, but it is actually the attention that is elsewhere. Hence wherever the attention – the eye of the mind – is, there is the mind and man.

The builder-spirit suffuses the mind-body mechanism of man through this power or spirit aspect of all the component minds. The various plexuses and glands are power stations scattered all over the human body. The key power stations are in the head, the thorax and the abdomen. The spine provides the link between these major centers.

In man the spirit separates and yet holds together the body and the mind. Except through the connecting spirit, the human mind cannot act directly on the body. Man has five outer senses and five inner ones. The outer senses are hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch. The inner senses are feeling, imagination, memory, thinking and will. The inner senses are the inherent faculties of the mind, while the outer senses are the inherent faculties of the body. The outer senses connect the spirit to the body, while the inner senses connect the spirit to the mind.

The outer senses are ruled by the spirit, while the mind is mandated to educate the inner senses with the help of the spirit at its disposal – the attention. This is why the mind has difficulty affecting the outer senses directly with the will. It is only through its spirit component that the mind can impact the body and its senses. The mind need not bother to educate the outer senses, since they belong to the spirit and the latter knows how best they should be.

But ignorance has deluded man to believe that the outer senses can be controlled by conscious effort of will. The mind has thus been engaged in a futile battle against an omnipotent spirit. The result of the battle is the acquisition of the ego, dis-ease in mind and body, social unrest and misery.

How then can the mind be renewed or reprogrammed?

The mind of man has been incorporated into form so that it can educate or bring forth its inherent faculties – the inner senses. This education of our inherent faculties, with a view to liberating the creative powers of our spirit, is the sole goal of human evolution.

If the mind is to use its attention (its spirit aspect) to educate its inherent faculties, it goes without saying that this aspect of the mind must be brought under conscious control. Since attention is the eye and light of the mind, the work ahead requires that we have absolute control of that great eye and light. With the light of attention in our hands, we shall proceed to focus it on the inner faculties to hasten their birth. When these faculties are educated or brought forth, the animal-man transmutes into the God-man.

The attention being of the spirit is very volatile. The mind needs hard and patient work to reduce the volatility of its spirit component – its attention; the sought-for goal being to fix it. The mind must train its attention to be still and focused on the task at hand, for as long as it desires. The fixation of the mind's volatile attention is symbolized by the legendary search for the Philosopher's Stone, the Elixir of Life, etc. A crystallized attention is the wand of spirit power in the hands of the human mind.

We are told that God creates “in the image and likeness” of some model. If then we are truly Gods, our creations must also be “in the image and likeness” of some model. The creative mind is one that is capable of constructing a mental “image and likeness” of some event or object.

The mind must renew itself by freeing itself from the thralldom of sense stimuli and then educating itself, with a view to embarking in creative activity. First the mind gets hold of its attention and then uses it to train its image-making faculty – the imagination. When the mind can make and hold mental images for prolonged periods of time, the materialization of such images in the external world is guaranteed. It is the achievement of this capability that makes us Gods.

Note that attention, being the spirit portion of the mind, has the resident and universal spirit back of it. The mind that has a hold on its attention has also a hold on the resident and universal spirit back of that



attention. Such a mind is capable of influencing the internal nature (ruled by the resident spirit) as well as the external nature (ruled by the universal spirit).

Finally, the mind regenerates itself through a marriage or permanent union with the resident spirit. The mind simply coagulates the spirit without projecting it outside the body through desires, etc.

#### **4.7. The Work Program for the Second Birth**

The object of the work is the mind. The work program may be divided into three stages, called Dissolution, Coagulation and Sublimation.

First, the mind must dissolve its traditional links with the senses. The mind purifies itself by transcending the senses, i.e., by freeing its attention from the thralldom of sense stimuli. The fixed response patterns between the mind and the senses are dissolved, with a view to creating new ones later. This stage involves the following operations:

- (1) Getting a hold on the attention. The mind must first reduce and eliminate the volatility of its attention.
- (2) Cultivating the imagination: Having reduced the volatility of its attention, the mind should learn to create true-to-life images.

Next, having checked and reduced the volatility of its attention, the mind concentrates or coagulates its freed attention.

Finally the mind has two options for the use of its attention:

(1) The mind may apply its attention to sustained concentration on mental images. The mind thus contemplates mental images. This is meditation with seed or mental image. At this stage the mind may be used for projecting mental images into the outside world. Projection of mental images into the outside world involves the following operations:

- (a) Concentration: Having learned to create true-to-life images, the mind should concentrate its attention on those images. This concentration polarizes the attention by giving it a unidirectional flow.
- (b) Contemplation: Having learned to concentrate the attention on mental images, the mind should train itself to contemplate such images for as long as it desires; contemplation is sustained concentration.
- (c) Projection: The mind will project its creations or images into the outside world by contemplating them and simply withdrawing its attention from them. The materialization in the outside world is the job of the spirit – resident and universal.

(2) Alternatively, the mind may sublimate its attention by refusing to create and contemplate mental images. The mind thus contemplates emptiness. The mind empties itself of images, creating space for the permanent stay of the visiting spirit. The mind invites the spirit during contemplation and refuses to project it or let it go. The mind is permanently flooded by the spirit. This is the renewal or regeneration

of the mind by the spirit – the 2<sup>nd</sup> Birth – achieved by meditation or contemplation of emptiness. This option in the final stage involves one operation:

- (d) Meditation: The mind becomes a perfect witness of internal and external conditions. This is the contemplation of emptiness or coagulation of the spirit without its projection outside the body – the elixir of long life.

The above program will take time and effort, but man is here for its execution. Unless the program is achieved, we cannot be born again and the statement that we are Gods is meaningless. A God that cannot materialize its desires is no God – a sleepwalker, maybe!

The Ancients taught the above operations to their students. As a result, the hardworking seekers achieved the dissolution and coagulation stages of the program by the time they reached adulthood. They were externally and internally accomplished individuals. They applied the sublimation stage to prolong physical life and disseminate the knowledge.

#### **4.8. Execution of the Work Program for the Second Birth**

Let us now see how the above program may be realized in practice.

First, the mind must dissolve its traditional links with the senses. The mind purifies itself by transcending the senses, i.e., by freeing its attention from the thralldom of sense stimuli. The fixed response patterns between the mind and the senses are dissolved, with a view to creating new ones later. This stage involves the following operations:

- (1) Getting a hold on the attention. The mind must first reduce and eliminate the volatility of its attention.
- (2) Cultivating the imagination: Having reduced the volatility of its attention, the mind should learn to create true-to-life images.

The mind's attention has the arduous task of responding to stimuli from the inner and outer senses. The mind is restless because its attention jumps from one stimulus to another like a drunken monkey. Attention is the eye and light of the mind; and this light is dissipated in the ignorant mind by being a slave to stimuli from the senses. When this light is withdrawn from the senses, turned inwards and concentrated, it illuminates everything and the mind becomes calm.

The mind's attention is the only source of knowledge that we have. Everyone is using it, particularly in the external world and rarely in the internal world. From our childhood upwards we have been taught only to pay attention to things external, never to pay attention to things internal, and most of us have nearly lost the faculty of observing our internal states. Paying attention to the internal world is difficult and requires a great deal of practice. To turn the attention of the mind, as it were, inside, stop it from going outside, and then to concentrate it, and throw it upon any subject, so as to know its nature, analyze it, is very hard work.

The first step is to use the will to keep the attention on one thing at a time, during gradually increasing time periods – 10, 20, 30 minutes, etc. This exercise aligns the molecular structure of the mind's attention. The flow of attention becomes unidirectional or polarized instead of being dissipated by the

call of the senses. The attention is thus transformed by the will into a powerful magnet. Armed with a magnetic attention, the mind is now ready to participate with the resident spirit in the activity of creation. This first step of polarizing the attention is basic for the education and use of the other faculties of the mind.

Passive meditation techniques are designed to achieve this polarization of attention. The rate of change of the attention decreases and we say the mind has calmed down. With practice and persistence the attention obeys the will. The mind can now comfortably place its attention on any subject for as long as it desires.

## **4.9. Simple Techniques to Polarize the Attention**

### **4.9.1. Counting backward polarizes attention**

Lie comfortably on your back. Gently close your eyes. Close your lips and ensure the tongue is in contact with the palate. Slowly, at about two-second intervals, count backward from one hundred to one. As you do this, keep your attention on it. If you lose the trail, go back to the last number you can recall as having been counted and continue from there. If you are not sure, just start again from one hundred. Do this for fifteen minutes, twice a day – upon waking in the morning and before sleeping at night.

You may fall asleep during the exercise. That simply shows how tired you are. Enjoy the sleep. Continue the exercise later. Set your alarm for fifteen minutes later in case you drift off to sleep during the morning exercise. With practice sleep will no longer intrude and the attention can be focused solely on the counting.

Ideas that have nothing to do with counting may pop up in the mind asking for attention. Gently ignore them and use the will to keep the attention uniquely on counting. It's tough, but this is basic. Nothing can be achieved without polarizing the attention.

Use the hundred to one method for one week. Then count only from fifty to one, twenty-five to one, then ten to one, and finally five to one, one week each. Move to the next method only when you have completely mastered the previous one. The fifty to one method should be done only when the hundred to one is completely mastered.

Note that when the exercise is mastered we are able to move from the Beta level of consciousness to the Alpha level by simply counting from five to one. The counting helps us to get a handle on the volatility of the mind's attention. A quick entry into the Alpha or relaxed state of mind is all we need for mental creativity.

### **4.9.2. Listening polarizes attention**

Sit quietly and just listen to the sounds around. Put your attention into just listening.

For the morning session, sit silently and gently close your eyes. Close your lips and ensure the tongue is in contact with the palate. Now experience quietly all that is happening around and do nothing else. You are hearing sounds? – listen to them silently. A bird is singing – listen to it silently; the breath is moving in and out – go on watching it silently: nothing else has to be done

The night session has to be done while lying down in bed. The steps are exactly those of the morning session, i.e., listening, being a witness. Lying silently on your bed, gently close your eyes. Close your lips and ensure the tongue is in contact with the palate. Now experience quietly all that is happening around and do nothing else.

You will hear the cry of a bird, you will hear the loud music from your neighbor's apartment, the barking of a dog, and many other sounds – just keep silently listening. It is just as if there is an empty room and a sound comes in, resonates and goes. You should not think about why you are hearing these sounds; neither should you think about why the dog is barking, because you have nothing to do with the dog. There is no reason for you to think about why this dog is barking or why this stupid dog is disturbing you now that you are meditating. No, you have nothing to do with it. The dog does not know at all that you are meditating: he has no idea about it, he is absolutely innocent, he is just doing his job. It is nothing to do with you. He is just barking, so you have to let him bark. It is not a disturbance to you unless you make it a disturbance. It becomes a disturbance only when you resist, when you want the dog to stop barking – the trouble begins there. The dog is barking – it should bark; you are meditating – you should meditate. There is no conflict between these two, there is no opposition. You are silent – the dog's sound will come, linger, and go; it is not a disturbance to you. Just accept that the dog is barking and listen silently. Drop the resistance. Accept its barking. And the moment you accept it, the barking of the dog is transformed into a musical rhythm.

So do not resist. Listen silently to whatsoever is all around. This silent listening is a very miraculous phenomenon. This non-resistance, this non-opposition towards life is the key to the polarization of attention.

Give attention to only one thing: "I am listening. I am listening totally to whatever is happening. I am not doing anything else, just listening, totally listening."

Listening is stressed because as you listen totally, the attention is placed exclusively in the sense of hearing. I am listening, and this one thing I do. So put your total effort into listening. This is a positive effort.

During the listening exercise, some sense other than hearing may solicit the mind's attention. Ideas may just pop up from memory. If you try to throw out the ideas then the mistake which we just spoke about will start happening. It is a negative effort. Ideas cannot be thrown out by making an effort to get rid of them, but if they are simply noticed and given a passing attention, they will fade away. While listening, the mind must give maximum attention to stimuli coming from the sense of hearing; stimuli from other senses are noticed and ignored.

Then do only one thing: listen silently to whatever sounds are coming from all around. A bird will make a sound, a child will speak on the road – listen to them silently. Go on listening and listening and listening, and everything will become silent inside. Listen – listen silently for ten minutes. Let all the attention be on listening. Be just listening, doing nothing else.

Here's a recapitulation of the night session: First of all lie down with your body totally relaxed. Allow it to be completely loose and relaxed. Then slowly close your eyes. Close your lips and ensure the tongue is in contact with the palate. Now for ten minutes remain awake inside and keep listening silently to all the sounds around. Stay awake inside, don't go to sleep. Remain conscious inside. Stay

awake inside and keep silently listening. Just keep listening. Keep listening to the silence of the night and while listening, a deep emptiness will arise. Drown in the emptiness that is all around until the mind has become completely empty.

Note that even while listening to someone else you may be full of your own thoughts. That is “false hearing.” Then you are not a listener. You are only under the illusion that you are listening, but as a matter of fact you are not.

For “right hearing” it is necessary for the mind to be in a completely silent state of watchfulness. The mind’s attention must be stilled. When you are only listening and not doing anything else, only then are you able to hear and understand. If it does not happen in this way, you are not listening to anyone but yourself – you remain surrounded by the tumult raging within you. And when you are engaged in such a way nothing can be communicated to you. Then you appear to be seeing but you are not; you appear to be listening but you are not.

Jesus-the-Christ has said, “Those who have eyes to see, see. Those who have ears to hear, hear.” Did those he was talking to not have eyes and ears? Of course they had eyes and ears, but the mere presence of eyes and ears is not enough for seeing and for hearing. Something more is needed and without it the existence or non-existence of eyes and ears is the same. That something more is inner silence and attention. It is only when these qualities are there that the doors of the mind are open and something can be said and heard.

Once you have learned this kind of hearing, it becomes your lifelong companion. It alone can rid you of trivial preoccupations. You can awaken to the great mysterious universe outside and you can experience the eternal, infinite light of awareness hidden behind the tumult of the mind.

Right seeing and right hearing are the foundation of all right living. Just as everything is clearly reflected in a lake that is totally calm, without ripples, that which is the truth, that which is the divine will be reflected in you when your mind becomes calm and still like the lake. And the mind becomes calm when its volatile attention is fixed or polarized.

The mind is the kingdom of heaven spoken of in the Christian Bible and the training of the mind’s attention is achieved by the use of the force of the will.

We find in Matthew (11:12): “And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”

We also find the location of this kingdom of heaven in Luke (17: 20-21):

20. Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation;

21. nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.

In the spiritual school headed John the Baptist (John the Baptizer) the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, because the students had to use the violence of the will to overcome the volatility of the mind’s attention. By forcing his attention to be still, man takes his mind (his kingdom of heaven) by force.

### 4.9.3. Polarize the mind's attention by circulating it within the body

We may also stop the mind's attention from going outside and circulate it within the body. Since attention is easy to move but hard to fix, let us then move with it – inside the body.

Recall that the body is made up of minds from the physical, desire and lower mental levels of the universal mind. The various organs of the body are specialized colonies of minds. Each mind has the same triune structure as the imagining human mind. The basic difference lies in the relative importance of each of the three aspects of mind – consciousness, power and content of consciousness. A mind can speak to other minds. When the human mind polarizes its attention, other minds that make up the body will follow suit. The body then becomes a powerful magnet and radiates psychic force.

Place the attention at certain parts of the body to the exclusion of others. Consider your body as a great temple with many special and separate rooms. Give a number to each room as in the following table. Number differently if you wish.

Lie comfortably on your back or sit comfortably in a chair, feet flat on floor. Close your eyes. Close your lips and ensure the tongue is in contact with the palate. Place your attention at room number 1 – which is the Left Foot, and stay there for five seconds, listening within. Feel the vibration within the foot.

Then go to room number 2, which is the Right Foot. Stay there for five seconds, listening within. Feel the vibration of the foot.

Then visit the various parts of your body temple in the order given in this exercise:

1	Left Foot	2	Right Foot
3	Left Calf	4	Right Calf
5	Left Knee	6	Right Knee
7	Left Thigh	8	Right Thigh
9	Left Rump	10	Right Rump
11	Left Abdomen	12	Right Abdomen
13	Left Kidney	14	Right Kidney
15	Spleen	16	Liver
17	Left Ribs	18	Right Ribs
19	Left Lung	20	Right Lung
21	Left Collar Bone	22	Right Collar Bone
23	Left Shoulder	24	Right Shoulder
25	Left Upper Arm	26	Right Upper Arm
27	Left Forearm	28	Right Forearm
29	Left Hand	30	Right Hand
31	Left Thyroid	32	Right Thyroid

33	Left Ear Drum	34	Right Ear Drum
35	Left Eye	36	Right Eye
37	Left Temple	38	Right Temple
39	Left Cerebrum	40	Right Cerebrum
41	Forehead, at Root of Nose	42	Medulla Oblongata, Base of Head
43	Down through spinal cord to base of spine	44	Around in front over Bladder and generative organs
45	The Navel	46	The Stomach
47	The Heart	48	The "Adam's Apple" or Larynx
49	Top of the Head – Straight through the Door of God <sup>31</sup>		

If you have time, reverse the exercise, beginning at the top of the head and going down to the foot. This exercise is very beneficial in restraining the outgoing tendency of the mind's attention. With time and practice the mind's attention slows down and eventually crystallizes.

Counting backwards, listening and visiting the interior of our earth or body are simple techniques that polarize the mind's attention. The objective of the exercises is to fix our volatile attention and give it a one-directional or magnetic flow. How long can I keep my attention on just one thing? The longer the better! Judge your progress by this criterion.

Why go through all this trouble of polarizing the mind's attention? The Ancients held that any idea will manifest itself externally, if one's attention – the mind's eye – is totally focused upon it. And only a polarized attention can be totally focused on anything. Hence, mental creations will manifest themselves externally if attention is totally focused on them.

Note that the above exercises strengthen the will, since this faculty of the mind is at their root. Our desire is to fix a very volatile attention, with a view to using it in more beneficial ways. Without the help of the will, nothing would be achieved. But as regards attention, when you are training that, you are at the same time training all the other powers of the mind.

Try the three polarization techniques and choose the one that suits your temperament. I personally prefer the listening technique, because it comes handy for the sublimation stage of mental regeneration. From listening to contemplation of emptiness is a leisure walk! You see?

#### **4.10. Cultivating the Imagination**

But when the attention is polarized, what next? Having reduced the volatility of its attention, the mind should learn to create true-to-life images. The education of the imagination must be started immediately. The steadied attention must be used to create and visualize vivid mental images. Once we master how the attention is polarized, we move on to educate the imagination.

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<sup>31</sup> This is a small region on the top of the head, which pulsates and is open in some new-born babies.

Imagination is the ability of the mind to create or recall a picture of an event or object. It is a process – the process of forming an image in the mind. It is a creative faculty of the mind. To fully develop this faculty of the mind, we must learn to think in pictures. Did you ever see an object, or a picture of it, or read a description of it, so that you can bring its shape before your mind's eye? If not, there can be no imagination.

Our mental imaging and visualization capabilities must be fully developed. We suggest that mental imaging be undertaken at the end of each exercise of attention polarization. When we are able to create clear mental images, we may proceed to concentrate the attention on them for gradually increasing time periods – five, ten, fifteen, twenty minutes and more. This is contemplation or sustained concentration of attention.

The following exercises on mental imagery depend heavily on the power of attention. Try them out and invent others for yourself, you will gain thereby.

### **Exercise 1**

Take any simple and familiar object – an orange, your photograph, or something handy. Observe it carefully and put it out of immediate sight. Close your eyes and polarize the mind's attention by any of the passive meditation techniques described above. With the mind's attention under control, proceed to create an image of the chosen object in your mind. Each time you practice, stay with just one image; you may change it the next time. Concentrate on making the mental image more and more real – three dimensions, in full color, in all its details. Think of nothing else.

It has been said that the untrained attention is like a drunken monkey; it lurches willy-nilly from one thing to another. It is surprising how little command we have over this attention of ours, despite the fine work it sometimes does for us. This attention is too powerful, far too powerful, to leave out of control. Once we learn to use our will to train and control it, it will do some astounding things for us, as you will soon see.

In the meantime, be patient with this simple exercise. Using your will, train your attention to keep still and to attend exclusively to the job of creating a simple image more and more vividly. In the beginning, as sense stimuli intrude, be gently forgiving. Just notice them and return to the single object at hand. Becoming irritated or tense will be counterproductive.

### **Exercise 2**

- (a) Take any object you are familiar with and observe it thoroughly, noting all its characteristics – shape, color, etc.
- (b) Hide the chosen object under your bed or table – out of your immediate view.
- (c) Close your eyes, and do not open them until you can see with your mental eye, in your mind, the image of the object you have just put out of sight.
- (d) Make sure that your mental image of the chosen object is true-to-life, i.e., contains all its characteristics – form, color, etc.



- (e) Hold this mental image for some time (say, five minutes for a start) in your mind.
- (f) Open your eyes and, without looking at your chosen object, write down a full description of the object from your mental image of it.
- (g) Finally, get out the chosen object and compare your description of it from your mental image with the real object. This comparison will show you how strong or weak your imagination is. You will be amazed by the results and that will encourage you to continue the exercise.

We must learn to associate words, sentences, etc., with corresponding vivid mental images. The word “airplane” must be associated with a corresponding mental image of what the “airplane” looks like. In the sentence “an airplane flew over the lake”, we must be able to mentally see an airplane flying over a lake.

If your attention is volatile, this exercise will polarize and fix it. Devote time daily to this exercise. For each session, stay with one object only; you may change the object next time. Try out the exercise and develop this wonderful faculty of your mind. Polarized attention and vivid imagination constitute the master-key to the temple of spirit power. A man whose attention is polarized and who has a true-to-life imagination stands on the threshold of godhood.

### Exercise 3

This is a game to train the imagination.

1. Draw the following figures on rectangular sheets of paper (use letters of your choice):

M	B
U	D

 (a)

O	G	B
U	D	I
A	N	Y

 (b)

S	V	P	T
Z	M	W	I
L	X	A	C
O	E	K	R

 (c)

2. Prepare sheets similar to the above, but with empty rows and columns.

Now, the game:

1. Observe sheet (a) carefully, and mentally note which letter occupies which cell.
2. Turn the sheet upside-down or put it out of your view.
3. Sit quietly for one minute.
4. Take the empty sheet similar in format to the one you have hidden and fill it out from your memory image of the hidden sheet.
5. Compare the hidden sheet with the one you completed from memory.
6. Try sheets (b) and (c) when you have consistently scored a 100% success on sheet (a).
7. From sheet (c), move to sheets of higher row and column dimensions.
8. Vary the theme by using figures instead of letters.
9. Use different samples of each type of sheet; prepare, say, ten models of sheet (a) containing different letters or figures. Do the same for sheets (b) and (c).

This is a game that can help a student recall the exact words used by his teacher during a past lecture, for which his written notes contain gaps. The student can sit and re-hear in imagination the lecture given some time in the past as though it was happening right in front of him.

#### **Exercise 4**

Lie on your bed and imagine that you are running. Imagine the whole scene: the trees and the wind, the sun, etc. Imagine everything: visualize it and make it as colorful as possible. Recall any morning that you like the most — running around a football field, along the streets of your neighborhood, on the beach, in a forest — and start running in imagination.

You will find that your breathing is changing. Go on running. You can do this for miles, for hours. You will be surprised that even doing this on the bed, you will experience the same sensations you had while doing the actual running. So if some day for some reason you cannot run — you are ill or the situation doesn't allow it or the city is not worth running in — you can do this and you will obtain the same results. If you have never run, you must have seen people running. Imitate them in imagination.

The above imagination can be varied to good advantage. We may imagine ourselves eating at table, walking along a street of our neighborhood, bathing in the bathroom, talking to someone, listening to some favorite song — we hear the tune or sing it in our imagination, etc.

Do you know that it is possible to develop the muscles of your body by practicing imaginary exercises? Try it, and see for yourself. Lie in bed at night and give your mind up for ten minutes to the conjuring up of a picture of some simple exercise, such as the exercising of the arm muscles or the calf muscles. Go through the exercises in your mind: picture yourself doing them. Concentrate upon them with all your might. Do this for a fortnight and see if the muscles have not been improved by the imaginary exercises. This is quite obvious when you come to think about it. Why do you suppose that the muscles improve by ordinary physical jerks? Because of the action of the body? No! The muscles of a corpse would not improve, no matter how much they were forcibly exercised. The physical jerks simply constitute a little mental ritual which impresses the imagination with the importance of the muscles and with the general health of the body, and this causes the muscles to rise in response to the need of the body. It does not matter whether that need is expressed by physical action or not: so long as

you get the impression on the mind with sufficient intensity, you will get the effect you desire.

