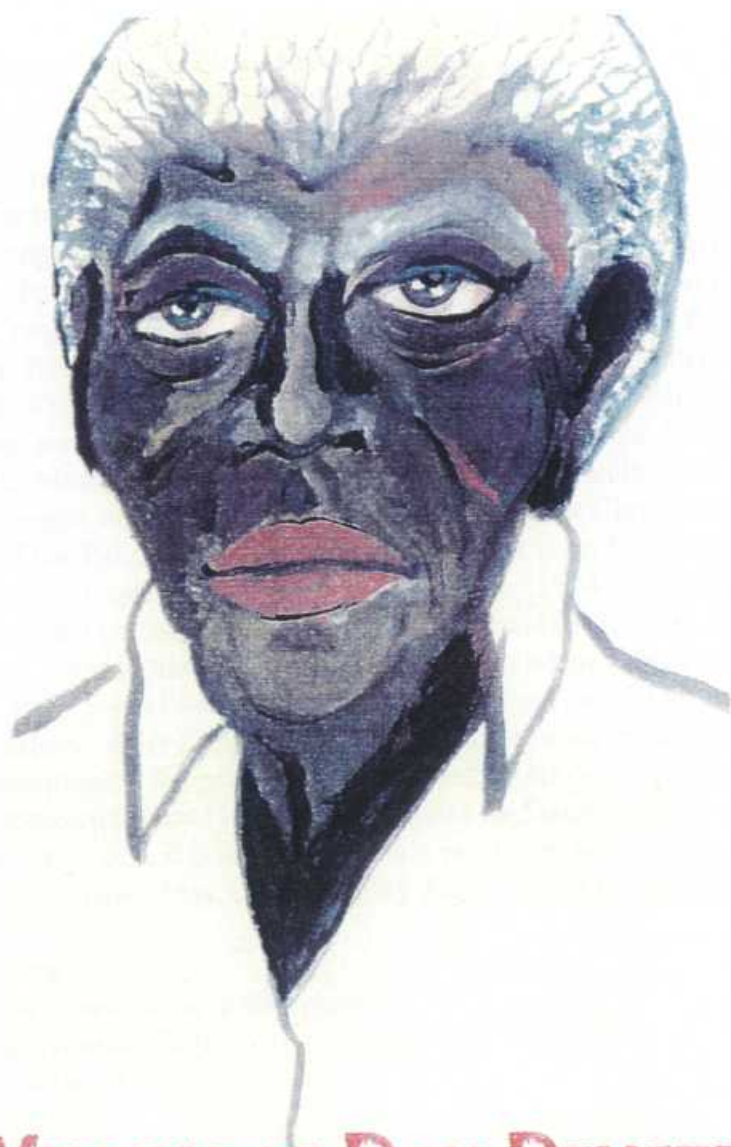


# THE BOOK ON PALO



WISDOM OF DON DEMETRIO  
BABA RAUL CANIZARCO  
SECOND, EXPANDED YEAR 2000 EDITION

## INTRODUCTION

Palo, one of the four main African-derived religions still practiced in Cuba--the other three are Santería, Abakuá, and Arará--developed among practitioners of a form of necromancy called *Nganga* still widely found in various parts of the west coast of Central Africa. "Nganga" refers both to the practice and to its priests. In Cuba, the practitioners of Nganga were mostly of KiKongo and BaKongo stock. Highly utilitarian and syncretistic even in Africa, Palo, as the practice of Nganga came to be known in Cuba, added to the Congo, Yoruba, Aráò, and Dahomean mix it brought from Africa, popular Roman Catholicism, Kardecian Spiritism, and elements of Freemasonry in Cuba. Palo has four branches; Palo Briyumba, Palo Monte, Palo Mayombe, and Palo Kimbisa. Palo Briyumba has the most African retentions. Palo Monte is mostly identified with goodness, while Palo Mayombe is thought to be "evil." Palo Kimbisa is the most Christianized and Masonic of the Palo sects. The focus of this book is on Palo Monte as taught by Demetrio Gomez Camposante Mediañoche (1874-1968) of Guanabacoa, a town on the outskirts of Havana famous for keeping African traditions alive. I was initiated into Palo by Demetrio when I was a small child, he died when I was twelve. His student Paco kept careful notes on Demetrio's wisdom. After Demetrio's death, Paco went on to become a priest of Ifá, abandoning the practice of Palo. Before his own death in 1985, Paco generously shared his invaluable notes on Demetrio with me. Beginning in chapter one, it will be Demetrio's voice you will hear, channeled through mine. May God Almighty Zambia bless all our efforts.

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*New York, NY, 6/06/99*

## CHAPTER I

### *What is Palo Monte?*

My Christian name is Demetrio Gomez, both of my parents, Jose Herrera and Francisquilla Perez, were born in Angola. They were brought to Cuba as slaves. It was in Cuba that they met while serving the same master, a relatively poor Spaniard named Don Triburcio Perez. Don Triburcio had a small farm in Guanabacoa where he raised pigs. He only owned three slaves; Don Triburcio's wife and children used to labor right alongside the slaves, so there was a feeling among the slaves of belonging to a family rather than being owned by slavemasters. Shortly after I was born a strange sickness killed off most of Don Triburcio's pigs and he faced losing his property. In order to raise money, he was forced to sell my father to a wealthy aristocrat named Demetrio Gumersindo Gomez Chaviano, who paid an incredibly high price for him. Back in Africa, my father had been a feared Nganga. Don Demetrio, who knew the power of African magic, had heard of my father's gifts as a practitioner. Thinking my father's talents were being wasted raising pigs, as soon as he brought his new slave to his property he encouraged him to set up shop as a Palero, as Ngangas were called in Cuba, providing Don Demetrio as well as the numerous slaves and free men who worked in Don Demetrio's sugar cane plantation with his special kind of service. In less than a year, Don Demetrio came to view my father as his spiritual mentor and principal problem-solver. Another powerful practitioner of Palo named Andres Petit, who was an elegant, impeccably-dressed free man of color who befriended both Don Demetrio and my father, convinced the latter to initiate Don Demetrio into the mysteries of Palo in exchange for his freedom. Andres Petit was a man of great charisma and was greatly admired by most, yet he had his detractors; he had been criticized by other blacks for "selling out the secrets of African magic" to whites. In reality, initiating whites into African magical systems was a brilliant act of empowerment for the initiators, since it virtually put the white initiates in the subservient position of neophytes in relation to their black teachers.

