

WE are the EBBO

I am increasingly disturbed by the failure of too many Ifa Devotees, as well as Ifa priests, to see how their unexamined adoption of the Western Worldview has distorted their practice and perceptions of this ancient philosophy.

What makes it even more problematical to me is that the attacks on the Ifa Foundation, from a small sect of so called Traditionalists, are based on their use of the very principals they supposedly reject. Western principals.. Their objections to the concept of American Ifa are that we are turning away from "traditional practices." By this they mean that we have not used the **exact** words, ingredients or order that they consider *correct*. They fail to perceive that this fixed concept of *correct* is a totally Western concept!

It was our initial observation, more than a quarter of a century ago, that these brilliant ancient observations lost much of their effectiveness when utilizing them as if the world still functioned as it did hundreds, or thousands, of years ago, but quickly regained their original power when understood in relationship with today's culture, technology, political and social realities. The analogy we have used is that it would be somewhat senseless to buy a new car and then attempt to look for the hand crank to start it simply because that's how your Grandfather started his! Some have mistaken this approach as a lack of respect for tradition rather than seeing it as the exact same approach that Ifa used when, **as an oral tradition, the changes in the world were automatically incorporated into the telling of tales**. Only when the West's love affair with "the word", both as a written reality and as a philosophical absolute, came into play did Ifa begin to become frozen in time...begin to watch the cars others were starting by simply turning the ignition sweep past them while they sought the hand crank that had become "the word." They had forgotten the most basic truth of the tradition: the "car, as a means of transportation, was the truth. How you started it, and the features that improved it, would constantly change." **The Beauty and the Power of Ifa is that Orisa Energy adapts to these changes while working with the genuine Truths of Love, Heath, Success & Character within the current reality.**

They have even gone so far as to adopt the Western *supremacist view* within the philosophy. Ifa, which never had a Pope or governing council, is suddenly faced with a number of small sects who wish to take control of the thinking and behavior within the philosophy.

One of the most brilliant, talented and thoughtful Orisa Devotees I have ever known is Susanne Wenger (Aduni Olorisa). Wenger's life and art is an unremitting battle against the trivialization of African Culture. Her statement: "**Do not even try and imitate the past, but do not lose your connection with it,**" is the essence of the driving energy at the Ifa Foundation. Finally, Wenger reflects: "**We only willingly and without any self-centered corrections, allow the current of ever new and inventive creation, its ever changing moods and forms, to take hold of us and carry us along.**" Such is the real view of Orisa, not the Westernized hubris and pomposity of those whom seek power and control of the uncontrollable.

Within that view it is our lives that reflect Orisa. Those lived with good character, understanding of our relationship to our family, community and the world we live in, as well as with love and respect for the Creators **entire** creation, become living Ebbo! For the vibrations that emanate from these lives will seamlessly integrate with the vibrations of the Orisa to bring strength and harmony to the planet as well as ourselves.

Ewe nla' ki pada ru wewe
Awon olosi ko ni I to wa
Pele-pele,ka ma ba won ja
Ka ma baa bawo Orisa je tan yaan-yaan!
Ore rerun rerun buru ju ota lo,
A o ni I raburu-ase!
Ka ma fimo sin mo je
TOjo tEerun
Kin-kin lomi tutu fun loju orun
Eni tj ko fe-ran irunmole
Ko fe ran araa re
Aimoyii toni lajmoyii tola
La ija ni a o segun ota

Ase! Ase! Ase!

La ija aaja you segun ota

Blessings,

Oluwo Philip Neimark

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