You will be astounded at the result you will obtain from these most simple of imaginations. Try them for yourself! It will do you good. But do not half believe in what you are doing: play the game according to the rules, and give the exercise all your attention.

These simple exercises of the imagination are the basis of the secret of life. Control your imagination: hold in it only those things that are good and desirable, then throw all your mental attention upon these desires, and your life will shape itself accordingly. How could it be otherwise? The product must always take on the shape of the mould. Your life is the product of the mould of your imagination: therefore guard it!

#### **4.11. Use imagination to improve memory**

Anything you believe you have forgotten is associated with an event. If it is a name, the event is the time you heard or read it. All that you have to do, once you learn to work with your imagination, is to mentally re-live the past event that surrounds the object you believe you have forgotten, and it will be there.

We say the object you believe you have forgotten because in reality you have not forgotten it at all. You simply do not recall it. There is a significant difference.

It is doubtful that we ever really forget anything. Our mind squirrels away images of the most trivial events. The more vivid the image and the more important it is to us, the more easily we recall it.

But can you recall the name of that attractive person you met at a dance party last week? When you first heard the name, the hearing of it was an event. You need simply re-create the surrounding event – the dance party – on your mental screen and you will hear the name again. Relax, re-create the scene, and experience the event. This takes a few minutes.

The faculty of memory enables the mind to store, recall and use what it has seen, heard, experienced, or thought. Based upon the principle just discussed, we may formulate our first rule for the development of memory: study the object you wish to remember in all its details, in all its peculiarities, in all its relations. For the time being keep every other thought out of the mind. Make the object part of yourself, and you will never forget it. I say object, but I mean, of course, anything, fact, figure, idea, principle, or plan, to all of which the same rule applies.

One of the best ways of applying this rule to practical development is the following: make it a rule every night, either before or after retiring, to mentally review in detail the events of the day.

Another very simple and useful method of training the power of recollection is the following: take some interesting book, such as a historical work, or some attractive novel. Read a paragraph slowly and carefully. Then close the book and repeat aloud the substance of the section which you have just read. Make no attempt to repeat the passage word for word. Simply give the sense of it as you remember. It matters little whether you repeat the author's words or use your own. After your first attempt (which is not likely to be a striking success) read the paragraph again and make a second effort to recall and express its general meaning.

When you have learned this paragraph fairly well, pass on to the next, and so on, until you come to the last paragraph on the page. Then take that page as your task, and give an account of the entire page. After practicing this way on every paragraph and every page until the end of the chapter, take the chapter as a whole and repeat it as fully and exactly as you can.

This seems like hard work. And it is, at first. But it soon becomes interesting, especially as you begin to find that, although at first you were unable to give any clear idea of a paragraph you had just read, you are soon able to recall, and to clearly express, the sense of an entire chapter without any great effort or difficulty.

This exercise trains not only the memory, but the perceptions, the will, and the powers of expression.

A valuable variation of the above exercise is to write out at length, instead of attempting to express in spoken words, your recollection of the paragraph, the page, or the chapter. For those who desire the widest development – a development of the power of expression in writing as well as in speech – we suggest that they practice this exercise by both talking and writing their memories of the passage.

By the time you have gone over one book in this way, talking out certain passages and writing others, you will not only know that book in a way that few people ever know any book; but you will have developed added powers of attention, will power, memory, and expression, which will prove a surprise and a delight to you.

Can you recall what you had for lunch three days ago, seven days ago? Try it!

#### **4.12. Coagulation or Concentration of Attention**

Having checked and reduced the volatility of its attention, the mind concentrates or coagulates its freed attention. Finally the mind applies its attention to sustained concentration on mental images. The mind thus contemplates mental images. This is meditation with seed or mental image. At this stage the mind may be used for projecting mental images into the outside world. The projection of mental images into the outside world involves the operations of concentration, contemplation, and projection.

So, having learned to create true-to-life images, the mind should concentrate its attention on those images. This concentration polarizes the attention by giving it a unidirectional flow.

Concentration means bringing to a centre, and mental concentration is really a focusing of the attention by means of the will. Concentration may be developed by practice. Learn to shut out distracting thoughts and ideas for a few moments, holding the mind "one-pointed" upon the thing or idea before you. Then, after an interval, concentrate upon something else. This training requires calm and isolation. In the beginning, after ten minutes of concentration on a given subject, we notice that our attention starts to wander. We must continue this training until we are capable of twenty consecutive minutes of concentration. Our earlier training to reduce the attention's volatility would prove very useful here.

After you have subdued the wandering tendency of the mind's attention, gradually, you will find that you have acquired a new power of mind which will enable you to direct and apply a focalized mental power upon whatever idea or thing to which you may direct it. The essence of the whole thing consists in fixing the attention upon anything, and being able to hold it there. This is attained only by practice. And the practice may be had by fixing and holding the attention upon anything for a few moments at a

time, until you grow more and more proficient by practice. **Remember, concentration does not mean "staring" at a thing – it consists of fixing and holding the attention or mind's eye, not the eyes.** Begin practicing, and you will soon acquire the knack. It is altogether a matter of the use of the attention, by means of the will.

Next, comes contemplation or visualization. Having learned to concentrate the attention on mental images, the mind should train itself to contemplate or visualize such images for as long as it desires; contemplation is sustained concentration.

Contemplation or visualization consists in forming and holding a mental image of things and conditions as you wish them to be in actuality. The mental image tends to create for itself a material and objective form and existence – it is the mental pattern around which the material conditions tend to group themselves. It is, in fact, the seed-form of the thing itself. The prime factor in visualization is to create a clear mental image of the thing or condition desired, as if it were actually existent at that moment. Visualization is the creative process employed by those desiring to manifest mental images on the mental and material planes. These three rules of visualization should be observed: (1) See yourself as you wish to be. (2) See others as you wish them to be. (3) See conditions as you wish them to be. It is around these visualized ideals that the material realities form and crystallize.

Visualization is a critical stage in the process of mental creation. The secret of mental creation may be simply stated as the art of mental imaging, backed by the will. Mental creation, under any name, may be found to consist of simply the power to create strong, clear mental images, and to project them into the outer world by means of the concentrated will.

Whether you desire to influence people or events, the principle is the same: the projection of your mental image into objectivity, and the materializing of that picture by the operation of the law of attraction.

Let us use an analogy as an aid to understanding the mechanics of mental creation. A slide projector kit comprises a slide projector and a perpendicular flat screen. The slide projector is an opto-mechanical device to view photographic slides. It has four main elements: a fan-cooled electric light bulb or other light source, a reflector and condensing lens to direct the light to the slide, a holder for the slide and a focusing lens. Light passes through the transparent slide and focusing lens, and the resulting image is enlarged and projected onto a perpendicular flat screen.

Thus, the three key elements of the slide projector kit are: concentrated light, a slide containing an image, and a perpendicular flat screen.

For mental creation, the concentrated light represents the polarized attention; the slide containing the picture represents the mental image held in the mind; the perpendicular flat surface represents the objective world. Let us then fix the symbol of the slide projector kit firmly in our minds, and recall it whenever we practice mental creation. By holding this mechanism in mind, we will be able to give increased force, power and reality to the projection of mental images.

With this symbol still in mind, we see that the power and strength of the projected image depends materially upon the strength and focused force of the light falling on the slide. If the light is weak, or dim, or flickering, the projected image will be likewise. And, if the rays of the light are not focused and concentrated properly, the force and power of the light will not be properly directed and applied.

Therefore, in mental creations, we must hold our polarized attention firmly concentrated upon the mental image. This is why contemplation or visualization is very important.

Likewise, if the slide containing the picture – the mental image – is poorly and faintly drawn, the projected image will also be faulty; in fact, the fault will be more apparent, for it will be magnified according to the distance to which it is projected. Therefore, cultivate the art of mental imaging and endeavor to train your imagination to see clearly that which you wish to project into the objective world for the purpose of materialization. Train your imagination to form and hold plain, clear pictures of the things and conditions that you wish to materialize in the objective world. Upon this one thing depends much of the efficacy and success of the process of mental creation. If you cannot fill in the details of your mental picture at first, at least draw firm, strong general outlines, and add the details later before projecting.

#### **4.13. Uses of Mental Alchemy**

##### **4.13.1. Projection of Mental Images into the Outside World**

The mind may project its creations or images into the outside world by contemplating them and simply withdrawing its attention from them. The materialization in the outside world is the job of the spirit – resident (Chi) and universal (Chineke).

Attention is the spirit component of the human mind. By concentrating the attention on a mental image the mind pulls in extra supply of spirit into itself and pours it into the image. And contemplation of a mental image further floods the image with spirit.

To project or radiate the image into space we must end the contemplation by withdrawing attention from it, trusting that our spirit (Chi) will materialize it in the outside world.

But the projection or radiation of mental images involves the use of spirit or psychic energy, and this requires a prior condensation. The essential condition for the condensation is: accumulate your psychic energy by refusing to think of the subject that you intend to project later; the images and thoughts will come alright, but refuse to give them attention. In this manner, you will accumulate your psychic energy during the time separating two periods of projection or radiation. For example: 23 hours of spirit condensation and one hour of radiation. This is the Hermetic operation of Coagula (coagulate) and Solve (dissolve), symbolized in the Devil of the Tarot.

After contemplating and projecting, it is necessary to isolate the mind. This is achieved by diverting your attention from all images and thoughts related to the subject on which you concentrated and which you have projected. Put your attention onto anything different from the subject on which you have just concentrated. With the attention, you may visit the interior of your earth or body. Circulate your attention within or simply ignore all stimuli related to the mental image you have just projected into space. Notice the stimuli but don't dwell on them. Be confident that the god or spirit that dwells in your body will take charge and conveniently materialize your mental image in the most suitable way. This rule is not only important for the mental balance of the operator, but also for the efficacy of his volition.

Do you wish to attract something? And do you think of the thing all day long and even during your sleep? Your attempt to attract the thing will fail! Your influence will be ineffective as a result of your attitude,

because you have dissipated, minute by minute, all the psychic or life's forces that you were supposed to accumulate before radiating them under high tension. Here is the correct approach:

1. You want to attract a given result? Create a two-phased dynamism as follows:
  - (a) Create and visualize a precise mental image of the desired event; this puts your spirit in the required state of magnetic attraction; and then
  - (b) Let go the image by isolating the mind, i.e., by refusing attention to the subject which you have just visualized. You thus allow your own spirit, coupled with the universal spirit, to effect the magnetic attraction.
  
2. Do you want to avert, repel an undesirable event? Also create a two-phased dynamism as follows:
  - (c) Create and contemplate a precise mental image inhibiting the undesirable event; this places your spirit in a state of magnetic repulsion; and then
  - (d) Let go the inhibiting image by isolating the mind, i.e., by refusing attention to the subject which you have just visualized. You thus allow your own spirit, coupled with the universal spirit, to effect the desired magnetic repulsion.

The isolation of the mind after projection is tricky in the beginning, because it requires control of the attention. The projected mental image would naturally pop into the mind from memory and the untrained mind would resume the contemplation of an image it has just let go into space. By contemplating and projecting an image, the mind concluded its drawings and submitted them to the builder-spirit for implementation. Giving new attention later to the projected image confuses the spirit, which says: "This fellow is calling back the drawings he submitted to me for execution. Probably for some amendment! That's okay. I'll suspend implementation until he stops coming back to withdraw his drawings." The inability to isolate the mind delays the materialization of our mental creations and may even nullify our efforts. We acquire the ability to isolate the mind through patience and practice.

Here are the essential points to remember:

- ❑ Anything you desire exists in the surrounding Universe, and you can obtain it.
- ❑ Your indwelling spirit is your share of the ambient Universal Spirit or God. Have complete trust in your own spirit, which you have now coupled with the Universal Spirit through the completion of the coagulation phase of our work program. Recall that the mind uses its spirit component – its attention – to get a hold on the indwelling and universal spirit. And that with this achievement, animal-man transmutes into god-man.
- ❑ Ask yourself if there is a single reason why you should not obtain what you desire. You will see that there is none as long as your desire is justified and merited, and this removes all doubt from your mind. Doubt creates a negative condition, disturbs the inductive power of your spirit and, as a result, hinders the physical materialization of your mental creations.
- ❑ Next, make and visualize a precise mental image of the thing you ardently desire. Let go the image by isolating the mind or by withdrawing your attention from the visualized image, and allowing

your spirit to handle the materialization. Have total faith or trust in your own spirit – your god – and keep an expectant positive attitude. Do not try to foresee how the object of your desire will come to you; the universal spirit, working through your own spirit, will do the job in a convenient and just manner, without hurting anybody.

- ❑ Ask specifically and exclusively for one thing. This helps you to create a precise and clear mental picture; the clearer the picture, the faster its materialization. If you desire to have a car, do not bother about the amount of money needed to buy it. Focus on creating a clear and precise mental image of your dream car; mixing the car and its cost will have you asking for two things at a time instead of one. You desire money? How much? Imagine the exact amount!
- ❑ Spend time to formulate your mental pictures and remember that you are using an Immutable Law. Always remember the axiom: “In the universe, nothing is created and nothing is lost; all is transformation.” By leaving the materialization of your mental creations in the hands of your spirit, you are simply saying to your God: Your will be done!

An old prayer to the resident spirit runs thus:

Grant us good whether prayed for or unsought by us;  
But that which we ask amiss, do thou avert.

The wisdom of this prayer is evident. It is a safety net to protect us from the snares of desire. The objects of desire are like firewood in the bush. And he who brings ant-infested firewood to his house, requests the company of lizards. Carefully inspect and select the firewood you want to take from the bush back to your home, to be sure they contain no ants. If they contain ants, then lizards will surely visit you. You will reap whatever you have sown.

It may be fun to desire your neighbor’s wife. Watch it! Your spirit will help you if you insist. It does not distinguish between our so-called “good and evil.” But you are entirely on your own and soon it will not be much fun getting away from your neighbor’s wife, who is now glued to you by your own magnetism.

Remember that the Spirit is neither a moralist nor a subtle interpreter. It takes your mental images and materializes them.

The male that lusts after the female exalts his spirit, through mental imagery, in order to emit magnetism capable of exerting its action as soon as favorable conditions arise.

In societies where sex is repressed for religious or other reasons, the resourceful adolescents discover the power of the spirit through apparently innocent erotic games. Sex cannot be engaged in unless a basic set of clothing is put aside. And since sex is not allowed, they keep their clothes on and play erotic games. They cuddle, kiss, and gently caress the body – particularly the back side of the body. Slowly, but surely, the resident spirit is exalted and set in motion.

The girl who, sure of herself, plays the coquette with her lover succumbs at a moment she least expects to do so. She is a victim of a natural enchantment to which she submitted by playing with an omnipotent force. Conquered by a mysterious tipsiness, she momentarily loses control, and the act which she had resolved not to participate in is accomplished. But her resolve not to participate in the



sexual act is purely a mental thing, backed by a complete ignorance of how she is made and how she functions.

The exalted human spirit smashes all mental constructs that violate its domain of jurisprudence – the outer senses. All rules against nature or spirit are bound to fail. They lead to neuroses. The girl above had imbibed the sex-repressing lessons and was mentally sure of herself never to succumb to the sexual act, whatever the persuasive capabilities of her lover. Playing the coquette with her lover aroused her sleeping spirit, which inundated both body and mind. All mental constructs – mind stuffing – aimed at checking the natural movements of spirit were thus smashed. The will of the spirit always prevails.

The mind should learn to understand and not repress sense stimuli. Those stimuli are promptings from the spirit which, like a wind, blows where it wants. Hunger, thirst and sex are prompts from the spirit. To deliberately repress these promptings is to declare war on your own spirit. For the mind to influence the body in any way, it must learn and understand the ways of the spirit who owns that body. Co-operation with the owner of the body – the spirit (Chi) – is the only way for the mind to have beneficial commerce with that body.

For quite a long time, the civilized world has considered self-control as the key to the eradication of social dis-ease. Physical and mental gymnastics have been devised, with a view to using the will, without the consent of the spirit, to control the body and its senses.

But what degree of self-control has been achieved so far? None! Hypocrisy is the order of the day. Might is right and nations, in spite of international law, engage in armed robbery. Has social dis-ease been eradicated? The reader should judge for himself. Violent crime is rife. The prisons and mental hospitals are packed full of misfits that society has created with its spirit-repressive laws. Is it not time to re-think the social codes that we inherited from the past, with a view to bringing the left-out human spirit into the picture?

Ten children from one mother are actually created and inhabited by ten different spirits. Any system of education for these ten children must be flexible enough to take due account of their ten different spirits. A standardized system will always generate misfits and dropouts. The social dis-ease will never be eradicated. The change of approach described in the section on reincarnation is worth trying, for the gradual improvement of man and the world he lives in. Let society empower its citizens by helping them bring out what they have within. Education is not mind stuffing to silence the rebellious spirit. Each spirit has something important to contribute in the general construction of the universe, and it takes revenge on society whenever its expression is denied or repressed.

#### **4.13.2. Sublimation of the Attention**

The mind may choose to sublimate its attention by refusing to create and contemplate mental images. The mind thus contemplates emptiness. The mind empties itself of images, creating space for the permanent stay of the visiting spirit. The mind invites the spirit during contemplation and refuses to project it or let it go. The mind is permanently flooded by the spirit. This is the renewal or regeneration of the mind by the spirit – the 2<sup>nd</sup> Birth – achieved by meditation or contemplation of emptiness. This option in the final stage of the work involves one operation – meditation – in which the mind becomes a perfect witness of internal and external conditions. This is the contemplation of emptiness or coagulation of the spirit without its projection outside the body – the elixir of long life.

We have learned to contemplate mental images, with a view to projecting them into the outside world. Let us now learn to contemplate emptiness – this is objectless concentration or unfocused awareness. The attention is kept one-pointed, on no object. Recall the listening exercise given above? Intensify it by increasing the duration.

The inflow of the spirit, finding no object in the mind, swamps the mind – this is the mystical union of mind and spirit. This is how the practice of meditation leads to the enlightenment of the mind by the inflow of the spirit. Through meditation, the mind clears the way to welcome the waiting resident spirit.

Note that the new birth begins with the accomplishment of the dissolution and coagulation stages of our program: we see the kingdom of God. We enter this kingdom by completing the last stage of sublimation. Through sublimation, the overloaded mind of the adult is emptied and becomes like that of a little child. We have thus realized the evolutionary goal of renewal of the mind and its union with the spirit. We are born again and the union of the mind and spirit is accomplished. We have entered the kingdom of our God.

The opening sentences of this section on mental alchemy provide a summary of the process of second birth. They say:

The mind is a bag. How loaded is yours?  
Uche Vbü Akpa. Kedi Ka Nke Ghi Shi-Judevbe?

The child carries an empty bag, because its mind is empty. The adult acquires experience and takes in the ideas of other people – the child's empty bag is now overloaded and difficult to carry. The adult's mind is overloaded. He has three options:

- (1) Commit suicide and force his bewildered mind out of the body.
- (2) Drag the overloaded mind to his grave. He has wasted his life collecting dust. He has failed the quiz of evolution for this life and will repeat the class and its lessons in his next incarnation. My folks would say: Onwere ivbe ö pasital! He passed in no subject!
- (3) Empty his mind and become like a child before the body dies. He has thus passed the quiz of evolution for this life. He has mastered the inner and outside worlds. He has acquired and exercised the attributes of a god during this incarnation, and will get the appropriate evolutionary assignment in his next incarnation.

Properly prepared as indicated above, the mind is the instrument given to man to conquer the world and to liberate him from that world. Man works out his salvation on earth by first using his mind to conquer the outside world, and then by regenerating that same mind he frees himself from the trammels of that world. His salvation is entirely in his hands. He may be ignorant of the facts regarding his nature and the great work program that he must achieve. But his spirit (Chi) knows, since that spirit brought his mind from the higher mental plane into an animal body. His spirit will eventually impel him to seek to understand his makeup and eventually discover the work program that must be executed.

Mgbe onye ji-niri n'üla, ö vbülü ütütüüya. Our morning begins whenever we decide to wake up from the night's sleep. The spirit (Chi) will wait for us, since it has incarnated to divinize us and its patience is unlimited.

#### 4.14. Easter Festival and the Second Birth

Question: What does the Easter festival represent?

Keep an open mind, read along, think and then judge!

First answer: Easter is the anniversary to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

Second answer: Easter is the anniversary to celebrate the birthdays of the Sun God, in the Northern Hemisphere of the Earth.

An analysis of Easter follows:

The day and month of the Easter festival changes from year to year. Hence, Easter is not the anniversary of some historical event. Our respective birthday anniversaries – historical events – are fixed days of fixed months of the year. The birthday anniversary of a person born on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April 1945 will be celebrated on the 4<sup>th</sup> of April of every year starting from 1946 onwards.

How is the date of the Easter festival determined? Here is the answer:

**Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday immediately following the first full Moon that occurs after the 21<sup>st</sup> March – date chosen by the Roman Church as the 1<sup>st</sup> day of Spring or Spring Equinox.**

Note that this Spring Equinox date is the date on which the Sun (apparently) entered the Zodiacal Sign of Aries. Remember that it is the Earth that turns around itself (rotation) and moves around the Sun (revolution). So, the Sun's movement that we observe is apparent – not real. Note also that the true astronomical Spring Equinox occurs on 20<sup>th</sup> March or 21<sup>st</sup> March. Appendix F shows the Western Christian Easter dates from 1997 to 2030.

We observe then that:

- ❑ The date of Easter depends wholly on astronomical factors – the positions of the Sun and Moon in the Zodiac.
- ❑ The Easter festival is of Pagan origin and celebrates the return of the Sun in Spring to the Northern Hemisphere of the Earth, after its absence during the Winter months. Spring represents the resurrection of Nature, which died in Autumn and was buried in the Winter snow.
- ❑ Seen from the Northern Hemisphere of the Earth, the Sun (Sun God) declines (gradually dies) from Autumn until the Winter Solstice (Solstice means the Sun stands still) around December 21. Three days later (after a trip to hell!) around December 25, the Sun starts its ascent back to the Northern Hemisphere. Around March 21, the Sun crosses the Equator (the Spring Equinox) and we celebrate the return or resurrection of the Sun God.

## Conclusion:

- ❖ Easter, therefore, celebrates the birthdays of the Sun God in the Northern Hemisphere.
- ❖ As a climax, Easter serves to remind us that we must be born again – the Christ in us all must resurrect – before we can enter the Kingdom of Heaven. The outward celebration of Easter is for the ignorant multitude. Christ rose from the “dead”, when then will you rise as he did?

Think dear friends!

Cheers and happy Easter!

### 4.15. The Great Work of Alchemy and the Second Birth

The Philosopher's Stone of Alchemy is the symbol for a perfected or regenerated mind. The process of perfecting the mind is called the Great Work. The mind has innate powers that it must educe or bring forth. Without educating itself, the mind remains an unpolished stone that cannot be used in universal construction. By successfully undertaking the Great Work on itself the mind re-creates itself, and is able to transmute all “base metals into gold”:

- (1) The mind aligns its will to the will of the spirit and its creations materialize in the outside world.
- (2) The mind unites itself permanently with the spirit. This union results in the regeneration of the mind and body – a new birth. This renewed mind is like gold, compared to its former unregenerate, base-metal-like state.

In Alchemy it is asserted that the metals are composed of the four elements: Fire, Water, Air, and Earth. The actual differences between the metals are the result of the particular proportions in which the elements are combined in the metals. Gold itself is the natural result of a particular combination of the elements. The other metals of Alchemy are also combinations of the elements. By extracting and purifying the elements in the base metals, thereby reducing the metals to their pure state of spirit or Prima Materia, and then by skillfully re-combining the elements which constitute the metals, the metals can be transformed into gold.