Although Don Triburcio absolutely refused to sell my mother to Don Demetrio, his children considering their *nana* as much a part of their family as Don Triburcio's wife, Doña Emilia, my father was allowed to visit my mother as often as he could. I was baptized in the Catholic Church when I was about one and a half. Don Demetrio and his wife, Doña Petra, became my Catholic godparents. Don Triburcio agreed to let me move in with my father. By the time Don Triburcio died in 1880 slavery had been abolished in Cuba. He left my mother a comfortable cottage in a small plot of land near his farm in Guanabacoa. At last my family was reunited. It was in that cottage, where I still live, that my father and other men from the "old

Country," as Africa was called, taught me how to be a Palero. Old J.S. Baró, a former slave from the Belgian Congo, taught me about Palo Mayombe, Andres Petit initiated me into Palo Kimbisa, yet it was my father's intimate knowledge of Palo Monte that most deeply affected me.

Palo Monte is my TRUTH. It is also the truth for thousands of others. I would never say that Palo is "*the* TRUTH." No one religion should claim to be the sole repository of the TRUTH. I reject no religion except those that routinely practice coercion, exploitation, and/or dishonesty. The teachings I leave behind are intended for those who would benefit from the practice of Palo Monte. Palo is not for everyone. In my sixty years as a Palero I have rejected ten times as many people as I have accepted for initiation. Those who need to be here will find their way. Palo Monte teaches trust in God, belief in destiny, and respect for the forces that move the Universe; these forces can take surprising forms and can manifest themselves in unusual and unexpected manners. In a world steeped in despair, any path that brings solace and spiritual fortitude should be allowed to flourish. The practice of Palo Monte engenders a particular form of spiritual strength, a gutsy, down-in-your-groin, earthy power that some people need to experience as their souls travel on the way to the Final Cause.

Palo Monte, Vodou, and Macumba have much in common. Although what I know of Brazilian Macumba is mostly second hand, I have spent months at a time in Haiti studying Petro Vodou and I can tell you that it is similar enough to Palo Monte for both religions to be considered branches of the same tree. The first lesson for the would-be Palero is that this religion is as valid as Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism. To fully understand African traditional religions, the outsider who seeks shelter in one of them, such as Palo Monte, has to leave behind pre-conceived ideas about the wild, sensual, horrific "voodoo" cults depicted in Hollywood films. Such grotesque imagery has two principal historical precedents: The overwrought tourist shows put on in Haiti for the benefit of thrill-seeking foreigners, and the deliberately wild dances orchestrated on Congo Square and other places in New Orleans during the last half of the 19th century. These spectacles were put on by a series of Voodoo queens, the most notable being Marie Laveau, for the benefit of high-paying white onlookers. Although Madame Laveau was undoubtedly a powerful practitioner, she was also a sharp businesswoman who knew how to put on a lucrative show. The religious aspects of Palo, Macumba, and Vodou, however, have nothing to do with these aberrations. In a concise manner, I'll describe in the following notes the basics of Palo Monte, including its deities, initiatory rituals, ceremonies, as well as the relationship between Palo deities, Yoruba orishas, and Catholic saints. I'll also provide a glossary of Palo terms consisting of creolized KiKongo, and, most importantly, a compilation of some of the most popular and effective mambos. The Palo invocations known as

mambos are of supreme importance in calling forth the spiritual forces that we work with; therefore, learning these mambos is essential to a Palero's growth.

We Paleros do not proselytize, since we do not believe that ours is the only way. "Many are the roads that lead to Heaven," states one of our proverbs. Although some anthropologists have criticized us for being syncretistic, mixing elements of many other paths, they fail to realize that this could also be said of any other religion. Palo is as ancient as any other faith. Adapting and changing is just part of our tradition, a way of surviving. Palo has all the hallmarks of a valid religion, including a well-defined set of ethics and morals which teach respect for human life, the sharing of wealth with those who are less fortunate, and belief in a supreme god called ZAMBIA, as well as in his helpers, the nkisis, also commonly called "orishas" (a term we borrowed from our Yoruba neighbors back in Africa). We also have what I call a "natural priesthood" consisting of men and women who have been chosen by the wise spirits and the orishas to be set apart as teachers, herbalists, counselors, and messengers between the world of the seen and of the unseen. Palo priests and priestesses, therefore, must become proficient in the art of communicating with enlightened disincarnate intelligences we call "*pure essences*" or "*pure spirits*". We also believe that sometimes backward, evil essences can be manipulated and used by the Palero. If the Palero is a practitioner of mostly beneficial magic, the evil spirit may be helped to evolve into a good spirit. An unscrupulous Palero may also use these unfortunate souls for his own benefit without caring for the spiritual development of the backward spirits. The Evildoer will then have to face the consequences of his actions at some future point, and the impure essence that had been misused by the Palero may encounter a good teacher in the future who will help him or her develop, so in God's eyes the whole evil/good dichotomy is just a play leading to eventual order and balance. For all Paleros believe that, ultimately, good *will* triumph over evil.

Palo Monte teaches that all that exists was created by Zambia God. He created good as well as evil--the reasons why he did this are ultimately unknown to us in the material plane, although theologians and philosophers may argue about it till the cows come home. Pure spirits incarnate in the material world in order to live out their destiny here for as long as it is necessary in order to learn what can only be learned in the material plane, later to go on to the realm of the spirits (also called the realm of the essences) or to the realm of Truth, from which no reincarnation is necessary.

The ideographs, painted "signatures," chants, invocations, and seances designed to communicate with the pure spirits form the core of the practice of Palo Monte. We who are initiated in the path of Palo Monte are called "Paleros." Although some may find this appellation humorous ("Palero"

means "user of sticks"), we find no fault with this name and accept it with dignity and honor. In my own *house* (congregation) we are under the protection of Centella Ndoki, the goddess of lightning, and are committed to seeking out that which is beneficial and just for all members. We maintain constant communication with enlightened essences in order to receive their guidance, wisdom, and beneficent care for all who come under the protection of this house (*munanzo*) under the divine care of Centella Ndoki. Our religion consists in belief in a high God whom we praise, a number of demigods who we actively worship and interact with, the pure spirits we constantly work with, a hierarchical priesthood, a body of believers, temples, altars, and traditional rituals passed on from generation to generation by way of our ancestors.

