

GOVERNMENT OF THE
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

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FILE No.	21943	VOLUME No.	I
SUBJECT:	REPORT ON UKPE - SOBO CLAN BY L. E. H. FELLOWS		
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Nigeria

No. B.P. 6965/54.

Secretary's Office,
Southern Provinces,
Nigeria,

All communications should be addressed

THE SECRETARY,
SOUTHERN PROVINCES,
ENUGU, NIGERIA

(and not to officers by name) and the
number given above should be quoted.



Enugu, 31st December, 1930. 492

The Honourable
The Chief Secretary to the Government,
L. A. S. O. S.

Intelligence Report Ukpe Clan of the Sobo
Sub-Tribe : Warri Province.

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With reference to my letter No. S.P. 6965/24 of the
10th of December, 1930, I am directed by the Lieutenant-
Governor to inform you that owing to certain further
correspondence from the Resident, Warri Province, and to
certain representations made by the Resident during his
recent visit to Enugu His Honour has cancelled his
previous sanction contained in paragraph 8(d) of His
Honour's minute, a copy of which was sent you under cover
of my letter under reference, and substituted therefor
sanction for the following :-

- A | (a) A Clan Council (Odogun) Native Court of
B Grade to be constituted by warrant listing
members by name.
- (b) A Clan Native Court of C. Grade incorporating
village group councils which when sitting
separately at village group centres are to be
granted restricted powers equal to those of a
Grade D Native Court. This Native Court to be
constituted by a separate warrant and not to be
incorporated in the warrant for the constitu-
tion of the Clan Council Court.

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T. S. ...

H. J. M. ...
Acting Secretary,
Southern Provinces

their customs shows that they were less prone to the more brutal habits, such as cannibalism and human sacrifice, which are common amongst so many of the Southern Nigerian tribes. They are naturally independent and intolerant of any rule. They showed little respect for their own chiefs or leaders and as soon as any man set himself up as a ruler they generally deposed or killed him. They never appear to have been conquered by any tribe and though they probably came indirectly under the Oba of Benin, this appears to have been a nominal sovereignty. They have quickly overcome their initial fear of the European and are rapidly adapting themselves to the new order. Education and clerical work appeal to them and they are discarding many of their old laws and customs. They display a lack of stability and a love of show. They are great spend-thrifts and have the natural penchant of the Sobos for endless litigation. It cannot be said that they show a very high moral standard, theft and adultery being common offences.

Dress.

10. The dress of an Ukepe on ordinary occasions is a cloth fastened round the waist. On special occasions he will wear a shirt over the cloth and a felt or straw hat ornamented with feathers. European clothes are becoming more general and it is not uncommon to meet a native in full European dress in a bush village. The ordinary Ukepe woman wears no ornament and is not particular in her dress. Small children go about naked. Girls at the age of seven years and boys at the age of ten years wear a small cloth. In the old days it was customary for boys and girls to go naked till they were about seventeen years of age.

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22 December, 1941

Intelligence Report Ukpe Clan of the Sobo
Sub-Tribe: Warri Province.

The Honourable
The Secretary,
Southern Provinces,
Enugu.

I am directed by the Officer Administering
the Government to acknowledge the receipt of
your letter No.S.P.6965/24 of the 10th of
December, transmitting an Assessment Report on
the Ukpe-Sobo sub-tribe in Warri Province,
together with comments thereon, and to say that
His Excellency will await with interest the
outcome of the reorganisation of Warri Provi
which has been approved by His Honour.

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[2. I am to add that His Excellency consid
that the general instructions regarding
assessment reports given in paragraphs 2 and
11 of His Honour's minute of the 1st of
December are admirable.]

Set to
03200/41

For a Burns

Acting Chief Secretary to the Government.

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92, para 11 of 915 and 99 para 2
to 03200
Done 11/12/41

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Previously the hair used to be worn twisted into a number of small plaits and a handkerchief fastened round the head was worn by men and women. This custom has largely died out and the head-dress is only occasionally seen. It used to be customary to file the teeth at about twenty years of age but this practice has now ceased.

Physical Type.

11. The Ukpe is a thick-set and sturdy type. This is due to the work of climbing palm trees and cutting the heads of fruit which has developed his muscular strength. Physically he is not so strong and quickly succumbs to pneumonia and other diseases. They are not tall as a race, the average height being about five feet five inches. They are of pure negro stock and the colouring of the skin is black, though in some cases, owing to inter-marriage with the Jekris, the type has been somewhat altered and a lighter shade is found. An Ukpe will often call himself Jekri even if he has only a slight strain of Jekri blood.

Ukpe
Jekri

Houses.

12. The ordinary Ukpe house shows little comfort. The usual type is a two-room dwelling made of mud and sticks and roofed with palm branches. Houses are generally built in a line three or four adjoining. The furniture is scanty consisting of a bed made of bamboo and mats on the floor. Seats of mud are constructed in the walls. A dressing of clay, charcoal and white chalk mixed, is rubbed over the walls as a finish. A lamp consisted of a bowl filled with palm oil and a piece of cloth as a wick. With the advent of money a better type of house is being built in many places, the floor being made of cement and the roof of corrugated iron. Furniture of a European pattern such as chairs and tables are

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used and cups, saucers and glasses are becoming the fashion.

HISTORICAL.

tradition.



13. The earliest accepted event, from which the development of the Ukpe clan can be more or less accurately traced, is the death of the one and only king OGHEI. The date of the rising of the Ukpes and the murder of OGHEI, whose name became a bye-word for every form of cruelty, can be placed somewhere about 150 years ago. At this time the Ukpes were living at their capital city Ozerukpe, the site of which can still be seen near the Ajayube River beyond Oha. Prior to this their migrations cannot be clearly traced and are clouded by myth and legend. There is one story that there were two brothers Ukpe and Uye. They quarrelled at a meeting when Ukpe said "Enro Ukpe Ukpsta", which might be translated "what I say, I mean". This phrase is remembered to this day by the Eferun clan. Uye went to Eferun, founding the Eferun clan and Ukpe went to Ozerukpe founding the Ukpe clan. That there was some affinity between these two clans is substantiated in the past from the fact that Ukpe never raided Eferun or vice versa in cases of head-hunting by the Igboes for sacrificial purposes. The Ukpes themselves say that they came from Ukporikpere near to Usoro, which is in the Ishoko country, and from here they say they migrated to Ekwesi. While they were camped at Ekwesi one Orue a hunter discovered the site of Ozerukpe and reported that it was suitable for a town. Ozerukpe was founded and he gave his name to one of the streets, which can still be pointed out.

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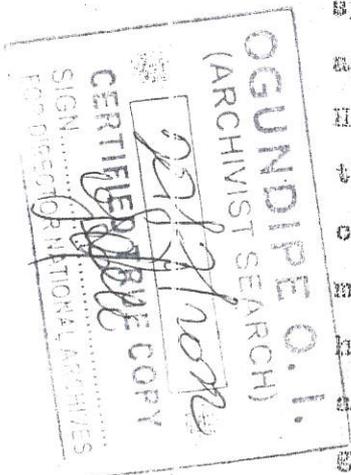
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14. One fact however emerges clearly from this collection of myth and legend, namely that the migration of the Ukpes has been steadily in a westward direction from the Ass and Niger Rivers to the Ethiopian and Benue Rivers. It seems probable that originally the Ukpes came from Benue parts. During one of the early upheavals and migrations a family or clan was driven from Benue towards Asaba and thence came down river to the Patani parts. After settling near to Uwere they again broke up and moved westward. There is no legend or tradition to substantiate this theory but there is an unquestionable linguistic and religious connection. The equivalents for such words as fire, water, wood, food, are exactly similar in Bini and Ukpes, and it is with little difficulty that an Ukpes will learn the Bini language. There is also the religious ceremony of the shaving of the head at the death of an Oba which was always performed by the Ukpes.

15. The migration of the Ukpes appears to have been peaceful for the most part and they encountered no opposition. War is one of the principal factors in the development of a national spirit and the absence of this factor probably accounts for the early break-up of the clan. Having no enemies outside, they took to fighting themselves and quickly scattered from their mother city never to return. Throughout their history is marked by inter-family feuds. They never appear to have been able to obey or tolerate one ruler for any length of time, and the family or village group with its local council has been the real centre of life.

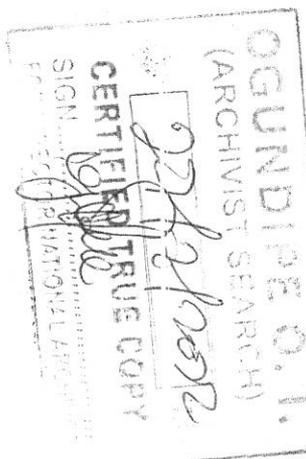
16. The city of Orerukpe, the mother city of



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the Ukpes, was a place of considerable size. It had four main streets, which can still be traced on the ground, radiating from a central point, the ancient market place, in straight lines approximating to the four points of the compass. The streets extended for nearly a mile from the centre which would make the city about two square miles in area. The four streets were named respectively starting from the ^{north} ~~the~~ Orue, Ugoro, Osezi, and Kvrake. These four streets mark the division of the Ukpé clan. The king by name Osezi, who ruled over the city, was remarkable for the pleasure he took in acts of extreme brutality. Many stories are told about him. He is reported to have ordered people to collect, when a large tree was being felled, in order to see them crushed by the weight. On another occasion he ordered a number of people to break a huge bar of iron end, when they failed, he killed them. The people of Ugoro street however accomplished this by a ruse. They filed the bar through in the night and filled the cutting with rubber. The next day they broke the bar and saved their lives and those of their family. At last the people became tired of this treatment and decided to kill the king. This they accomplished in an ingenious manner. They dug a pit, covered it with sticks and mats, placed the king's chair ready for him, and called a meeting. He fell into the pit and died cursing the Ukpés while the people poured boiling oil over him. After the murder of the king the people killed his sons and drove the rest of his family away. They went to the southern western part of the district and settled



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at Jeddé, Bokodo and Agbo. Here they are still to be found, and they acknowledge to-day that they came from Osezi street and are descended from the king's people.

17. There were four leading Okakurus at the time of the king's murder, Ogwere of Usezo street, Idoroni of Orue street, and Eruckwo and Ogoni of Eyreke street. They re-divided Uke omitting Osezi's people. From this time at any division of spoils Eyreke street took half, to be divided between the people of Eruckwo and Ogoni, and the remaining half was divided between the people of Orue street and Usezo street. This division is still recognised. After the murder of the king Idoroni became the most important man. He made Okakurus and Oletus and introduced from Benin the insignia of office. It was he who used to officiate at the installation ceremonies fastening on the necklets and anklets of coral beads, which he obtained from Benin. This privilege remained with the family of Idoroni.

18. It would appear that about this time Uke came indirectly under the Oba of Benin. Any Oletu, who wished to become an Okakuru, first obtained a sword which was given to him by the Oba. Some of these swords are still in the possession of chiefs. Again the Oba appears to have exercised considerable power in the government of Uke. He seized and took to Benin one Ujeru, an Okakuru, on the information of Eruckwo another Okakuru, on the ground that he was becoming too powerful.

19. Idoroni continued to rule at Owerukpe as the leading Okakuru for some years, but after a time the jealousy of the people was awakened, as it was feared that Idoroni would make himself king.

