

The Story of Eweka

Take turns to read the story of Eweka aloud to each other.

After reading it through carefully, can you use some of the names in bold to complete the family trees?

The Ogiso dynasty ruled Benin in the twelfth century. Owodo, the last Ogiso ruler, banished his only son Ekaladerhan from Benin, after lies were told about him by Esagho, Owodo's senior wife. Three years later the lies told about him were found to be untrue and messengers were sent to ask him to return home but he refused. He even dug pits to protect himself and many soldiers were killed when they fell into them. The people of Benin had hoped that he would become the next ruler but gave up this idea on hearing what had happened to the soldiers.

Owodo did not rule over his people very well and the people eventually banished him. For the next few years they did not have an Ogiso but they asked Evian, one of the most important men in Benin to look after them. However, the people were not happy when Evian tried to make his eldest son the next ruler saying that only an Ogiso could do this. The people of Benin asked Oduduwa, the powerful Oba of a neighbouring city called Ife, to send one of his sons to be their ruler.

In about AD 1170 Oduduwa sent Prince Oranmiyan, his son, to rule over the people of Benin. Oranmiyan lived in a palace which was built for him in Benin, married a beautiful Edo lady called Erinwinde and had a son called Eweka. However, Oranmiyan said that only someone born in Benin should rule it and made his son, Eweka, the Oba. This was the start of the Eweka dynasty.