Most of my godchildren are simple, hardworking folk. Many have been victimized by systems not friendly to the poor and disenfranchised. Many of these people have been turned away by conventional sources of support and have come to view our spirits and deities ~~as~~ their last hope for justice. Palo Monte is a utilitarian and practical religion, more concerned with the here and now than with the hereafter. We recognize GOD (ZAMBIA) as the highest being. Borrowing a Yoruba word, in our *munanzo* we call the demigods "orishas" interchangeably with "nkisis," which is the more traditional KiKongo term. The orishas have power over everything that happens, both good and evil. Unlike Santeria, which does not teach that there exists an eternal duality of good vs. evil, we Paleros believe that there is a clear and long-standing battle between absolute good and absolute evil, the tension between the two being the energy that propels existence. In my *munanzo*, called MUNANZO CENTELLA NDOKI, I teach that we must strive to do good. We are committed to fighting the forces of evil. Our temple here in Guanabacoa is simple. There is a major "*prenda*" (cauldron) for worship and another one we actually work with. The major *prenda* is dedicated to Centella Ndoki, the working *prenda*, inhabited by an old trickster spirit called Lungambé, is used in all of the temple's dealings with the dead--the essences.

Our hierarchical structure is simple. The head of the temple is called the "Tata Nganga" (a female would be the Nana Nganga). In Spanish, our members call the Tata "Padrino," which means Godfather. Anyone seeking membership in our *munanzo* and is accepted by the Tata must undergo the "Purification and Acceptance" initiation, also known as "Presentation to the Nganga." At this stage the neophyte becomes a member of the *munanzo* and is called "ahijado" or "ahijada" (godson or goddaughter). Later on, the neophyte may receive further instructions preparing him or her for further development. The next step after presentation is the SCRATCHING ceremony. After a period of time where the neophyte and the godfather have had a chance to assess each other for a minimum of three months, the

neophyte may request that the godfather ask the orishas and the spirits if the neophyte is ready to be offered a more advanced initiation. Although everyone can benefit from being presented to the Nganga, not many are called to go deeper than that. If a godchild is accepted for scratching, he or she receives certain ceremonial scratches on the skin and is given certain information not available to non-scratched people. This information has to do with sacred formulas and practices that empower the newly scratched Palero. After a year and seven days of having been scratched, a godchild may request to be given his/her own cauldron. The cauldron (*prenda*, *nganga*) is a miniature universe containing at least 21 sticks (*palos*, where the religion gets its name) and other secret ingredients which imbue it with enormous power. Paleros are supposed to concentrate on developing their particular talents, such as ritual expert, healer, herbalist, exorcist, drummer, singer, or diviner. He or she will develop these attributes through the grace (*ashé*) of his elders.

Every godchild has an obligation to aid his godfather in whatever the godchild can. This should include offering help in maintaining the temple and the altars themselves extremely clean and filled with flowers and sweet-smelling colognes. All members of the house should learn how to divine using four pieces of coconut or four shells (*shamalongos*). The most common and accepted form of divination in Palo is to communicate directly with the essences while these essences possess Palo priests, taking over their senses and speaking through them. My father taught me that when orishas possess Paleros, these are really avatars of the orishas, not the totality of those great spirits--unless the Palero happens to also be a Santero, in which case and under the right circumstances, the archetypal orishas may possess them. Paradoxically, however, when a Palero communicates with an avatar, he is actually communicating with the great spirits, because these avatars are part of those great beings as much as a drop of coffee that spills out of a cup is of the same substance as the greater amount that remains inside the cup. Some Paleros feel that the best method of communicating with the orishas is to use the *diloggun* or cowry shells method of divination, since it is said that the primal force of the orishas speak through these sixteen shells. Another advantage of using shells rather than possession as a way of communicating with the orishas is that the priest does not lose his consciousness to the orisha, as it happens during possession. It also requires less effort to cast the shells than to become possessed.

During the time of persecution, which intermittently lasted well into the middle of the present century, Paleros were forced to hide their deities under the guise of Catholic saints. Back in Africa, Ngangas had already developed a correspondence between their deities and those of the Yoruba pantheon. What follows is a list of our most popular deities, their Catholic counterparts and their Yoruba names.

PALO MONTE	CATHOLIC	YORUBA/SANTERIA
Nkisis, Kimpungulu	saints, celestial court	orishas
Zambia, Nsambi Mpungu	God Almighty	Olodumare
Nkuyo, Lucero	Child of Prague, St. Anthony, Lonely Soul	Eshu, Elegbara
Mama Kengue, Tiembra-Tierra	Our Lady of Mercy, Jesus	Obatalá, Oshanlá
Nsasi, Siete Rayos	St. Barbara	Shangó
Kalunga, Balaunde, Madre de Agua	O.L. of Regla	Yemayá, Olokun
Mama Shola	O.L. of Charity	Oshún
Kubayende, Pata en Llaga	St. Lazarus	Babalú Aiyé, Shakpana
Zarabanda	St. Peter, St. John the Baptist	Ogún
Mariwanga, Centella Ndoki	St. Therese	Oyá
Watariamba, Vence Batallas, Busca Rastros	St. Norbert	Oshosi
Tata Funde, Cuatro Vientos, Daday	St. Francis of Assisi	Orunmila, Ifá
Musilango	St. Isidore	Orishaoko
Burufinda, Ngurufinda	St. Joseph	Osanyin, Osain
Mama Canata	O.L. of Mount Carmel	Nana Bukuu
Brazo Fuerte	St. Christopher	Aganju



In Cuba the language we use in our ceremonies is called "Palo" or "Bantu." It derives mainly from KiKongo, with plenty of creolized Spanish and some Yoruba thrown in for good measure. When sacrificing animals, we always call them by their Palo names, thus a rooster is called *ensuso*, a sheep *enkonde*, a goat *meme*, the rum we spray from our mouths in a ceremonial fashion *malafo*, the sacrificial knife *embele-koto*, gunpowder *fula*, water *lanso*, gourd dish *tie tie*, machete *embele*, the razor blade we use to scratch neophytes *gele-samba*, the cigar we use to offer our spirits blessed smoke *ensunga*, and incense is *maba-guindango*. Ahead a more extensive glossary will be provided.

The first sign of initiation the neophyte receives after the purification/presentation ceremony is the "necklace." Wearing this necklace indicates that the person is a member of the munanzo and is entitled to the godfather's protection as well as help from all members of the munanzo, including the spirit protectors, who are considered an integral part of the house. Along with the necklace, the neophyte is given a set of rules and guides to follow. Becoming a member of a munanzo carries with it privileges, but also responsibilities. If after getting the necklace the neophyte neglects his/her duties, then he or she may become vulnerable to misfortune, the spirits letting the person know that life is a two-way street: neglect your responsibilities to me, and I'll neglect mine to you, the spirits might say. Every munanzo should take care to celebrate its important feasts, such as its Tata's initiation day and the days of the most important orishas.