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Civil war broke out in Orunkpe between Evreke and Orue streets. The whole town was burnt down and totally destroyed and the inhabitants scattered. Idoroni fled to Jeta-Ode.

20. Some of the people of Evreke street went to Ogole on the Ajayube River and an attempt was made to build another city but proved a failure and the various families migrated to different parts. The people of Orue street went about 15 miles to the west and settled at Bereji. The people of Usoro street under the leadership of Ogwere went to Oha and Anukpe and what is now Opele. The people of Evreke street split into two families under Bruckwo and Ogoni and migrated to Ilune and Aghalokpe. After this followed a period marked by local feuds and a rapid increase in population of the various village groups. There was no individual ruler in Uke during this period, which corresponds roughly with the first half of the Nineteenth Century, but each village group developed under its own Olotu. Somewhere about the middle of the Nineteenth Century another effort was made to unite the Uke clan under one ruler. This resulted in the appointment of Digor, an Okakuru, a descendant of Bruckwo, as head of the clan. The headquarters were established at Ogole and all matters of peace and war appertaining to the whole clan were settled there. Olotus were appointed by him and the old regime was to an extent restored. It was not however fated to last for any length of time. Orolor, an Okakuru, a descendant of Ogwere and head of the Anukpe family refused to recognised the leadership of Digor. A war ensued and Orolor was killed, and

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his family, having lost their chief, remained resentful and aloof and the Ukpes were still divided.

21. At this juncture it was apparent that the old system of the rule of the Okakurus, based as it was on wealth, had been a failure, and the Ukpes evidently decided that some new system would have to be evolved. It was then that they went to the Okpakus and qualification for ruler of the Ukpes ceased to be a hereditary one based on wealth but became one of age merely. Diemor was deposed and Onovan the eldest Ukpe was elected as ruler. A house was built for him at Ojede and there he moved from his village of Egbo and held court and settled all matters of state. He was assisted by the leading Olotus, all representatives of the various village groups of the Ukpes. The rank of Okakuru appears to have lapsed during this period. The Odogun and the rule of Onovan lasted for some years after the advent of the Government in 1891. He was a very old man at the time. His rule appears to have been satisfactory and his name is always mentioned with respect.

LAGOS GOVERNMENT.

22. Warri District was founded in 1891 and from that year to 1896 was under the charge of a Vice-Consul. In 1896 a Divisional Commissioner was appointed and Warri became the headquarters of the Western Division. On May 1st 1906 under the Lagos Southern Nigerian Amalgamation Scheme Warri became the headquarters of the Central Province. In 1914 Warri Province was created and the various divisions put under the control of District Officers.

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23. Sapele was started in 1893, when the old headquarters of the Oil River Protectorate moved from Benin River, and was in charge of Vice-Consul. The name was altered to that of the Niger Coast Protectorate. On the 1st of January 1900 the Niger Company Territories were handed over and Sapele became a part of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria. A minor Native Court was started in 1901. The main road from Warri to Sapele was completed in 1906 and a hospital and Rest House were built. In 1907 a new layout of the Township was commenced and an infant school started. In 1917 Sapele was established as a 2nd Class Township.

24. With the advent of the Government the Ukepe clan was split into two divisions, the southern half going to Warri and the northern half to Sapele. The boundary is approximately the seventeenth mile on the Warri-Sapele road.

25. The history of the Ukepes under the Government has been one of rapid progress in wealth, trade and education. Previously they had always been dependent on the Jekri middlemen for their wealth and any benefits of civilisation. They had come little into touch directly with European traders and were still somewhat frightened and suspicious of any European. The rapid spread of Missions and the broadcasting of education, the growth of large townships such as Sapele and Warri, the introduction of wealth and European civilisation, all in a period of thirty-five years, have tended to break up their old institutions and customs rapidly and have consequently unsettled the Ukepe.

Always dependent on Jekri middlemen for their wealth

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26. The actual history of the Ukepes under

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Government, as has been previously stated, has been peaceful and there are few incidents of exciting nature to relate. The old system of Okpaku rule continued for six years after the advent of the Government, and the Odogun was held at Ojede under Onovan. In 1897 after the Benin expedition there was trouble between the Odogun and the Government. Eyoju, one of the elders on the council, was arrested in connection with the murder of a woman and sent to Calabar. The council broke up after this and ceased to meet at Ojede. The village group ruled by its Okpaku then became the local unit of organisation. It was to an extent supervised by the Native Courts and Warrant Chiefs.

27. It was not till September 1897 and the proposed introduction of taxation was mooted that any active trouble has been encountered. A careful system of propaganda, with its headquarters at Warri, had been spread through the bush informing the natives that they would again be made slaves and that their land and palm trees would be seized. Other equally absurd and exaggerated rumours were spread. At the end of September the Ukpes rose en masse with the rest of the Province. They established their headquarters at Ojede and attempted to revert to their old system of government. It was not a complete success. Three of the oldest Okpakas refused to attend and Igbele a junior Okpaku was elected ruler of the Ukpes. At Ojede he issued his edicts which practically amounted to open war. Stirred up by these meetings and encouraged by the leniency of the Government which they mistook for weakness a crowd of Ukpes led by agitators attacked and nearly overpowered the police at Sapele. One man was shot and several

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wounded. It is unnecessary to discuss in detail the work of the subsequent patrol, but law and order was restored in two months without further loss of life. The seriousness of the rising should not be over-emphasised. It was the result primarily of the propaganda of agitators and the mistaken ideas of the masses.

28. The Ukpoe are not a warlike tribe and owe most of the advantages they enjoy to civilisation. The rapidity with which they again settled down does not show a deep-seated hostility.

ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANISATION.

29. The study of the Ukpoe organisation shows a development from a hereditary kingship and an oligarchy of wealth to the rule of the local village council presided over by the Okpala, who was elected by the people and had no special qualification of wealth or birth but merely that of age.

30. The Oroje or king, whose duties were of a sacerdotal character as well as judicial and administrative, united in himself all the offices of state and was the head of the Ukpoe organisation.

31. Next to the king came the Okakurus or nobles. They were the wealthiest men in the clan. Before a man became an Okakuru he had to pay what was considered as a very large sum of money and slaves. The word Okakuru itself appears to be derived from the Bini title "Okaku", which means noble, and the title was bestowed by the Oba of Benin, the applicant visiting him and presenting him with the requisite number of slaves and money. The Oba used to give him in return a brass sword of curious workmanship. The fact that the Oba sold titles to

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the Ukpes appears to point to a certain over-
-lordship, but this must have been very slight. It
is probable that the selling of titles may have
been one of the sources of the Benin slave traffic.

32. Next to the Okakurus came the Olotu.
They were executive officers and controlled various
departments, such as the police and soldiers.

33. The Okpaku existed in the time of the
king but he had little power qua Okpaku. It was
only if he had previously risen to the rank of
Olotu or Okakuru that he was recognised. The system
of kingship and hereditary wealth proved a failure
owing to its corruption and the titles of king
and Okakuru were abolished. The Okpaku was then
put at the head of the Ukpe administration.

34. The company or Otu appears to have been
the basis of the Ukpe organisation as elsewhere
amongst the Sabos. A youth at the age of fifteen
first became a member of the Otuibiru and then
passed through the various Otus till he retired
from active service and became an Okpaku. Each Otu
had its definite work allotted and its recognised
leader or Olotu, who, in the latter days of the
Ukpes, was appointed by the Okpaku. A youth who
distinguished himself as a member of the Otuibiru
would be made an Olotu Otuibiru or head of his
company of youths. He would always be recognised as
leader as he advanced through the different grades
and might become an Olotu Ukpe or senior
Olotu, provided he had the money. The grading of
the Otu was by age.

35. The Otus were four in number.

Otuibiru - youths of 15 to 20 years. They
did any light work required about the village.

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Otuorere - Men of 20 to 30 years. These were regarded as the young warriors and always went into battle in the front rank. They would do all the heavy work about the village, such as clearing the bush. They were always employed as carriers.

Otuivaragwa - These were men of 30 to 45 years. They were recognised as the warriors proper of the clan. In the case of a serious war where the Otuorere were insufficient they would be called upon. They always went into battle behind the Otuorere to encourage them and see that they did not run away.

Otuikpini - These were men from 45 onwards. They were excused from the more vigorous work. They would train members of the other Otus and give advice. The Olotus of this grade sat in council with the Okpakura.

36. Last of all came the Okpakus. A man was recognised as Okpaku when he reached approximately 60 years of age. No qualification other than age was required. The Okpaku was looked upon as the head of the whole organisation. He appointed the Olotus. He was referred to on all matters and gave advice and instructions which were carried out by the Olotus. The Okpaku succeeded to the place originally occupied by the king and after him by the Okakuru.

37. In the time of Onovan the last and only Okpaku of Ukge, the central council or Odogun at Ojede, consisting of Onovan and the senior Olotus, representing the village group, was the administrative centre of the clan. A special meeting could be summoned at any time of emergency and every one was bound to attend.

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38. The powers of the Okpaku were often somewhat titular owing to his age and imbecility. In these cases the powerful Olotu of the local village groups really wielded the power. They went to the Odogun and sat in council with the Okpaku of Uke. In some cases the Olotu would become an Okpaku by virtue of his years, in this case his former prestige added to his age gave him the greater power.

39. In addition to those mentioned above there were several Otus for which there were special qualifications.

Otuikpoko - These were the executioners. They would be selected from the Otuvaregwa. The Olotu Otuikpoko was responsible for all executions.

Otuohere - This was the company of the watch or guard. They would be selected from the Otukpini. Their duty was to keep a watch on the villages at night and to arrest any thieves or escaped prisoners, "Ogusu", from other villages.

40. Special titles were given to certain definite ranks. Every Olotu Uke or Odiegware who sat at the Odogun was attended by an Otota and an Arijo.

The Otota was the spokesman, who explained the cases to the Olotu and put any matter, which necessitated discussion, before the council. The Otota Uke, who was attached to the Okpaku Uke, was the head of the Ototas.

Arijo was a title given to a man who felled an ox with one blow. He was noted as a strong man and acted in the capacity of an orderly to the Olotu Uke.

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Local System Government.

41. From the foregoing account it can be seen that Okpaku Ukpe was the nominal ruler of the clan. He was recognised as such and would be appealed to in all cases, especially in cases of conflict between powerful Olotu, and *mutatis mutandis* the local Okpaku ruled the village group. The unit of administration at the advent of the Government was the village group and the council of the group presided over by the Okpaku arranged all matters of local government. Any question of importance would be referred to the Okpaku Ukpe and the head council or Odogun at Ojede.

42. On the advent of the Government it was found that the Okpaku was probably too old and consequently unwilling if not unable to attend the Native Courts which were instituted, consequently Warrant Chiefs were appointed, nominated by the Okpaku in the village council. In some cases these Warrant Chiefs were a success in others they were not. On obtaining their power from the Government they realised that their position was immensely strengthened at the expense of the Okpaku. The Okpaku by virtue of his age and position still rules in the village council and consequently in many cases a dual system of control has resulted. This is unsatisfactory. Under the old system the Okpaku did not move about and all matters to be settled in the village were brought to him at his house and the executive and judicial bodies were one and the same. If it was necessary for a matter to go to the head council at Ojede the Olotu was sent and the matter put before the Okpaku Ukpe and the head Olotu. The village group with the appointment of Warrant Chiefs at the advent

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of the Government was broken up and each chief acted independently.

