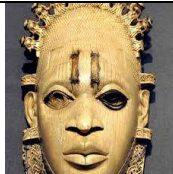


Religion

The people of Edo's beliefs were centred on a creator god named Osanobua and his many children. It was believed after his death, Osanobua would decide their fate. They would either be reincarnated as another person or would join the spirit world. Religion was particularly important to the people of the Kingdom of Benin. Ceremonies were led by an Ohen and were intended to make the Oba seem powerful and great, as well as to worship the gods.

Artefacts

Masks were made for use in ritual ceremonies and represented a link to the spirit world.



Coral beads had a special significance in traditional Edo customs. Chiefs would wear necklaces of coral beads and the Oba would wear necklaces and collars.



The double bell or Egogo, was used by Oba to scare away evil spirits during ceremonies.



Key Vocabulary

Ogiso	The title used by the early rulers of Igodomigodo. It means 'kings of the sky'. There was believed to be 31 Ogiso rulers.
Oba	The title used by Eweka. Eweka was from the Yoruba people and Oba is their word for 'king'
Edo	The name given to the kingdom of Igodomigodo by Oba Ewaka. The people also became known as the Edo people.
Yoruba	The name of the people from the holy city of Ife. The histories of the Edo and Yoruba people are closely linked
Ohen	A priest who performed religious ceremonies
animists	People who believe that humans, animals and objects all have souls or spirits.
brass	A yellowy metal made of a mixture of copper and zinc.



Key Events

AD 400	The Yoruba people start using iron tools, which enable them to clear the forestland effectively. Villages developed and chiefs emerged.
AD 600	The area becomes the Ife Kingdom one of the earliest kingdoms in the West African Rainforest.
AD 900	The Kingdom of Benin begins to develop and boundaries are established around the region called Igodomigodo is what now Nigeria is.
AD 1091	The Edo people were ruled by the Ogiso, which means 'kings of the sky'.
AD 1100	The last Ogiso of Igodomigodo, Owodo, dies and there is nobody to rule.
AD 1180	Eweka becomes the new ruler and changes the name Igodomigodo to Edo. He calls himself the Oba.
AD 1300-1700	The 'golden age' of Edo. It has a large powerful army and skilled craftspeople
AD 1489	It was only when Portuguese made contact with the kingdom of Benin that the name 'Benin' began to be used.

Kingdom of Benin