Our munanzo is fairly varied, most of our members are hard-working people, although we do have a couple of important political figures and several showbizz luminaries that are faithful Paleros. One of the factors that unites us is our devotion to LUNGAMBÉ, the spirit of our temple's working nganga, who in our house takes the form of a deceptively funny old man who constantly licks his lips. Lungambé, an avatar of Eshu, is Centella Ndoki's messenger. Lungambé's principal spirit helper is Perro Bernardo, who likes to present himself as a not-too-advanced essence who nevertheless "gets the job done." The fact is that Perro Bernardo is very bright, he just enjoys playing down his intelligence. Other spirits we work with are El Hermano Jose, an extremely wise old black man who died in 1915, and Candelo Blanc, also known as Le Flambeau, a Haitian Petro spirit. Pure spirits may not have the answer to all our problems, but they do have the advantage of not being fettered by a material body and of being able to detect lies and fraud. After experiencing a thousand and one adventures with these and many other spirits, I've come to regard them as members of my family, as real and present as my wife or my children. These spirits are our protectors; they deserve all our love, praise, and devotion.

Let me again reiterate why I am instructing those to whom I am dictating these words to make them public after I am gone. As both Palo and Santeria emerge from secrecy and as more and more practitioners are willing to speak up publically, the need for accurate information regarding these formerly closed magical systems will become greater. Another problem that arises with Palo and Santeria's increased visibility is that many dishonest or misinformed people purporting to speak about these faiths will not be presenting an accurate picture. I believe we who have been blessed with a powerful Palo and Santeria foundation must eventually lay aside the veil of secrecy that was used in the past in order to give the world a glimpse of our beautiful traditions. Years ago, participating in African-based religions could cause a person's life or freedom to be taken away. Also, people who practiced African religions were often socially ostracized and persecuted in many subtle ways. Now that such abuses are less frequent, we must lift up our voices and demand that our religions be respected by the world at large.

Coming back to our present task of writing down all that is accurate about Palo, let me say that we consider the coconut sacred; it is an indispensable component of all our rituals. Coconut throwing, more properly called obi divination, is an age-old method of communication between humans and spirits. Cowry shell casting, called IBBO, SHAMALONGO, or COBO in Palo and DILOGGUN in Santeria, grew out of obi divination. Cowry shells are thought to be the "mouths" of the orishas and are considered more accurate than coconuts. In Palo, however, we believe that intense, one-to-one interactions with the pure essences is the highest form of divination.

## CHAPTER II

### *Making Chamba*

*(note: most names have been left in Spanish except when I was sure of the English equivalent. Any well-stocked botanica will carry most of the ingredients named in this chapter—Raul Canizares)*

Chamba is the holy liquid of Palo. There are many ways to make chamba, the main ingredients of the chamba we make for multiple uses are: Rain water, particularly that collected during the first rain of the month of May as it settles in the crevices of the silk cotton tree, forming small puddles; river water, sea water, holy water from a Catholic or Eastern Orthodox church, palm oil, cocoa butter, cascarilla or pembe chalk, black pepper kernels, eru (a Nigerian root), kola nut, a burning charcoal wrapped in a *malanga* leaf, and at least twenty-one of the orisha's herbs.

Chamba serves to purify and sanctify stones, necklaces, seashells, amulets, and all kinds of implements used for ritual purposes or to provide protection. The herbs which are to be used in the preparation of chamba should be placed on a straw mat in front of several elders who will chew some of them to imbue the herbs with their *ashé* (grace). Of those present during the preparation of the chamba, the one with the least amount of time initiated will gather the herbs and, walking on his or her knees as a sign of respect, will hand the herbs over to the elders for chewing. After the elders chew the plants, they will deposit them in clay containers that have been painted in the emblematic colors of each orisha represented. Thus, herbs sacred to Shangó will be deposited in a red container, to Obatalá in a white one, and so on. The elders must have recited the *mo juba* prayer before starting, and must sing to each orisha as he or she works with the different orisha's herbs. After the sorting-of-the-herbs ceremony, the person with the greatest seniority will lift the straw mat where the herbs had been worked making sure every single bit of herb gets used in the chamba. The orishas must be sung to in the following order: Lucero, Zarabanda, Oshosi, Tiembla-Tierra, Siete Rayos, Centella Ndoki, Madre de Agua, and Mama Shola, followed by any other orisha that needs to be invoked. In our house, since we have so many Santeros that also practice Palo, we tend to sing Santeria/Yoruba songs when we make chamba. Chamba is indispensable in the making of a *ngangulero* (owner of a cauldron). After a scratched member of the *munanzo* has successfully completed his/her one year and seven days apprenticeship, he or she may ask the Tata for a reading regarding whether he or she is psychologically, spiritually, and physically ready to receive the awesome responsibility of having his/her own *nganga* (*prenda*, cauldron). Assuming all goes well and the applicant is accepted for

inclusion in the ranks of *nganguleros*, the *tata's* assistant, called the *mayordomo* or, if a woman, the *yayi* or *tikan-tika*, will have to bathe the future *ngangulero* with *chamba* seven days in a row. The *mayordomo* will also make sure his charge drinks three big gulps of *chamba* each morning. A super-charged *chamba* will also contain some of the blood of sacrificed animals, as well as some rum. *Aberikulas* (non-initiates) should never view any of the ceremonies discussed so far. After initiation as a *ngangulero*, the newly-created cauldron-owning priest must be watched closely by the *padrino*, the *mayordomo*, or the *yayi*, for in the week following initiation, his strengths and weakness will be magnified a thousand times; it is the teacher's responsibility to note these strengths and weaknesses in order to guide the new *ngangulero* through them later in life. Some of the *nkisis* we have installed in our *munanzo* include Centella Monte Oscuro, Siete Rayos, Tumba Loma, Lungambé, Vence Batallas, Mariquilla Ndoki, Acaba Mundo, Tranca Vias, and Vira Mundo. These are potent forces. Before we can allow one of our priests to channel one of these spirits, we must be sure he or she can handle it. After one week, we offer the new *ngangulero* his *Esengue*, a staff made of Iroko wood, while he holds a lit candle which rests on a white plate.