Suggestions.

43. It is suggested that the ancient family divisions which are clearly marked should be recognised, and that from the point of view of executive work the village group should be re-established. There are, excluding Sapale, six definite village groups, Aghalokpe, Amukpe, Kekame, Ogole, Mereji and Ugortof, which has always been recognised as a sub-group of Mereji since the murder of the king. Representatives of the local village groups could be appointed and all matters appertaining to the conduct of any village in the village group should be discussed with the representatives of the group. This would obviate the confusion which often arises from villages of different groups, which happen to adjoin, being dealt with through their Warrant Chiefs and independently of the group. The first essential condition would be the combining of the whole of the Ukpe clan under one division. This is discussed below in paragraph 60. At the moment it would be quite impossible to restart any system of family or village group organisation as many of the families are divided, some going to Warri Division and others to Sapale.

44. The Warrant Chiefs have largely taken the place of the Olotus and, by re-instating the authority of the council of the village group, there is no reason why they could not be adapted to the new conditions, and thus the element of dual authority would be eliminated. As age is the only qualification for the rank and title of Okpaku, many of the Warrant Chiefs become Okpakus in time and are ipso facto the recognised rulers of the village group.

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JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

Ancient System.

45. There were two courts which administered justice, the major or central council called the Odogun, which met at Ojede and the minor or local village council. These were a gradual development from the council of the Ukpes presided over by the Oroje or king. Originally the Oroje assisted by his Okakurus was the head of the whole system of justice. In the king himself were vested the powers of life and death. After the murder of the king the Okakurus ruled the Odogun, the senior Okakuru being the president. After the destruction of Orerukpe the Odogun was held for a time at Ogolo. During the period of unrest, while the various families of the clan were migrating, the Odogun appears to have lapsed, and cases of murder or serious crimes were tried by the council of the village group. It was re-started later and Diemor, an Okakuru, was elected president. A feud broke out between him and another Okakuru, Orolor, which again divided the Odogun. It was then the old judicial system was revised. The presidency of the council passed from the hands of the Okakuru to the Okpaku.

The oldest man in the clan was elected and given the title of Okpaku Ukpe. A house was built for him at Ojede and here all the big trials took place.

46. The court of the local village group was held at the house of the head Okpaku and the Odotus with their people would be present. This court would try petty cases of stealing or assault and other cases of minor importance. Any one had the right of appeal from this court to the head council at Ojede. All cases of a serious nature

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such as murder would have to be reported to the head council. If any local village council settled a case of murder, they were promptly dealt with by the head council and the Olotu responsible would probably be tried and sentenced to death. The head council consisted of the leading Olotu of the village group presided over by the Okpaku Ukpe. It used to sit periodically at Ojede and notice was sent by an Onaker or messenger to all the village groups and every one attended.

47. The procedure at a trial was definite and each official had his respective work and position. If a murder were committed at a village, it was immediately reported to the village Okpaku, who gave instructions to the Olotu Ivaragwa to arrest the suspected man, who would be kept in the Olotu's house. A report was then sent to the Otota Ukpe at Ojede, who corresponded to the Crown Prosecutor, and he reported to the Okpaku Ukpe. On the day fixed for the Odogan all the Olotu and their people went to Ojede, taking the accused with them.

At the trial all the Olotu Ukpe would be present. The case would be explained by the Otota Ukpe. If the man was found guilty by the council, the Okpaku Ukpe assented. A special Olotu, who had been appointed, pronounced sentence, touching the accused on the head with a small stick, called "Ukpokpe", which was ornamented with cowries. The accused was seized by the executioner, "Otuikpoko", who despatched him by hitting him with a stick. The execution had to be performed without the spilling of blood. If any blood was spilt in the course of the execution the executioner became liable for murder. The bodies of the executed were buried at Ojede in a sacred grove, called Ogerisan. This place can still be seen.

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48. Punishments for murder varied. An influential and wealthy Olotu by systematic and heavy bribery could avoid being executed himself. A slave was produced and killed in his place and justice was satisfied. Sometimes compensation would suffice, the accused handing over a daughter to the dead man's family, but this could only be done by mutual consent. In the case of a slave the charge of murder was not considered, compensation of £6 being paid to the owner.

49. Punishments for theft were severe. Emutilation was a common method. If a man was convicted several times, his hand or ear was cut off or his eye put out. Sometimes he was sold as a slave.

50. In cases of debt, if a man was unable to pay, he became the slave of the creditor till he paid off the amount. Sometimes children were pledged to the creditor for the debt.

51. In cases of assault or wounding the complainants were taken to the native doctor who attended them. The accused would pay the fee and also compensation. If he refused to pay he would be sold as a slave. Anything approximating to a government prison was unknown to the Ukeje, consequently the solution was to sell such people as slaves and the money realized was paid to the complainant. Fines imposed were often shared out amongst the people at the end of the Odogun.

52. In the case of adultery the punishment depended largely on the rank of the complainant. If he were a big Olotu he would take his staff, "Usu", and place this upright in the ground in the compound of the adulterer. This could not be moved by any one except the owner or an Olotu equal in

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rank. Before the staff could be moved heavy compensation had to be paid, otherwise the village was destroyed.

53. Trial by ordeal was usual. The customary ordeal was Iten and there were various forms of this ordeal. Sometimes the accused was sent to the Obolten who produced a feather dipped in juju medicine. This was passed through the tongue. If the feather stuck the accused was guilty and if it was withdrawn easily he was acquitted.

54. Another form of the Iten ordeal was to pass a needle through the lobe of the ear of the accused. If the needle stuck he was guilty and if it passed through easily he was innocent.

55. A third form of Iten was the ordeal by fire. The suspected party, whose hands had been previously smeared with medicine, would have to pick up a bar of iron, which had been heated in the fire. If his hands were blistered he was found guilty.

56. There was an ordeal called Corere. This took place in the Ishoko country, and was only resorted to in cases of witchcraft. Native medicine was rubbed on the eyes, feet and hands of the accused and he was thrown into a pool of water infested by crocodiles. If he succeeded in swimming and getting out he was acquitted otherwise he was never seen again. Any one acquitted by the Corere juju always performed the Igboheni dance. Performers in this dance chalked their bodies white and put cowries on their ankles and wrists.

57. The system of justice does not seem to have been completely satisfactory to the people. The element of bribery played a big part in all trials and decisions were often given in favour of the wealthy. This had a curious result in the formation

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of a body of young men who called themselves the Otuada. Their organisation was similar to an ordinary Otu and they had their own Olotus, Ototas and drummers. Their original object was to see that justice was administered and that retribution came to the wrong-doer whatever his rank. If a murder was reported they proceeded to the spot and despatched the culprit without trial. Their methods were summary and violent and they soon became the terror of the Okpakus and Olotus. So great had their power become that there is little doubt that, but for the advent of the Government, they would have completely usurped the position of the Odogun.

Under Government.

58. On the advent of the Government the Ukpes were divided into two, the southern half going to the Native Court of Warri and the northern to that of Sapele. A Native Council was established at Warri in 1892 and at Sapele in 1901 and Native Courts were later opened at Oviri in 1907 and at Ukpe Sobo in 1925. The Ukpes ceased to attend Warri Native Court in 1907 when the Oviri Court was opened. The Odogun at Ojede broke up in 1897 under circumstances which have been mentioned above in paragraph 26, and the place of the central council was gradually taken by the Native Courts and Warrant Chiefs. The right of appeal lay to what was, for all intents and purposes, a Jekri Appeal Court at Warri. Under the old system the Okpaku and the local village council were the judicial body and the venue was the house of Okpaku, with a right of appeal to the head council at Ojede.

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59. The present position is that the Okpaku, who exercises the executive power, lives in the village and the Warrant Chief who comes to court has the judicial power. Therefore there would appear to be two possible solutions, either to return to the village group and allow it to settle its own cases or to make the Okpaku a chief. The Okpaku is adverse to becoming a chief. Under the old system an Okpaku never went about to any extent but every one came to him. It is common to find that a chief on reaching the age of an Okpaku promptly wishes to relinquish his warrant. The present system is to appoint a successor, either his son or his nominee approved in a town meeting.

Suggestions.

60. It is suggested that a solution of the question might be reached in the least violent manner as follows.

The Ukpe clan should be brought together, Sapele, Ukpe Sobo and Ovirri Native Courts being combined under one jurisdiction and placed under Sapele Division. The present system of separating the Ukpes into two branches is neither in accordance with tradition, language or topography. An Appeal Court for the clan should be established. This could be placed at Ojede and would then correspond to the ancient system of the Odogun, and would obviate the necessity of the Ukpes going to a Jekri Appeal Court.

The Ukpes were going to the Jekris



61. It is further suggested that at the hearing of all big land cases and appeals the senior Okpakus should be allowed to sit as assessors with the chiefs. This would give a status to the court and would be in accordance with the

ancient procedure. The Okpokus would be selected from the representatives of the village group in accordance with the system described in paragraph 43. This court would in time become the judicial and administrative centre of the clan. It would be started with the support of local tradition and would meet with approval from the people in that they would again be a united clan.

ETHNOLOGICAL.

Religion.

62. There is found in the Uke religion a belief in an universal God, which exists side by side with a system of pure fetish worship. The Uke believes that God made the world and created man, and he often uses the expression "Osologbrugwe omari me" which means "God made me" but he explains his apparent disregard of the divinity by saying that God does not interest himself in human affairs and that sickness and misfortune are due to other forces, which are located generally in some form of tree, and to this he devotes his attention. No particular kind of tree is venerated, though the Iroko is worshipped by some, but there is almost a trace of totemism in their attitude towards the Ezoukpe which is mentioned in paragraph 81. The various fetishes or jujus are innumerable and depend for their success primarily upon the juju priest. A "medicine" man, who is successful, will build his juju house, fill it with various figures male and female, which are constructed of clay and wood, and call them the mother, father and children of his juju. To them offerings of goats and food are made by the worshippers and money is paid to the juju man. The juju may only last for three years and then become a

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failure and the juju can cease to have any importance.

63. The worship of God or Osologbrugwe is performed by individuals under special circumstances. Thus in cases of sickness diviners sometimes instruct a person to sacrifice a cocoa-nut and yam to Osologbrugwe but the sacrifices are made in private and not in public. There is no image of Osologbrugwe but the worshipper will sometimes fasten a piece of white cloth to the end of a pole when a sacrifice is made. Juju priests before sacrificing will infallibly call upon Osologbrugwe to bless the particular juju but will not offer anything to him.

64. The story of the flood and the re-birth of the world from one man and a woman is told. There is also a legend of the building of a mountain reaching to the sky and its destruction by Osologbrugwe and the subsequent scattering of the nations, which is reminiscent of the biblical story of the Tower of Babel. These stories are vaguely told and no great importance appears to be attached to them. Fetish worship, ancestor worship and tabus are the principal forces in the Ukepe religion.

65. There is a belief in an after life. This is evident from the funeral ceremony where food and clothes are always provided for the dead man. The general idea appears to be that the position of a man will be the same in the next world as in this life and a slave will remain a slave.