By purifying an object of the Four Elements we are left with a fifth element which is called the Quintessence and the First Matter of the Work. This fifth element is called the Spirit. The elements represent the human senses. Fire is the sense of sight, Water is the sense of taste, Air is the sense of smell, Earth is the sense of touch, and Spirit is the sense of sound or hearing. The fifth element of Spirit, unlike the others, has a direct link with our Spirit, the coagulation of which is the goal of the regenerative work. To attain this fifth element the mind must first purify or deprogram itself.

To consecrate itself to the spirit, the mind purifies itself by rising above the senses. Liberated from the thralldom of the senses, the mind is then able to properly recreate itself, to reprogram its systems, or to recombine its elements to fit in with its new perspective. But first it must purify its systems; only then is it truly fit and freely able to properly consecrate itself to the Great Work of reprogramming itself in accordance with the will of the spirit.

The Great Work of Alchemy comprises three basic stages, called the Black, the White, and the Red. Black is the stage of Dissolution, which is the Putrefaction of the Work; White is Coagulation, which is the Synthesis of the Work; and Red is Sublimation, which is the Multiplication of the Work. The three stages of the Great Work are also given as the Purification of the Salt, the Fixation of the Sulfur, and the Coagulation of the Mercury.

In his book, *The Twelve Keys*<sup>32</sup>, the famous Alchemist, Basile Valentin, encourages seekers to descend into the bowels of the earth to seek the Philosopher's Stone. He says: *Visita interiora terrae; rectificando invenies occultum lapidem, veram medicinam*, which means: "Visit the bowels of the Earth; if you rectify you will find the hidden Stone, the true medicine." But the master Alchemist was not talking about descending into the center of the planet Earth, but into our own physical bodies, into our own minds, for it is there that we shall find treasures and wealth of every sort.



**The Great Work of Alchemy**

Basile Valentin provides us with the above pentacle, with scanty commentary, describing the seven operations of the Great Work. We have attempted to decipher the pentacle in the light of our research and personal hunch. The text describing the pentacle below is adapted from Oswald Wirth's *Tarot des Imagiers du Moyen Age*. The translation from French is mine.

<sup>32</sup> Basile Valentin: *Douze Clefs de la Philosophie traictant de la vraye médecine métallique*

“At the midpoint of its base, a square frame, which is the symbol of perfection on the physical plane, bears the apex of a big equilateral triangle divided into three small triangles by a large circle. Within these small triangles are inscribed the words Anima, Spiritus, Corpus, accompanied by the image of the Sun, the Moon and a Cube. Above the Sun blazes a fire containing a salamander. On the other side, the Moon and the word Spiritus attract the Dove of the Holy Spirit.

“These are the emblems of Fire and Air, Sulfur and Mercury, the latter supporting the combustion of the former. The opposing angles should logically provide hospitality to Earth and Water. That is indeed the case because the fiery side shows a mountain, domain of a solar king sitting on a lion that he uses as a throne. At the feet of the king crawls an ill-defined fire-spitting beast that has emerged from the bowels of the earth. The aquatic counterpart presents us with Diana, seated on the back of a sea monster that she guides through the waves. The quaternary of Elements is thus distributed between a masculine right (Jakin) and a feminine left (Boaz), as well as between a corporeal below and a spiritual above.

“The circle, beyond which appear only the corners of the triangle, is divided into seven equal parts by a star whose branches bear a number and the symbol of a planet. The middle branch at the base is black, with the number 1, the symbol of Saturn and the square of the perfect Salt written in white.

“The other six branches of the star are white; the 2<sup>nd</sup> relates to Jupiter, the 3<sup>rd</sup> to Mars and Sulfur, the 4<sup>th</sup> to the Sun, the 5<sup>th</sup> to Venus, the 6<sup>th</sup> to Mercury as metal-planet and as a ternary principle of trinity (Sulfur, Salt and Mercury); in the 7<sup>th</sup> position comes the Moon.

“Between the branches of the star, seven medallions refer to the operations of the Great Work. Saturn’s Crow is the emblem of the black color that should be obtained right from the start of the enterprise, if success is to be expected. Between Jupiter and Mars, is shown the black crow watching itself dissolve. But two birds intervene between Mars and the Sun to retrieve the remains of the dissolution, thereby separating the subtle from the gross. After the successful separation they earn a crown, which they lift heavenward between the Sun and Venus. Later, they rest on a tree, an olive tree probably, between Venus and Mercury, as if the Work was left to accomplish itself. Between Mercury and the Moon, the tree flowers and shelters a unicorn peacefully resting on the grass, while preparing the road for the King. The cycle is closed by a child who resurrects to reign alone, red and very pure.”

Now, what can we make out of the above commentary?

The crow perched on the skull informs us that the Work is entirely mental. Let us then regroup the seven operations above into our three categories as follows:

**Dissolution:** The attention of the mind putrefies and dissolves into the mind. The mind frees its attention from the thralldom of the senses. Imagination is trained and mental imagery is perfected. The symbols for this stage of the Work are: The middle black branch of the star at the base of the square, with the number 1, the symbol of Saturn and the square of the perfect Salt written in white. The black crow perched on top of a skull. The 2<sup>nd</sup> branch of the star relating to Jupiter. The black crow watching itself dissolve. The opening of the Work with the symbol of the square of the perfect Salt indicates the need to first purify the Salt.

**Coagulation:** The mind perfects its powers of concentration on and contemplation of mental images. The symbols for this stage of the Work are: The 3<sup>rd</sup> branch of the star relating to Mars and Sulfur, the

4<sup>th</sup> branch relating to the Sun, the 5<sup>th</sup> branch relating to Venus. Two white birds retrieving the remains of the dissolved crow. The birds leaving Earth and lifting the five-spiked crown heavenward – the five-spiked crown being a symbol of the mind’s victory over the five senses. The birds nesting in a tree and brooding over their egg, as if the Work was left to accomplish itself. The symbol of Sulfur on the 3<sup>rd</sup> branch of the star indicates the start of the operation to fix the Sulfur, i.e., to reduce the volatility of the mind’s attention.

Sublimation: The attention or single eye of the mind crystallizes into a solid beam of light. We read in Matthew 6:22: The light of the body is the eye. Therefore if your eye is sound, your whole body shall be full of light. At this stage of the Work, the mind accumulates the spirit or light. This retention of the spirit within regenerates both body and mind. The symbols for this stage of the Work are: The 6<sup>th</sup> branch of the star referring to Mercury as metal-planet and as a triune principle (Sulfur, Salt and Mercury). The tree flowering and sheltering a unicorn peacefully resting on the grass. The 7<sup>th</sup> branch of the star referring to the Moon. The resurrected child emerging from an open grave. The symbol of Mercury on the 6<sup>th</sup> branch of the star shows the start of the operation of coagulating the Mercury, i.e., to bring the spirit into the mind and keep it there by meditation or the contemplation of emptiness.

The second part of the commentary follows.

“The circle enclosing the medallions bears the inscription:

*Visita Interiora Terrae, Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem*

(which means: Visit the bowels of the Earth; if you rectify you will find the hidden Stone.) The first letters of the Latin words combined read VITRIOL, a mysterious septenary considered as revealing the secret of the Great Work. We may add that the Stone is in us, at the center of our personality. He who knows how to go into himself, rectifying, discovers the supreme treasure of human wisdom. He learns to know Man, whose face shows through a window in the middle of the star of the seven transformations. It is the Great Hermes that the Adept should bring to life within himself, in the same way that the true Master-Mason resurrects Hiram the architect within himself, and in the same way that the Christian of old, emerging from the baptismal waters aspired to a birth in himself of the Christ-Spirit. We have no doubt that this Man is Mercury, because the wings of the god surmount the circle, beyond which the right hand holds a torch for the enlightenment of Minds, while the left hand holds the seeds of life. Here the reader should refer to the 15<sup>th</sup> major Arcanum and compare the Devil of the Tarot with the alchemical personification of the mercurial fluid, the universal agent of intellectual stimulation and renovation of vitality.”

Again, what can we make out of this part of the commentary? The commentary says that:

“The Stone is in us, at the center of our personality.” Yes, the Stone is the mind, which is at the center of our personality.

“He who knows how to go into himself, rectifying, discovers the supreme treasure of human wisdom.” By going into himself and rectifying the relationship between his mind and sense stimuli, man discovers, in his regenerated mind, the supreme treasure of human wisdom.

“He learns to know Man, whose face shows through a window in the middle of the star of the seven transformations. It is the Great Hermes that the Adept should bring to life within himself, in the same

way that the true Master-Mason resurrects Hiram the architect within himself, and in the same way that the Christian of old, emerging from the baptismal waters aspired to a birth in himself of the Christ-Spirit.” Well, Hermes has always symbolized the Mind in Hermetic philosophy!

“We have no doubt that this Man is Mercury, because the wings of the god surmount the circle, beyond which the right hand holds a torch for the enlightenment of Minds, while the left hand holds the seeds of life.” The torch for the enlightenment of Minds, the face at the window in the middle of the star of seven transformations, and the seeds of life form the axis of the hidden nature of man. The torch represents the head, the face at the window relates to the thorax, and the seeds of life relate to the abdomen. These great centers of the body are linked together by the spine. When the mind regenerates itself, communication is established between the base and top of the spine. The female at the base of the spine (holder of the seeds of life – the spirit) rises and mates with the male at the top of the spine (the mind). The supreme transmutation has occurred. We become androgynous – neither male nor female, but both. This is the mystical marriage.

#### 4.16. Conclusions on Mental Alchemy or 2<sup>nd</sup> Birth

True freedom is of the mind and this truth is aptly reflected in the opening sentences of this section, where we read:

The mind is a bag (Uche vbü akpa).

How loaded is yours? (Kedi ka nke ghi shi-judevbe?)

Think about these two sentences. You may then be able to understand these sayings of Jesus, about the **rich man**, in Matthew 19:16 - 28:

“And behold, one came and said to Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?

And He said to him, Why do you call Me good? There is none good but one, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.

He said to Him, Which?

Jesus said, You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not bear false witness, honor your father and mother, and, you shall love your neighbor as yourself.

The young man said to Him, I have kept all these things from my youth up; what do I lack yet?

Jesus said to him, If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in Heaven. And come, follow Me.

But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful; for he had great possessions.

Then Jesus said to His disciples, Truly I say to you that a **rich man** will with great difficulty enter into the kingdom of Heaven.



And again I say to you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a **rich man** to enter into the kingdom of God.

When His disciples heard, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved?

But Jesus looked on them and said to them, With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.

Then answering Peter said to Him, Behold, we have forsaken all and have followed You. Therefore what shall we have?

And Jesus said to them, Truly I say to you that you who have followed Me, in the **regeneration**, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, you also shall sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”

This story tells us that it is only through the **regeneration** of the mind that we can enter the kingdom of God – within! The mind being a bag and the rich man’s bag being overloaded with images of objects in the outside world, he will have great difficulty entering the kingdom of God. The advice to sell his belongings and follow Jesus relates to the freeing of the mind from the bondage of sense stimuli, with a view to realizing the Great Work of mental regeneration.

Jesus was not asking the rich young man to sell his belongings and become materially poor. The physical luggage that we accumulate in life cannot, of itself, hinder us from entering the kingdom of God within us. Our mental attachment to the luggage is the only hindrance. Earlier in Matthew 5:3 and 5:8 Jesus tells us:

“Blessed are the poor in spirit! For theirs is the kingdom of Heaven.  
Blessed are the pure in heart! For they shall see God.”

To be poor in spirit or pure in heart points to one thing: The mind is a bag. How loaded is yours?

To educate means to bring forth what is already there. Educate yourself, since what currently goes by the name of education is mind-stuffing and accumulation of mental luggage. Your salvation lies squarely in your hands and there are no shortcuts in this Great Work of self-regeneration. The moment you wake up from the night’s sleep is your morning. The object of the Work is your own mind. The Work can be undertaken by anybody – materially rich or poor. You start the Work wherever you are on this good Earth.

Life becomes an exciting adventure if we know how to live it. And how should life be lived?

- (1) We are born as children into the playground of the outside world. The mind at the beginning of life is an empty bag. It is this emptiness of the mind that makes the child blissful.
- (2) We must acquire the things and ways of the outside world and live comfortably. While acquiring the things and ways of the outside world, we must learn to detach the mind from the stimuli of the senses. We thus retain a small amount of easily disposable objects in the mind.

- (3) At the end of active life in the outside world, we empty the mind of the small amount of easily disposable objects it contains. The mind at the close of life again becomes an empty bag. In old age we thus regain the bliss of childhood. We may now understand why life is an eternal and exciting adventure, if we know how to live it.

Jesus gave us the key in the following words:

Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Unless you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

You may postpone executing the Work, because the beginning is a bit arduous. Some effort is needed. But it is for the execution and realization of this Work that you came here. If you postpone and fail to realize the goal before leaving the body at death, you will come back to Earth and start again where you stopped before leaving the body in your last incarnation. The choice is yours.

If the reading of this write-up has helped to put you on the path of true salvation or self-regeneration, it will have served its purpose.

## **5. More Facts on Natural Sympathetic Magic**

### **5.1. Help yourself, for the Gods help only those who help themselves**

You want to be of some account in the world: in your profession or in your trade! Begin to play-act the part. Live it! Make it a part of yourself. It is up to you to begin to move the life-forces in your favor, for nobody else will do it for you. Imagine yourself as being what you want to be, and the faith or trust – in your spirit – behind this imaginative effort will materialize your image of yourself. The job you desired, the rank you wished to attain, the post you wanted to fill, the role you longed to act – all these will be yours if you act them in trust and in complete earnestness of purpose and with no doubt in your mind.

Note that to desire the position of a company's accountant, one must first study and qualify as an accountant. Why dream of a job for which one is not prepared? We must always work as nature does – no shortcuts! Prepare the trenches and wait in trust for the rains to fill them with water. Do your part and trust your spirit (Chi) to crown your effort, by the materialization of your legitimate desire.

### **5.2. Words have power**

Consider the statement: "I'm now eating a lemon". Imagine it, i.e., create a clear mental picture of the lemon-eating! What happens? Your mouth is full of saliva trying to wash away the lemon that you are not actually eating. The lemon-eating image created by the mind triggers the intervention of the spirit, which "asks" the salivary glands to wash the lemon away. Thus word-images do not just reflect reality; they create reality, like the flow of saliva. Eat a lemon if you have never done so and try the exercise some days later. When you have licked a piece of lemon, then you "know" the taste of it and you can imagine the lemon-eating very easily.

As adults, we dull our appetite for life with negative words, and the words, gathering power with repetition, in turn create negative lives, for which our appetites become dulled.

“How are you?”

“Ah – can’t complain”, or “No use complaining”, or “Not too bad”.

How does the spirit within respond to these dreary views? Is it a “pain in the neck” to do the dishes? Remember that the spirit is no subtle interpreter and takes you at your word. It says, “This fellow is asking for a pain in the neck. Okay. A pain in the neck is coming up.”

Of course, every time that we say something gives us a pain, a pain does not immediately result. Simply because no clear mental image is associated with the terrible words we ignorantly use. The spirit takes little note of empty words – words not put into images. The spirit ensures that the body’s natural state is good health, and all its processes are geared toward health. In time, though, with enough verbal pounding away at its defenses and careless imagination by the mind, it delivers up the very illnesses we order.

### **5.3. Affirmations**

Affirmations are positive assertions of the existence of the conditions which you wish to bring about. They tend to aid the visualization to a great degree, and besides have a power of their own. Always use statements as in the present tense. Do not say to yourself, “Such and such a thing will be bye and bye,” but boldly assert “Such and such a thing is existent and in actual being, now, this moment.” The power of the positive statement must be experienced in order to be appreciated.

Make your statements earnestly and positively – avoid all half-hearted statements, for they result in half-hearted results. In making your statements, do not use a tone of entreaty or of asking a favor – speak in a tone of command. Of course, these statements should not be made aloud for other people to hear. They have the best effect when made in a state of meditation and concentration – in Alpha or deeper levels of consciousness. Use them in connection with visualization, and you will find that they will tend to energize and vitalize your mental images.

### **5.4. Denials**

Denials are negative forms of affirmations. They have a most positive effect when rightly used. With the individual whose attention is polarized, he is able to exert much power by boldly denying out of existence the obstacles and difficulties which beset his path. It is marvelous, at times, to see how the obstructing things show a tendency to disintegrate and disappear from one’s mental world, which is followed later by a response of like kind and degree in the material world. Do not be afraid to say: “I deny this or that obstacle. It has no power over me. I deny it out of my world. For me it does not exist.” My folks would say: Ügbüü! Not for me, I have slipped away! Ö bülü ögwü na o-lere! If it is magic, it has failed! Make your denials as positive as your affirmations. Command, don’t beg or implore.

Your spirit is your personal guardian. It needs clear instructions from you and takes you at your word. So, make your assertions in a tone of command; don’t beg or implore.

### **5.5. Talismans, Ögwü, Ötümökpö, Ökpö, Jazz, Juju - What are they?**

On whatever level of embodied being the same controlling power – Life or Spirit – presides over the phenomena of experience. The Ancients tell us that certain Gods presided over marketplaces and others

over battlefields – an idea long supposed to have been abandoned as empty superstition. Nevertheless there are Gods, Angels or Divine presiding powers, both of marketplaces and of battlefields, Gods, in fact, having a special and controlling relationship to all the phenomena of the Cosmos. Such Gods are entirely real; and the phenomena we know, as well as many more that we do not know, owe their being and their peculiar form to the presidency or participation of those Gods. These Gods are simply modalities of the one God called Life. Electricity, magnetism, attraction and repulsion are all modalities or aspects of a unique power – Life. Moreover it is on a knowledge of the Gods concerned in any given object or event that practical occultism depends for its power.

Constantly surrounded by dangers and things he cannot understand, man always had the need to believe. Man believed in the magical, supernatural, protective powers of certain religious objects. Sacred objects, Talismans and Pentacles, with their engraved or drawn symbols and the God or power they are supposed to represent, have always been considered as a tangible link between man and the Absolute. That their use has survived the passage of time is proof of their efficacy, because man always abandons anything that has not proved its worth. But man believed in these objects and, given the positive results obtained, continues to believe in them. Being a psycho-spiritual support, the talisman implies faith.

But this faith is more or less developed in all of us and it is our duty, in our quest for happiness, to intensify and use it to the maximum. All civilizations have had faith in their religious objects; but your task henceforth is to have faith in yourself (your Spirit), because a talisman is simply an aid, a “crutch for the one-legged person,” a stage in the recognition of your own powers. Unfortunately, man always wants to see in order to believe. Indeed, this immovable and inflexible faith in ourselves is difficult to maintain, particularly in the beginning when the expected results are slow in coming.

To strongly believe in our own potentials without prior concrete results, constitutes a very abstract exercise for the mind. That is why all religions resort to objects of worship in order to concretize the faith of their followers in a material object that they can see and touch.

For those who have no religion, for those who cannot sufficiently believe without some material aid, for those whose faith is weak, magic or spiritual wisdom provides the seeker with a set of instruments and aids designed to support his will and materialize his mental images; among these objects, talismans and pentacles are the most widespread.

The Ancients tell us: “Whether the object of your faith is true or false, you will obtain the same results.” Thus, whether your faith is founded on the bones of a dead saint, on the healing power of some waters (Lourdes, Nwangene), on a sacred picture (pentacle), on an object (talisman, amulet, gris-gris, juju, ötümökpö, ökpö, jazz, etc.), you will obtain the same results solely by the powerful suggestion given to your own Spirit.

A talisman is not, as many believe, a mascot or good-luck-charm; it is simply a condenser of psychic fluid, which must be helped by personal effort. The sole aim of the talisman is to support and facilitate the effort of its owner, at the required time. The talisman only represents a concrete extension of your intention. Because, back of every talisman is a mental image of some desired goal – money, prestige, pull, protection from mishap, etc.

Take the wrestling talisman called “aba elu ana” (back-no-touch-ground!). A black cat would be a key item in the preparation of this talisman. The Dibia will impress the wrestler’s mind with a peculiar characteristic of this animal: it never falls on its back! He will secure the cat with a rope and then throw it

into the air. The animal will come down on its feet before the eyes of the wrestler. With this strong mental image in his mind and the resulting talisman in his pocket, the wrestler in the arena transmutes into a cat. Through sympathetic magic, he displays all the characteristics of the animal. Note that the wrestler knows the art and has trained. The talisman simply gives him a spiritual edge.

No talisman, no matter how elaborate it may be, can bring you anything if, from the start, you lack the firm will and the ardent desire to succeed. The talisman simply helps you to keep the mind on the object of your desire, to conserve a strong will and your faith in yourself. But he who carries a talisman without understanding its meaning and goal is like a child holding a book on nuclear physics.

Ready-made talismans have as much spiritual value as any other object, as long as the purchaser places all his faith and hopes in them. This explains why these ready-made talismans are expensive. Because the makers know that the more difficult it is for a purchaser to mobilize the required sum, the greater will be his tendency to believe in their “miraculous” qualities. At the time when their desires are obtained, people do not attribute such success to their own faith in themselves but to the miracle-object or talisman.

It is evident that these objects become efficacious when their users concentrate their faith in them. This is the whole secret of their “miraculous virtues”; it is imperative that the users believe in them, with conviction and perseverance. Since it is clear that one cannot truly believe what one does not understand, it is imperative that the user of a pentacle should know the exact meaning of the various symbols inscribed on it (the meaning and desired goal). Talismans have virtue and efficacy only when they are in perfect correspondence with their owner. A talisman has no value unless its owner understands it. You have to understand it. If you tell a good Dibia Ögwü that his ögwü is not efficacious (ögwü ghü adürö ile), he asks: *Ï makwa ka e shi-èji ögwü?* Do you know how to handle a talisman?

As soon as the owner of a talisman understands its meaning and goal, mental imagery becomes more precise and mental creation follows the desired orientation; the will to succeed and persistent faith will procure the desired goal. Believe in the power of your talisman, for this helps a lot in the beginning. Later, when you have mastered how to use your creative visualization skills and appreciated the tangible results obtained by trust in your own spirit (Chi), try to do away with your talisman.

## **5.6. Use of Talismans**

The best place to keep a talisman is where you will see it periodically. Each time it comes to your attention, you will consciously or unconsciously formulate the goal that you have set yourself to achieve. During those moments, make an effort to mentally materialize your secret desire. Only a periodic repetition of your creative mental images can bring about the materialization of your desire. This is why the makers of talismans request us to do certain daily rituals (nlekwe ögwü). A talisman may require a prayer to be said upon it on waking in the morning and before talking to anybody. At the end of the prayer, we are requested to clearly state our desired goal, say, seven times. The daily ritual simply helps to produce vivid mental images of the desired goal, which we let go into space at the end of the ritual. This is also the secret behind the Psalms we are asked to recite daily at appointed hours, with a view to achieving some objective. The Psalms help to vivify the mental images, while their daily repetition at appointed hours helps to hasten the outward manifestation of the images. It is all sympathetic or natural magic of reaping in the outside world the seeds that you have sown in your mental world (your mental creations).

If each time you remember your talisman, you mentally affirm the approaching realization of your goal, you have succeeded. It has played its role, because by the periodic mental realization of your desire, the

latter will finally materialize. Do not forget that your talisman alone cannot have any tangible effect. It is there simply to help you, but the principal effort must come from you.

Once you have used a talisman, preserve it preciously or burn it. According to tradition, the talisman loses its virtue if it is lent or alienated; one should be very careful in doing away with one's talisman, because it could be used as a weapon against its previous owner (bewitchment, etc.) – it contains your personal magnetism, condensed! When you will have succeeded in using your own Spirit to achieve a number of goals that you set for yourself, you will become conscious of the immense power that lies asleep within you. From this point onward, you will only need your creative imaginations and you can throw away your talismans. They would have, at least, helped you to start off and then assert yourself. They would have served their purpose and that, truly, is not a bad job!

## 6. The Fateful Months and Days of the Year

The months of March, June, September, and December seem to have something fatal about them. Crazy things just happen in these months. Could there be something special about these months that has eluded our consideration?

Recall the assassination of the Roman Emperor Julius Caesar in 44 BCE. Caesar summoned the Senate to meet in the Theatre of Pompey on the Ides of March, i.e., 15<sup>th</sup> day of March. A certain seer warned Caesar to be on his guard against a great peril on that day, saying: “Beware of the Ides of March!” When the day came and Caesar was on his way to the senate-house, he greeted the seer with a jest and said: “The Ides of March has come,” and the seer said to him softly: “Yes, the Ides of March has come, but it has not past.” As the Senate convened, Caesar was attacked and stabbed to death by a group of senators who called themselves the Liberatores (Liberators); they justified their action on the grounds that they committed tyrannicide, not murder, and were preserving the Republic from Caesar's alleged monarchical ambitions.