*Chamba* is also used to feed and invigorate the deities. *Lucero's* *chamba* may have three, twenty-one, or one-hundred one different herbs, *Tiembla-Tierra* takes eight, *Siete Rayos* six, *Centella Ndoki* nine, *Madre de Agua* seven, *Mama Shola* five, *Zarabanda* three or seven, *Pata en Llaga* seventeen, and so on. All herbs must have been duly consecrated as described above. *Chamba* should be added to any food cooked for the *orishas* or during feasts. The following are some herbs belonging to the different *orishas*.

**LUCERO:** horsehair, lengua de vaca, grass, wheatgrass, asafetida, itamo real, meloncillo, basil, piñon, yamao.

**TIEMBLA-TIERRA:** bleo de clavo, sauco, encampane, aguinaldo blanco, lillies, higuereta, almond, soursop, marquesa, jagua blanca.

**SIETE RAYOS and BRAZO FUERTE:** bleo rojo, atipola, moco de guanajo, baria, platanillo, plantain, banana, sasparilla, china berry, elb, jobo.

**MADRE DE AGUA:** vervain, lechuguilla, yerba anil, prodigiosa, paraguaita, flor de agua, lotus, hyacinth, fern, watercress, hierba buena, purple basil, guasima, boton de oro, yerba de la niña, cucaracha, palo canelo, yerba mora, corazon de paloma.

**ZARABANDA:** lemongrass, pata de gallina, hueso de gallo, mimosa, siempreviva, jericho flower, romerillo, pinon, rompe saragüey, purple basil, ebony.

CENTELLA NDOKI: yerba garro, guasimilla, baria, yucca, plum, cabo de hacha, mazorquilla.

Never put sticks or bark in chamba, only leaves and soft stems. Lucero, Zarabanda, and Oshosi can interchange herbs. So can Madre de Agua and Mama Shola. Pata en Llaga, however, must never be mixed in rituals with other orishas, except Nana Bukuu and Afrá. His herbs are: cundiamor, sargazo, pazote, zazafrá, ateje, alacrancillo, Escoba amarga, pinon botija, casimon, bejuco ubi, tapa caminos, carabali la yaya, and tengue.

We must not forget that the most important ingredient of Chamba is water, the very essence of God's favorite daughter, Oshun, who incarnated in Angola as a queen named Shola Wanga. Baths make our members healthy and ready to receive the good vibrations our spirit guides bring. Any prospective member of our munanzo must be given some chamba to drink. He or she will then be bathed in Chamba and taken to a cemetery or a sacred grove where he or she will swear an oath of allegiance to the Tata, the munanzo, and all of its members. Initiations should ideally be carried out outdoors in the wilderness, but placing lots of plants, tree branches, and herbs in a room can substitute for the real thing if circumstances call for it.

## CHAPTER III

### *Iroko*

A plant considered more powerful than all others, including the majestic royal palm, is IROKO, which in Cuba has been identified with the stately silk cotton tree. Paleros sometimes call Iroko "munanzo mambe" (house of God). Most Palo Monte houses give Iroko a white chicken offering each month. Iroko is almost never used for evil purposes. The one exception is the making of so-called *ngangas judias* in the Palo Mayombe tradition. The pejorative use of the word "Jew" (*judia*) to imply evil reflects the anti-Semitic sentiments of the dominant Spanish rulers of nineteenth century Cuba. In reality, most Paleros are not conscious of the offensive nature of the use of this word. I find it interesting that the Jews in my munanzo have never complained about this, even though I've instructed my godchildren not to use the word *judia* in its negative context. Since all the other houses continue to refer to "prendas judias" and "ngangas judias," I mention this here as a way of teaching what these are. The Mayombero will bury the prenda that will be used for evil purposes under Iroko's shadow for twenty-one days. At that time, a totally black cat will be made to become enraged, when it is then decapitated, its skull and left back tibia being made an integral part of the evil *nganga*.

#### TO GET SOMETHING FROM IROKO

To gain Iroko's favor, hard-boil sixteen eggs, removing the shell from each. On the eastern side of the Iroko tree, draw an equilateral cross using palm oil, then place sixteen pennies and the sixteen peeled eggs, one at a time, over the cross. Place each egg on top of each penny, beginning at the head of the cross down to its feet, then from left to right in the horizontal line. Each time you deposit an egg, say out loud a particular petition—it must be the same petition all sixteen times. At the end, say "Father Iroko, grant me this boon in twenty-one days, amen."

#### TO CALM AN ENEMY

To calm an enemy, boil four eggs until they are hard, peel them, dress them with cocoa butter, almond oil, and Balsamo Tranquilo or oil of cloves. Take the dressed eggs to Iroko, making the offering to Tiembla-Tierra, whose palace is in the top of Iroko. Tiembla Tierra will pacify the most stubborn soul.

Iroko, Father of all trees, gives solace to all who ask. There can be no *nganga* without Iroko, since its stick is the most important of the twenty-one. When walking by a silk cotton tree, believers must always salute it with respect, saying something like "good morning, Father Iroko, bless me, your humble servant, with health and peace, and forgive me if I've unwittingly

stepped on your holy shadow." My father used to call Iroko FUMBE. Spirits called "nfunbi" live in Iroko, where Paleros feed them periodically. These Eshu-like spirits, similar also to the *gede* of Vodou, are offered candy on a brand-new plate. The Palero will write his *firma* (personal ideograph or sigyll) on the ground by the part of the tree's trunk that faces east. Along with the candy, the nfunbi are given four peeled hard-boiled eggs, four clear glasses filled with water, coffee, a lit cigar, and some rum. When a vulture rests on one of Iroko's branches, we Paleros believe it is a sign of Oshun Ibu Kole's favor. This crone aspect of the goddess of sensuality and riches is called Kana-Kana in Palo. The following mambo is to be sung after sunset to Iroko.

**Sanda Narbe**  
**Sanda nkinia naribe**  
**Sanda fumadaga**  
**Ndinga nkusi**  
**Ndiga mundo**  
**Pangualan boco**  
**Medio tango**  
**Malembe Ngusi**  
**Malembe mpolo**  
**Kindiambo kilienso**  
**Guatuka ngusi**

Iroko is a natural temple. It is there that we bury our ngangas, our cauldrons, in order to imbue them with enormous power. In places where there are no silk cotton trees, Paleros will travel to places that have them if they are serious about obtaining the greatest amount of power. There are many Iroko trees in the Southern United States. The Seminole Indians worshipped Iroko under the name "kapok." Paleros work with Iroko in many different ways. Its trunk is used in tying down spells; Iroko's shadow serves as a resting place for many spirits that the Palero can communicate with; Iroko's roots are the home of a powerful spirit called Mama Ungungu. Soil from around Iroko is offered to the orishas Oddua and Brazo Fuerte. A tea made from Iroko's leaves will open a neophyte's third eye and help her become a spirit medium. The spirit of Iroko can be contacted even if the tree is not present by singing the mambo listed above while shaking an iroko stick rhythmically in front of the nganga.