66. There is also a belief in re-incarnation. Thus, if a woman has born several children who have died young, it is customary to



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mark the next child somewhere on its body so that if it dies it can be recognized when re-born, the belief being that the same child has been born on previous occasions. Sometimes an iron ring, called "Igoni", is fastened on its foot. The object of this is to keep the child in the world. Any child, that is born after a succession of children who have died, is specially named "Eda", which means "the child that has gone to and fro". Again the spirit of a dead brother, who wishes to be re-born, will often trouble one of his descendants by appearing to him during sleep. If a man in a dream sees his brother following him, then he knows the spirit of his dead brother is waiting to be re-born and, if a son is afterwards born by one of his wives, he believes that it is his brother who has come back to the world in the body of the child. The dead man apparently could return to this life at will but only as one of his descendants.

67. Ancestor worship plays a most important part in the religion of the Uke. The "celebration of his fathers" is carried out annually with as much splendour as he can muster. The oldest living member of the family officiates. Ivory horns, swords and emblems of state, which have belonged to a famous ancestor, are paraded. A dance is held. Goats are sacrificed and offerings of food are made to the spirit of the departed ancestor. It is generally believed that the ancestor returns and consumes the food and drink put at his shrine. It is common to attribute any family calamity to the anger of a dead ancestor and immediate steps are taken to appease this by sacrifice and offerings of food. The

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"celebration of their mother" is likewise carried out, only in this case the eldest living woman member of the family officiates.

68. Fetiches or jujus are countless and the Uke rarely performs a daily action without sacrificing to some juju. Every Uke who owns a house has his Obor, which consists of a carved block of wood standing upright in a wooden bowl. To this he offers regularly palm wine, kola, cowries and white chalk. This is his personal juju and gives him strength to do his work.

69. There are two jujus always found, called Otor and Edion. The former is the more important. It is kept in the head village of the local village group and is the principal juju of the group. The Edion was carried with them from Owerri by the four leading families at the time of their migrations. It is the authority for all the tabus and unwritten laws. Its priests are restricted to the sons of Oropaku. The juju consists of the withered boughs of the tree Ofor, which have fallen to the ground of their own accord. They are collected in a bundle by the Oropaku. Sacrifices of goats are made to the Edion and the skulls are placed in front. Offerings of various foods are also made to it by the inhabitants of the local villages, who come to the Edion of the central village to ask for protection for themselves and their families. The ceremony of the Edion Uke for the whole clan is performed at Owerri and the expenses incurred are paid by the different villages in turn.

70. The Otor juju consists of the tree Oolimi, which is always planted when a new village

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is founded. The Otere is a sign that the spot is longer bush and the tabu on sexual intercourse in the bush, mentioned in paragraph 70, is removed immediately it is planted. The first thing that any man does, when he clears a piece of bush to build a house, is to plant the Oohini tree. It is worshipped regularly with sacrifices of goats and offerings of food. If the tree dies another is immediately planted. As in the case of the Edion, the Otere Ikpe is worshipped at Ororukpe on behalf of the whole clan and here the original tree can be seen.

71. There appear to be no fertility rites performed by the whole clan at any regular seasons. Ceremonies were performed at different times by local villages about every three years to celebrate the fertility of the palm bush. During this period the palm bush is closed for three months and no collecting is done. One palm tree "Okokpa", which is always regarded as head of the palm bush, is worshipped and a dog is sacrificed to it. The ceremony is not performed by the Okpoku. A young man and a woman are selected by the village and they become the priest and priestess. They stain their bodies with camwood and wear cloths of a red colour. The palm tree is decorated with red cloth. A dance, in which the actors wear masks of voms, 'fishes and crocodiles', is performed and the whole village gives itself up to rejoicing. The festival lasts intermittently for about three months and hospitality is offered to all strangers on a generous scale during this period.

72. Another important juju was the Ngba or warriors juju. The Okpoku held the ceremony



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and the "Uje" or warriors dance was performed. Before the advent of the Government the juju was worshipped with human heads, which the Igboos would supply. The object was to give the worshippers strength in war and all the warriors obtain got their power from this juju.

73. Native doctors and diviners are common, the Ukpe being extremely credulous. Juju swearing from the Native Courts is a regular source of income to the juju man. Jujus continually spring up and are popular for a time, then their fame dies and they are found ineffective and a new one is sought. The methods of such jujus are primitive and depend for their power on obvious deception and the credulity of the worshippers.

74. There appears to be no powerful juju amongst the Ukpes at the moment which could compare with the Oboie juju at Jeremi. The Ukpes appear generally to have used the jujus of other clans such as Ogele at Kwale, Uge at Jeremi or the Jekri juju of Abacala.

75. There is a belief in witchcraft and metamorphosis. Witches are supposed to have the power of putting spells on their victims, spoiling the crops and killing people. They are supposed to suck the blood of their victims. They can change themselves into any shape, becoming leopards, crocodiles, or owls, in which form they fly from place to place. If killed in his were-form the witch must obtain the heart of the animal killed and eat it otherwise he will die. They meet at night and dance the "Igbegberioda" or witch dance.

76. Tabus are common amongst the Ukpes,

Tabus.

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as elsewhere in the same country. The various forms of tabu for marriage, birth, food, health, are found. The advent of civilisation and missions and the spread of education have however tended to break up the old system and with it the tabus. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the marriage tabu. Originally marriage within the family was absolutely prohibited. A man, who was descended on his father's side from Ogwere and on his mother's side from Eruckwo, would take a wife from a descendant of Idoroni. So strictly was exogamy insisted on that, if it was discovered that a man and a woman of the same family were living together, the punishment was severe in the extreme. If a child was born it was killed. The parents were both brought before the village council, where they were bound hand and foot and their heads shaved. They were then fined and a goat was killed and sacrifice made to their fathers. This custom has practically ceased to operate now and they are marrying as they like. In the case of a man having intercourse with any of his father's wives the punishment was as above.

77. There was the usual tabu in the case of twins. The twins were always killed and the town had to be purified by the Oborivo or native doctor. The woman and her husband were kept in the bush for a week and no one was allowed to see them. The houses in the village were all marked with charcoal and the palm bush was closed. The Oborivo then sacrificed to the juju. Goats were killed and gin, palm wine and chalk were offered to the juju. During this period the whole village remained in their houses and no one could go to the bush or the farm to



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work. At the end of the seven days the woman and her husband were brought back to the village. After that the curse was removed and every one pursued their ordinary occupations. If a woman died in child-birth or the child was still-born, it was likewise regarded as a curse on the village which had to be removed and, though not so serious as the birth of twins, the procedure was the same. No one could mention the woman's name in the morning. After midday no danger attached to the mention of it.

78. Food tabus appear to be unknown to the Ukpe. This is curious, as the food tabus of other clans are always respected. Thus if an Ukpe married an Ughole woman his child would not eat the flesh of the duiker, which is forbidden to an Ughole person. Similarly the food tabu of any slave was always respected, as the owner probably considered this in his own interest.

Nothing however was forbidden to the Ukpe himself. Warriors were not supposed to eat snails as it was believed that it made them slow in war, but this cannot be regarded as tabu and was not general. It was tabu to eat human flesh and cannibalism was unknown amongst the Ukpes as amongst other Sobo clans.

79. Other tabus in connection with sex regulation were strictly enforced. It was forbidden to have sexual intercourse with a woman in the bush. Both parties were taken before the Ogerole juju and sacrifice was made for them. It was believed that one of the parties might die. It was also forbidden to have connection with a woman in a state of pregnancy, as it was

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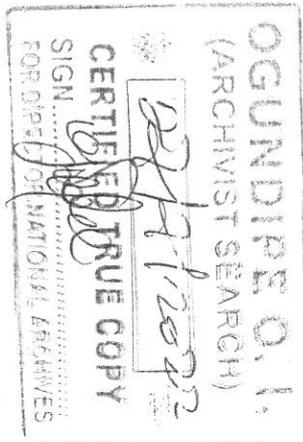
considered that the family juju of the woman would be offended. It was forbidden to a woman during menstruation to enter any house.

30. In the case of serious sickness there were few tabus. Any one suffering from small-pox was forbidden to enter the town otherwise the town had to be purified by the native doctor and sacrifice made to the Ogerele juju. A leper however was not under any tabu and used to live in the village.

31. There is one custom which is always observed by every Ukepe and, though it can hardly be classed as a tabu, might be mentioned in this connection. It is entirely forbidden to any Ukepe to make fire with wood of the tree Ezeokupo. They say that this is the mother of Ukepe. The mother of Ukepe when she became old had the power of changing herself into any form. She tried various forms of animal and bird but always she could be killed. Finally she changed herself into a tree which is now called Ezeokupo. An Ukepe will cut it down and use it for building his house if necessary but it is always forbidden to make a fire with it. This appears to be a belief in metamorphosis and approximates to totemism. The tree is not however worshipped but the custom is universally observed and the story told.

Birth.

32. After birth a child is taken and washed with water and native soap, consisting of palm oil and charcoal and is kept by the Oriri or woman doctor. The mother also washes but she cannot touch the child till she has performed the Omiamer ceremony. She has to walk into the



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house by the front door and turning round faces
 outwards and places her right foot on the
 threshold. The Oxiri then stands in front of her
 holding the child. She counts up to nine and
 announces in a loud voice, "may the child remain
 with you for ever and ever". The child is then
 passed under the mother's right leg and handed to
 her. Gin is given to the women doctors and every
 one celebrates the event. The after-birth is
 collected by the women doctors and placed in
 plantain leaf and buried in the compound. The
 woman does not leave the house for seven days.
 After this period has elapsed she appears with the
 child, whose head is shaved, and every one comes
 to see it. Gin is then passed round. The woman
 remains in the house for three months. After this
 she comes out and carries on her usual work. The
 ceremony of cleansing the house is performed by a
 small child, who walks through with a chicken and
 the leaf of a tree called Ibenririon in his
 hand. After this every one can enter the house.

35. There appears to be no ceremony of
 christening. A male child was always called
 Iankoro and a female child Iankokor at birth. As
 it grew up it was given pet names by different
 people, one of which was adopted and remained its
 name. This custom has changed with the advent of
 missions and children now are generally named at
 birth. After three months a man resumes normal
 intercourse with his wife. Male children are
 generally circumcised by the Oxiri seven days after
 birth. Sometimes however this operation is not
 performed for three years.

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84. A girl usually stays with her parents till she is about seventeen years of age, when the ceremony of "Usamo", **circumcision** or **clitoridectomy**, is performed, at a rather later age than is customary amongst the Binis and other tribes. This is a most important ceremony. At the operation the female relatives of the future husband have to be present. After the ceremony which is performed by the **Omwena** or women doctors the girl's body is rubbed with **camwood** and she remains in the house for seven days. All the young girls who are relatives also stain their bodies with **camwood** dye. A big dance is then held by the father, at which the whole village and all the relatives will be present and it is customary for the guests to give presents of money. A girl of wealthy family might acquire **£30** in this way. A goat is killed and the right hind-leg is given to the **Omwena** as a special honour. The future husband comes and brings his own people who join in the dancing. The girl remains in the house for seven days, after which she comes out but does no work for three months. At the end of three months she washes the **camwood** dye off her body and resumes her normal life. The bed, called "**Esirugbo**", which has been specially made for the girl to rest on and is constructed out of crocodile, iguana and various other skins is presented with great ceremony to the woman in the village who has born the most children who have lived without sickness.

