

Orishas in Yoruba Medicine

Orishas in Yoruba Medicine The Yoruba religion has a multitude of deities, the major of which are called Orisha. Osain is one of the most important Orishas. Osain rules over all wild herbs, and he is considered the greatest herbalist who knows the powers of all plants. In the Yoruba tribe a sort of staff is given to the herb gatherer of the community, to make clear their position. In Africa there are so many herbs and plants that are used in healing, that only someone trained for life can competently perform the function. The plants and herbs of Osain have their purely medicinal value as well as their magical value. The Osainista knows how to correctly gather the herbs and plants. Some plants have to be gathered at certain times of the day or night. Certain plants have to have certain prayers said to them and certain offerings made in order to correctly work. As said before there are a multitude of Orisha's. In diagnosing illness each one of the orisha's has physical qualities and herbal attributes, each affecting one another. See the diagrams below[6]:

Orishas Attributes Physical Correspondences Herbs (Ewe) Obatala Deity of Creation and custodian of the Ifa Oracle, source of knowledge. Creator of Human Form, Purity, Cures illness and deformities. His priests are the Babalawo Brain, Bones, White fluids of the body Skullcap, Sage, Kola Nut, Basil, Hyssop, Blue Vervain, White Willow, Valerian Èsù or Elegbara Gateman of the Heavens. Messenger of the Orisha, he is prime negotiator between negative and positive forces in body, enforces the "law of being". Helps to enhance the power of herbs sympathetic nervous system All Herbs Ogun Orisha of Iron, he is divinity of clearing paths, specifically in respect to blockages or interruption of the flow vital energy at various points in the body, and he is the liberator. heart, kidney (adrenal glands), tendons, and sinews Eucalyptus, Alfalfa, Hawthorn, Bloodroot, Parsley, Motherwort, Garlic Yemoja Mother of Waters, Primal Waters, Nurturer. She is the amniotic fluid in the womb of the pregnant woman, as well as, the breasts which nurture. She is the protective energies of the feminine force. womb, liver, breasts, buttocks Kelp, Squawvine, Cohosh, Dandelion, Yarrow, Aloe, Spirulina, Mints, Passion Flower, Wild Yam Root Oshun Sensuality, Beauty, Gracefulness, she symbolizes clarity and flowing motion, she has power to heal with cool water, she is also the divinity of fertility and feminine essence, Women appeal to her for child-bearing and for the alleviation of female disorders, she is fond of babies and is sought if a baby becomes ill, she is known for her love of honey. circulatory system, digestive organs, elimination system, pubic area (female) Yellow Dock, Burdock, Cinnamon, Damiana, Anis, Raspberry, Yarrow, Chamomile, Lotus, Uva-Ursi, Buchu, Myrrh, Echinacea Shango Kingly, Virility, Masculinity, Fire, Lightning, Stones, Protector/Warrior, Magnetism, he possesses the ability to transform base substance into that which is pure and valuable reproductive system (male), bone marrow, life force or chi Plantain, Saw Palmetto, Hibiscus, Fo-ti, Sarsaparilla, Nettles, Cayenne Oya Tempest, Guardian of the Cemetery, Winds of Change, Storms, Progression, she is usually in the company of her counterpart Shango, she is the deity of rebirth as things must die so that new beginnings arise lungs, bronchial passages, mucous membranes Mullein, Comfrey, Cherrybark, Pleuris Root, Elecampane, Horehound, Chickweed