Recall the Tenerife air disaster of March 27, 1977, when two Boeing 747 airliners (KLM and Pan Am) collided at Los Rodeos on the island of Tenerife, Canary Islands, Spain, killing 583 people. The accident has the highest number of fatalities (excluding ground fatalities) of any single accident in aviation history. We are told that the KLM attempted takeoff, even though the Pan Am was still on the runway and the KLM had not received clearance for takeoff. The Pan Am tried to get out of the way and the KLM tried to climb over, but the latter ended belly up after dragging its tail on the ground. The lower fuselage of the KLM plane hit the upper fuselage of the Pan Am plane, ripping apart the center of the Pan Am jet nearly directly above the wing. This accident seems crazy, and it is!

Recall also:

- (1) The June 23, 1985 Irish Sea destruction of an Air India plane en route to Bombay that killed 329 people;
- (2) The December 21, 1988 Lockerbie, Scotland destruction of a Pan Am flight killing 270 people;
- (3) The June 23, 1993 annulment of President M.K.O. Abiola's election by General I.B. Babangida and the ensuing political turmoil that engulfed Nigeria;
- (4) The December 22, 1999 destruction of Odi in Nigeria's Niger Delta region;
- (5) The December 23, 1999 military coup in Côte d'Ivoire;
- (6) The September 11, 2001 destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center in New York City, USA;

- (7) The September 19, 2002 eruption of armed rebellion in Côte d'Ivoire;
- (8) The March 19, 2003 invasion of Iraq by Great Britain and the USA;
- (9) The December 26, 2004 Indian Ocean undersea earthquake that triggered a series of devastating tsunamis along the coasts of most landmasses bordering the Indian Ocean, killing 229,866 people in eleven countries, and inundating coastal communities with waves up to 30 meters (100 feet) high. It was one of the deadliest natural disasters in history.

The above are instances, but the curious reader may consult a timeline of world history for further insight.

We repeat: The months of March, June, September, and December seem to have something fatal about them. Crazy things just happen in these months. Could there be something special about these months, which has eluded our consideration? My answer is: Yes, there is something special about these months, which has eluded our consideration. They are the Fateful months for our planet Earth and its inhabitants. And Fate is inexorable!

I, therefore, invite all to be careful during the following four periods of the year: the two solstices (June and December) and the two equinoxes (March and September). Why? Just have a good look at the orbit of the Earth around the Sun. This orbit is an ellipse with two axes, like a rugby ball. The two solstices are situated at the ends of the major axis of the ellipse, while the two equinoxes are placed at the ends of the minor axis. In its yearly travel around the Sun the Earth has to negotiate four bends represented by the equinoxes and the solstices.

Look well again at the rugby ball and you may understand the dangers that confront our planet every year at those bends. The Earth's speed round the Sun is about 30 kilometers per second. But this speed is not uniform along the ellipsoid orbit. Just as a motor vehicle reduces its speed to negotiate a deep corner, the same is true for the Earth. The corners at the solstices of June and December are so deep and sharp that the Earth comes to a quasi-standstill in order to go safely through them. It is this quasi-standstill of the Earth that gives us the impression that the Sun is standing still. Hence the name of Solstice (sol = sun, sistere = come to a stop) given to this period of the year. It is this extreme application of its brakes that upsets the magnetic fields on the Earth's surface. The same is true at the corners of the equinoxes but the magnitude of the magnetic disturbance is less, compared with that of the solstices.

Everything on Earth is upset during these four periods, because the survival of the planet is at stake and its Guiding Spirit Host (Ana) is having a hard time; just like the articulated truck driver struggling mentally and physically to steer his vehicle through a deep road bend. Great disasters occur during these four periods of the year. Crazy things "just" happen during these four periods. Coup and terror plotters operate during these periods.

The feasts of Christmas (December), Easter (March), St. John the Baptist (June) and St. Michael (September) were instated to remind Christians of the need for retreat and meditation at the approach of these fateful periods. Unfortunately, our business-minded spiritual guides have taught us to engage in all sorts of excesses during these periods. These feasts relate to the four cardinal points on the Earth's orbit and are older than any religion. The Sages of old instituted them for the benefit of mankind. Certain laws are at work on Earth during the four periods and these laws affect us inexorably as inhabitants of the planet, whatever our religion may be.

The focal dates are: 21 March, 21 June, 21 September and 21 December.

My advice: keep sacred the ten days before and after these fateful dates. Leave your home only when it is absolutely necessary. Meditation, Moderation, Retreat and Silence are advised. The Gods help only those who help themselves! Had I known is the brother of Mr. Late! Orimili na-eli onye ö vbülü ökpä! The sea swallows those whose feet it sees!

For the fateful days, just watch the happenings around you three days before the full moon day until three days after the full moon day. As the full moon draws close in the phase of the waxing or increasing moon, fluids are drawn upwards. The human blood, as any other fluid, is also drawn upwards into the head from other parts of the body. With our heads exceptionally inundated with our blood, we feel edgy and easily irritable. People display some inexplicable high during those seven days. The full moon affects a lot of people – the lunatics – despite the denegations of science. They are not mad. They are simply affected by the magnetic pull of the moon, which is maximal during the full moon phase of lunar phenomena. A quarrel or fight could ensue for no clear reasons. As the new moon draws close, in the waning or decreasing phase, fluids are drawn downwards. Folks are more discerning and less aggressive. There are twelve or thirteen moons in a lunar year<sup>33</sup> and I invite the curious reader to observe the happenings around him/her three days before the full moon day until three days after the full moon day. Just observe and take note! We shall be amazed at the number of lunatics in our midst. We shall also be able to avoid being victims of unpleasant situations created by such moon-affected individuals. To illustrate, a full moon occurs on 15 June 2011. Observe what goes on around you from 12 June 2011 until 18 June 2011, i.e., seven days including the full moon day.

## 7. My Pedigree – Onye mü m?

My people ask: Onye mü ghü? (Who are your parents?) Our parents are not limited to the father and mother, but extend to the ancestors. I recall presenting myself to an old man as Emma Anazövba. He asked: which Anazövba? I said: Anazövba Udo. He asked: which Udo? I replied: Udo Anaagö. He asked: which Anaagö? I replied: Anaagö Mmadiagwu Ashii. He smiled and shook my hand three times saying: Ö-ö nne, nna ghī mülü ghü! (Verily, you are a true son of your father!)

My pedigree is my family tree and describes the line of my ancestors. The Igbo do not generally document their pedigree. Oral data abound and have been the source of unwarranted family feuds. The story varies with each ruling family head. Gradually, the facts are lost in the mists of time. Greedy family members gang up to create fables, with a view to grabbing and selling the property of their brethren. Families have been dispossessed of their birthrights by their unscrupulous relatives. The victims of such robbery usually resort to village heads or the King of the town. The only evidence tendered at these arbitration centers is an oral account of what each party can recall of its ancestry. The verbal testimony of each party is backed by the verbal testimonies of genuine or false witnesses. The marauding party generally hides behind their Christian faith and refuse to swear oaths before the Alüshī.

I had earlier mentioned my grand-uncle's wife, Nwanyanwü Nweke (Özala) from Ümüzööcha village, Öka. This powerful lady helped me trace my pedigree. She personally knew Udo Anaagö, her father-in-law, and the entire Anaagö Mmadiagwu's descendants. She gave me an elaborate family tree that included women – a rare feat, since only the men count in our genealogy. When the woman marries,

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<sup>33</sup> See Nevbechi Emma Anizöba, Ngü Arö Öka: The Öka Lunar Calendar, 2010 – 2021.



her name is lost in the genealogy of her maiden home. Özala was a living encyclopedia and we remained very close until her death. So, what follows is solid stuff.

My traceable ancestral line begins with the Matriarch Ashii Nta Nwüwaöma. Members of the Ashii clan, Ümü-Ashii, of Ümübeelee village are the direct descendants of Matriarch Ashii. The clan comprises the descendants of Mmadiagwu, Ana (Anaadüpanyi) and Mgbechi.

During the matriarchate, the names of Öka children contained two parts: the first part was the name given to the child at birth and the second part was the name of the child's mother. Two boys born to two women of the kin on any Eke market day are named Nweke (Nwa-Eke). To distinguish them the name of the mother was appended to each name. So we may have Nweke be Mgbavbö and Nweke be Anyankwö. When someone called Nweke, he is usually asked: Nweke be onye? (which Nweke?) He then adds: Nweke be Mgbavbö, i.e., Nweke of/from Ngbavbö. The "be = of, from" is usually omitted and we simply say Nweke Mgbavbö, the "be = of, from" is implicit. They were all children of the mother, and were named from the mother. This naming procedure that originated in the matriarchate was continued later in the patriarchal or polygamous family setting. Ashii's compound is located behind Obu Beele Anwünya (Beelü Önwü) at Enugo Ümübeelee. Obu Ümü Ashii (Matriarch Ashii's Obu) is located in this compound.

Ashii's eldest son, Mmadiagwu, inherited her compound. Mmadiagwu's eldest son Anaagö, inherited the compound when his father passed on. But Anaagö, a wealthy man too, had four sons and the compound became too small to contain him and his expanding family. He moved out of Ashii's compound and settled on his vast domain at Egbeana Ümübeelee. As mentioned earlier, Anaagö's compound is the last on the Öka-Nibo road before the Öbibia River. It is bounded by a deep gully that runs down from Ezi-Udo square to the Öbibia River, the Öbibia River itself, and a strip of land that stretches from the cassava ponds (mgboko) before the Öka-Nibo Öbibia Ezi-Udo bridge to Okavbö Egbunönu Mgbechi's compound wall, to the end of Ümüökam land that has the same southern limits as Mbgechi's compound. The Ümüökam land comes immediately after Mmadika Nwözöbial Udo's compound along the road from Ezi-Udo to the Nibo-Öka road. The following areas are all part of this vast domain: Mmadika Nwözöbial Udo's compound and its backyard stretching down to Öbibia and containing the giant cotton tree (Akpü Anaagö), the Nwanna spring, the road leading down to Öbibia Owele Anaagö; Nwövbö Nwokweghi Udo's compound and its backyard down to Öbibia; Nwammöö Udo's compound and its backyard down to Öbibia, Nnajide Nnavbüeze Udo's compound and its backyard down to Öbibia; the central compound occupied by Anazöö and his brother Nweke Udo and its backyard down to Öbibia and the bounding gully. This portion includes the land behind the compound of Ejiövbö Okavbö (Mma). Across the gully is Mbaanugo's compound and a portion of its backyard stretching towards Öbibia Ngene. The latter portion was Anaagö's yam barn, where the echichili trees used for the yam barn pillars are still standing.

Anaagö Mmadiagwu had four sons: Udo, Ikevbüdü, Obudiike, and Okoye (Onyeemeto). The topography of Anaagö's compound made it partially habitable. The land is on a slope, whose gradient increases as we move towards the Öbibia River. Thus, the compound had two portions: a habitable part where houses could be built and a vast non-habitable part stretching to the Öbibia River. The non-habitable portion was a virgin forest of palm trees, bamboos, oil-bean trees, breadfruit trees, pear trees, and diverse flora that provided herbal remedies. The threat of uncontrollable erosion made it mandatory to protect this virgin forest standing on the non-habitable portion of the estate. No digging whatever was allowed on the non-habitable area.

Anaagö's eldest son, Udo, inherited his compound as described above. Ikevbüdü moved across the road (davbuge ekpe, crossed the ridge) to occupy the following area: Önüzulike's compound and the land immediately behind it towards the Nibo-Öka road, Ibe Chinwüba's compound (where Mbaama Ibe currently lives) and Onwüraa Okechikwu's compound, which was Ikevbüdü's residence. Obudiike moved across the gully to Mbaanugo's compound. Okoye (Onyeemeto) moved out to a land along the road from Ezi-Udo to Ezi-Nwaavbö. This land contains a two-storey building belonging to this writer. In addition to the above, Udo inherited Ashii's compound; Ikevbüdü inherited the lands currently occupied at Ümübeelee by the Chinwüba family at Ezi-Nwaavbö, the Nwezi family, the Akavbögü family, and the Eche family.

Ikevbüdü had two sons: Önyido and Anaagö. This Anaagö Ikevbüdü was a reincarnation of his grandfather Anaagö Mmadiagwu. It was customary to give a child the name of the ancestor who reincarnated in the child. We shall call him Anaagö Junior to distinguish him from his grandfather. Ikevbüdü's eldest son, Önyido, had two sons: Önüzulike and Okechikwu. Anaagö Junior had five sons: Akavbögü, Chinwüba, Nwezi, Eche and Udo. This Udo was a reincarnation of his granduncle Udo Anaagö and the naming custom was applied naturally. By a rigorous distinction this son of Anaagö Junior would be known as: Udo (Junior) Anaagö (Junior). Let's put the name simply as Udo Anaagö Junior, bearing in mind that the epithet, Junior, applies to both the child, Udo, and his father, Anaagö. Eche and Udo Junior had the same mother. The sons of Udo Junior are the only sons of Ikevbüdü allowed to partake of Udo Senior's Agwü Eucharist rituals and feast. Eche, a soft-spoken and kind Dibia, was a good friend of my father. With only two sons, Önyido inherited the following: Önüzulike's compound and the main Ikevbüdü's compound now occupied by Onwüraa Okechikwu's family. With five sons, Anaagö Junior inherited the remainder of Ikevbüdü's lands comprising the lands currently occupied by: the Chinwüba family at Ezi-Nwaavbö, the Nwezi family towards Ashii's compound, the Akavbögü family at Egbeana Ümübeelee, the Eche family close to the Ngene Shrine. The land immediately behind Önüzulike's compound and Ibe Chinwüba's compound are all part of Anaagö Junior's inheritance. Udo Junior later left his elder brother, Eche, and purchased a piece of land facing Ikevbüdü's compound at Ezi-Udo square. Önyido's son, Okechikwu, a powerful Dibia, was now occupying Ikevbüdü's compound. His Aröbunaagü's shrine (Ngene Ukwuavbö) stood beside the point of entry into the land purchased by his cousin, Udo Junior. There was, and still is, enough free space on this part of Udo Junior's land to contain three or more large iron gates. But Okechikwu refused Udo Junior entry to the land from anywhere along the fence facing his compound, on the grounds that none should disturb his Aröbunaagü's shrine. Thus did Udo Junior buy a land into which he could not enter, thanks to his cousin's interdiction to use the land's official and sole entry point. The remaining possible entry point was the side of the land facing Ezi-Udo. But Ezi-Udo belonged to Udo Senior, whose son Anazöö was now in command of the assets of Udo Senior. Outraged by what Okechikwu did to his cousin, Anazöö allowed Udo Junior to enter his land through the Ezi-Udo square. As a result, the gate into Udo Junior's compound faces the Ezi-Udo square. So we now have two Udo Anaagö's compounds all facing the Ezi-Udo square. Some of my untutored folks point to Udo Anaagö Junior as the owner of Ezi-Udo square. Even the Obu in Udo Anaagö Senior's compound had been attributed to Udo Anaagö Junior. The sad part of story of the two Udo Anaagös is that the eldest of Udo Junior's surviving sons, Umeadi Udo-Anaagö, is totally ignorant of his pedigree. His father was the only and original Udo Anaagö, owner of Ezi-Udo square! My people say: Ekwe rakalia önu, ekwuo oshishi e ji-piya. If the wooden gong gets too loud, we tell it the wood from which it was carved. I had a good opportunity to clarify matters to Umeadi Udo-Anaagö, in the presence of his clansmen, Ümü Ikevbüdü, during a get together in my Obu (the true Obu Udo Anaagö). Chinwüba Anaagö Junior was a powerful customary chief. He had a prison cell in his Ezi-Nwaavbö compound. His sons were Ibe and Ökpala (Nwabekee or Nwabe)). Ibe's eldest son was Chinwüba, a reincarnation

of his father, Chinwüba. His name, Obieshie, was changed to Chinwüba in accordance with the naming custom. So, we have Chinwüba Junior and his grandfather, the all-powerful Chinwüba Senior. The Junior is Chinwüba Ibe and the Senior is Chinwüba Anaagö Junior. Had the Junior not taken his father's name, Ibe, he would have been called Chinwüba Chinwüba! Legend has it that hired assassins murdered Nwabekee, Okpala's mother, along the Öka-Nibo road, on her husband's orders. The woman's arm was smoke-dried and kept as a trophy, which her all-powerful husband displayed publicly. The woman, who sold tobacco (ütavba), got wind of the plot from a repentant member of the group that was detailed to kill her. The hoodlum had asked her for some free snuff expecting her to turn down his request. She gave him as much snuff as he wanted. Moved by her generosity, the hoodlum told her never to go home late because her life was in danger from her husband. Nwabe thanked the hoodlum, closed shop, bought a hen and headed for the famous Raba Shrine at Agülü. She put her life in the hands of Raba, picked up a pebble and went home. Thereafter, she was murdered and her smoked arm was kept as a trophy by her husband. Shortly after, Raba struck in the middle of the night. Raba, the Ezenwaanya Agülü, led Chinwüba to her waterside where her death-boat was waiting. How art the mighty fallen! His father, Anaagö Junior, was still alive. The next morning wild bees invaded the compound and water rose from the ground. Chinwüba's corpse was abandoned to the bees and rising water. My clansmen met and Dibie Avba was consulted. They were sent to the Raba Shrine, where the preliminary purification rites were outlined. These initial rites were required to get the bees away, check the water oozing out of the ground, and bury Chinwüba's decomposing body. The legend continues but we shall stop here.

Okoye (Onyeemeto) and his wife Nwambgoli had a son, Emenginī, and a beautiful daughter, Anyankwö who refused to marry. Nwambgoli's burial rites were financed by Anazöö, who inherited her husband's assets as per the custom.

Obudiike had a son, Mbanugo. The latter's sons were: Mmöökwügwö, Chigbata and Chidekwe.

Udo Anaagö had seven sons: Nwokeke, Nwobu, Nnavbüeze, Nwammöö, Nwokweghi, Nwözö and Nwavbee. Udo's eldest son, Nwokeke, died after his marriage and his young childless widow was married (kuchie) by his father, Udo. From the re-marriage came Anazöö, his junior brother, Nweke and their sisters Nwaagö and Onyenweenu. Nweke's mother hails from Amudo village, Öka. An Amudo God (Ovbuybe Amudo) had reincarnated in Nweke and explains the Alüshī appended to his name. Anazöö's children were: Nwavbüishi (Godfrey), Nwosungene, Ivbeöma and Avbö-ukwu. Nweke-Alüshī had two daughters: Nwaamu and Ekegboo. Nwobu had a son, Okoye (Mgbolinta) and a daughter, Anyankwö (Mgbolinta). It was Anyankwö who brought Agwü Udo Anaagö from Mbaukwu, her mother's place (ikwu-nne). Nwobu inherited Matriarch Ashii's compound (our ökpüünö or ancestral home) and moved to Enugo Ümübee. Nnabueze had a son, Nnajide, and a famous daughter, Adaeze Ezelagbö. Nnajide's sons were: Okoye, Obunaabö and Nwa-Ajaana (Jerry). Nwammöö's sons were: Taagbo, Nwajjobu and Ndivbe. Nwokweghi's sons were: Nwövbö, Nnenna and Ödükö. Nwözö's sons were Mmadika and Nnagbo. Nwavbee's sons were: Nweke and Ngene. His daughter was Nwajeenete who was married to Okeke Nwaöma of Ümüörüka village, Öka.

We have a tradition whereby a non-Öka man may join the clan through the auspices of a rich and powerful member of the clan. It happens like this. I am a wealthy business man based at Achala. An unmarried Achala man works for me and has proved himself worthy to be part of my household. I bring this man to my clansmen and present him as an adopted brother. I perform the requisite adoption rituals and my family name is appended to his name. A non-Öka wife is given to this brother-by-wealth and his residence is somewhere at the backyard of my large compound. He attends the clan's

meetings, though he is forbidden to take the floor. He participates in all the family rituals as a special guest. Neither he nor his male descendants can officiate any of the sacred rituals. The adopted brother and his descendants are called *Ndü a күтал n'ökü* (People who came through our wealth). The sacred rule is that whenever it is the turn of my family to head the clan, none of this adopted brother's male descendants will ever lead the clan. To be on the safe side, the adopted brother's male descendant dies or goes blind whenever he becomes a potential candidate to the headship of the clan. I invite my folks to count their teeth with their tongue, to see that the safety mechanism designed to preserve the purity of our traditions has always functioned inexorably. But this practice is never documented and the hard facts soon disappear with the death of those elders who conducted the adoption ritual. With the passage of time the descendants of such adopted brothers start claiming the same leadership rights as the blood-descendants of the clan. Some of these descendants of adopted brothers are loud-mouthed and roguish, thereby betraying their hoodlum ancestry. *Agwö, ö ga-amü nwa avbürö agwö? Waa! Nwa agwö ya-avbülilí agwö!* Can the snake's offspring be other than a snake? Never! The snake's offspring will always be a snake! When invited to settle scores by the eternal and inexorable methods of *Ödünana*, these fellows transmute into born-again Christians who would only swear with a Christian Bible. But *Ödünana* is inexorable. Blindness or death awaits the male descendant of an adopted brother who desires to lead the clan. *Ö dü n'övbö!* The rule is absolute and sacred!

A member of the *Ikevbüdü* family was dismayed when I showed him a copy of my pedigree, at a meeting with them in my *Obu*. His name is *Jimoh Nwoshi Anaagö* (Junior). He said his father's name, *Nwoshi*, and the names of some of his brethren from the *Anaagö Junior* family were not on the list. These other names were *Nwaököödügboo* and *Nwaokavbö Anamakílija* (*Kílija*). Hum! Were these not *Chinwüba Anaagö Junior's* hoodlums, *Ndü a күтал n'ökü*? The clan's legend says they are! *Jimoh Nwoshi* even added that *Nwoshi*, *Nwaököödügboo* and *Kílija* were *Chinwüba Anaagö's* brothers. *Chinwüba* was the eldest son of *Anaagö Junior* and his ascertained brothers are: *Akavbögü*, *Nwezi*, *Eche* and *Udo Junior*. I suggested that the missing names could be *Ndü a күтал n'ökü* (People who came through our wealth). I said that I was not sure, but it was curious that my elders always told me not to delve into such matters, because it was taboo to unveil such family secrets. The subject was *ekumavba*, not to be discussed, un-nameable. Fortunately for all of us, key descendants of *Chinwüba Anaagö Junior* were present at the meeting, viz.: *Özö Felix Aneze Chinwüba* (*Özö Ökpala*) and *Eng. Pat Nzekwe Ibe*. *Chinwüba* is the grandfather of *Özö Ökpala* and the great-grandfather of *Nzekwe Ibe*. I turned to *Özö Ökpala* who is my age mate and chided him for coming into my *Obu* with his shoes on. Next, I requested him to help us resolve, now or later, the issue of his granduncles whose names do not appear on my version of our family tree. *Özö Ökpala* promised to handle the matter and come back to me. He then asked *Jimoh Nwoshi* to close the matter and relax. I sincerely hope they would clear the muddle, so that our pedigree would get a precious update. Because, the *Igbo* ask: *Onye amara ibe mmili bidol wee-mavbiya, kedi ka ö ya-eshi köö akükö nyavbü mmili?* How can one tell the story of a rain that fell on him, when he is ignorant of where the rain started falling on him?