85. During this period the husband is permitted to visit her in the parents' house and have intercourse with her. She does not go to the

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husband's house till he has completed the dowry. On going to her husband's house another dance is to be given by the husband but this is not nearly so magnificent as the previous ceremony.

86. The question of dowry is settled by the husband with the parents of the girl. In the old days it varied between £6 and £18. There were various methods of payment. Sometimes a man would select a girl when she was young and pay the money by instalments till she came of age. If she died in the meantime he was unlucky and probably lost his money. Sometimes he paid the full amount down and took the girl, but it was never customary for the girl to leave her parents' house till the full dowry was paid. If the girl went to her husband's house when she was young this was probably a case of pledging for debt. In this case the parents would be short of money and the ceremony of circumcision would be performed by the husband.

87. If the girl had a child by another man during the period she was betrothed, the husband claimed his damages for adultery and the child was given to the adulterer. The future husband could never apparently refuse to take the woman, being content with damages which would buy him another wife. There was no limit to the number of wives a man might acquire, and it is related that some of the old Okakurus had as many as a hundred.

Death.

88. Death ceremonies depend largely on the rank of the deceased. A poor man, who has no compound of his own, is buried without ceremony in

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the bush. Wealthy or important people are always buried in their houses. On the report of the death of a leading man, his whole family collects. When the body becomes cold, it is washed and dressed in the finest clothes. Guns are then fired and the Ivri dance is started, while the coffin is being made. The body is usually buried at sunset the next day. At the burial the oldest son puts on his father's dress, wearing any insignia of office which he had held. A goat is killed and sacrifice is made to the father and the goat's flesh is divided amongst the mourners. After this they all proceed to the grave and more guns are fired. The body is placed in the grave, the feet pointing towards the east. A relative from the father's side and another from the mother's side stand near the grave with a piece of white cloth, from which they cut off strips and, casting them into the grave, repeat "this is for the father and this is for the mother", naming past ancestors. The object of this is to trace the dead man's descent. Some of the goat's flesh unsalted is placed in a bowl and put between the legs of the dead man to sustain him on his journey to the next world. Drink is also put in and, if he is wealthy, a number of fine cloths and cowries are included so that he will be recognised as a wealthy man. In ancient times slaves used to be killed to carry his loads but this custom had been abolished long before the advent of the Government. The grave is then filled in. The funeral celebrations which consist of dancing and drinking, if the money is sufficient, will sometimes

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not however become the head of the family. The
 largest share of the estate and property. He does
 expect that the oldest son takes the title and
 97. The inheritance is recognized to this
 their families and buried in their own country.
 the next world. Women are always taken away by
 believed that he would continue as a slave in
 used to be buried face downwards. It was generally
 nowadays and bodies are generally buried. A slave
 upon an individual death is not so powerful
 procedure is similar in the case of slaves. This
 recovered, and are thrown into the "fire". The
 attendants, who have contracted the disease and
 who die from small-pox are taken away by their
 them into the bed with or "Ela". Bodies of those
 given to the native doctor, "Obokoto", who throws
 -birth or of still-born children are not buried but
 90. Bodies of women, who die in child-
 "Abemeri".
 details. A funeral of this nature is known as
 and the funeral ceremony performed in all its
 away. A grave is dug and a rock-cover is buried
 sufficient money at the time the deceased passed
 this case it is due to the family not having
 performed a year or two years after the burial. In
 99. Sometimes the funeral ceremony is
 "Amanki", or widow.
 buried. All women is buried and is known as
 when they go to the sun to whom they have been
 return to their families for some months, after
 kept in his compound for three months. They then
 amongst the family. The wives of the deceased are
 share their heads and the estate is divided
 amongst. After the seven days all the relatives
 last for seven days. Some are fixed at dawn and

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next brother to the deceased takes over any insignia which belong to their fathers and performs all ceremonies in celebration of their fathers. He automatically controls the palm bush and is responsible for closing it and also controls any land or creeks which belong to the family. On his death the next brother takes over. If there are no more brothers the headship of the family reverts to the eldest son.

92. All personal property, such as cattle, money or debts owed, belongs to the sons and is shared amongst them at a family meeting when the relatives of the deceased's father and mother are present. The actual allotting of the various shares is arbitrary and, in the case of the distribution of a large estate, generally results in a disturbance. The daughters receive a share of cloths, money or beads. They are taken over by the eldest brother, who is responsible for marrying them and receives the dowry. If any of the wives is too old to be married she generally goes to her son, who looks after her. Before slavery was abolished the father's slaves were shared amongst the sons in a similar manner. If the father married one of his slaves the son was free born and inherited with the other sons. On his father's death he usually took his mother to his own house to avoid her being called a slave again. Women could hold property in their own right and bequest it to whomsoever they wished and the husband had no right over the wife's property.

Societies. 93. Societies were rare and secret societies would appear to be unknown amongst the Ukpes. There was a society of head hunters or Igboos who

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used to be a source of terror to the local inhabitants. Any one who went to another clan and killed a man returning with the head, which he presented to the Okpaku, was given a white feather, which he wore in his hair, and forthwith declared an Igboe. In this case the head was required for the Egba or warriors juju. Similarly any man who killed an enemy in war and captured the head or who killed a leopard was made an Igboe. They were recognised as big men and on their death and before they were buried any one, who ventured out of his house by night, was killed by the society of Igboes. No man could win more than nine feathers. There was another society which was not recognised by the Okpakus and Olotus but which nevertheless made itself all-powerful. This was the Otuada. Its objects and methods have been discussed in paragraph 57. Hunters also had a society and juju of their own but this was never of any particular importance.

Social System.

94. The two principal characteristics of the ancient social system of the Uke were slavery and multiplicity of wives. The abolition of the former and the emancipation of the latter have completely altered his outlook. The aim and object of an Uke was to buy himself a wife. When he had achieved this, he considered that it was no longer necessary for him to work to any extent. The woman was supposed to do all marketing, cooking and work on the farm and she made the money. His wealth increased proportionately with the number of his wives. Children also were a source of cheap labour. Sons rarely left their parents till they were able to buy a wife for themselves, and if their father was wealthy he would give them the dowry money and also some slaves.

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95. At the present day children do not stay with their parents for any length of time. A child will often spend his early years at the local mission school instead of on the farm and at the age of sixteen or seventeen will probably apply for clerical work or become a letter writer. He might join a mechanical trade. Women also show a propensity to refund their dowries and leave their husbands and the spread of missions and christianity is encouraging monogamy. With the growth of large Townships, such as Sapele and Warri, un-employment is steadily becoming a difficult problem. The Uke is now in the transition stage. His old habits and customs are being dropped and forgotten and he is joining the ranks of the town-dwellers and Europeanised native.

Slavery.

96. Slaves were general amongst the Ukees as elsewhere. It was not unusual for a wealthy man to have as many as forty male and female slaves. Thieves, malefactors, debtors and prisoners of war were the main sources of the slave supply. In the absence of prisons one of the means of ridding the community of a recidivist was to sell him away as a slave. In the case of an in-corrigible debtor he was handed over to his creditor and worked for him till the debt was paid off. The general life and condition of a slave appear to have been comparatively pleasant. He used to do the work on the farm and would occasionally trade. A smart slave would be put in charge of other slaves and would have an opportunity of making money for himself. A slave could always purchase his freedom. An owner might sometimes marry one of his female slaves and any

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children born by her to him would be free. There is no doubt that quite a number of slaves became free in time. The slave himself would not have regarded his position as being extraordinarily ignominious as he always knew that any member of the community or even his own master might perhaps be reduced to the status of a slave through circumstances and there was no question of a strong caste system. There is however a darker side to the picture. Slaves lost their civic rights and were the absolute property of their master. They had no redress for any of their grievances and a master could kill a slave without incurring any punishment. As a rule masters appear to have been more or less kind, as they probably realised that the well-being of a slave was to their advantage. But in the case of a cruel master the lot of a slave could hardly have been a pleasant one. The Ukpes do not appear to have kept slaves for human sacrifices, as was customary amongst the Binis, nor do they appear to have dealt largely in the slave export trade. Such slaves as they had appear to have been kept primarily for their own personal requirements.

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Land Tenure.

97. All land belongs to the community or village. No one can sell land. It can be leased or mortgaged only with the consent of the whole community, that is by the Okpaku in a village meeting. It is sometimes customary to mortgage a palm bush without giving the mortgagee any right over the actual soil, which is still used by the mortgagor for farming. The head of the village is responsible for all land and controls

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it on behalf of the community. He is generally one of the Okpakus. When the head of the family or village dies he is succeeded by his next brother, who controls all land, and his sons and heirs have no actual power except as members of the community. Any person from another village who applies for permission to collect palm oil must apply to the head of the village to whom he pays a sum of money, which is regarded as rent, and is paid into the communal fund. The procedure is the same in the case of farming, fishing or hunting rights.

MISCELLANEOUS.

War and Weapons.

98. The Uapee cannot be described as a warlike race, most of their fighting being confined to family feuds or occasional raids on a local clan, consequently little science or skill is shown. The principal weapons used were the spear, the long sword, the machet, the bow and poisoned arrows, and the Dane gun. They never apparently understood the use of cannons and employed the aid of the Jekris, when they were required, as at the time when they called in the aid of Nana against Ejagbe.

99. In the case of war the Okukor or messenger was sent by the Okpaku Uke to all leading villages. The Olotu then collected their people, the head Olotu taking charge. The ceremony of the Egba juju would be performed and every man would get out his warrior's charms. They then proceeded to Ojede and here the sacrifice to the Egba juju for the whole clan was performed. It consisted of a pot filled with various medicines, which was placed on three sticks in the ground

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and was surrounded by a fence six feet high. In the case of a serious war, human heads would be supplied for the juju by the Igboes. After sacrificing, the priest selected a man, who put a small pot on his head containing some of the Igba medicine and then proceeded to dance round and anybody he touched was deemed to die, if he went to the war. Such men did not go but stayed behind. The juju priest, who was also a seer, would find out beforehand if any of the big Olotu was threatened and such an Olotu would not be allowed to go into battle. All the warriors were then sprinkled with water, containing the Igba charms, which rendered them immune from danger, after which they proceeded to battle. The young men generally fought in the front ranks and the old men in the rear rank. If peace was to be declared the Onkwer was sent to the other side, and a meeting of the Okpakus and Olotus of both sides was called. The Oforior juju was sworn and the terms of peace decided.

100. As amongst other primitive people so amongst the Ukpes dancing plays an important part in the expression of emotion. Peace and war, birth and death, the fertility of the palm bush are all celebrated by various dances. In many of the dances, particularly those in connection with the fertility of the soil, masks are worn, images of crocodiles, fishes and kams being the commonest. Another peculiarity is the "Kelik" dance, in which the performers dance on stilts. The knowledge of this dance is confined to certain villages. The Ukpes have only one dance which is definitely recognised as their own. This is known as the Ivri dance and is

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MUSIC AND DANCING.

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performed at funeral ceremonies or on any special occasion. Other dances are common to all the Sobos or have been adopted from other tribes. Performers in the Ivri dance wear a string of bells round the waist and put the plume feathers of the cock on their heads. They wear a single cloth which is not twisted round the waist in the usual manner but tied according to the Oboluku custom. The drums are beaten in slow, monotonous time which is quite distinct from the ordinary drumming. The dancers sway their bodies sideways in a rhythmical motion bending nearly to the ground. The whole dance is singularly expressive of sorrow and is very popular with the people. The last song of the Ivri dance whatever the time of the day, is always the same and ends in a slow haunting chant, "dawn is breaking now for the Ivri dance". Before the dance can be stopped 2/- and 30 cowries are placed on the ground, and this is known as Ogbigivri. Performers in this dance are specially trained and the qualification is confined to one family.