#### **THE EVIL EYE**

A small piece of Iroko wood hung with a red ribbon by a baby's crib will protect her from the evil eye. Since we Paleros believe that there is an eternal struggle between the forces of good and the forces of evil, we have a responsibility to learn how to combat evil in order to maximize our happiness and that of our loved ones. The evil eye is a natural manifestation of evil. Knowing that the eyes are the windows of the soul, we can surmise that a perverted, sick individual who has allowed his soul to become tainted

with evil will sometimes even unwittingly look at someone and this evil will spill from his soul through his eyes, affecting the person he is looking at in a negative fashion. Because of their innocence, babies are particularly vulnerable to the evil eye and must be protected at all times. Because they are most defenseless while they sleep, babies should not be allowed to be looked upon while they are asleep. If a stranger or a person known for his evil eye compliments your baby, make sure he utters the phrase "may God bless her" right after. Otherwise, you must say to yourself the words "*besale el culito, besale el culito, besale el culito . . .*" several times. This literally means "kiss his little ass," why it works, no one knows. Other talismans against the evil eye that work are a piece of jet (*azabache*), a piece of red coral, or a dog's tooth. Although many Hispanic jewellers in the U.S. claim they sell azabaches, many times they are selling black plastic beads instead. Genuine jet does not shine, can be pierced with a needle, and will stain a white paper black if one runs it across it. Other implements successfully used to ward off the evil eye are garlic, camphor, and a prayer to St. Louis Bertand (San Luis Beltran). The great Palero Andres Petit, founder of the Kimbisa faction of Palo, said there was no more powerful defense against the evil eye than the prayer to San Luis Beltran. He always carried it with him and would write it down for any one who asked--he knew it by heart. Andres also gave my father the following recipe for lowering a fever: Arrange for three people to read the prayer to San Luis by the bed of the feverish person. Each reader must come, read the prayer, and leave without seeing who read before or after, and all three must read in turn not more than one hour apart. A little cross made out of basil leaves and holy water from a Catholic church must also be used by the reader, who must sprinkle some holy water on the feverish person while making the sign of the cross over the him or her while holding the basil cross pressed between the right index finger and the thumb each time it says to do so in the written prayer.

A special chamba made out of the leaves of Iroko, guara, yaya, tongue, and caja, serves as baptismal water for infants. Babies baptized in this chamba, called Mamba Nsanbi, grow strong and healthy. Let it be clear that infant baptism in Palo does not make our children Paleros. They will choose if they wish to remain in Palo when they are old enough to make such a decision.



## CHAPTER IV

### *Nganga*

Nganga means "mystery," "soul," or "force." In Africa, what we call a Palo priest is called a "Nganga." In Cuba, nganga refers to the cauldron which is at the center of our practice. This cauldron is also called "prenda," which in Old Spanish meant "precious," implying that the nganga is dear to us. The making of a nganga involves the signing of a pact between a living being and one who has passed on to the spirit world. A spirit who agrees to work with a Palero in this fashion is called a "nganga luzambi" or "nganga ndoki." The making of a nganga involves going to the bush and to the cemetery, contracting with a spirit, and knowing how to control that spirit.

In the cemetery one finds the human remains needed for the nganga; in the bush the plants and spirits one needs to contact. Cemetery and bush are not that different, in both one finds the Nfumbi, souls willing to make a pact with the Palero. A nganga may be inherited, but more often it is specially made by the padrino for the new ngangulero. In old munanzos, it would take at least seven years after "scratching" for a Palero to be considered for ngangulero. Because of the exigencies of modern life, the time has been shortened to one year and seven days in most munanzos. The Padrino "*monta*" (makes) the nganga by putting inside the cauldron the bones, vines, sticks, herbs, soils, animal carcasses, and other secret ingredients which give the nganga life. Every nganga must have an *otan* (stone) or *piedra de rayo* (stone arrowhead), also called *matari*. These dark, flat, elongated stones are pointed on one end and have white streaks running through them. They are sacred to Siete Rayos. Siete Rayos, by the way, is a corruption of Cetewayo, the famous Zulu chief, nephew of Shaka, thought to be an incarnation of the god of thunder. The stone must be fed sacrificial blood, *menga*, separately. Then it "eats" again when the entire nganga is fed. Ceremonies of initiation should be done either during the new moon, *tangu* or *oshuka guamiaku*, or during the full moon, *oshuka dida*. Never during waning moon, *oshuka aro*, a time when plants lose their powers. The following prayer is offered to the new moon:

Luna nueva, yo te saludo, dame salud, tranquilidad  
al mundo, que no haya guerra, ni enfermedad,  
aqui te doy una moneda pa' que no nos falte el pan ni  
a mi ni a mis hijos, familiares, amigos, y enemigos.

Afterwards three "Our Fathers," three "Ave Marias," and one "Gloria" are recited, followed by the following Lukumi prayer:

Chukwa madeni  
 Ochukwa made rawo  
 Ochukwa madeni  
 Ochukwa made rawo  
 Solodde guini guini eco eco  
 Ochukwa imabere inawo  
 Inawo ima were

Mother Moon is godmother to all magicians. She is the queen of all heavenly bodies. The Moon presides over a ngangulero's initiation. She is "Mama Mposi," The "All-Mother." It is during the full moon that the godfather, the mayordomo, and the future ngangulero go to the cemetery, asking with the shamalongos or with obi oracle at the foot of each grave if that *muerto* (dead person) wishes to work with them. If the oracle gives a positive answer, then the padrino spills some rum (*malafo*) by the grave, listening for some rumbling sounds which will indicate that the spirit of the dead body buried under the chosen grave is eager to work with him. The next step is to form a cross over the grave using the rum. The grave is then dug up and the *kiyumba* (skull), fingers, toes, tibias, and ribs are removed from the cadaver and placed inside a large black bag. Back at the munanzo, the black bag containing the bones is covered with a white sheet as four white candles are lit around it. The padrino then calls out the name of the dead person, which had been copied from the tombstone at the gravesite. Seven small piles of gunpowder (*fula*) are placed on top of one of the flat sides of a large sugar-cutting knife called a machete. If they all explode when fire is applied to one of them, it means that the spirit (*nfumbi*) has agreed to become the resident spirit of the nganga that is being made. Using a pencil, the padrino then writes the name of the *nfumbi* on a piece of parchment or brown paper bag, placing it at the bottom of the cauldron that will become the new ngangulero's *prenda*. The padrino now adds to the name the dead man's bones, seven silver coins, the previously prepared stone, and a razor blade (preferably the one that had been used to cut scratches on the new ngangulero's skin). A black chicken or rooster is now offered to the nganga-in-the-making to ensure the continuing well-being of the proceedings. Other sacrifices also take place at this time.