Another pathetic case was that of *Mr. Abole Udeekwe Okoye* (*Agü*) *Okechikwu*, who was brazenly claiming ownership of the giant cotton tree (*Akpü*) at *Anaagö's* backyard near the *Nwannu* spring, close to the *Öbibia* River. He claims the tree is *Apkü Okechikwu*, where *Okechikwu* is his grandfather. I had asked *Abole* to explain to me and his clansmen how his grandfather, *Okechikwu*, came to possess a tree at the backyard of the same *Okechikwu's* great-grandfather? *Okechikwu* may have claims within the *Ikevbüdü* clan, but he would simply become a common thief by claiming what belongs to other clans within the larger *Anaagö Mmadiagwu* clan. *Abole* is a politician and my age mate. I had given him a copy of our pedigree and chided him to go home and find out who he is before approaching vital clan issues with the mythomania that is the bane of our so-called politicians. He refused to remove his

slippers in my Obu on the grounds that he is a born-again Christian. Yes, a born-again Christian eyeing his remote pagan ancestor's Akpü tree for sale to timber dealers. Ajügh ajü(jü) wee lie, na-ewete ayagh aya wee nwüö. He who eats without discernment dies without falling sick.

Below is the report of a spurious committee of some marauding descendants of Anaagö Mmadiagwu, who have been scheming to grab and dispose of the uninhabitable portion of Anaagö's compound. The report is presented "as is". Mr. Aneze Önüzulike, the able secretary of this committee, has the original copy of this report, which the doubting Thomases of my clan should procure. I have provided the details of this part of my family's estate and will not belabor the issue any longer. As indicated above, Anaagö Mmadiagwu settled all his sons by sharing out his landed property among them. The uninhabitable portion of his compound was to remain a virgin forest as already explained. Whoever inherited the habitable portion was Ödünana-bound to maintain the physical integrity of both portions of the compound. As the first son (di ökpala) of Anaagö Mmadiagwu, Udo Anaagö Senior inherited the habitable and uninhabitable portions of this compound. Udo's brothers, Ikevbüdü, Obudüike, and Okoye Onyeemeto, moved out of their father's compound to their allotted estates as described above. The descendants of Ikevbüdü are at the fore of this cabal to grab and sell what is not theirs. Except one is a rogue at heart, the claim on Anaagö Mmadiagwu's compound by the descendants of Ikevbüdü is simply baffling. Why invent fables to achieve what Ikevbüdü himself never attempted in his lifetime? A bunch of pitiable mythomaniacs will always strive to re-tell or re-write history to suit their designs. I have invited all who believe they have a stake in Anaagö's compound to come together for an oath-taking with Övbö and Alüshī. The Ikevbüdü family would bring their Övbö and any Alüshī of their choice. I will bring Övbö Udo Anaagö and any Alüshī of my choice. We shall place the two Övbö and Alüshī together at the village square and then swear to the veracity of our claims. The punishment for false claims would be death and misery for the false claimants and their families. My proposal turned all the marauding members of the Ikevbüdü family into born-again Christians, who would have nothing to do with Övbö or Alüshī. But my Övbö and Alüshī proposal remains the indispensable condition, the sine qua non for the resolution of this cabal to dispossess Anazöö Udo Anaagö's inheritors of their birthright. And I hope the somnambulists would wake up to see that they are heading for a stone wall. Kedi ibe e ji azü eje? O nweree! Anyi vbü nshikö ji azü eje ije? Waa! A na-eje ünyaa eje? Waa! Where do you expect to reach by walking backwards? Nowhere! Are we the crab that walks backwards? No! Can we go to yesterday? No!

Before leaving for Europe in 1971 I provided money to my mother for the clearing of the part of the compound occupied by the forest. She was alone on the vast domain and the frightening dwellers of this forest paid her frequent visits. My explanations about our family cult of the forest dwellers did not help much. She was a Christian and a hooded cobra or the African python are dangerous snakes, period. She threatened to move out of the compound if I did nothing about the forest. I authorized her to invite other members of Anaagö Mmadiagwu's family to join her in clearing and farming the land. When I came back in 1980, those descendants of Ikevbüdü Anaagö Mmadiagwu that had joined us in clearing and farming the land started laying ownership claims on the land. Under the Chairmanship of Uncle Jerry Ajaana Nnajide, the land was surveyed and plotted for sale to descendants of Anaagö Mmadiagwu. The price of each plot was put at one thousand Naira (N1000). Uncle Jerry's elder brother, Obunaabö, who was at the head of the Udo clan, approved the project. He passed on, however, before he could bless (gbaa övbö) the site plan. I had warned Uncle Jerry that his committee is an abomination and there was one punishment for him and his acolytes: Ndiichie akpöfugo ügbö unu niine! Your canoes have been perforated by Ndiichie. The canoes of the Chairman and seven of his chieftains have sunk already. Ödünana is very patient and Its children must learn to be patient. Ana says: tifulu m mkpu, mana rafülü m ögü. Speak out in my defence but leave the fighting for me. I have

done my duty and spoken out in defence of Ana.

Erosion is gradually taking over the habitable and non-habitable portions of this estate. My mistake in allowing the clearing and farming of the non-habitable portion dawned on me. The possibility a Nanka erosion scenario facing us in a very near future frightened me. I called those families who had crops on the land and told them that all farming on the land must cease effective end-December 2005. Ndivbe Udo Junior's wife came to contest my decision saying: Anyĩ na-akö nyavbü ana shite n'igbii. We have been cultivating that land since time immemorial. I drew her attention to the fact that we were in an Obu and then asked her: Kedi mgbe igbii ghi bidolu? Ö vbükwa ka agha Biafra bulu ka a nütal ghĩ? When does your time immemorial begin? Was it not after the Biafra war that we came to marry you? She apologized, took back her words and left. Before end-December 2005, I put Alüshĩ on the land specifying that:

- (1) Farming on the land must cease effective 31 December, 2005.
- (2) It is forbidden to appropriate or sell any portion of the land without prior approval from Nwavbüishi Anazöö Udo Anaagö's family.

Onye kachie ntĩ, ö vbü n'anya! Those who fail to listen, see with their eyes! Onye lie ivbe abürö nkiye ö nwüö önwü avbürö nkiye! He who eats what is not his, encounters a death that is not intended for him! Mmönwü afügo n'ögbö. Onye kwülü akwülü, o mie n'arü. Onye gböwal ösö, ö nüjuo akükö ntĩ. The masquerade has moved into the arena. You will be whipped if you hang around. Your ears will be filled with news if you run away.

**ANAGOR FAMILY LAND: REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE  
APPOINTED TO CARRY OUT CERTAIN INVESTIGATIONS  
ABOUT THE LAND AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS.**

In December 1989, during the Christmas season, members of ANAGOR FAMILY held a meeting. At the meeting allegations were made that pieces or parcels of Anagor Family land, Umubelle village, Awka were being encroached upon and annexed by those whose private compounds adjoin the FAMILY LAND.

Members of the descendants of Anagor Family who own the land are:

- (a) Ikebudu Family
- (b) Udo Family
- (c) Mbanugo Family (This family has one surviving male alive).

It was Ikebudu and Udo families that held the meeting in December 1989. At that meeting held in December 1989 members of the family appointed a committee comprising:

- |      |                    |             |
|------|--------------------|-------------|
| i.   | JERRY .N. NNAJIDE  | (Chairman)  |
| ii.  | Aneze Onuzulike    | (Secretary) |
| iii. | Chukwujekwu Nnenna | (Member)    |
| iv.  | Onwura Okechukwu   | (Member)    |
| v.   | Nwanno Okoye       | (Member)    |
| vi.  | Chidekwe Oduko     | (Member)    |
| vii. | Sunday Nwoshi      | (Member)    |

viii.	Obuzoba Akabogu	(Member)
ix.	Chukwukeluo Onuzulike	(Member)
x.	Oguguo Udo	(Member)
xi.	Christopher Akabogu	(Member)
xii.	Jonathan Onuzulike	(Member)
xiii.	Umeadu Okoye	(Member)
xiv.	Osita Akabogu	(Member)

There were no written Terms of Reference but when the Chairman was briefed about his nomination and appointment as chairman of the committee the purpose was explained to him.

2. During the whole of 1990 the Committee did not meet and could not meet. This was due to the fact that the chairman summoned no meeting: he was seriously looking into his dismissal matter with the Anambra State Government and the eventual Court case over the issue; coupled with his court case in respect of his “Abandoned Property” at Port Harcourt. These two important issues gave him no breathing space.

3. First meeting: First meeting was held on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 1991. Members (those that were present) fashioned out the following terms of reference.

(a) To investigate allegations that pieces or parcels of Anagor family land have been encroached upon and annexed into their compound by those whose compounds adjoin the family land. Those suspected of annexing the land are families of Anizoba, Nweke Alushi, Nwanmuo, Onyido and Nnagbo Nwozor.

(b) To investigate the land near Ngene alleged to be annexed by the family of Okoye Mgbolinta.

(c) To investigate the strip of land which the family of Anene Chika claimed.

(d) To investigate and locate the boundary of the entire Anagor family land all round.

(e) To make recommendation as to the use of the entire land.

(f) To consider any other issues relating to the land and make any other recommendation that may assist the family in resolving all issues pertaining to the land.

4. LAND INSPECTION: On the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1991 we commenced inspection of the encroachment and annexations. The first inspected was that claimed by the family of Anene Chika (see item ‘C’ of the terms of reference). The land involved comprised only two ridges and after inspecting it, the committee handed the parcel to Onwurah Okechukwu and Umeadu Okoye to clear and cultivate it. Onwurah Okechukwu was told by the committee that if he cultivated the land and what he planted was destroyed the committee would refund his expenses.

We also inspected the land near Ngene, claimed and being farmed by the family of Okoye Akutigbueilo. Thereafter the committee inspected the land alleged annexed by the families of Anizoba, Nweke Alushi, Nwanmuo and Onyido. Behind Nweke Alushi the committee saw a property beacon on which was written BI-1155. The beacon is near the wall of Nnajide’s compound. The committee took the particulars of the property beacon for investigation to find out who planted it there.

On the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 1991 Onwurah Okechukwu and Umeadu Okoye reported that they cleared the bush in the area of the two ridges which late Anene Chika claimed and that later the family of late Anene Chika cultivated part of that area of the two ridges which they cleared. The Committee told them to level the mounds they have made since nothing has been sown or planted therein. On the 8<sup>th</sup> of September 1991 Umeadu Okoye reported that they planted ‘Ogilishi’ plants round the area of the two ridges but they were uprooted by unknown person.

The Committee did not pursue this matter further (the area claimed by late Anene Chika family). The Committee left it for the entire Anagor family to take a decision during its general meeting.

ANIZOBA’S COMPOUND:

Beacon BI-1155 was investigated at the survey Division, Ministry of Works, Lands and Transport Enugu. The Surveyor-General revealed that the private surveyor who owns the initials ‘BI’ on the beacon was Mr. Nwadiogbu and that he has not filled the survey plan of the land in the Ministry and so the Ministry could not give the Committee a copy of the plan. However it was revealed that the office of Mr. Nwadiogbu was at No. 197 Enugu Road, Awka. Our intension was to obtain the survey plan and know from it who authorised the survey. However on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 1991 we were told by Chikwukeluo Onuzulike (a member of the Committee) who made a private investigation on the beacon that Mrs. Anizoba told him that it was Emma Anizoba who authorised the survey to be carried out on the land. With this revelation the Committee went to Mrs. Anizoba and discussed with her. She confirmed the survey. She told the Committee that when her husband Mr. Anizoba was living, he met the elders: Eche Anagor, Okoye Mgbolinta and others and told them that it was better to bring the grave of ANAGOR into his (ANAGOR’s) compound (instead of its remaining outside the compound and kept clean by sweeping every morning). She said the elders agreed and on the day to start the work late Obu Anagor and Mr. Chinwuba Ibe were sent by the elders to supervise the walling in order to make sure that the grave came into the compound. She also confirmed that it was Emma Anizoba who carried out the survey and he (Emma) intended to wall the area from the beacon (BI – 1155) linking it to the wall behind their compound which brought ANAGOR’s grave into the compound. We asked Mrs. Anizoba to tell Emma not to commence the walling until ANAGOR FAMILY has taken a decision on the matter. She agreed.

As Mr. Chinwuba Ibe was mentioned, the committee took the trouble to see Chinwuba and told him what Mrs. Anizoba said. But Chinwuba denied having gone to supervise the walling at any time. He said, it was not true and that during that time he was not of the age to attend family meeting.

When Emma returned home the committee met him on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1991 and discussed the issue. He confirmed what his mother told us regarding bringing the grave of Anagor (i.e. Iroko) into his compound. He said it was his father Nwabishi Anizoba who negotiated the whole matter in 1961 when he met the elders who sent late Obu Anagor and Chinwuba Ibe to supervise the walling and to make sure that the grave (i.e. Iroko) came into the compound. He said he was then in secondary II at Okongwu Memorial Grammar School Nnewi. Emma also told the Committee that Chinwuba Ibe saw him on 18<sup>th</sup> October 1991 to discuss the issue and that when he (Chinwuba) was told everything convincingly he replied that he did not remember whether it was true or not. To drive the matter home Emma suggested to him the taking of OATH (either juju or bible) Chinwuba still replied that he did not remember.

Emma then submitted to us two plans:



(a) Plan No. E.5/AN16/64 made by G.N. Nwokolo surveyor on 22/3/64. This plan is purely a sketch and on examining close, one will see that it shows all the compound of Godfrey Nwabuisi Anizoba in 1964. A copy of this plan is attached as ANNEXURE A.

It is believed that this sketch plan was made by Godfrey Nwabuisi Anizoba himself before his death.

(b) Plan No. CEN/AN69/90 made by Chidi E. Nwadiogbu, Licensed Surveyor. This is a proper survey plan which on closer examination also shows all the compound of Godfrey Nwabuisi Anizoba in 1990; it supersedes sketch plan No. E.5/AN16/64 [(a) above]. A copy of this plan is attached as ANNEXURE 'B'.

The Committee observed that the shape and boundaries of the compound in plan ANNEXURE 'A' and those in ANNEXURE 'B' are the same and are similar in all respects.

It is the Committee's view that the decision of the elders to bring into the compound the grave of our great great grand father ANAGOR (i.e. the Iroko tree) was a sound one and their decision to send two of their sons to supervise the walling was also sound. It is now left for the general meeting of ANAGOR FAMILY to discuss this matter with a view to issuing instruction, or otherwise, for the completion of the walling by Emma Anizoba.

#### NWANMUO'S COMPOUND:

It was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 1991 that we inspected late Nwanmuo's compound. On that day Onwurah Okechukwu and Chukwukeluo Onuzulike, all members of the committee, pointed to the strip of land behind Nnajide's compound which was in fact part of late Nwanmuo's compound. This piece of land measures 36½ft x 75ft, and is bounded by tall Ogilishi trees. This piece of land they said was fenced illegally by Nnajide's family. The Chairman (Mr. Jerry N. Nnajide) who happened to be present at the inspection refuted the allegation and said, it was a blatant lie. He explained the history of that piece of land. He said that the entire Nwanmuo's compound now belongs to him and that he inherited it because he performed the funeral ceremonies (Ikwa-ozu) of late Nwandibe Nwanmuo who was Nwanmuo's most senior son and who died of Leprosy. He said that when Nwanmuo asked for a compound he was given a very narrow piece of land by our great grand elders of ANAGOR FAMILY. He had not developed his compound when late Nwaokweghi was also given land by the elders for his compound. When Nwanmuo saw that Nwaokweghi's land was thrice his own, he complained to the elders that Nwaokweghi's land was thrice his own. The elders inspected the two portions and having discovered the anomaly, gave Nwanmuo the strip behind Nnajide's compound to complement his holding. The chairman said he was told this history by his mother, (late Nwanyangene Nnajide) his aunt (late Nwaudengene Nwanmuo who was Nwanmuo's most senior daughter). The chairman said being a member of the Committee he would like the Committee to refer the matter to his senior brother Obunabor Nnajide who would be in a better position, because of his seniority, to tell the history. The meeting was held in Obunabor Nnajide's house on 22/9/91. Obunabor confirmed that the parcel of land belonged to Nwanmuo but he did not know when the entire compound, including the parcel in question, was given to Nwanmuo. He said that he (Nwanmuo) built his UNO-NGA near Nwaokweghi's UNO-NGA and that a palm tree (still standing, according to him) was near Nwanmuo's UNO-NGA. The meeting pressed and appealed to him to accompany us to the site (Nwanmuo's compound) and show us the particular spot where Nwanmuo's UNO-NGA was built. After much convincing pressure he agreed.

On reaching Nwanmuo's compound Obunabor took us down to the last spot of the compound and showed us where Nwanmuo was buried in the UNO-NGA and it was last inhabited by Nwandibe (Nwanmuo's first son who died of Leprosy).

**OBSERVATION:** It was observed by the Committee that the UNO-NGA was within the site alleged claimed illegally by Nnajide family and fenced off with Ogilishi not given to him by the elders of ANAGOR FAMILY. Obunabor's statement to the Committee closed the matter. It was not discussed again because there was nothing to discuss.

**ONYIDO LAND:**

On the 13<sup>th</sup> of October 1991 the Committee visited late Onyido's land at Odo-ngwo, (Onuzulike family is the descendant of Onyido). Onwurah Okechukwu (a member of the Committee) told the Committee that the land at Odo-ngwo belonged to Onyido and that no other sections or families of ANAGOR FAMILY had gone to that area to cut bamboo tree or tap Ngwo wine. Umeadu Okoye (also a member of the Committee) supported Nwaonwurah Okechukwu by saying that right from his boyhood he knew that that land belongs (and still belongs) to Onyido family. This parcel of land extends from bamboo tree down stream in that area to Akpu tree further upland. There was further evidence by Chikwukeluo Onuzulike that the Ngwo trees in that area were being tapped by one Nwokeonyema and Ude both of Nibo for Onyido.

**OBSERVATION:**

The Committee observed that the land from the evidence before it, does not belong to ANAGOR FAMILY.

**OKOYE MGBOLINTA'S LAND:**

This land which is near Ngene juju was the next discussed. This land was alleged to be ANAGOR FAMILY land but claimed and annexed by Okoye Mgbolinta whose family still farms the land. Umeadu Okoye and Nwanno Okoye (members of the Committee) sons of Okoye Mgbolinta told Committee that their father got the land from Umuike people by PLEDGE i.e. Umuike land owners pledged the land to their father for money. They went further to say that their mother, before she died, had warned them that if Umuike placed juju on the land they should not remove but if they (Umeadu and Nwanno) placed juju on the land and if the juju was removed by Umuike people, they (Umuike people) should take the land. The land is known as Mgbamgba-Uba.

Onwurah Okechukwu had a different view. He said that the land belonged to ANAGOR and that when ANAGOR shared his land among his family none went to Okoye Mgbolinta and that he was told to take that land and that since then the land was still with him. Again, Umeadu Okoye and Nwanno Okoye said if we were in doubt we could ask Mgboli Ezenagu. We went to Mgboli on the 20<sup>th</sup> of October 1991. She confirmed that Mgbamgba-Uba land belonged to Okoye Mgbolinta but that she did not know how he got the land and that Okoye's wife had been cultivating the land.

**OBSERVATION:**

We closed this matter after visiting Mgboli and hearing from her as we could not proceed to

investigate it further. Because, according to Onwurah Okechukwu, if it is true that ANAGOR asked Okoye Mgbolinta to take the land after sharing his other lands and none went to Okoye, then it belongs to Okoye. It should therefore not be queried by anybody.

#### NNAGBO NWOZOR'S COMPOUND:

On the 17<sup>th</sup> of November 1991 we investigated the portion of Anagor's land alleged occupied by Nnagbo family. We asked him John (Nnagbo's son) the boundary of the land. He said he did not know. But members, who knew, showed him the portion of Anagor's land which they appropriated into their compound. As the mother was not in we could not proceed but we took the measurement of the land which is 11ft x 101ft.

When we went back to Nnagbo's compound on 22/12/91 we met John's mother, showed her the original end of Nnagbo's compound and also the portion of Anagor's land she encroached and appropriated into the compound. She denied encroaching upon and appropriating any land. Instead of driving home her denial conclusively and convincingly she resorted to accusing Onwurah that he did not know the boundary of Nnagbo's land because he (Onwurah) was all the time living at Nibo and only came back recently.

#### OBSERVATION:

The Committee felt that Mrs. Nnagbo's excuses and denials were flimsy. There was physical existence of where the boundary wall terminated and where the encroachment took off. The Anagor general meeting should make a clear decision on this after visiting the land.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. We recommend that ANAGOR FAMILY should summon a general meeting at which this report should be read and deliberated upon. The meeting should take meaningful decisions on the observations of the Committee arising from its various investigations of land suspected annexed into compounds of Anizoba/Nweke Alushi, Nwanmuo, Onyido, Nnagbo and Okoye Ngbolinta.
2. The Committee was of the opinion that the general family meeting of Anagor Family should look into the entitlement to the land of Mbanugo family. The Committee felt that the bone of contention which made the land to remain undivided all these years was because some sections of Anagor family claimed that the land should be divided into two, one for Ikebudu and the other for Udo, while others claimed that it should be divided into three portions: One for Ikebudu, another for Udo and the third for Mbanugo. Because the elders could not agree on the method of division made the land to remain undivided till this time.
3. The Committee recommended that the entire land should be made into a layout of plots by the Anagor family. The family should take a decision in this respect. They should also lay conditions for allocating/selling the plots to each of Anagor's family descendants who have no family residential plot and who desire to have an abode in Awka.

The land is bounded as follows:

- (a) Eastern boundary: Umu-uzegbo family and Umuokam family lands.

(b) Southern boundary: Obibia Stream

(c) Western boundary: Umuokam family land further down the Obibia stream and Egbunonu's family land further up land.

Signed:

- |       |                              |                         |
|-------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| i.    | JERRY .N. NNAJIDE            | (Chairman) (Signature)  |
| ii.   | ANEZE ONUZULIKE              | (Secretary) (Signature) |
| iii.  | CHUKWUJEKWU NNENNA NWOKWEGHI | (Member) (Signature)    |
| iv.   | ONWURAH OKECHUKWU            | (Member) (Thumbprint)   |
| v.    | NWANNO OKOYE                 | (Member) (Signature)    |
| vi.   | CHIDEKWE ODUKO               | (Member) (No Signature) |
| vii.  | SUNDAY NWOSHI                | (Member) (Signature)    |
| viii. | OBUZOBA AKABOGU              | (Member) (No Signature) |
| ix.   | CHUKWUKELUO ONUZULIKE        | (Member) (Signature)    |
| x.    | OGUGUO UDO                   | (Member) (No Signature) |
| xi.   | CHRISTOPHER AKABOGU          | (Member) (No Signature) |
| xii.  | JONATHAN ONUZULIKE           | (Member) (Signature)    |
| xiii. | UMEADU OKOYE                 | (Member) (Signature)    |
| xiv.  | OSITA AKABOGU                | (Member) (Signature)    |

## Appendix B: A Celebration of Akwalī Deity

The dictionary tells us that the word “worship” means treating somebody or something as divine and showing respect by engaging in acts of prayer and devotion. But this definition of the term “worship” has no place in Igbo theosophy, because the Igbo functional Gods are not worshiped at all. Instead of worship, the Igbo enter into pacts with their functional Gods. If the God does “this” for me, then I will do “that” for the God.

For instance, a woman who wants a son would enter into a pact with the God of procreation – Akwalī Ömümü. She will promise to celebrate the God periodically with the required consumables (cash, food, drinks, etc.), if she conceives and safely delivers a male child within, say, the next one year. She also asks the God to take back Its gift (the male child) if she breaks her promise to come and celebrate after safe delivery. This pact process is called ngö mmöö! Göö mmöö means: to negotiate with – not worship – the functional Gods or Spirits.

Standardized songs and prayers for the worship of God and saints is an absurd Judeo-Christian contraption that has no place in Ödünana. In Ödünana, Chikwu is the boss and container of the various functional Chi (which include Ana and Alüshī). The Alüshī, being functional Chi, perform specific functions – procreation, protection from mishap, provision of wealth, health, justice, retribution, etc. The prayers and songs offered to these functional Gods are function-specific. A war-prayer or war-song is offered to a war-God, etc.

I tell my folks that Ödünana is eternal. Greed and ignorance have pushed our dumskull brethren into the abomination of destroying the symbols of Ödünana with the help of scheming Christian priests. Well, the temerarious fools destroy the symbols but not the indestructible thing symbolized – Spirit. The visitation of Ödünana on these fellows has been immediate and dolorous. Some go nuts and wander through life zombie-like, na-eje evburu m evburu m. Some lose their lives. The repentant ones replace the destroyed objects and do the necessary purification rites. I know of no family that ever had peace after destroying Ödünana symbols with the help of Christian priests.

