

Contents

	Preface	7	4.1.5	<i>Mgbe</i> and its association with the leopard	77
1	Introduction: General information about Kembong and its history; the research project and its realisation	9	4.1.6	Funeral rituals in <i>Mgbe</i>	78
2	Elements of religious world-view	31	4.1.6.1	<i>Ofu akeken nkeku</i> , “day of burying the corpse”	79
2.1	God and the ancestors	31	4.1.6.2	An excursus: <i>aboku</i> , the feasting day	93
2.2	Spirits	36	4.1.7	The <i>Mgbe</i> society today	104
2.3	Witches and magic medicines	38	4.2	<i>Nkanda</i>	105
2.4	Divination	41	4.3	The skin-covered masks, <i>Nchebe</i> and <i>Mkpe</i> , and night dances	112
3	Society and leadership	47	4.4	<i>Angbu</i>	125
3.1	Principles and institutions of an egalitarian society	47	4.5	<i>Obon</i>	132
3.2	The heads of families	48	5	<i>Ajom</i> – magic medicines	139
3.3	<i>Etek</i> , the assembly of the community	48	5.1	<i>Enok Ateng</i>	139
3.4	Chief or head of a village community	50	5.2	<i>Mfam</i>	142
3.5	Secret societies – organisation and functions. An initial overview	57	5.3	<i>Amok</i>	143
3.6	Age-groups	60	5.4	<i>Okeboho</i>	145
4	<i>Akum</i> – the secret societies	63	5.5	<i>Obasinjom</i> , the “God of medicine”	147
4.1	<i>Mgbe</i>	63	5.5.1	First encounter with <i>Obasinjom</i> and an initial orientation: its house and grove	147
4.1.1	History, dissemination and general characteristics	63	5.5.2	Ranks of <i>Obasinjom</i> and special positions	151
4.1.2	The 32 <i>Mgbe</i> lodges in Kembong	63	5.5.2.1	<i>Abo Njom</i> , the young members of <i>Obasinjom</i>	153
4.1.3	Ranks in <i>Mgbe</i>	64	5.5.2.2	<i>Atemambi</i> , “heart of <i>Obasinjom</i> ”	153
4.1.3.1.	<i>Abo Mgbe</i> , the “young people of <i>Mgbe</i> ”	65	5.5.2.3	Special positions in <i>Obasinjom</i>	153
4.1.3.1.1	<i>Bekundi</i>	65	5.5.2.3.1	<i>Bebu Njom</i> , the mantletbearers of <i>Obasinjom</i>	153
4.1.3.1.2	<i>Okat Mgbe</i> , “curtain of <i>Mgbe</i> ”	65	5.5.2.3.2	<i>Osam Njom</i> , the interpreter of <i>Obasinjom</i>	158
4.1.3.1.3	<i>Okongo</i>	65	5.5.2.3.3	<i>Eturu Njom</i> , the trumpet of <i>Obasinjom</i>	158
4.1.3.1.4	<i>Ebongu</i> and <i>Ema</i>	65	5.5.2.3.4	<i>Mma Njom</i> , the wife of <i>Obasinjom</i>	159
4.1.3.2	The full members of <i>Mgbe</i>	66	5.5.2.4	<i>Anne eboho Njom</i> , the leaders of <i>Obasinjom</i>	159
4.1.3.2.1	<i>Eteme Mgbe</i> , “grove of <i>Mgbe</i> ”	66	5.5.3	The mask and its medicines	160
4.1.3.2.2	<i>Eyume Mgbe</i> , “voice of <i>Mgbe</i> ”, or <i>okahah Mgbe</i> , “to answer <i>Mgbe</i> ”	68	5.5.4	Mask performances	167
4.1.3.2.3	The <i>dikaba</i>	72	5.5.5	<i>Obasinjom</i> as <i>njom</i>	181
4.1.3.3	The big men of <i>Mgbe</i>	72	5.5.6	Origin and expansion of <i>Obasinjom</i>	182
4.1.3.3.1	<i>Osongaribo</i>	72	5.6	Summary and recent developments	183
4.1.3.3.2	The <i>seseke</i>	72			
4.1.4	The activities of <i>Mgbe</i>	75			

6	Institutions for women	189	6.4.2.4	<i>Agbep mfut Ndem</i> , “inserting the feathers of a peacock”	200
6.1	<i>Aboninkim</i> , the “children of circumcision”	190	6.4.3	Commemorative monuments for the <i>agbokarem</i>	200
6.2	<i>Mawu</i>	191	6.4.4	The decline of <i>Ndem</i>	208
6.3	<i>Njom Ekpa</i>	193	6.4.5	Bessem Bate from Ewelle, the last of the <i>agbokarem</i>	213
6.4	<i>Ndem</i> , the society of the elite <i>agbokarem</i>	196	7	Conclusion: The concept of an ideal society and the importance of masks	219
6.4.1	Dignity and importance of the <i>agbokarem</i>	196			
6.4.2	The long period of initiation into <i>Ndem</i>	198			
6.4.2.1	<i>Agbut etene Ndem</i> , “to set aside <i>Ndem</i> ”	198			
6.4.2.2	<i>Akesu Ndem</i> , “to wash <i>Ndem</i> ”	199		Glossary	225
6.4.2.3	<i>Ayi nju Ndem</i> , “to enter the house of <i>Ndem</i> ”	199		Bibliography	233
				Index	237