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Musical Instruments.

101. There are various kinds of musical instruments of which the design is primitive. The three principal instruments used are the drum or Igede, a piece of iron called Agogo, which gives a chiming sound, and empty calabash or Onyare, which, when struck with the open palm of the hand, give a booming sound. There are several varieties of drums, both membrane and wooden. Some of the larger membrane drums can be heard as far as a distance of five miles on a still night. The different types of dance are produced by a skillfully varied system of syncopation. There is

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another instrument, called Akpata, which has a pleasant tone very similar to a guitar. It consists six or seven strings stretched on pieces of bent stick, shaped like bows, which are fastened to an upright box about twelve inches long. The strings are made from the fibre of the wild pala branch. It is played by striking the strings with fingers. The Akpata is a variety of the instrument known to the Yoruba, Binis and Ibo. It used to be very popular but is now being discarded in favour of the more modern guitar. A hollow calabash, shaped somewhat like a cucumber, was used as trumpet. It was generally blown on occasion of war and the sound can be heard at a distance of several miles. The art of drumming messages through the bush is unknown to the Ukpes.

AGRICULTURE.

108. The Ukpes is not so good a farmer as the Bini his neighbour but farming used to be the occupation of the majority and the Ukpes was fond of farming. This attitude is changing. Yams, cassava, plantains and corn are the staple crops. Native beans, cocoa yams, pepper, ochre, pumpkins, sugarcane, ground-nuts and kola are also grown. The farms are generally mixed, several crops being planted together. There are usually three crops in a year. First comes the corn crop or "Ugboka" which is sown in January. The next crop is the water yam or "Enego" which is sown in March. The third crop, the yam and general crop, or "Okwe", is planted in April and may include cassava, plantains, sugarcane and others, all sown together. Ground-nuts are sown in March. This crop is never mixed with any other. The ground-nut is not so

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generally planted as it was years ago. The same piece of ground is never farmed for two years in succession but is left fallow for period of three years.

103. Farming amongst the Ukpes is not nearly so general as it was years ago and is becoming less popular. In the old days about one hundred acres would be farmed by one man but now it is all petty farming, the average farm being about two acres. There are several reasons for this. Firstly the abolition of slavery has done away with the supply of cheap labour. Secondly the increase of the palm oil trade has absorbed a large amount of labour which would be engaged on farming. Thirdly there appears to be a deep rooted fear of felling prohibited timber and thereby being prosecuted by the Forestry Department. The native is ignorant of the classes of timber and when clearing the bush to make his farm fells trees promiscuously for which he has been fined in the past. He has estimated that the cost of the fine and fees imposed upon him does not make the farm a paying proposition. Lastly the tendency to leave the land for the townships, mentioned in paragraph 95, is rapidly thinning the ranks of the farmers. Women and children always do a considerable amount of work on the farm, and the system of cultivation is that of the family. The land is communal and any member of the village can clear a portion of the surrounding bush and make his farm there. After he has cleared the bush, the piece of land in question is recognised as his and no one else can farm on it without his permission. All profits that he makes from the farm are his personal property. The Ukpe recognises

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two types of soil which he calls (wobri and Olahi. The former is dry and the latter is swamp, consisting of chikoko and clay and is not suitable for yam farms. No system of manuring is employed and no particular skill is shown. The only implements used are the machet and hoe.

FORBERRY.

104. The Ukpe district is on the edge of the mangrove belt and on its northern side approaches the thick forest belt. The land is largely swamp and it is the natural country of the oil palm (*Elsia Guineensis*) which grows everywhere in large numbers. Iroko grows generally in most parts of the district and mahogany and walnut are found scattered in small numbers over the northern part. The native rubber tree (*Funtusia Elastica*) grows everywhere and the rubber is collected and sold by the natives but not in large quantities. The soil and climatic conditions appear suitable for the growth of the para rubber tree (*Hevea Brasiliensis*) but beyond the few native plots no extensive cultivation is being attempted.

105. There are no timber concessions and there is practically no export of mahogany or iroko. There are endless supplies of minor forest timber which are used by the natives for fire-wood and building.

Farms.

106. Forty years ago game of all kinds was to be found in abundance but to-day it is scarce, elephants and most of the larger game having migrated to other parts. This is due to the construction of main roads through the heart of the bush and to the fact that most of the places which were pure jungle are now flourishing



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villages. Various forms of antelope and buck still remain but they are scarce and keep mostly in the inaccessible parts of the bush and can rarely be seen. The duiker is common everywhere and being less shy is not so difficult to find. Leopards exist in large numbers and are a source of inconvenience to the local countryside, ravaging flocks and occasionally seizing a human being. During the rains a herd of buffalo or bush cow sometimes passes through having wandered from the Katani parts but they are rarely seen.

INDUSTRIES.

197. The two principal industries of the Ukepe are palm oil and palm wine making. The collecting of the palm nuts and the expression of the palm oil occupies the energies of most of the population men, women and children. The family is the unit of oil making. The husband and his sons climb the palm trees and cut the heads of fruit. The expression of the oil from the fruit is done by the man. The cracking of the nuts to obtain the kernels is done by the women and children. The palm bush is communal and is opened and closed by the head of the village, who is the Okpaku. It is closed regularly for a period of three months about every three years. It may be closed for other reasons, such as the birth of twins mentioned in paragraph 77.

198. The actual time taken in making the oil is about nineteen days. A man collects the fruit heads for three days. He then rests for a day, which is the native Sunday. He collects for another three days and rests again. He collects for a further three days and then stops. There

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is a wait of four days while the nuts ferment. They are then picked and put in the oil canoe. Two days are spent in treading the oil out of the fibrous pericarp, after which water is poured in and a second quantity of oil produced of an inferior quality which is then boiled. After the oil is finished there is a rest of three days. Collection is then started again. The nuts, after the oil has been expressed from the pericarp, are put out to dry in the sun for nine days and then are cracked by the women and children. The kernels are considered as the property of the woman who sell them and keep the money. There is a local rule in force in some places by which one man is only allowed to cut ten heads of fruit in a day. The oil when made is kept in calabashes or kerosene tins and until recently was sold to Jekri middlemen. The Ekpe now however has started to

bring his oil himself into the central markets of Warri and Sapele. The average price of oil is 7/- a kerosene tin. About 200 heads of fruit make 10 kerosene tins. A man who works hard will make a panchoon of oil in four collecting periods which amount to about three months. The value of a panchoon is about £12.

109. The question of the soaking of kernels and the adulteration of produce, which is so common, is being taken up by the Agricultural Department and an officer is being posted to Sapele. It is a question of educating the native to understand that it pays to produce the best quality and to punish them for offering for sale produce which they have deliberately adulterated. There are quantities of palm trees in the bush which are still untouched and the resources are unbounded.

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110. Palm wine trees, which are also prolific, are another source of wealth. The palm wine is obtained by tapping the head of the palm tree. The tree is tapped twice a day for about two months after which it dies. The palm wine which is a very popular drink with the natives is sold at about 6d a quart. Three to four quarts are obtained at a tapping. An individual often plants his own "tombo" palms and no one can tap a tree in his bush. A tree takes about seven years to grow. Cocoa-nut palms are found but not in any large quantities.

Arts and Crafts.

111. The Ukpes did not show particular skill at any craft. The principal crafts were those of the carpenters and blacksmiths. These two crafts were organised as guilds, and each guild had its recognised head. At the general meeting of the Ukpes if there was anything to be divided a portion was always allotted to the carpenters and blacksmiths and would be taken by the head of the guild and shared by him amongst the members. The arts of pottery and weaving appear to have been unknown and such articles as were used were obtained from the Warri.

Blacksmiths.

112. Blacksmiths' implements are primitive and the work is rough. The art of smelting is unknown. They make iron anklets for women, hoes, bullets, swords and native axes. The craft appears to have been learnt from Benin but their work is not in the same class as the Bini work. They also work in brass. At the present day most of the blacksmiths' work is being done by natives from Awka who show greater skill. Hatchets, hoes and axes are bought from local factories. The result



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is that the craft of the blacksmith has practically ceased.

Carpenters.

113. The carpenters' tools consist of the machet, native axe and a curious form of adze which is used for planing. They used to make doors, windows, postles and mortars and also the wooden images for shrines. Their work was crude. They are now becoming more skilled and with the use of European tools can do average work.

Basket and Mat Making.

114. This can hardly be classed as an industry. There was no particular shape or pattern and no special skill was shown. Baskets were made by the men and mats by the women. The materials used were split cones and the stalk of the Egen plant.

LIVESTOCK.

115. The Uke shows little interest in stock farming and the general conditions of the district, which consists principally of swamp and thick bush, are not suitable to large herds. Leopards, which abound, destroy any livestock which strays far afield. Cattle, sheep, goats and pigs are all kept and they wander promiscuously without a herdsman through the villages. Cattle are not found in any large quantity, as the native objects to the destruction of his farms by them. The type is the dwarf Bini variety, which is immune from the local tsetse. They look healthy and thrive under the conditions. They are not kept for sale and are only killed at festivals. The price of cow is about £9. Sheep are small and of poor quality. They are kept in considerable numbers. The average price of a ewe is about £2 and a ram about £1. 10/-. Goats are prolific. A female goat is worth about 15/- and a male goat about 9/-.

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Pigs are kept in small numbers. The price of a pig is about £1. 10/-. Horses have been kept at Sapele but were not a success and quickly succumbed to the tsetse.

Trade and Currency.

116. The Townships of Warri and Sapele provide the Ukeas with his main markets. It is only within the last fifteen years that he has been coming into the central markets himself with his produce, having in the past always dealt through the Jekri middleman. There are local markets held at all the larger villages generally every four days. The principal articles for sale are yams, cassava, plantains, crawfish, dried fish of every description, peppers, palm oil and kernels. Yoruba traders are to be seen selling hardware of various kinds, Hausas from the north barter Kano cloths, a wealthy Jekri trader comes to buy oil and kernels and Awka blacksmiths sell iron knives and repair pots or matchets. The markets are large (sometimes as many as 1,000 attending those at Asagba, Elume and Cha. Markets are generally placed at the waterside if possible and close to a village. The prices are the same as the central markets.

Jekri
Middleman

117. In the central markets of Warri and Sapele most things a native requires from a cow to a bicycle or a bottle of ink can be bought. Tinned foods and cigarettes are largely sold by the local natives, who buy them at the factories and retail them in the markets making a profit of 10%. The average prices of food are high. A fowl costs 2/- to 2/6, eggs 1½d each, average sized yams 4d each, cassava 6d a pan, plantains 4d a bunch and palm oil 5d a quart. Native salt, which is made

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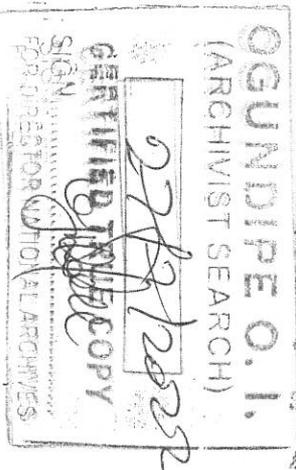
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from the root of the mangrove tree, is bought from the Jakris and costs 6d per lb. The cattle generally killed are the imported Fulani cattle from the north which are brought down river by the Hausa, the local native cattle being rarely slaughtered. The trade of the butcher is always carried on by the Hausas, the local natives having no experience. Native traders from other parts principally Yorubas and Hausas are found in large numbers. Nigerian currency is generally used though cowries are still employed, the rate being about 20 cowries to a ld.