I repeat: We can see the symbol of a spirit, not the spirit itself. The tortoise is an apt symbol of the Öka God Imöka. But the tortoise is not the God Itself. The God is breath, spirit or wind, and cannot be seen! But this breath can momentarily take hold of and use the body of a man, python or tortoise. It is then the unseen mover of the man, python or tortoise.

On the cover of this book is my clan’s Akwalī Ömümü, a red-earth mound symbolizing the God of fertility and procreation. Does the mound not look like a fully pregnant woman’s belly? It is located in a corner inside Obu Ümüashī. Recall that Ashī is the mother and matriarch of my clan. The Akwalī’s celebration ritual and song will be given shortly.

Akwalī Ömümü is my clan’s God of protection, fertility and childbirth. When a man from my clan gets a wife, he takes her to the God’s shrine and asks the God for male and female children and for their safe delivery. Remember that there were no maternities and the birth of children happened at the backyard under the care of our astute Granny-midwives. A child may die at birth, but the mother must remain alive to bear other children.

This God is celebrated once every year by the clan. All our wives come with cooking utensils. A man whose wife has given birth to two boys and a girl will bring three four-lobed kola nuts, alligator

pepper, palm wine, gin, firewood, two cocks (egbene), one hen (nnekwu), three smoked catfish, and three yams. If you have ten children, each male child presents a cock and each female child presents a hen. Each child brings a tuber of yam, a smoked catfish and one four-lobed kolanut. The alligator pepper, firewood, palm wine and gin have no strict rules for the quantities that may be provided, since we are celebrating. Each mother sets up her fireplace around the shrine where she will prepare her favorite soup – egusi, öra, ögbönö, nsala, etc. Some people bring rams and goats too.

With the kolanut-bowl in his hands, the priest (officiating elder) sits before the holy earth-mound symbolizing the God and gives thanks for our children and their trouble-free delivery. He implores the God to continue to give us children and protect our women from death during childbirth; the newly-married couples now come around the mound to present gifts (kolanuts or gin) to the God. To check-out whether the God agrees with what is going on, the priest breaks a four-lobed kola nut and throws the lobes into the kolanut-bowl. The spread of the lobes is an oracle that shows acceptance or rejection of the ceremony by the God. With the acceptance of the God ensured, the priest proceeds to slaughter the animals. The blood is sprinkled over the mound and the clan's övbö, while the carcasses are taken away by young men for cleaning, cutting-up and sharing-out to the women for the preparation of soups. The priest pours palm wine and gin libations on the mound and outside the shrine (for uninvited spirits), and the drinks are then served to the public. The amalile (efficacy) prayer is offered and involves the sharing of smoked catfish soaked in salted peppery palm oil. The yams are cooked and pounded in readiness for the Eucharist feast. The pounded yam and soups are presented in front of the earth-mound and the priest asks the God to flow into the food for the Eucharist feast to continue. The priest takes some food (pounded yam, soup, and meat) in the altar plate, tastes the food and loudly affirms that it is delicious. He then places four small pieces of meat, gizzard and liver on the earth-mound. The same number of pounded yam lumps are soaked in the soup and placed on the mound. One soup-soaked lump of pounded yam and a piece of meat are thrown outside the shrine for uninvited spirits to share. The food is then shared out to everybody present, including non-clan members. There is so much to eat and drink that the women bring food-flasks and jerry-cans to take food and palm wine back home. At the close of the feast the clan breaks into a hilarious dance as the priest intones an appropriate song, as follows:

Akwali anyi akwali anyi-oo  
 Iyolo-oloo  
 Akwali anyi-oo  
 Iyolo-oloo  
 Anyi ga-elie  
 Iyolo-oloo  
 Arö özö-oo  
 Iyolo-oloo  
 Anyi ga-elie  
 Iyolo-oloo  
 Anyi a-müö n'udo-oo  
 Iyolo-oloo  
 Anyi ga-elie  
 Iyolo-oloo  
 Anyi a-müö nwoke-oo  
 Iyolo-oloo  
 Anyi ga-elie  
 Iyolo-oloo

Anyi a-müö nwaanya-oo  
 Iyolo-oloo  
 Anyi ga-elie  
 Iyolo-oloo  
 Akwali anyi-oo  
 Iyolo-oloo  
 Anyi ga-elie  
 Iyolo-oloo

Dear Reader, do you want the above song in English? Okay, but are you not asking me to give you a wife/husband and the mat on which both of you will sleep? Let's share the burden. I will provide the key elements and you fill the gaps.

Akwali anyi = Our Akwali

Anyi ga-elie (ga-eli ye) = We shall celebrate it

Iyolo-oloo = an onomatopoeia describing the effortless gliding out of the baby during delivery (chilili-welelee)

Arö özö-oo = Next year-oo

Anyi a-müö n'udo-oo = If we deliver children safely

Anyi a-müö nwoke-oo = If we deliver males

Anyi a-müö nwaanya-oo = If we deliver females

Can you see how the song fits the occasion? We are negotiating with the Akwali Ömümü and we shall celebrate it if our requests – safe delivery of males and females – are fulfilled.

Deeme nu o! Thank you.

## Appendix C: Morning Kolanut Ritual – Ngö Öjī Ütütü

Ibe anyi chi evbo-o! Ka anyi döönü Ana aka na ntí!

- (1) Chikwu neekwe öjī
- (2) Chineke neekwe öjī
- (3) Anyanwü na Agbala neekwen öjī
- (4) Ökü na Ndü Ökü neekwen öjī
- (5) Ikuku na Ndü Ikuku neekwen öjī
- (6) Mmili na Ndü Mmili neekwen öjī
- (7) Ana na Ndü Ana neekwen öjī
- (8) Önwa na Ndü Önwa neekwen öjī
- (9) Ivbe na-emel m ivbe, Ivbe m na-emel ivbe neekwen öjī
- (10) Ashii Nta Nwüwaöma, Nne mül ömümü neekwe öjī
- (11) Ndü Nne niine neekwen öjī
- (12) Akwalī Ashii neekwe öjī
- (13) Mmadiagwü Ashii nekwe öjī
- (14) Anaagö Mmadiagwü nekwe öjī
- (15) Okuku Anaagö neekwe öjī
- (16) Udo, Chi m nekwe öjī
- (17) Agwü Udo neekwe öjī
- (18) Ngwu Udo neekwe öjī
- (19) Ana-obu Udo neekwe öjī
- (20) Obu Udo neekwe öjī
- (21) Ichie Ukwu na Ichie Nta, Ökpü Ukwu na Ökpü Nta dü n'Obu Udo neekwen öjī
- (22) Anazöö Ödfigwe nekwe öjī
- (23) Nweke Udo Ezeokolobia nekwe öjī
- (24) Nna m Nwavyüishi Amülnamma nekwe öjī
- (25) Okoye Nnajide Avbülükwe nekwe öjī
- (26) Ndü m kulu, vba kuo ibe vbe
- (27) Imöka Nomeh, Akeete Ögba, Mgbaghanyilazi, Nnemülüöka nekwe öjī
- (28) Ngene Onyeachönam Ümübeele, Ödübeanyiadünamba, Ömütaonezuonya, Otuugoejeagha, Akataogbongo nekwe öjī
- (29) Ngene Nkölöbīa Amawbia Ösüakwü nekwe öjī
- (30) Adaanyi n'Achala nekwe öjī
- (31) Ezenwaanya Agülü, Onyeöchabunammili, Baabaaduuduu nekwe öjī
- (32) Ndü ö na-avbü e kuo ö dü mma neekwen öjī
- (33) Ndü ö na-avbü e kuo ö dü njö nekwukween öjī, na ndü ovbüna nwel ulu vba na-aba
- (34) Ashi m arize unu niine maka ivbe unu megolu m
- (35) Wee na-ekenekwe unu maka nke unu ka ya-emel m emel, n'uzo n'uzo öbüna
- (36) Ashi m na nwoke na nwaanya ya-adü ndü, arü eshie vbe ike, uche ezuo vbe oke
- (37) Neekwen mü na ndü be m
- (38) Buol nu anyi uzo, kpel nu anyi azü
- (39) Weful nu anyi akologheli mmöö na akologheli mmadi
- (40) Ka ö bial ga-echu anyi chuo onwie
- (41) Ka ö bial ga-egbu anyi gbuo onwie
- (42) Eji m aka nwata enye unu öjī nünwa



- (43) Biko wel nu aka ogalanya wee nal m nya  
 (44) Ka unu tivboo, ka o lee ka m göl  
 (45) Maka na önu mü vbü Nwaakanri vbü önu Nnaa vba

### Comments on the Morning Kolanut Ritual

This ritual is personal, but I give it as an example to help the interested reader to formulate one. Remember that what matters are the mental images associated with the words used. The magic rule is: we cannot achieve what we cannot imagine! And remember that by imagination<sup>34</sup> we mean creating clear mental pictures of objects and events.

The hands are washed clean and the whole body is cleansed by touching the head, trunk, hands and feet, with a grain of the alligator pepper (ose öro) that is thrown away, asking corruption (öraakwü) to depart with the grain. Picking up the kolanut or holding the kolanut bowl in my right hand, the invocations begin.

The unknown Godhead is invoked first and shown the kolanut; then follows the Spirit of the Godhead. Next come the Sun and Rainbow; Fire, Air, Water, Earth, Moon, and their denizens; the unknown Forces that work for me or for whom I work.

Next, we have our Great Mother and Matriarch Ashii Nta; the family's Deities; dead and living female/male ancestors; my closest female/male ancestors that I can remember; I ask those I can remember to invite those that I cannot remember.

Next come Öka and non-Öka Deities for which I have a soft spot – Imöka Öka, Ngene Onyeachönam of Ümübeelee, Ngene Nkölöbia of Amawbia, Adaanyä of Achala, Raba of Agülü.

Finally, the Spirits of harmony and disharmony are invited, because each group has its utility.

Next, I give thanks to all that I have called on, from the Godhead to the Spirits of disharmony, for what they have done for me and for what they will do for me in every way.

Then I bless all men and women; and I follow-up with a request of protection for me and my family.

And I finally conclude the ritual as indicated.

The kolanut is then broken and the “tongue” (ile öji) on each lobe is removed and thrown outside for all those invoked to share. The lobes are thrown into the kolanut bowl. The breaker of the kolanut is the first to take a lobe from the bowl, while those present will share the remaining lobes.

A piece of kaolin (nzu) may be passed around to enable all present to express some personal wish or request additional blessings from all those invoked in the ritual. Note that the kaolin comes after the kolanut is broken in order to avoid staining the kolanut with kaolin stains resulting from the contact of the washed hands with the piece of kaolin.

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<sup>34</sup> See Appendix A.

A gin libation, in four throws, is poured outside or into some convenient spot, for blessings on the four market-days: Eke, Oye, Avbö, Nkwö.

We note the pyramidal structure of the ritual. It flows from the apex of the Godhead to the base of our mundane world. As indicated above, this is a sample. Invent one for yourself using your own idiosyncrasies. Below is an approximate English rendering of the ritual and its keywords.

nee [LH] = nekwe [LH] = neekwe [LHH] = look, look at, here is, see  
 neekwen = neekwe nu = here is  
 öjì [HH] = kolanut  
 chuo [LH] = disgrace; humiliate; stain

Chikwu = Godhead, the Infinite Space in which we live, move and have our being  
 Chineke = Universal Spirit that creates

Anyanwü na Agbala = The Sun and the Rainbow  
 Ökü na Ndü Ökü = Fire and its denizens  
 Ikuku na Ndü Ikuku = Air and its denizens  
 Mmili na Ndü Mmili = Water and its denizens  
 Ana na Ndü Ana = Earth and its denizens  
 Önwa na Ndü Önwa = Moon and its denizens  
 Ivbe na-emel m ivbe, Ivbe m na-emel ivbe = Forces that work for me and those I work for

Ashī Nta Nwüwaöma, Nne mül ömümü = Matriarch Ashī Nta with nickname, our Great Mother  
 Ndü Nne niine = All mothers  
 Akwalī, Agwü, Ana-obu, Ngwu, Okuku = symbols of my family's Deities  
 Obu = family temple  
 Ichie Ukwu na Ichie Nta = dead and living male ancestors  
 Ökpü Ukwu na Ökpü Nta = dead and living female ancestors  
 Mmadiagwü, Anaagö, Udo, Anazöö (Ödīgwe), Nweke (Ezeokolobia), Nwavbüishi (Amülamma) = my male ancestors  
 Ndü m kulu, vba kuo ibe vbe = Those called should call the others

Imöka Nnomeh, Akeete Ögba, Mgbaghanyīlazī, Nnemülöka = the Imöka Deity with praise-names  
 Ngene Onyeachönam Ümübeelee, Ödübeanyīadünamba, Ömütaonezuoanya, Otuugoejeagha,  
 Akataogbongo = Ngene Onyeachönam Deity of Ümübeelee village with praise-names  
 Ngene Nkölöbīa Amawbia Ösüakwü = Ngene Nkölöbīa Deity of Amawbia with praise-name  
 Adaanyī n' Achala = An Achala Deity  
 Ezenwaanya Agülü, Onyeöchabunammili, Baabaaduuduu = Raba Deity of Agülü and praise-names  
 Ndü ö na-avbü e kuo ö dü mma = Spirits of harmony  
 Ndü ö na-avbü e kuo ö dü njö = Spirits of disharmony  
 Na ndü ovbüna nwel ulu vba na-aba = Each group of Spirits has its utility

Ashī m arize unu niine maka ivbe unu megolu m = I thank you all for what you have done for me  
 Wee na-ekenekwe unu maka nke unu ka ya-emel m emel, n'uzo n'uzo öbüna = And thank you also for what you will do for me in every way

Ashi m na nwoke na nwaanya ya-adü ndü, arü eshie vbe ike, uche ezuo vbe oke = I assert that man and woman shall live, enjoy good health and be lucid

Neekwen mü na ndü be m = Here am I with my family

Buol nu anyi uzo, kpel nu anyi azü = Lead us and guard our rear

Weful nu anyi akologheli mmöö na akologheli mmadi = Protect us from evil influences, human and spiritual

Ka ö bial ga-echu anyi chuo onwie = So that whoever wants to disgrace us will disgrace himself

Ka ö bial ga-egbu anyi gbuo onwie = So that whoever wants to kill us will kill himself

Eji m aka nwata enye unu öji nünwa = I offer you this kolanut with the hand of a child

Biko wel nu aka ogalanya wee nal m nya = Please accept it with royal hands

Ka unu tivboo, ka o lee ka m göl = So that my path shall be cleared, and my prayer be granted

Maka na önu mü vbü Nwaakanri vbü önu Nnaa vba = Because the voice of me, the dwarf, is the voice of my ancestors

Cheers!

**Appendix D: Egwu Imöka Schedules, 2011 – 2022**

**Imöka Moon Dates & Schedule 2011 - 2016**

Event	Date	Day
Imöka moon	Tuesday, May 03, 2011	Eke
Full moon	Tuesday, May 17, 2011	Avbö
Visit to Ümüokpu	Tuesday, May 17, 2011	Avbö
Egwu Imöka starts	Saturday, May 21, 2011	Avbö
Egwu Imöka ends	Wednesday, May 25, 2011	Avbö
Imöka moon	Saturday, April 21, 2012	Avbö
Full moon	Sunday, May 06, 2012	Oye
Visit to Ümüokpu	Monday, May 07, 2012	Avbö
Egwu Imöka starts	Friday, May 11, 2012	Avbö
Egwu Imöka ends	Tuesday, May 15, 2012	Avbö
Imöka moon	Friday, May 10, 2013	Avbö
Full moon	Saturday, May 25, 2013	Oye
Visit to Ümüokpu	Sunday, May 26, 2013	Avbö
Egwu Imöka starts	Thursday, May 30, 2013	Avbö
Egwu Imöka ends	Monday, June 03, 2013	Avbö
Imöka moon	Tuesday, April 29, 2014	Eke
Full moon	Wednesday, May 14, 2014	Nkwö
Visit to Ümüokpu	Tuesday, May 13, 2014	Avbö
Egwu Imöka starts	Saturday, May 17, 2014	Avbö
Egwu Imöka ends	Wednesday, May 21, 2014	Avbö
Imöka moon	Saturday, April 18, 2015	Avbö
Full moon	Monday, May 04, 2015	Avbö
Visit to Ümüokpu	Monday, May 04, 2015	Avbö
Egwu Imöka starts	Friday, May 08, 2015	Avbö
Egwu Imöka ends	Tuesday, May 12, 2015	Avbö
Imöka moon	Friday, May 06, 2016	Avbö
Full moon	Saturday, May 21, 2016	Oye
Visit to Ümüokpu	Sunday, May 22, 2016	Avbö
Egwu Imöka starts	Thursday, May 26, 2016	Avbö
Egwu Imöka ends	Monday, May 30, 2016	Avbö

**Imöka Moon Dates & Schedule 2017 - 2022**

Event	Date	Day
Imöka moon	Wednesday, April 26, 2017	Oye
Full moon	Wednesday, May 10, 2017	Nkwö
Visit to Ümüokpu	Tuesday, May 09, 2017	Avbö
Egwu Imöka starts	Saturday, May 13, 2017	Avbö
Egwu Imöka ends	Wednesday, May 17, 2017	Avbö
Imöka moon	Tuesday, May 15, 2018	Oye
Full moon	Tuesday, May 29, 2018	Nkwö
Visit to Ümüokpu	Monday, May 28, 2018	Avbö
Egwu Imöka starts	Friday, June 01, 2018	Avbö
Egwu Imöka ends	Tuesday, June 05, 2018	Avbö
Imöka moon	Saturday, May 04, 2019	Nkwö
Full moon	Saturday, May 18, 2019	Oye
Visit to Ümüokpu	Sunday, May 19, 2019	Avbö
Egwu Imöka starts	Thursday, May 23, 2019	Avbö
Egwu Imöka ends	Monday, May 27, 2019	Avbö
Imöka moon	Thursday, April 23, 2020	Avbö
Full moon	Thursday, May 07, 2020	Eke
Visit to Ümüokpu	Saturday, May 09, 2020	Avbö
Egwu Imöka starts	Wednesday, May 13, 2020	Avbö
Egwu Imöka ends	Sunday, May 17, 2020	Avbö
Imöka moon	Tuesday, May 11, 2021	Oye
Full moon	Wednesday, May 26, 2021	Eke
Visit to Ümüokpu	Monday, May 24, 2021	Avbö
Egwu Imöka starts	Friday, May 28, 2021	Avbö
Egwu Imöka ends	Tuesday, June 01, 2021	Avbö
Imöka moon	Saturday, April 30, 2022	Nkwö
Full moon	Monday, May 16, 2022	Nkwö
Visit to Ümüokpu	Sunday, May 15, 2022	Avbö
Egwu Imöka starts	Thursday, May 19, 2022	Avbö
Egwu Imöka ends	Monday, May 23, 2022	Avbö

**Imöka Moon Dates & Schedule 2011 - 2013**

Izu önwa	Days after moon day	2011	Day	2012	Day	2013	Day
	0	3-May-2011	Eke	21-Apr-2012	Avbö	10-May-2013	Avbö
	1	4-May-2011	Oye	22-Apr-2012	Nkwö	11-May-2013	Nkwö
1	2	5-May-2011	Avbö	23-Apr-2012	Eke	12-May-2013	Eke
	3	6-May-2011	Nkwö	24-Apr-2012	Oye	13-May-2013	Oye
	4	7-May-2011	Eke	25-Apr-2012	Avbö	14-May-2013	Avbö
	5	8-May-2011	Oye	26-Apr-2012	Nkwö	15-May-2013	Nkwö
2	6	9-May-2011	Avbö	27-Apr-2012	Eke	16-May-2013	Eke
	7	10-May-2011	Nkwö	28-Apr-2012	Oye	17-May-2013	Oye
	8	11-May-2011	Eke	29-Apr-2012	Avbö	18-May-2013	Avbö
	9	12-May-2011	Oye	30-Apr-2012	Nkwö	19-May-2013	Nkwö
3	10	13-May-2011	Avbö	1-May-2012	Eke	20-May-2013	Eke
	11	14-May-2011	Nkwö	2-May-2012	Oye	21-May-2013	Oye
	12	15-May-2011	Eke	3-May-2012	Avbö	22-May-2013	Avbö
	13	16-May-2011	Oye	4-May-2012	Nkwö	23-May-2013	Nkwö
4	14	17-May-2011	Avbö	5-May-2012	Eke	24-May-2013	Eke
	15	18-May-2011	Nkwö	6-May-2012	Oye	25-May-2013	Oye
	16	19-May-2011	Eke	7-May-2012	Avbö	26-May-2013	Avbö
	17	20-May-2011	Oye	8-May-2012	Nkwö	27-May-2013	Nkwö
5	18	21-May-2011	Avbö	9-May-2012	Eke	28-May-2013	Eke
	19	22-May-2011	Nkwö	10-May-2012	Oye	29-May-2013	Oye
	20	23-May-2011	Eke	11-May-2012	Avbö	30-May-2013	Avbö
	21	24-May-2011	Oye	12-May-2012	Nkwö	31-May-2013	Nkwö
6	22	25-May-2011	Avbö	13-May-2012	Eke	1-Jun-2013	Eke
	23	26-May-2011	Nkwö	14-May-2012	Oye	2-Jun-2013	Oye
	24	27-May-2011	Eke	15-May-2012	Avbö	3-Jun-2013	Avbö
	25	28-May-2011	Oye	16-May-2012	Nkwö	4-Jun-2013	Nkwö
7	26	29-May-2011	Avbö	17-May-2012	Eke	5-Jun-2013	Eke
	27	30-May-2011	Nkwö	18-May-2012	Oye	6-Jun-2013	Oye
	28	31-May-2011	Eke	19-May-2012	Avbö	7-Jun-2013	Avbö
3rd moon		1-Jun-2011	Oye	20-May-2012	Nkwö	8-Jun-2013	Nkwö

**Imöka Moon Dates & Schedule 2014 - 2016**

Izu önwa	Days after moon day	2014	Day	2015	Day	2016	Day
	0	29-Apr-2014	Eke	18-Apr-2015	Avbö	6-May-2016	Avbö
	1	30-Apr-2014	Oye	19-Apr-2015	Nkwö	7-May-2016	Nkwö
1	2	1-May-2014	Avbö	20-Apr-2015	Eke	8-May-2016	Eke
	3	2-May-2014	Nkwö	21-Apr-2015	Oye	9-May-2016	Oye
	4	3-May-2014	Eke	22-Apr-2015	Avbö	10-May-2016	Avbö
	5	4-May-2014	Oye	23-Apr-2015	Nkwö	11-May-2016	Nkwö
2	6	5-May-2014	Avbö	24-Apr-2015	Eke	12-May-2016	Eke
	7	6-May-2014	Nkwö	25-Apr-2015	Oye	13-May-2016	Oye
	8	7-May-2014	Eke	26-Apr-2015	Avbö	14-May-2016	Avbö
	9	8-May-2014	Oye	27-Apr-2015	Nkwö	15-May-2016	Nkwö
3	10	9-May-2014	Avbö	28-Apr-2015	Eke	16-May-2016	Eke
	11	10-May-2014	Nkwö	29-Apr-2015	Oye	17-May-2016	Oye
	12	11-May-2014	Eke	30-Apr-2015	Avbö	18-May-2016	Avbö
	13	12-May-2014	Oye	1-May-2015	Nkwö	19-May-2016	Nkwö
4	14	13-May-2014	Avbö	2-May-2015	Eke	20-May-2016	Eke
	15	14-May-2014	Nkwö	3-May-2015	Oye	21-May-2016	Oye
	16	15-May-2014	Eke	4-May-2015	Avbö	22-May-2016	Avbö
	17	16-May-2014	Oye	5-May-2015	Nkwö	23-May-2016	Nkwö
5	18	17-May-2014	Avbö	6-May-2015	Eke	24-May-2016	Eke
	19	18-May-2014	Nkwö	7-May-2015	Oye	25-May-2016	Oye
	20	19-May-2014	Eke	8-May-2015	Avbö	26-May-2016	Avbö
	21	20-May-2014	Oye	9-May-2015	Nkwö	27-May-2016	Nkwö
6	22	21-May-2014	Avbö	10-May-2015	Eke	28-May-2016	Eke
	23	22-May-2014	Nkwö	11-May-2015	Oye	29-May-2016	Oye
	24	23-May-2014	Eke	12-May-2015	Avbö	30-May-2016	Avbö
	25	24-May-2014	Oye	13-May-2015	Nkwö	31-May-2016	Nkwö
7	26	25-May-2014	Avbö	14-May-2015	Eke	1-Jun-2016	Eke
	27	26-May-2014	Nkwö	15-May-2015	Oye	2-Jun-2016	Oye
	28	27-May-2014	Eke	16-May-2015	Avbö	3-Jun-2016	Avbö
	29			17-May-2015	Nkwö	4-Jun-2016	Nkwö
3rd moon		28-May-2014	Oye	18-May-2015	Eke	5-Jun-2016	Eke