Further ingredients that go into the nganga are: soil taken from four different spots near the grave (North, South, East, and West), a hollowed piece of bamboo about two inches in diameter and six to twelve inches long that had been previously filled with mercury, sea water, and sand from a beach, all of which had been sealed inside with beeswax; the remains of a small black male dog which will serve as the *nfumbi*'s pet and messenger, dirt from an anthill, the necessary twenty-one foundation sticks (sold as a package in most major botanicas in the U.S.), termites, a dead bat, spiders, lizards, a centipede, a toad, cinnamon, chili peppers, ginger, a white onion,


sage, and more soil from the grave. The cauldron is then taken to the cemetery, where it is buried on a Friday in a spot where it won't be disturbed, preferably close to the grave of the *nfumbi*. The *nganga* is left buried for three weeks. After three weeks have elapsed, the *nganga* is dug up, a chicken is sacrificed on the spot and nine pennies are left on the hole left by the removal of the *nganga*. This is a symbolic payment to the forces that govern the cemetery and a reminder that one doesn't receive anything in this world without paying for it. The *nganga* is immediately taken to the bush, where it is buried next to *Iroko* or another sacred tree and left there for another three weeks. Afterwards, the cauldron is removed from that spot and, after the spirit of the tree has been offered a chicken and eight pennies (or six if it is a palm tree), the cauldron is taken to the *munanzo*, where it is placed next to the temple's main *nganga* and left there for three more weeks in order for it to receive *ashé* (strength), at the end of these three weeks, a black rooster whose throat is slit but is not decapitated is offered as a sacrifice. Rum, nutmeg, dry white wine, and Florida Water are then added to the *nganga*, that is now ready to occupy its place of honor in the new *ngangulero*'s home.

A traditional type of *nganga* not usually made anymore is the *nganga boumba*, which used a burlap bag as its receptacle, rather than a cauldron. This *nganga* required as ingredients the legs, heads, and hearts from the following animals: a dog, a cat, an opossum (a rat can be substituted), a black goat, a sparrow, an owl, a bat, a vulture, a woodpecker, a blackbird, and a parrot. Plus the remains of a snake, a lizard, a toad, a frog, a tarantula, a scorpion, a centipede, a wasp, a dragonfly, red ants, termites, worms, and caterpillars. Originally, all evil *prendas* were kept in burlap bags, not in cauldrons since the cauldron, as a representative of the justice-loving god *Zarabanda*, does not lend itself well to undeserved evil. The *boumba*, also called *sacu-sacu*, was kept hanging by a rope from the *padrino*'s ceiling. The *padrino* had to sing the following *mambo* to the *sacu-sacu* before lowering it to the floor.

Ay Lembe Lembe Lembe  
 Mi caballo 'ta 'tropiao  
 Malembe yaya  
 Lembe Lembe Malembe  
 Andale siete legua  
 Que yo vengo  
 Cuando llegue aqui  
 Lembe Lembe Malembe  
 Siete legua que yo vengo  
 Gurubana con licencia  
 Jacinto congo ta la loma

These burlap ngangas were also called "*macutos*." Before bringing down the sacu-sacu, the padrino would also sweep the floor under it with much ceremony while singing the following mambo.

Barre, barre, barre, basura  
 Barre, barre, barre, basura  
 Simbico, Simbico  
 Tata Nganga ya limpio piso

The Tata would then sign his *firma* (sygill) on the floor using ashes or white chalk (cascarrilla or pembe). The Tata would also draw the traditional Palo sign for the universe (  ), afterwards singing the following mambo.

Mpati! Mpati!  
 Npembe Simbi ko?  
 Mpati! Mpati!  
 Npembe Simbi ko, Simbi ko?  
 Como Tata te mando  
 Abajo nganga  
 Bajalo, mi Mama  
 Como Tata te mando  
 Bajalo, mi Mama  
 Trailo, trailo, mi nganga  
 Trailo, nganga, como paso l'inguana  
 Despacio como anda camaleon

The sticks were then carefully taken out of the bag and placed leaning by a wall in a vertical, standing position. While this operation was undertaken, the Tata would sing the following mambo.

Paralo, paralo mi Mama  
 Como Tata te mando  
 Paralo, paralo, Simbico  
 Pa'que yo jura mi Mama  
 Simbico, paralo.

While continuing to organize the contents of the sacu-sacu, the padrino would continue singing

Yaya patempolo  
 pa'to lo mundo Simbico  
 Yaya patempolo  
 Yaya Maria Nganga  
 Ya vamo a ve' Simbico  
 Que patimpolo goya ya que patimpolo  
 Mambe Dios  
 Mambe Dios

Once the sacu-sacu was organized on the floor, the Tata and his assistant would proceed to spray rum or aguardiente on it, also offering the nganga cigar smoke while singing

Sala mi nganga, sala la o  
Nsunga de vuelta ligenia  
Arriba mundo to mocua  
Singa, vamo'nsunga  
Yimbila, yimbila

Immediately afterwards, the Tata would sing the following

Mayombe fue bueno en guinea  
Con lonyaya, lonyaya  
Cuando viene,  
Vamo a ve  
Susundama ya ta pinta nganga  
Mayombe bueno en Guinea  
Mama Lola da licencia  
Abre camino  
Mayombe fue bueno en Guinea  
Mayombe abre camino  
Chikirungoma recoge  
Chikirungoma a recoge  
Vamo recoge

After working with the sacu-sacu, the Tata would carefully place everything back inside the burlap bag and hang the nganga back from the ceiling. Such was the way of the sacu-sacu nganga in the days of old.

The life of each nganga is sustained by the sticks (*palos*) of the bush (*nfinda*) that give our religion its name, by the spirit who has chosen to reside in it, and by all of the animals it contains. A nganga is a micro-universe reflecting all that one can find in the larger world, both good and evil. This is why so many ingredients go into a nganga, because it must reflect the forces of the universe, forces that are channeled in a nganga to be used by the ngangulero, who is like the god of the nganga. Since Andres Petit initiated whites into Palo back in the mid 1840s, members of virtually all races and nationalities have discovered this path which, while it is not for everyone, everyone can benefit from it.