118. Most of the leading British firms as well as French, Germans and Italians have factories established at Sapele and Warri, the palm oil and kernel trade being an every-increasing attraction.

SCHOOLS AND MISSIONS.

119. Four Missions are represented in the Ekpo area, the denominations being the Church Missionary Society, Roman Catholic, Baptist and African Church. Of these the Baptist is by far the largest and is rapidly extending its churches and schools throughout the district. The Baptist Mission, or to quote its full title the African Mission of the Southern Baptist Convention of the United States of America, has its local headquarters at Sapele and is under the direction of the Rev. Oatsola, Native Pastor. The Mission started in 1917 when a small body of the C. M. S. converts under the Rev. Oatsola broke away from the main body, owing to some dissatisfaction, and joined the Baptists. The organisation of the mission might be termed "Congregational" and though affiliated to the head Baptist Mission at Ogbomoso is not subject to its



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control in any way. The Native Pastor for the community is elected and deposed by the congregation, and there appears to be no central authority having the power of appointment or dismissal of the local pastors. The mission has been visited occasionally by American Missionaries but they themselves state that they have no executive power or control and act merely in an advisory capacity. The mission appears popular with the natives and is rapidly increasing the number of its converts. The numbers of the churches of the various missions are as follows, Baptist 18, Church Missionary Society 11, African 10 and Roman Catholic 7, and the numbers of the converts respectively are Baptist 3,300, Church Missionary Society 1,100, Roman Catholic 600 and African 346. The C. E. S. Mission which was opened in 1908 is in charge of a European the Rev. Kidd, and Catholic Mission which was opened in 1923 is in charge of two Fathers, the Rev. Fathers Shine and Birmingham. The people generally show no opposition to the missions and make ready converts. The spread of the mission movement has had considerable effect in breaking up the old system of Orpaku rule.

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Schools and Education.

120. There is one Government School at Sapele under a headmaster and seven assistant teachers. There are 234 day pupils. The school is supervised by the Superintendent of Education Warri. The Baptist Mission has 20 un-assisted schools with the staff of 27 teachers and 727 pupils. The Roman Catholics have one un-assisted school which has recently been opened. There are seven teachers and 207 pupils. The Church Missionary Society has two un-assisted schools with thirteen teachers and 410 pupils. They are applying to

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become assisted schools. Education appeals to the native who has natural liking for clerical work and the opening of new schools in the bush is generally welcomed. The average native however, after he has completed his school career, objects strongly to doing any manual work and will wait for months trying to obtain a clerical position, and in the meantime will probably keep himself by taking up the profession of the letter writer.

121. Instruction in arts and crafts is more urgently required, if the question of unemployment is to be avoided. The crafts of shoemakers, blacksmiths, tailors, builders, carpenters and coopers are all filled by Yorubas, Hausas, or native foreigners and the local native has little or no skill or knowledge of them. He is consequently becoming semi-educated and indolent, living by his wits rather than by his work. With the introduction of a Native Administration the institution of schools of arts and crafts should be possible and the above characteristics largely eliminated.

MEDICAL AND SANITATION.

122. The average Uke is a sturdy type, as has been stated previously. Leprosy and venereal diseases are the principal scourges. Considerable difficulty is encountered in tracing and diagnosing the former and, as there is no system of complete segregation, it remains unchecked. The latter is likewise prevalent and, owing to the growth of large ports of Benue and Warri with the inevitable concomitant of prostitution, has spread everywhere. The institution of well equipped native hospitals with staffs of native dispensers and nurses at Warri

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and Sapele is doing much to combat the diseases. Free treatment is given to all patients who are too poor to pay and the native is daily becoming more ready to take proper treatment. Beyond these two prevalent diseases the average health is good. The rates of infant mortality are fairly high, the diseases, to which they succumb most quickly, being bronchial diseases and malaria. There have been few epidemics of small-pox or relapsing fever, the only serious epidemic during recent years being the influenza outbreak in 1918.

123. It cannot be said that the average Ukpe village in the bush shows a high standard of cleanliness, goats and sheep wandering promiscuously through the houses and rubbish of all kinds being thrown into pits dug in the compounds. A general improvement is however noticeable and some of the larger villages are being well laid out and compounds demarcated in regular positions. With the use of corrugated iron roofing a better type of house is being built and a higher standard of living is becoming general.

COMMUNICATIONS AND REST HOUSES.

124. There are two main roads along which the telegraph line runs, one from Warri to Sapele and the other from Sapele to Kwale. The one from Warri to Sapele, which is 52 miles long, runs practically due north through the heart of the Ukpe bush. During the rains it becomes almost impassable owing to the swampy nature of the ground and generally has to be closed to all motor traffic for a period of about four months. The road from Sapele to Kwale is 36 miles long and runs alongside the Ebiho River on the northern boundary of the Ukpe district for a distance of 20 miles when it

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reaches the Kwale boundary. Except for a bad patch between the 7th and 10th miles the surface is comparatively good during the rainy season. A third motor road is in course of construction on the eastern side of the district and passes through the village of Oba joining the Sapelo-Kwale road at the 11st mile. The road when completed will link up Warri with Kwale, shortening the distance between the two places by about 23 miles. Outlying parts of the district, such as Kluna and Asagba, can be reached by launch.

125. There are four Rest Houses, one permanent house at Sapelo and three bush houses. One is placed at Oviru at the 12th mile on the Warri-Sapelo road in the southern part of the district, one at Uhepe Sobo at the 19th mile, and a third is at Asagba at the 15th mile on the Warri-Kwale road.

CONCLUSION.

126. The actual time taken on this report has been about two months, one month of which was spent practically entirely in mapping an area, which was for all intents and purposes previously unmapped except in the northern parts where Mr. Martindale's map was of great assistance.

127. It is feared that the report shows in many places evidence of bad typing and corrections. Most of the report had to be completed in the field and under conditions which were not always most suited to the typist and the only available typewriter showed periodic tendencies to collapse.

Considerable assistance was rendered by native court interpreter Umkoro, a son of one of the old Olotus, who has a knowledge of and interest in the Uupes.

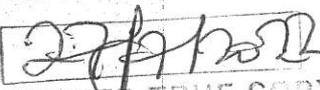
L. N. ...

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A P P E N D I X I.

62

	<u>U K P E</u>	<u>B I N I</u>
Arm	Obo	Obo
Leg	Ogwe	Ogwe
Stick	Oran	Eran
House	Ogwa	Owa
Food	Emari	Evari
Water	Ame	Ame
Fire	Erare	Ere
Lamp	Ukpe	Ukpa
River	Okun	Okun
Land	Otore	Otor
Hair	Ston	Eto
Head	Urumu	Uhumu
Eye	Ero	Aro
Goat	Eve	Eve
Leaf	Ebe	Ebe
Chair	Aga	Aga
Day	Ede	Ede
Elephant	Eni	Eni
Face	Ogware	Ugbaro
Slave	Ovre	Ovie
Captive	Ogumu	Ohumu
Bush	Egbo	Egbo
Hunter	Orue	Ohue
Ivory	Anwoni	Akeni
Hat	Eru	Eru
Thief	Chi	Oji
Money	Igo	Igo
Axe	Ukeke	Akeke

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APPENDIX I.

63

	<u>U K P E</u>	<u>B I N I.</u>
1	Ohu	Owo
2	Eva	Eva
3	Esa	Eha
4	Ene	Ene
5	Esiene	Isen
6	Era	Ehan
7	Irirue	Ihine
8	Erere	Erere
9	Irine	Ihine
10	Eekpe	Igbe
20	Ooze	Ooje
30	Ogba	Ogba
40	Oozova	Iyeva
50	Oozovab' eekpe	Ikigbesieha
60	Oozosa	Iyeha
70	Oozosab' eekpe	Ikigbesiyene
80	Oozorne	Iyehe
90	Oozorine	Ikigbesiyise
100	Oozosione	Iyise

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64

Village Group.

Ikere

Senior Akwaku

Ikere

This group is divided into three village sub-groups Ikere, Okwovu, Gbesian.

Sub-Group.
Senior Akwaku
Village

Ikere
Ilebi
Ikere
Obudugbudu
Olu
Okpa
Adagbode
Adagbrassa
Ajefe
Ojede
Arubome
Ghimidaka
Ajoniya
Ajakiri
Ituru

Sub-Group.
Senior Akwaku
Village

Okwovu
Ayoji
Okwovu
Okpoku
Okpakomeje
Omoisan
Okogborode
Okwode

Sub-Group.
Senior Akwaku
Village

Gbesian
Ikere
Gbesian
Kerekan
Igbom
Asagbome
Ako
Ikere
Ikere
Obati
Okogbo

Village Group.
Senior Akwaku
Village

Ankpa
Okere
Ankpa
Adagbrassa
Okogbo
Igboku
Okere
Okwovisi
Okwini
Okwani
Asagbo
Okogbo
Ankpa
Okere

Sub-Group.
Senior Akwaku
Village

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INHERITED WIVES.

Since writing this report it has occurred to me that possibly a further note on the question of inheritance paragraph VI might be added, with regard to the vexed question of inherited wives which occupies much of the time of the Native Courts.

If A dies and leaves eight wives and four sons, the wives are shared to the sons at a family meeting. The eldest son takes the two wives which he likes and the rest are then apportioned. If the fourth son is too young to take a wife he will be compensated. The remaining six wives will then be apportioned between the other sons. There is no fixed system and it rests with the family meeting to apportion the shares. Generally the eldest son will be given another wife.

If the woman refuses to go to the son to whom she is apportioned, he can take an action for restitution of conjugal rights. If she still refuses she is punished by the Native Court. After this the husband is at liberty to sue the parents or family for return of half dowry which is fixed at £12. The son cannot under any circumstances sue the other party for full dowry.

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68

Report on the UKRM-8080 : Warri Province,
by Mr. L. E. H. Fellows, D.O.

1. Para 43. The word 'local' before 'village groups' appears to be redundant.
2. Appendices I & II. Definitions of the terms used should have been given.
3. Mr. Boileau has assisted my study of the report by his glossary of Sobe words.
4. The maps are most useful but I am doubtful as to how they will sun-print.
5. As to the few suggestions made by Mr. Fellows I have no criticisms or suggestions to offer and the Resident has made no The building up of an indigenous form of Native Administration with the Native Courts as a part of it must be the work of the Provincial Staff. This report provides much useful information for the builders and I congratulate Mr. Fellows.
6. The Anthropological Officer should see this report in due course. It should also go to the C.S.G. for information.
7. No mention is made of any previous reports on this during the last thirty years.

L. E. H. Fellows
21/8/28.

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64

Ukpe Sobo Titles used in report,
and their English equivalents.