**Imöka Moon Dates & Schedule 2017 - 2019**

Izu önwa	Days after moon day	2017	Day	2018	Day	2019	Day
	0	26-Apr-2017	Oye	15-May-2018	Oye	4-May-2019	Nkwö
	1	27-Apr-2017	Avbö	16-May-2018	Avbö	5-May-2019	Eke
1	2	28-Apr-2017	Nkwö	17-May-2018	Nkwö	6-May-2019	Oye
	3	29-Apr-2017	Eke	18-May-2018	Eke	7-May-2019	Avbö
	4	30-Apr-2017	Oye	19-May-2018	Oye	8-May-2019	Nkwö
	5	1-May-2017	Avbö	20-May-2018	Avbö	9-May-2019	Eke
2	6	2-May-2017	Nkwö	21-May-2018	Nkwö	10-May-2019	Oye
	7	3-May-2017	Eke	22-May-2018	Eke	11-May-2019	Avbö
	8	4-May-2017	Oye	23-May-2018	Oye	12-May-2019	Nkwö
	9	5-May-2017	Avbö	24-May-2018	Avbö	13-May-2019	Eke
3	10	6-May-2017	Nkwö	25-May-2018	Nkwö	14-May-2019	Oye
	11	7-May-2017	Eke	26-May-2018	Eke	15-May-2019	Avbö
	12	8-May-2017	Oye	27-May-2018	Oye	16-May-2019	Nkwö
	13	9-May-2017	Avbö	28-May-2018	Avbö	17-May-2019	Eke
4	14	10-May-2017	Nkwö	29-May-2018	Nkwö	18-May-2019	Oye
	15	11-May-2017	Eke	30-May-2018	Eke	19-May-2019	Avbö
	16	12-May-2017	Oye	31-May-2018	Oye	20-May-2019	Nkwö
	17	13-May-2017	Avbö	1-Jun-2018	Avbö	21-May-2019	Eke
5	18	14-May-2017	Nkwö	2-Jun-2018	Nkwö	22-May-2019	Oye
	19	15-May-2017	Eke	3-Jun-2018	Eke	23-May-2019	Avbö
	20	16-May-2017	Oye	4-Jun-2018	Oye	24-May-2019	Nkwö
	21	17-May-2017	Avbö	5-Jun-2018	Avbö	25-May-2019	Eke
6	22	18-May-2017	Nkwö	6-Jun-2018	Nkwö	26-May-2019	Oye
	23	19-May-2017	Eke	7-Jun-2018	Eke	27-May-2019	Avbö
	24	20-May-2017	Oye	8-Jun-2018	Oye	28-May-2019	Nkwö
	25	21-May-2017	Avbö	9-Jun-2018	Avbö	29-May-2019	Eke
7	26	22-May-2017	Nkwö	10-Jun-2018	Nkwö	30-May-2019	Oye
	27	23-May-2017	Eke	11-Jun-2018	Eke	31-May-2019	Avbö
	28	24-May-2017	Oye	12-Jun-2018	Oye	1-Jun-2019	Nkwö
	29					2-Jun-2019	Eke
3rd moon		25-May-2017	Avbö	13-Jun-2018	Avbö	3-Jun-2019	Oye

**Imöka Moon Dates & Schedule 2020 - 2022**

Izu önwa	Days after moon day	2020	Day	2021	Day	2022	Day
	0	23-Apr-2020	Avbö	11-May-2021	Oye	30-Apr-2022	Nkwö
	1	24-Apr-2020	Nkwö	12-May-2021	Avbö	1-May-2022	Eke
1	2	25-Apr-2020	Eke	13-May-2021	Nkwö	2-May-2022	Oye
	3	26-Apr-2020	Oye	14-May-2021	Eke	3-May-2022	Avbö
	4	27-Apr-2020	Avbö	15-May-2021	Oye	4-May-2022	Nkwö
	5	28-Apr-2020	Nkwö	16-May-2021	Avbö	5-May-2022	Eke
2	6	29-Apr-2020	Eke	17-May-2021	Nkwö	6-May-2022	Oye
	7	30-Apr-2020	Oye	18-May-2021	Eke	7-May-2022	Avbö
	8	1-May-2020	Avbö	19-May-2021	Oye	8-May-2022	Nkwö
	9	2-May-2020	Nkwö	20-May-2021	Avbö	9-May-2022	Eke
3	10	3-May-2020	Eke	21-May-2021	Nkwö	10-May-2022	Oye
	11	4-May-2020	Oye	22-May-2021	Eke	11-May-2022	Avbö
	12	5-May-2020	Avbö	23-May-2021	Oye	12-May-2022	Nkwö
	13	6-May-2020	Nkwö	24-May-2021	Avbö	13-May-2022	Eke
4	14	7-May-2020	Eke	25-May-2021	Nkwö	14-May-2022	Oye
	15	8-May-2020	Oye	26-May-2021	Eke	15-May-2022	Avbö
	16	9-May-2020	Avbö	27-May-2021	Oye	16-May-2022	Nkwö
	17	10-May-2020	Nkwö	28-May-2021	Avbö	17-May-2022	Eke
5	18	11-May-2020	Eke	29-May-2021	Nkwö	18-May-2022	Oye
	19	12-May-2020	Oye	30-May-2021	Eke	19-May-2022	Avbö
	20	13-May-2020	Avbö	31-May-2021	Oye	20-May-2022	Nkwö
	21	14-May-2020	Nkwö	1-Jun-2021	Avbö	21-May-2022	Eke
6	22	15-May-2020	Eke	2-Jun-2021	Nkwö	22-May-2022	Oye
	23	16-May-2020	Oye	3-Jun-2021	Eke	23-May-2022	Avbö
	24	17-May-2020	Avbö	4-Jun-2021	Oye	24-May-2022	Nkwö
	25	18-May-2020	Nkwö	5-Jun-2021	Avbö	25-May-2022	Eke
7	26	19-May-2020	Eke	6-Jun-2021	Nkwö	26-May-2022	Oye
	27	20-May-2020	Oye	7-Jun-2021	Eke	27-May-2022	Avbö
	28	21-May-2020	Avbö	8-Jun-2021	Oye	28-May-2022	Nkwö
	29			9-Jun-2021	Avbö	29-May-2022	Eke
3rd moon		22-May-2020	Nkwö	10-Jun-2021	Nkwö	30-May-2022	Oye

**Appendix E: Egwu Nne, Mothers' Day Schedules, 2011 – 2022**

### Alöm Chi or Mothers' Day: 2011 - 2016

Event	Date	Day
Önwa Ise	Saturday, July 30, 2011	Eke
Full moon	Saturday, August 13, 2011	Avbö
Mothers' Day	Tuesday, August 16, 2011	Oye
Önwa Ise	Thursday, July 19, 2012	Nkwö
Full moon	Thursday, August 02, 2012	Oye
Mothers' Day	Monday, August 06, 2012	Oye
Önwa Ise	Tuesday, August 06, 2013	Avbö
Full moon	Wednesday, August 21, 2013	Oye
Mothers' Day	Sunday, August 25, 2013	Oye
Önwa Ise	Saturday, July 26, 2014	Eke
Full moon	Sunday, August 10, 2014	Nkwö
Mothers' Day	Tuesday, August 12, 2014	Oye
Önwa Ise	Thursday, July 16, 2015	Nkwö
Full moon	Friday, July 31, 2015	Avbö
Mothers' Day	Monday, August 03, 2015	Oye
Önwa Ise	Tuesday, August 02, 2016	Avbö
Full moon	Thursday, August 18, 2016	Avbö
Mothers' Day	Sunday, August 21, 2016	Oye

**Alöm Chi or Mothers' Day: 2017 - 2022**

Event	Date	Day
Önwa Ise	Sunday, July 23, 2017	Oye
Full moon	Monday, August 07, 2017	Eke
Mothers' Day	Saturday, August 12, 2017	Oye
Önwa Ise	Saturday, August 11, 2018	Oye
Full moon	Sunday, August 26, 2018	Eke
Mothers' Day	Friday, August 31, 2018	Oye
Önwa Ise	Thursday, August 01, 2019	Eke
Full moon	Thursday, August 15, 2019	Avbö
Mothers' Day	Sunday, August 18, 2019	Oye
Önwa Ise	Monday, July 20, 2020	Avbö
Full moon	Monday, August 03, 2020	Eke
Mothers' Day	Saturday, August 08, 2020	Oye
Önwa Ise	Sunday, August 08, 2021	Avbö
Full moon	Sunday, August 22, 2021	Eke
Mothers' Day	Friday, August 27, 2021	Oye
Önwa Ise	Thursday, July 28, 2022	Eke
Full moon	Friday, August 12, 2022	Nkwö
Mothers' Day	Sunday, August 14, 2022	Oye

### Önwa Ise Dates 2011 - 2013

Izu önwa	Days after moon day	2011	Day	2012	Day	2013	Day
	0	30-Jul-2011	Eke	19-Jul-2012	Nkwö	6-Aug-2013	Avbö
	1	31-Jul-2011	Oye	20-Jul-2012	Eke	7-Aug-2013	Nkwö
1	2	1-Aug-2011	Avbö	21-Jul-2012	Oye	8-Aug-2013	Eke
	3	2-Aug-2011	Nkwö	22-Jul-2012	Avbö	9-Aug-2013	Oye
	4	3-Aug-2011	Eke	23-Jul-2012	Nkwö	10-Aug-2013	Avbö
	5	4-Aug-2011	Oye	24-Jul-2012	Eke	11-Aug-2013	Nkwö
2	6	5-Aug-2011	Avbö	25-Jul-2012	Oye	12-Aug-2013	Eke
	7	6-Aug-2011	Nkwö	26-Jul-2012	Avbö	13-Aug-2013	Oye
	8	7-Aug-2011	Eke	27-Jul-2012	Nkwö	14-Aug-2013	Avbö
	9	8-Aug-2011	Oye	28-Jul-2012	Eke	15-Aug-2013	Nkwö
3	10	9-Aug-2011	Avbö	29-Jul-2012	Oye	16-Aug-2013	Eke
	11	10-Aug-2011	Nkwö	30-Jul-2012	Avbö	17-Aug-2013	Oye
	12	11-Aug-2011	Eke	31-Jul-2012	Nkwö	18-Aug-2013	Avbö
	13	12-Aug-2011	Oye	1-Aug-2012	Eke	19-Aug-2013	Nkwö
4	14	13-Aug-2011	Avbö	2-Aug-2012	Oye	20-Aug-2013	Eke
	15	14-Aug-2011	Nkwö	3-Aug-2012	Avbö	21-Aug-2013	Oye
	16	15-Aug-2011	Eke	4-Aug-2012	Nkwö	22-Aug-2013	Avbö
	17	16-Aug-2011	Oye	5-Aug-2012	Eke	23-Aug-2013	Nkwö
5	18	17-Aug-2011	Avbö	6-Aug-2012	Oye	24-Aug-2013	Eke
	19	18-Aug-2011	Nkwö	7-Aug-2012	Avbö	25-Aug-2013	Oye
	20	19-Aug-2011	Eke	8-Aug-2012	Nkwö	26-Aug-2013	Avbö
	21	20-Aug-2011	Oye	9-Aug-2012	Eke	27-Aug-2013	Nkwö
6	22	21-Aug-2011	Avbö	10-Aug-2012	Oye	28-Aug-2013	Eke
	23	22-Aug-2011	Nkwö	11-Aug-2012	Avbö	29-Aug-2013	Oye
	24	23-Aug-2011	Eke	12-Aug-2012	Nkwö	30-Aug-2013	Avbö
	25	24-Aug-2011	Oye	13-Aug-2012	Eke	31-Aug-2013	Nkwö
7	26	25-Aug-2011	Avbö	14-Aug-2012	Oye	1-Sep-2013	Eke
	27	26-Aug-2011	Nkwö	15-Aug-2012	Avbö	2-Sep-2013	Oye
	28	27-Aug-2011	Eke	16-Aug-2012	Nkwö	3-Sep-2013	Avbö
	29	28-Aug-2011	Oye			4-Sep-2013	Nkwö
6th moon		29-Aug-2011	Avbö	17-Aug-2012	Eke	5-Sep-2013	Eke

### Önwa Ise Dates 2014 - 2016

Izu önwa	Days after moon day	2014	Day	2015	Day	2016	Day
	0	26-Jul-2014	Eke	16-Jul-2015	Nkwö	2-Aug-2016	Avbö
	1	27-Jul-2014	Oye	17-Jul-2015	Eke	3-Aug-2016	Nkwö
1	2	28-Jul-2014	Avbö	18-Jul-2015	Oye	4-Aug-2016	Eke
	3	29-Jul-2014	Nkwö	19-Jul-2015	Avbö	5-Aug-2016	Oye
	4	30-Jul-2014	Eke	20-Jul-2015	Nkwö	6-Aug-2016	Avbö
	5	31-Jul-2014	Oye	21-Jul-2015	Eke	7-Aug-2016	Nkwö
2	6	1-Aug-2014	Avbö	22-Jul-2015	Oye	8-Aug-2016	Eke
	7	2-Aug-2014	Nkwö	23-Jul-2015	Avbö	9-Aug-2016	Oye
	8	3-Aug-2014	Eke	24-Jul-2015	Nkwö	10-Aug-2016	Avbö
	9	4-Aug-2014	Oye	25-Jul-2015	Eke	11-Aug-2016	Nkwö
3	10	5-Aug-2014	Avbö	26-Jul-2015	Oye	12-Aug-2016	Eke
	11	6-Aug-2014	Nkwö	27-Jul-2015	Avbö	13-Aug-2016	Oye
	12	7-Aug-2014	Eke	28-Jul-2015	Nkwö	14-Aug-2016	Avbö
	13	8-Aug-2014	Oye	29-Jul-2015	Eke	15-Aug-2016	Nkwö
4	14	9-Aug-2014	Avbö	30-Jul-2015	Oye	16-Aug-2016	Eke
	15	10-Aug-2014	Nkwö	31-Jul-2015	Avbö	17-Aug-2016	Oye
	16	11-Aug-2014	Eke	1-Aug-2015	Nkwö	18-Aug-2016	Avbö
	17	12-Aug-2014	Oye	2-Aug-2015	Eke	19-Aug-2016	Nkwö
5	18	13-Aug-2014	Avbö	3-Aug-2015	Oye	20-Aug-2016	Eke
	19	14-Aug-2014	Nkwö	4-Aug-2015	Avbö	21-Aug-2016	Oye
	20	15-Aug-2014	Eke	5-Aug-2015	Nkwö	22-Aug-2016	Avbö
	21	16-Aug-2014	Oye	6-Aug-2015	Eke	23-Aug-2016	Nkwö
6	22	17-Aug-2014	Avbö	7-Aug-2015	Oye	24-Aug-2016	Eke
	23	18-Aug-2014	Nkwö	8-Aug-2015	Avbö	25-Aug-2016	Oye
	24	19-Aug-2014	Eke	9-Aug-2015	Nkwö	26-Aug-2016	Avbö
	25	20-Aug-2014	Oye	10-Aug-2015	Eke	27-Aug-2016	Nkwö
7	26	21-Aug-2014	Avbö	11-Aug-2015	Oye	28-Aug-2016	Eke
	27	22-Aug-2014	Nkwö	12-Aug-2015	Avbö	29-Aug-2016	Oye
	28	23-Aug-2014	Eke	13-Aug-2015	Nkwö	30-Aug-2016	Avbö
	29	24-Aug-2014	Oye			31-Aug-2016	Nkwö
6th moon		25-Aug-2014	Avbö	14-Aug-2015	Eke	1-Sep-2016	Eke

### Önwa Ise Dates 2017 - 2019

Izu önwa	Days after moon day	2017	Day	2018	Day	2019	Day
	0	23-Jul-2017	Oye	11-Aug-2018	Oye	1-Aug-2019	Eke
	1	24-Jul-2017	Avbö	12-Aug-2018	Avbö	2-Aug-2019	Oye
1	2	25-Jul-2017	Nkwö	13-Aug-2018	Nkwö	3-Aug-2019	Avbö
	3	26-Jul-2017	Eke	14-Aug-2018	Eke	4-Aug-2019	Nkwö
	4	27-Jul-2017	Oye	15-Aug-2018	Oye	5-Aug-2019	Eke
	5	28-Jul-2017	Avbö	16-Aug-2018	Avbö	6-Aug-2019	Oye
2	6	29-Jul-2017	Nkwö	17-Aug-2018	Nkwö	7-Aug-2019	Avbö
	7	30-Jul-2017	Eke	18-Aug-2018	Eke	8-Aug-2019	Nkwö
	8	31-Jul-2017	Oye	19-Aug-2018	Oye	9-Aug-2019	Eke
	9	1-Aug-2017	Avbö	20-Aug-2018	Avbö	10-Aug-2019	Oye
3	10	2-Aug-2017	Nkwö	21-Aug-2018	Nkwö	11-Aug-2019	Avbö
	11	3-Aug-2017	Eke	22-Aug-2018	Eke	12-Aug-2019	Nkwö
	12	4-Aug-2017	Oye	23-Aug-2018	Oye	13-Aug-2019	Eke
	13	5-Aug-2017	Avbö	24-Aug-2018	Avbö	14-Aug-2019	Oye
4	14	6-Aug-2017	Nkwö	25-Aug-2018	Nkwö	15-Aug-2019	Avbö
	15	7-Aug-2017	Eke	26-Aug-2018	Eke	16-Aug-2019	Nkwö
	16	8-Aug-2017	Oye	27-Aug-2018	Oye	17-Aug-2019	Eke
	17	9-Aug-2017	Avbö	28-Aug-2018	Avbö	18-Aug-2019	Oye
5	18	10-Aug-2017	Nkwö	29-Aug-2018	Nkwö	19-Aug-2019	Avbö
	19	11-Aug-2017	Eke	30-Aug-2018	Eke	20-Aug-2019	Nkwö
	20	12-Aug-2017	Oye	31-Aug-2018	Oye	21-Aug-2019	Eke
	21	13-Aug-2017	Avbö	1-Sep-2018	Avbö	22-Aug-2019	Oye
6	22	14-Aug-2017	Nkwö	2-Sep-2018	Nkwö	23-Aug-2019	Avbö
	23	15-Aug-2017	Eke	3-Sep-2018	Eke	24-Aug-2019	Nkwö
	24	16-Aug-2017	Oye	4-Sep-2018	Oye	25-Aug-2019	Eke
	25	17-Aug-2017	Avbö	5-Sep-2018	Avbö	26-Aug-2019	Oye
7	26	18-Aug-2017	Nkwö	6-Sep-2018	Nkwö	27-Aug-2019	Avbö
	27	19-Aug-2017	Eke	7-Sep-2018	Eke	28-Aug-2019	Nkwö
	28	20-Aug-2017	Oye	8-Sep-2018	Oye	29-Aug-2019	Eke
6th moon		21-Aug-2017	Avbö	9-Sep-2018	Avbö	30-Aug-2019	Oye



### Önwa Ise Dates 2020 - 2022

Izu önwa	Days after moon day	2020	Day	2021	Day	2022	Day
	0	20-Jul-2020	Avbö	8-Aug-2021	Avbö	28-Jul-2022	Eke
	1	21-Jul-2020	Nkwö	9-Aug-2021	Nkwö	29-Jul-2022	Oye
1	2	22-Jul-2020	Eke	10-Aug-2021	Eke	30-Jul-2022	Avbö
	3	23-Jul-2020	Oye	11-Aug-2021	Oye	31-Jul-2022	Nkwö
	4	24-Jul-2020	Avbö	12-Aug-2021	Avbö	1-Aug-2022	Eke
	5	25-Jul-2020	Nkwö	13-Aug-2021	Nkwö	2-Aug-2022	Oye
2	6	26-Jul-2020	Eke	14-Aug-2021	Eke	3-Aug-2022	Avbö
	7	27-Jul-2020	Oye	15-Aug-2021	Oye	4-Aug-2022	Nkwö
	8	28-Jul-2020	Avbö	16-Aug-2021	Avbö	5-Aug-2022	Eke
	9	29-Jul-2020	Nkwö	17-Aug-2021	Nkwö	6-Aug-2022	Oye
3	10	30-Jul-2020	Eke	18-Aug-2021	Eke	7-Aug-2022	Avbö
	11	31-Jul-2020	Oye	19-Aug-2021	Oye	8-Aug-2022	Nkwö
	12	1-Aug-2020	Avbö	20-Aug-2021	Avbö	9-Aug-2022	Eke
	13	2-Aug-2020	Nkwö	21-Aug-2021	Nkwö	10-Aug-2022	Oye
4	14	3-Aug-2020	Eke	22-Aug-2021	Eke	11-Aug-2022	Avbö
	15	4-Aug-2020	Oye	23-Aug-2021	Oye	12-Aug-2022	Nkwö
	16	5-Aug-2020	Avbö	24-Aug-2021	Avbö	13-Aug-2022	Eke
	17	6-Aug-2020	Nkwö	25-Aug-2021	Nkwö	14-Aug-2022	Oye
5	18	7-Aug-2020	Eke	26-Aug-2021	Eke	15-Aug-2022	Avbö
	19	8-Aug-2020	Oye	27-Aug-2021	Oye	16-Aug-2022	Nkwö
	20	9-Aug-2020	Avbö	28-Aug-2021	Avbö	17-Aug-2022	Eke
	21	10-Aug-2020	Nkwö	29-Aug-2021	Nkwö	18-Aug-2022	Oye
6	22	11-Aug-2020	Eke	30-Aug-2021	Eke	19-Aug-2022	Avbö
	23	12-Aug-2020	Oye	31-Aug-2021	Oye	20-Aug-2022	Nkwö
	24	13-Aug-2020	Avbö	1-Sep-2021	Avbö	21-Aug-2022	Eke
	25	14-Aug-2020	Nkwö	2-Sep-2021	Nkwö	22-Aug-2022	Oye
7	26	15-Aug-2020	Eke	3-Sep-2021	Eke	23-Aug-2022	Avbö
	27	16-Aug-2020	Oye	4-Sep-2021	Oye	24-Aug-2022	Nkwö
	28	17-Aug-2020	Avbö	5-Sep-2021	Avbö	25-Aug-2022	Eke
	29	18-Aug-2020	Nkwö	6-Sep-2021	Nkwö	26-Aug-2022	Oye
6th moon		19-Aug-2020	Eke	7-Sep-2021	Eke	27-Aug-2022	Avbö

## Appendix E

### Western Christian Easter Dates 1997-2030

The first day of Spring is March 21, when the Sun entered the zodiacal sign of Aries.

Easter is the first Sunday after the first full moon after March 21.