A strong mind is needed to guide a nganga well. I believe the spirits of former slaves that usually work with nganguleros like to test us. They also have a tendency to try to obtain revenge from whites because of the mistreatment they may have received while in their last incarnation. Nganguleros have a responsibility not to give in to these feelings of revenge,

instead channeling that energy towards less destructive aims. I believe good is good and bad is bad. No one race has a monopoly on either, so lets move on.

There is only one way to destroy a nganga. After feeding it the blood of a rooster, rum, and cigar smoke, bury it beneath an anthill saying loudly "GOOD BYE FOREVER!" If, however, other ngangas have been born from that one, the parent nganga will continue to exist in an ethereal form as long as its descendants exist. To be a ngangulero, a person must have a stable character, a strong mind, faith in God and the orishas, respect and obedience for his padrino, and the humility to realize that to be placed in a position of leadership in the world of spirits is a huge responsibility as well as a great privilege.

## CHAPTER V

### *Nkisis, Kimpungulu: the deities*

#### NGURUFINDA/BURUFINDA/OSAIN

we start with Ngurufinda, also known in Palo as Sindaula Ndundu and Yembaka Butanseke, called Osain in Lukumi, because as god of plants he is very close to every Palero's heart. It is said that Osain began the practice of making magical potions out of plants and storing the potions in gourds and calabashes many, many, years ago. It was a woman who first discovered the secret potions, forcing Burufinda to share knowledge of how to work with herbs with the woman. She in turn promised not to work with herbs while on her menses, a promise she did not keep. Since that time, most Paleros have taboos against giving the Burufinda deity to women. In our house, we make special osains for women called Osain Kinibos, these are kept outside the home and must be hung at a low altitude, less than eight feet.

People born with the gift of working with plants are called "Osainistas" and are usually children of Siete Rayos (Shangó), Osain's favorite godchild. It was to Shangó that Osain first taught the secret of how to make powerful medicine out of plants and it was he who first kept a gourd filled with a magical potion in his home. Lucero, Zarabanda, Vence Batallas, and the nfunbi are all intimately intertwined with Burufinda/Osain. The Osain we work with in our house is called Osain Aguenegui Agualdo Kinikini and the way to praise him is with the following mambo:

Oile sai sai babalogwo  
 Oile sai sai babalogwo  
 Osain aweneye eli se ko  
 Ewel'eye n'ile 'yare obaniwe

Osain eats goats, tortoises, and roosters, especially fighting rooster and those called "silky." Ingredients for a gourd Osain include deer antlers, soil from at least seven different places, sticks, a tortoise that has been sacrificed to Osain, rain water collected in May, sea water, river water, Catholic holy water, and whole pepper kernels which must be chewed and spat inside the gourd by the tata. The Osain deity also requires bugs, birds, and coins. After the gourd is filled with all these ingredients, it is then taken to a palm tree, where it is buried for six days in order to receive Siete Rayos' and his sister Dada's ashé. By burying Osain for eight days next to Iroko, Tiembla-Tierra, Nana Bukuu, and Aganju imbues it with power. Kept buried for three days in an anthill gives the Osain deity the blessings of the nfumbis, while burying it for three days in a crossroads gives it power from Lucero. Each time Osain is taken out of the earth (*tile*) a rooster, a tortoise, toasted

corn, dry wine, a silver coin, and rum, must be left inside the hole, and a Catholic prayer called "The Apostles Creed" as well as the Our Father must be recited after each removal of Osain from a burial. This is called "thanking the earth." Some Osains are not made in gourds, but in terra cotta dishes or small iron cauldrons.

The secret powder that give life to Osain can be kept inside a small bottle, inside an antler, inside a bull or cow horn, or inside a little gourd. Divination determines which will be used. This powder is made out of four feet from a tortoise, two feet from a small parrot, the remains of a large parrot or macaw, the remains of a turtle dove, the following sticks: amansaguapo, wakibanza, sapo; plus the eyes and tongue of a rooster, seven large ants, seven human teeth which include the two canines, dirt from a graveyard, hair from a dead person, the name of the same dead person written on parchment, seven *mate* seeds, plus a little rum. All of these ingredients are to be burned to a crisp, the ashes that remain, along with some stuff that didn't burn, is put on a mortar and pestle and ground to a powder. The ensuing powder is a powerful *ashé* that is stored in one of the receptacles described above and then placed inside the larger gourd that had been prepared before. On a Thursday, Friday, or Saturday, The whole deity is to be buried along with a large piece of Iroko, sacrificing another turtle at the site. Three weeks later the Osain is ready to be taken out. The Osain is now complete, ready to be hung up high from the ceiling or from a tree in your backyard or patio, a practice I don't recommend because your enemies may have access to this precious nkisi if it is outside.

#### LUCERO MUNDO/TATA NKUYU/ESHU/ELEGGUA

Also called Tata Nfinda and Quicio-Puerta. Lucero is THE CHILD, a natural trickster. He is easily irritable and must be cared for. Like any child, Lucero does not respond well to neglect. He is the most indispensable of the orishas, for without him nothing moves. He is called *el portero*, the gatekeeper, for without his blessing no metaphysical doorway can be entered, and, without his help, no material threshold can be crossed. With his cowry shells, a priest can address any orisha. It is his shells that serve best for in-depth readings. Lucero enjoys offerings of toys, candy, and all those things dear to children. He enjoys parties and celebrations, as well as games. Lucero is a happy-go-lucky youth, yet he can be brutal if one forgets to propitiate him on Mondays. Lucero may forgive the Palero if he forgets to honor him once or twice, but if a third week goes by without Lucero receiving his tribute, then the Palero will be reminded that he needs Lucero by losing a lot of business.

To honor Lucero on Mondays, offer him rum sprayed on the Lucero figure directly from your mouth, cigar smoke, a candle, and a clear glass of water.



Remember to talk to Lucero throughout your Monday ceremony, telling him step-by-step what you are doing: "I am now lighting a candle for you, my precious child, I will now spray some rum on you, beloved Lucero," etc. Speak to him sweetly, as if you were speaking to a child. Always remind him that he is the lord of your home. Before addressing him, always knock three times on the floor in front of Lucero, using the knuckles of your right hand.

Lucero is one of *The Warriors* and is often kept next to Zarabanda, Oshosi and Osun. Osun, not to be confused with Oshun, is a nkisi associated with Osain, representing the Practitioner as a deity, a reminder of the inherent godhood within us all. