The Yoruba Religion & Osun Sacred Grove

The Yoruba people are an ethnic group from Nigeria, Benin, and Togo. There are more than 20 million Yoruba, and most Yoruba live in southwestern Nigeria. The areas with a large Yoruba population are called 'Yorubaland.' Around 100 years ago, every town in Yorubaland had a sacred grove. A grove is a small wooded area. At these groves, the Yoruba people would worship the gods of the Yoruba religion.

As Christianity and Islam spread throughout Yorubaland in the 1900s, these sacred groves began to disappear. Many of them were destroyed. Some people believed that the sacred groves encouraged the worship of idols. This is a sin in both the Christian and Islamic holy books: the Bible and the Qur'an.

One of the sacred groves was not destroyed, however. This grove is called the Osun Sacred Grove and it is in the Nigerian city, Osogbo. Osun Sacred Grove is dedicated to the worship of Osun. Osun is the Yoruba goddess of water, pleasure, and fertility. Many Yoruba women visit the grove to ask for children. Every year, there is a festival at Osun Sacred Grove. This festival is held to strengthen the bond between Osun and the grove.

Osun Sacred Grove remains, in large part, because of Susanne Wegner. She was an artist who wanted to protect the grove and make sure that it would not be abandoned in the future. She and other artists created beautiful sculptures to put in Osun Sacred Grove. They wanted to celebrate the Yoruba religion through art.

Would you like to visit Osun Sacred Grove?

1. Most of the Yoruba live in:

   a. Nigeria.

   b. Benin.

   c. Togo.

2. Osun is the Yoruba goddess of:

   a. women and children.

   b. sculptures and art.

   c. water, pleasure, and fertility.

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3. The Yoruba people are an ancient ethnic group from:

   a. the American continent.

   b. the African continent.

   c. the Asian continent.

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