

YEMONJA-OLOKUN

IFA FOUNDATION INTERNATIONAL

Yemonja (also known as: yemoja, yemanja ymoja, yemowo, yemanjá, iemanjá, janaína, yemalla, yemana, yemoja, la diosa del mar)



Yemonja is one of the major misunderstood Orisa energies. It is not some passive feminine mother figure; it is an enormously powerful energy matrix controlling a host of attributes. From mother, provider, teacher, in possession of secrets of the depths of the Ocean to an incredibly forceful destructiveness personified by Hurricanes, it is one of the foundational energies of Ifa.

In Africa, women are accepted as strong, equal partners to men. Women, for the most part, ran the stores in the marketplace. They ran the household, and the senior wife had total control over what other wives would be allowed into the home. This view of the “Mother” is quite different from the Diaspora view. As a result of the Middle Passage, the energy of Yemonja changed dramatically in this hemisphere. It lost its powerful aspect as a result of the secondary place of women in Christianity. The Catholic slave masters' world view began to prevail.

The pataki that have evolved over the years have concentrated more on the nurturing aspects, than the strong protective ones. Indeed, the ultimate extension of this has been to portray the Yemonja energy

as the nurturing mother who provides and never complains. An energy that simply devotes its existence to caring for its children, but seldom disciplining them.

Nothing could be further from the truth! Of all the energies in the pantheon of Orisa, Yemonja's wrath can be the most ferocious, the most devastating. Unlike the selective destructiveness of Oya, the destructiveness of Yemonja-Olokun in protecting its children, or expressing its wrath, is overwhelming and extensive. It is represented by the Hurricane! A correct and incisive description. The Hurricane sweeps away everything in its path...whole cities or countries have been left shattered by this devastation.

Yet, in modern Diaspora interpretation, Yemonja is the smiling homebody, always there to care of her inhabitants. Always willing to sublimate her desires and needs to the desires and needs of those she cares for. And, horrifyingly, children of Yemonja-Olokun have allowed themselves to be conditioned and molded by these perceptions. Indeed, the separation of the nurturing aspect of Yemonja, from the assertive energy of Olokun (the male aspect of Yemonja) has been the result of this misinterpretation...or desire. It has resulted in an energy lobotomy for those that have accepted it.

It is true that Yemonja is nurturing and providing. The pataki that describe the riches of the ocean, that refer to the creation and sustaining of life through her waters and their inhabitants, all correctly express the nurturing provider that Yemonja-Olokun truly is.

This care does not come without its cost. And that cost is the moral behavior of this energy towards those it protects, and towards itself. Not only will Yemonja-Olokun lash out to protect the children, family or community, it will lash out to protect itself from the moral abuse or ignorance of its meaning and place in our universe. It is an essential energy to our well-being, growth and comfort...but only because the gifts provided by the energy include the reality of stern punishment for moral or physical wrong doing. One cannot properly raise and nurture one's children without teaching, and insisting on, the moral behavior and respect they must learn.

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