Year	Date of 1st Full moon after March 21	Easter Sunday Date
1997	Monday, March 24, 1997	Sunday, March 30, 1997
1998	Saturday, April 11, 1998	Sunday, April 12, 1998
1999	Wednesday, March 31, 1999	Sunday, April 04, 1999
2000	Tuesday, April 18, 2000	Sunday, April 23, 2000
2001	Sunday, April 08, 2001	Sunday, April 15, 2001
2002	Thursday, March 28, 2002	Sunday, March 31, 2002
2003	Wednesday, April 16, 2003	Sunday, April 20, 2003
2004	Monday, April 05, 2004	Sunday, April 11, 2004
2005	Friday, March 25, 2005	Sunday, March 27, 2005
2006	Thursday, April 13, 2006	Sunday, April 16, 2006
2007	Monday, April 02, 2007	Sunday, April 08, 2007
2008	Friday, March 21, 2008	Sunday, March 23, 2008
2009	Thursday, April 09, 2009	Sunday, April 12, 2009
2010	Tuesday, March 30, 2010	Sunday, April 04, 2010
2011	Monday, April 18, 2011	Sunday, April 24, 2011
2012	Friday, April 06, 2012	Sunday, April 08, 2012
2013	Wednesday, March 27, 2013	Sunday, March 31, 2013
2014	Tuesday, April 15, 2014	Sunday, April 20, 2014
2015	Saturday, April 04, 2015	Sunday, April 05, 2015
2016	Wednesday, March 23, 2016	Sunday, March 27, 2016
2017	Tuesday, April 11, 2017	Sunday, April 16, 2017
2018	Saturday, March 31, 2018	Sunday, April 01, 2018
2019	Friday, April 19, 2019	Sunday, April 21, 2019
2020	Wednesday, April 08, 2020	Sunday, April 12, 2020
2021	Sunday, March 28, 2021	Sunday, April 04, 2021
2022	Saturday, April 16, 2022	Sunday, April 17, 2022
2023	Thursday, April 06, 2023	Sunday, April 09, 2023
2024	Monday, March 25, 2024	Sunday, March 31, 2024
2025	Sunday, April 13, 2025	Sunday, April 20, 2025
2026	Thursday, April 02, 2026	Sunday, April 05, 2026
2027	Monday, March 22, 2027	Sunday, March 28, 2027
2028	Sunday, April 09, 2028	Sunday, April 16, 2028
2029	Friday, March 30, 2029	Sunday, April 01, 2029
2030	Thursday, April 18, 2030	Sunday, April 21, 2030

**Appendix G: Egwu Akpütakpü na Ünöüzü Schedules, 2011 – 2022**

### Agülü Quarter: Önwa Asatö Events Schedule, 2011 - 2016

Event	Date	Day
Önwa Asatö	Wednesday, October 26, 2011	Eke
Full moon	Thursday, November 10, 2011	Nkwö
Akpütakpü – Agülü	Tuesday, November 15, 2011	Eke
Ovbuvbe – Ümüögbü	Wednesday, November 16, 2011	Oye
Ugwu Nwoköji – Ümüanaga	Thursday, November 17, 2011	Avbö
Ngene Onyeachönam – Ümübeelee	Saturday, November 19, 2011	Eke
Önwa Asatö	Monday, October 15, 2012	Nkwö
Full moon	Monday, October 29, 2012	Oye
Akpütakpü – Agülü	Thursday, November 01, 2012	Eke
Ovbuvbe – Ümüögbü	Friday, November 02, 2012	Oye
Ugwu Nwoköji – Ümüanaga	Saturday, November 03, 2012	Avbö
Ngene Onyeachönam – Ümübeelee	Monday, November 05, 2012	Eke
Önwa Asatö	Sunday, November 03, 2013	Nkwö
Full moon	Sunday, November 17, 2013	Oye
Akpütakpü – Agülü	Wednesday, November 20, 2013	Eke
Ovbuvbe – Ümüögbü	Thursday, November 21, 2013	Oye
Ugwu Nwoköji – Ümüanaga	Friday, November 22, 2013	Avbö
Ngene Onyeachönam – Ümübeelee	Sunday, November 24, 2013	Eke
Önwa Asatö	Thursday, October 23, 2014	Oye
Full moon	Thursday, November 06, 2014	Nkwö
Akpütakpü – Agülü	Tuesday, November 11, 2014	Eke
Ovbuvbe – Ümüögbü	Wednesday, November 12, 2014	Oye
Ugwu Nwoköji – Ümüanaga	Thursday, November 13, 2014	Avbö
Ngene Onyeachönam – Ümübeelee	Saturday, November 15, 2014	Eke
Önwa Asatö	Tuesday, October 13, 2015	Eke
Full moon	Tuesday, October 27, 2015	Avbö
Akpütakpü – Agülü	Monday, November 02, 2015	Eke
Ovbuvbe – Ümüögbü	Tuesday, November 03, 2015	Oye
Ugwu Nwoköji – Ümüanaga	Wednesday, November 04, 2015	Avbö
Ngene Onyeachönam – Ümübeelee	Friday, November 06, 2015	Eke
Önwa Asatö	Sunday, October 30, 2016	Nkwö
Full moon	Monday, November 14, 2016	Avbö
Akpütakpü – Agülü	Wednesday, November 16, 2016	Eke
Ovbuvbe – Ümüögbü	Thursday, November 17, 2016	Oye
Ugwu Nwoköji – Ümüanaga	Friday, November 18, 2016	Avbö
Ngene Onyeachönam – Ümübeelee	Sunday, November 20, 2016	Eke

### Agülü Quarter: Önwa Asatö Events Schedule, 2017 - 2022

Event	Date	Day
Önwa Asatö	Thursday, October 19, 2017	Oye
Full moon	Saturday, November 04, 2017	Oye
Akpütakpü – Agülü	Tuesday, November 07, 2017	Eke
Ovbuvbe – Ümüögbü	Wednesday, November 08, 2017	Oye
Ugwu Nwoköji – Ümüanaga	Thursday, November 09, 2017	Avbö
Ngene Onyeachönam – Ümübeelee	Saturday, November 11, 2017	Eke
Önwa Asatö	Wednesday, November 07, 2018	Oye
Full moon	Friday, November 23, 2018	Oye
Akpütakpü – Agülü	Monday, November 26, 2018	Eke
Ovbuvbe – Ümüögbü	Tuesday, November 27, 2018	Oye
Ugwu Nwoköji – Ümüanaga	Wednesday, November 28, 2018	Avbö
Ngene Onyeachönam – Ümübeelee	Friday, November 30, 2018	Eke
Önwa Asatö	Monday, October 28, 2019	Eke
Full moon	Tuesday, November 12, 2019	Nkwö
Akpütakpü – Agülü	Sunday, November 17, 2019	Eke
Ovbuvbe – Ümüögbü	Monday, November 18, 2019	Oye
Ugwu Nwoköji – Ümüanaga	Tuesday, November 19, 2019	Avbö
Ngene Onyeachönam – Ümübeelee	Thursday, November 21, 2019	Eke
Önwa Asatö	Friday, October 16, 2020	Avbö
Full moon	Saturday, October 31, 2020	Oye
Akpütakpü – Agülü	Tuesday, November 03, 2020	Eke
Ovbuvbe – Ümüögbü	Wednesday, November 04, 2020	Oye
Ugwu Nwoköji – Ümüanaga	Thursday, November 05, 2020	Avbö
Ngene Onyeachönam – Ümübeelee	Saturday, November 07, 2020	Eke
Önwa Asatö	Thursday, November 04, 2021	Avbö
Full moon	Friday, November 19, 2021	Oye
Akpütakpü – Agülü	Monday, November 22, 2021	Eke
Ovbuvbe – Ümüögbü	Tuesday, November 23, 2021	Oye
Ugwu Nwoköji – Ümüanaga	Wednesday, November 24, 2021	Avbö
Ngene Onyeachönam – Ümübeelee	Friday, November 26, 2021	Eke
Önwa Asatö	Tuesday, October 25, 2022	Oye
Full moon	Tuesday, November 08, 2022	Nkwö
Akpütakpü – Agülü	Sunday, November 13, 2022	Eke
Ovbuvbe – Ümüögbü	Monday, November 14, 2022	Oye
Ugwu Nwoköji – Ümüanaga	Tuesday, November 15, 2022	Avbö
Ngene Onyeachönam – Ümübeelee	Thursday, November 17, 2022	Eke

### Önwa Asatö Dates & Schedule 2011 - 2013

Izu Önwa	Days after moon day	2011	Day	2012	Day	2013	Day
	0	26-Oct-2011	Eke	15-Oct-2012	Nkwö	3-Nov-2013	Nkwö
	1	27-Oct-2011	Oye	16-Oct-2012	Eke	4-Nov-2013	Eke
1	2	28-Oct-2011	Avbö	17-Oct-2012	Oye	5-Nov-2013	Oye
	3	29-Oct-2011	Nkwö	18-Oct-2012	Avbö	6-Nov-2013	Avbö
	4	30-Oct-2011	Eke	19-Oct-2012	Nkwö	7-Nov-2013	Nkwö
	5	31-Oct-2011	Oye	20-Oct-2012	Eke	8-Nov-2013	Eke
2	6	1-Nov-2011	Avbö	21-Oct-2012	Oye	9-Nov-2013	Oye
	7	2-Nov-2011	Nkwö	22-Oct-2012	Avbö	10-Nov-2013	Avbö
	8	3-Nov-2011	Eke	23-Oct-2012	Nkwö	11-Nov-2013	Nkwö
	9	4-Nov-2011	Oye	24-Oct-2012	Eke	12-Nov-2013	Eke
3	10	5-Nov-2011	Avbö	25-Oct-2012	Oye	13-Nov-2013	Oye
	11	6-Nov-2011	Nkwö	26-Oct-2012	Avbö	14-Nov-2013	Avbö
	12	7-Nov-2011	Eke	27-Oct-2012	Nkwö	15-Nov-2013	Nkwö
	13	8-Nov-2011	Oye	28-Oct-2012	Eke	16-Nov-2013	Eke
4	14	9-Nov-2011	Avbö	29-Oct-2012	Oye	17-Nov-2013	Oye
	15	10-Nov-2011	Nkwö	30-Oct-2012	Avbö	18-Nov-2013	Avbö
	16	11-Nov-2011	Eke	31-Oct-2012	Nkwö	19-Nov-2013	Nkwö
	17	12-Nov-2011	Oye	1-Nov-2012	Eke	20-Nov-2013	Eke
5	18	13-Nov-2011	Avbö	2-Nov-2012	Oye	21-Nov-2013	Oye
	19	14-Nov-2011	Nkwö	3-Nov-2012	Avbö	22-Nov-2013	Avbö
	20	15-Nov-2011	Eke	4-Nov-2012	Nkwö	23-Nov-2013	Nkwö
	21	16-Nov-2011	Oye	5-Nov-2012	Eke	24-Nov-2013	Eke
6	22	17-Nov-2011	Avbö	6-Nov-2012	Oye	25-Nov-2013	Oye
	23	18-Nov-2011	Nkwö	7-Nov-2012	Avbö	26-Nov-2013	Avbö
	24	19-Nov-2011	Eke	8-Nov-2012	Nkwö	27-Nov-2013	Nkwö
	25	20-Nov-2011	Oye	9-Nov-2012	Eke	28-Nov-2013	Eke
7	26	21-Nov-2011	Avbö	10-Nov-2012	Oye	29-Nov-2013	Oye
	27	22-Nov-2011	Nkwö	11-Nov-2012	Avbö	30-Nov-2013	Avbö
	28	23-Nov-2011	Eke	12-Nov-2012	Nkwö	1-Dec-2013	Nkwö
	29	24-Nov-2011	Oye	13-Nov-2012	Eke	2-Dec-2013	Eke
	30	25-Nov-2011	Avbö			3-Dec-2013	Oye
9th moon		25-Nov-2011	Avbö	13-Nov-2012	Eke	3-Dec-2013	Oye

**Önwa Asatö Dates & Schedule 2014 - 2016**

Izu Önwa	Days after moon day	2014	Day	2015	Day	2016	Day
	0	23-Oct-2014	Oye	13-Oct-2015	Eke	30-Oct-2016	Nkwö
	1	24-Oct-2014	Avbö	14-Oct-2015	Oye	31-Oct-2016	Eke
1	2	25-Oct-2014	Nkwö	15-Oct-2015	Avbö	1-Nov-2016	Oye
	3	26-Oct-2014	Eke	16-Oct-2015	Nkwö	2-Nov-2016	Avbö
	4	27-Oct-2014	Oye	17-Oct-2015	Eke	3-Nov-2016	Nkwö
	5	28-Oct-2014	Avbö	18-Oct-2015	Oye	4-Nov-2016	Eke
2	6	29-Oct-2014	Nkwö	19-Oct-2015	Avbö	5-Nov-2016	Oye
	7	30-Oct-2014	Eke	20-Oct-2015	Nkwö	6-Nov-2016	Avbö
	8	31-Oct-2014	Oye	21-Oct-2015	Eke	7-Nov-2016	Nkwö
	9	1-Nov-2014	Avbö	22-Oct-2015	Oye	8-Nov-2016	Eke
3	10	2-Nov-2014	Nkwö	23-Oct-2015	Avbö	9-Nov-2016	Oye
	11	3-Nov-2014	Eke	24-Oct-2015	Nkwö	10-Nov-2016	Avbö
	12	4-Nov-2014	Oye	25-Oct-2015	Eke	11-Nov-2016	Nkwö
	13	5-Nov-2014	Avbö	26-Oct-2015	Oye	12-Nov-2016	Eke
4	14	6-Nov-2014	Nkwö	27-Oct-2015	Avbö	13-Nov-2016	Oye
	15	7-Nov-2014	Eke	28-Oct-2015	Nkwö	14-Nov-2016	Avbö
	16	8-Nov-2014	Oye	29-Oct-2015	Eke	15-Nov-2016	Nkwö
	17	9-Nov-2014	Avbö	30-Oct-2015	Oye	16-Nov-2016	Eke
5	18	10-Nov-2014	Nkwö	31-Oct-2015	Avbö	17-Nov-2016	Oye
	19	11-Nov-2014	Eke	1-Nov-2015	Nkwö	18-Nov-2016	Avbö
	20	12-Nov-2014	Oye	2-Nov-2015	Eke	19-Nov-2016	Nkwö
	21	13-Nov-2014	Avbö	3-Nov-2015	Oye	20-Nov-2016	Eke
6	22	14-Nov-2014	Nkwö	4-Nov-2015	Avbö	21-Nov-2016	Oye
	23	15-Nov-2014	Eke	5-Nov-2015	Nkwö	22-Nov-2016	Avbö
	24	16-Nov-2014	Oye	6-Nov-2015	Eke	23-Nov-2016	Nkwö
	25	17-Nov-2014	Avbö	7-Nov-2015	Oye	24-Nov-2016	Eke
7	26	18-Nov-2014	Nkwö	8-Nov-2015	Avbö	25-Nov-2016	Oye
	27	19-Nov-2014	Eke	9-Nov-2015	Nkwö	26-Nov-2016	Avbö
	28	20-Nov-2014	Oye	10-Nov-2015	Eke	27-Nov-2016	Nkwö
	29	21-Nov-2014	Avbö			28-Nov-2016	Eke
9th moon		22-Nov-2014	Nkwö	11-Nov-2015	Oye	29-Nov-2016	Oye

**Önwa Asatö Dates & Schedules 2017 - 2019**

Izu önwa	Days after moon day	2017	Day	2018	Day	2019	Day
	0	19-Oct-2017	Oye	7-Nov-2018	Oye	28-Oct-2019	Eke
	1	20-Oct-2017	Avbö	8-Nov-2018	Avbö	29-Oct-2019	Oye
1	2	21-Oct-2017	Nkwö	9-Nov-2018	Nkwö	30-Oct-2019	Avbö
	3	22-Oct-2017	Eke	10-Nov-2018	Eke	31-Oct-2019	Nkwö
	4	23-Oct-2017	Oye	11-Nov-2018	Oye	1-Nov-2019	Eke
	5	24-Oct-2017	Avbö	12-Nov-2018	Avbö	2-Nov-2019	Oye
2	6	25-Oct-2017	Nkwö	13-Nov-2018	Nkwö	3-Nov-2019	Avbö
	7	26-Oct-2017	Eke	14-Nov-2018	Eke	4-Nov-2019	Nkwö
	8	27-Oct-2017	Oye	15-Nov-2018	Oye	5-Nov-2019	Eke
	9	28-Oct-2017	Avbö	16-Nov-2018	Avbö	6-Nov-2019	Oye
3	10	29-Oct-2017	Nkwö	17-Nov-2018	Nkwö	7-Nov-2019	Avbö
	11	30-Oct-2017	Eke	18-Nov-2018	Eke	8-Nov-2019	Nkwö
	12	31-Oct-2017	Oye	19-Nov-2018	Oye	9-Nov-2019	Eke
	13	1-Nov-2017	Avbö	20-Nov-2018	Avbö	10-Nov-2019	Oye
4	14	2-Nov-2017	Nkwö	21-Nov-2018	Nkwö	11-Nov-2019	Avbö
	15	3-Nov-2017	Eke	22-Nov-2018	Eke	12-Nov-2019	Nkwö
	16	4-Nov-2017	Oye	23-Nov-2018	Oye	13-Nov-2019	Eke
	17	5-Nov-2017	Avbö	24-Nov-2018	Avbö	14-Nov-2019	Oye
5	18	6-Nov-2017	Nkwö	25-Nov-2018	Nkwö	15-Nov-2019	Avbö
	19	7-Nov-2017	Eke	26-Nov-2018	Eke	16-Nov-2019	Nkwö
	20	8-Nov-2017	Oye	27-Nov-2018	Oye	17-Nov-2019	Eke
	21	9-Nov-2017	Avbö	28-Nov-2018	Avbö	18-Nov-2019	Oye
6	22	10-Nov-2017	Nkwö	29-Nov-2018	Nkwö	19-Nov-2019	Avbö
	23	11-Nov-2017	Eke	30-Nov-2018	Eke	20-Nov-2019	Nkwö
	24	12-Nov-2017	Oye	1-Dec-2018	Oye	21-Nov-2019	Eke
	25	13-Nov-2017	Avbö	2-Dec-2018	Avbö	22-Nov-2019	Oye
7	26	14-Nov-2017	Nkwö	3-Dec-2018	Nkwö	23-Nov-2019	Avbö
	27	15-Nov-2017	Eke	4-Dec-2018	Eke	24-Nov-2019	Nkwö
	28	16-Nov-2017	Oye	5-Dec-2018	Oye	25-Nov-2019	Eke
	29	17-Nov-2017	Avbö	6-Dec-2018	Avbö		
9th moon		18-Nov-2017	Nkwö	7-Dec-2018	Nkwö	26-Nov-2019	Oye



**Önwa Asatö Dates & Schedules 2020 - 2022**

Izu önwa	Days after moon day	2020	Day	2021	Day	2022	Day
	0	16-Oct-2020	Avbö	4-Nov-2021	Avbö	25-Oct-2022	Oye
	1	17-Oct-2020	Nkwö	5-Nov-2021	Nkwö	26-Oct-2022	Avbö
1	2	18-Oct-2020	Eke	6-Nov-2021	Eke	27-Oct-2022	Nkwö
	3	19-Oct-2020	Oye	7-Nov-2021	Oye	28-Oct-2022	Eke
	4	20-Oct-2020	Avbö	8-Nov-2021	Avbö	29-Oct-2022	Oye
	5	21-Oct-2020	Nkwö	9-Nov-2021	Nkwö	30-Oct-2022	Avbö
2	6	22-Oct-2020	Eke	10-Nov-2021	Eke	31-Oct-2022	Nkwö
	7	23-Oct-2020	Oye	11-Nov-2021	Oye	1-Nov-2022	Eke
	8	24-Oct-2020	Avbö	12-Nov-2021	Avbö	2-Nov-2022	Oye
	9	25-Oct-2020	Nkwö	13-Nov-2021	Nkwö	3-Nov-2022	Avbö
3	10	26-Oct-2020	Eke	14-Nov-2021	Eke	4-Nov-2022	Nkwö
	11	27-Oct-2020	Oye	15-Nov-2021	Oye	5-Nov-2022	Eke
	12	28-Oct-2020	Avbö	16-Nov-2021	Avbö	6-Nov-2022	Oye
	13	29-Oct-2020	Nkwö	17-Nov-2021	Nkwö	7-Nov-2022	Avbö
4	14	30-Oct-2020	Eke	18-Nov-2021	Eke	8-Nov-2022	Nkwö
	15	31-Oct-2020	Oye	19-Nov-2021	Oye	9-Nov-2022	Eke
	16	1-Nov-2020	Avbö	20-Nov-2021	Avbö	10-Nov-2022	Oye
	17	2-Nov-2020	Nkwö	21-Nov-2021	Nkwö	11-Nov-2022	Avbö
5	18	3-Nov-2020	Eke	22-Nov-2021	Eke	12-Nov-2022	Nkwö
	19	4-Nov-2020	Oye	23-Nov-2021	Oye	13-Nov-2022	Eke
	20	5-Nov-2020	Avbö	24-Nov-2021	Avbö	14-Nov-2022	Oye
	21	6-Nov-2020	Nkwö	25-Nov-2021	Nkwö	15-Nov-2022	Avbö
6	22	7-Nov-2020	Eke	26-Nov-2021	Eke	16-Nov-2022	Nkwö
	23	8-Nov-2020	Oye	27-Nov-2021	Oye	17-Nov-2022	Eke
	24	9-Nov-2020	Avbö	28-Nov-2021	Avbö	18-Nov-2022	Oye
	25	10-Nov-2020	Nkwö	29-Nov-2021	Nkwö	19-Nov-2022	Avbö
7	26	11-Nov-2020	Eke	30-Nov-2021	Eke	20-Nov-2022	Nkwö
	27	12-Nov-2020	Oye	1-Dec-2021	Oye	21-Nov-2022	Eke
	28	13-Nov-2020	Avbö	2-Dec-2021	Avbö	22-Nov-2022	Oye
	29	14-Nov-2020	Nkwö	3-Dec-2021	Nkwö		
9th moon		15-Nov-2020	Eke	4-Dec-2021	Eke	23-Nov-2022	Avbö

## Who Are the Öka People Back Cover



Some writers have worked hard to find a primordial home for Öka people. This booklet is dedicated to those Öka people who may have been misled to believe that their ancestors came from somewhere and that their descent is in the male line.

Öka tradition has it that: (1) Öka ful efu! (Öka grew out of the soil of Öka), (2) Enwere vbe nna nna (Their descent is in the female line), and (3) Onwere İka eshivbe bİa (There is no history that they came from somewhere else).

What? Yes, Öka grew out of the soil of Öka, their descent is in the female line and there is no history that they came from somewhere else! Could this be poetic fancy or verifiable historical fact? Both, because poetic language is used to express a verifiable historical fact! How come? The booklet demonstrates these facts beyond cavil. Simply put, the statement “Enwere vbe nna nna” says that the descent of Öka people is in the female line – not in the male line – the kin being composed of a female ancestor and her children! It is when descent is in the male line that we can have nna nna (father’s father).

Even in today’s Öka patriarchal society, we may ask: (1) Why do Öka men continue to genuflect when greeting the daughters of their clan? (2) Why do Öka men invite their married daughters (Ümü-Ökpü) to come and settle seemingly intractable disputes in the clan? (3) Why do Öka men invite their married daughters (Ümü-Ökpü) to come and pray for the clan when the latter’s survival is at stake?

The tart response to these queries is invariably: Ö dü növbü shite n’İgbİİ = It has been the practice from time immemorial. This response shows how ignorant we are about the roots of our customs, and provides a perfect idol behind which we hide to mask our ignorance concerning our past!

But the simple answer to these queries is that these practices are a survival of the matriarchate, where the daughter is next to the mother in the rulership of the clan or family. We are now able to fathom the source of the power wielded by Ümü-Ada and Ümü-Ökpü of old. The powerful Awo-mmili women’s group was a residue of the old matriarchal epoch. Thus:

- (1) Öka of old was a matriarchy;
- (2) Öka families whose descent is in the female line are the core Öka people – Ökpülnana, Öka ful efu, Ndü enwere nna nna, children of the mother!
- (3) Öka families whose descent is in the male line are accretions to the core Öka people – Öka efuro efu, Ndü nwel nna nna, children of the father!

Some Öka folks chide their peers (ulo) about their descent from a woman, when descent from a man is the true Öka badge of honor. The untutored son-of-the-mother usually developed cold feet and had no argument to counter the humiliating banter of his son-of-the-father peer. Had the son-of-the-mother known the truth, he would have told the loud-mouthed son-of-the-father that:

Onye e kulu bİa İe İvbe ö kwöö aka n’abö,  
Onye nwe nli, ö ga-aghüzİ arü?

When the guest washes both hands before eating, should his host and owner of the food go and take a bath? Yes, because the son-of-the-father is a guest at the table of the son-of-the-mother! In Öka, matriarchy preceded patriarchy and the son-of-the-mother pre-dates the son-of-the-father. It was Ümü-Nne first, before Ümü-Nna.