Oroje	-	King
Okakuru	-	Nobility
Otu	-	Age-class or "company"
Olotu	-	Leader of an age-class.
Okpaku	-	Village Group Head and President of Group Council, also a Village Head.
Okpaku Ukpe	-	Nominal clan head.
Odogun	-	Clan Council.
Olatu Ukpe, or Odiegware	-	Member of Clan Council (Odogun).
Otota	-	Spokesman of Olotu Ukpe
Arijo	-	Orderly to Olotu Ukpe.
Otota Ukpe	-	Spokesman or "Prosecutor" for the Odogun at Ojede (seat of Government).

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1

ruptive influence. Also, it appears from paragraph 42 that some at least of these "Native Court Chiefs" were nominated by the real native head of the town, the "okpaku". Consequently if the wrong men were appointed the people only have themselves to blame. It is probable that at first, until we can instil into the people the idea that membership of a Native Court is in ^{no} way antagonistic to their own native organisation, the question of appointing true representatives on the Court will present some difficulty.

5. Paragraph 43. If the villages can be persuaded resume their recognition of the village group, this would be of value in the formation of Native Administration

6. Paragraphs 42, 46 and 58 suggest that OJEME should be the site of an Ukepe Native Court and also an appeal Court, though the respective merits of OGBESHIPE (see paragraphs 13 and 69) would have to be determined.

Paragraph 71 is interesting in view of the rumours that the palm bush was being closed; this had no significance and was probably connected with the custom described in this paragraph, which Mr. Fellows will be of the opinion that takes place every year.

Mr. Fellows will be of the opinion that in planning the recasting of the sunprint the copy only of each, so as to save space and supply one to the office. Doubtless you can arrange for the sunprint of each to be made by the Survey Department. If so, I would be glad if one sunprint of each could be made by the office.

OGUNDIPE O. I.
(ARCHIVIST SEARCH)

27/2/2000

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[Signature]
RESIDENT,
Warri Province.

4

and longitude 5° 30' and 6° W. It is bounded on the north by the Ethiope River and the southern boundary of the Benin Province, on the west by the Warri-Sapele Creek, on the east by the Ajayube River as far (as the village of Amoise and thence to the 20 mile bridge on the Kwale Road, and on the south by a line running from Biegheri Swamp to the Orua Creek, crossing the main road at the ninth mile and thence along the course of the Orere Creek to the Ajayube River. It contains an area of approximately 200 square miles. The land is principally swamp and is just outside the mangrove belt which it touches on the western side. It is covered for the most part with thick bush, in which the oil palm abounds. There are two telegraph main roads from Warri to Sapele and Sapele to Kwale. A third main road is under construction from Warri to Kwale on the eastern side. It is a thickly populated area and contains the second Class Township of Sapele, several large villages of over 2,000 inhabitants and innumerable small villages connected by bush paths.

5. The Benin River, which is tidal, is navigable as far as Sapele for ocean going vessels of 8,000 tons. The port is visited by vessels of all nationalities. The Warri-Sapele Creek and the Ajayube River are navigable for launches of the size of the Vigilant.

6. There is no mineral wealth. The soil is entirely alluvial and there is no stone or rock of any description. The district is largely under water during the rainy season.

7. The Okpe tongue is a part of the Edo section of the Sadic language group. Words are differentiated by pitch or tone and the vowel change is used for the plural. The male and female and

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LANGUAGE.

5

are expressed by the addition of the word man or woman. The Ukpe and Bini tongues show a strong similarity, the numeral and basic words being the same, and it seems probable that the Ukpes migrated from Benin. A list of similar words is included in an appendix. The writer, who has studied the Ukpe language and in collaboration with Mr. Martindale completed an Ukpe vocabulary, discussed the question when on leave with professor Lloyd-James of the Oriental School of Studies, when it was thought that the Ukpe language shows an unquestionable affinity with Yoruba. Ukpe is the most difficult of the Sobo dialects to learn. An Ukpe can generally understand another Sobo but few Sobos appear to understand Ukpe. It is possible that Ukpe was the original language and has changed less than the other Sobo dialects.

Tribal Markings.

8. The Ukpes have no distinct clan markings. A long cut down the nose, which is the tribal mark of the Sobo, is general. An Ukpe may often be seen with Jekri marks or those of other clans but there appears to be no reason for this. The Ukpe will mark his child with any pattern that appeals to him and no importance is attached to it.

*Ukpe
Seen with
Jekri
Markings*

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Character.

9. The Ukpes were originally farmers and palm oil makers. They had little or no skill in watermanship, though they lived in a country surrounded by creeks. This was probably due to the fact that the Jekris controlled most of the waterways. The Ukpes consequently were not travellers but remained for the most part isolated in their native bush and came little into contact with the outside world. A study of

*Jekris
Controlled
most of the
waterways*

11th July, 1928.

WARRI PROVINCE,
WARRI.

THE HONOURABLE,
THE SECRETARY, SOUTHERN PROVINCES
LAGOS.

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UKPE - SOBO REPORT.

I forward herewith in duplicate a Report on the UKPE SOBO Clan by Mr. Fellows. The Report shows careful and thorough work on the part of this officer and should prove of immense value when the time comes for proposing the re-casting of Warri Province with a view to getting all the members of the Sobo tribe within one division. As will be seen from the Report not only is this not the case at present but even the UKPE clan of the Sobo tribe is divided between Warri and Sapele.

2. I have recently discussed the matter with the District Officer, Sapele and the only difficulty with which we shall have to contend is the fact that the S.W. portion of the Ukpe Sobo area has a fairly large population of Jokri scattered about it. They are not friendly with the Sobos, to the extent that they even attend Sapele Native Court some distance away rather than Ukpe Sobo Court. Their presence will also cause some slight difficulty in the formation of Native Administration in this area. They appear not to be mere settlers on land not belonging to them but to have inhabited this portion of the country for some generations and to have a certain extent to have intermarried with the Ukpes.

Fairly Large Population of Jokri scattered

3. Paragraph 4. I fear the Warri - Kwale Road is a very nebulous one at the moment as reported in my memorandum No. R.27/1927/34 of the 23th June, 1928.

4. Paragraph 21. One derives a certain amount of negative comfort in observing that our Native Court system and the appointment of "Native Court Chiefs" has not been the only

disruptive

disruptive influence. Also, it appears from paragraph 42 that some at least of these "Native Court Chiefs" were nominated by the real native head of the town, the "olpaku". Consequently if the wrong men were appointed the people only have themselves to blame. It is probable that at first, until we can instil into the people the idea that membership of a Native Court is in ^{no} way antagonistic to their own native organisation, the question of appointing true representatives on the Court will present some difficulty.

5. Paragraph 43. If the villages can be persuaded to resume their recognition of the village group, this would be of value in the formation of Native Administration

6. Paragraphs 42, 46 and 53 suggest that OJEME should at all events be the site of an Ukepe Native Court and possibly an Appeal Court, though the respective merits of OJEME and OISRUKEPE (see paragraphs 13 and 53) would have to be examined.

7. Paragraph 71 is interesting in view of the rumours in February that the palm bush was being closed; this apparently had no significance and was probably connected with the custom described in this paragraph, which Mr. Shute is of opinion takes place every year.

8. The maps made by Mr. Fellows will be of the greatest assistance when planning the recasting of the Divisions. I have enclosed one copy only of each, so as to retain one set in my office and supply one to the District Officer, Bapele. Doubtless you can arrange for surprints to be made by the Survey Department. If so, I should be grateful if one surprint of each could be supplied to this office.

RESIDENT,
Warri Province.

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13.

closely modelled on the existing Council District

Councils of the Islands was constituted in 1927

It is a modern development on the basis of existing institutions and has always proved effective to be an effective body;

4. The complete disappearance of the hereditary principle among the Islands is an unusual feature in itself. I suggest, further investigation: it is also does the conclusion arrived at by Mr. Fellows that age ~~also~~ was the ^{sole} qualification of an Okpadek of Village Head. It is difficult to believe that there was no element of select where e.g. there were several claimants of equal age.

5. I suggest that it was perhaps not the creation of Warrant Chiefs with judicial powers which led to the decay of the essential Councils of Clan and Village, but their appointment not within and to judicial members of those Councils, but without and apart from them. An essential feature of the clan or tribal council has always been, I think, the judicial power by which it enforces



4.C.S.

1. This appears to be a very useful piece of evidence which should be invaluable if and when clan and tribal organisation is utilised for the creation of a local authority and a native administration.
2. p.p. 8-13. The Igbo system as found at Tolo and Kolori-Karifi, closely resembles the earlier Ukepe organisation viz a division in 4 quarters or sections - here called 'strato' - each under a hereditary chief: but the chieftainship among the Igbos passed in rotation from one quarter to another.
3. In its latter stages the Ukepe village organisation has resemblances to that of the Idoma tribes of the Benue Province: but whereas the latter had no central or tribal Council the Ukepes had evolved one which was apparently effective for a long period which survived for some 7 years after the arrival of the British.

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The amount of expenditure from 1967 to 1970 is
found to be about 100 lakhs. When
the financial position is, then, the
essential part had to be paid also.

It is notable that in the disturbances of
1967 an attempt was made ^{to} reconstitute
the Central Council at Gaya, Bihar.
The attempt was unsuccessful and it is suggested
that the Ministry of Home Affairs should
consider the possibility of a new system
of the people, and that ^{the} system may be
formed the members of a Central Authority
from which a better Administration may
be built up.

The copy of the document no. 70 is
sent which is follow about. It has been
noted elsewhere in the inclusion in the
Central Council of the ^{to} heads of the foreign
element.

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3.10.28. Very interested
Fwd.

Asst

21943/75.

Lagos, 5 October

Ukpa - Sobo Report.

Secretary,
Southern Provinces,
Lagos.

(P)

With reference to your letter No.S.P.5256, 1/75 of September 11th, 1928, I am directed by the Officer Administering the Government to say that His Excellency has read Mr. Fellows report with much interest. The report should prove most valuable if and when clan and tribal organisation is utilised for the creation of Native Authorities and a Native Administration.

W. Blorgun.

L. AG: Chief Secretary to the Govt

P.A.
6 X 2

B. R.
5/10.

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29/2/1928

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[Faint handwritten notes]

Nigeria



No. S.P. 6965/24.

Secretary's Office,
Southern Provinces,

Nigeria,

All communications should be addressed

"THE SECRETARY,
SOUTHERN PROVINCES,
ENUGU, NIGERIA"

(and not to officers by name) and the
number given above should be quoted.



Enugu, 10^h December, 1930.

The Honourable
The Chief Secretary to the Government,
Lagos.

Intelligence Report Ukpe Clan of the Sobo
Sub-Tribe: Warri Province.

I am directed by the Lieutenant-Governor to
forward for your information the following documents:-

- (a) Assessment Report on the Ukpe - Sobo sub-tribe Warri Province.
- (b) Comments on the Report.
- (c) A minute by Mr. W.E. Hunt, C.B.E., on the Report and on the question of the re-organization of Warri Province on tribal lines.
- (d) A minute by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

A. J. M. Hunt
Acting Secretary,
Southern Provinces.

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REPORT OF UKPE SOBO REPORT.

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Appendix I. Comparative list of word in Binl and Ukpe.

Appendix II. List of village groups and Orpaku.

Appendix III. Inheritance

Attachments:

*not included
TM.*

- Map of the Ukpe District
- Map showing the positions of the various clans of the Sobo tribe.

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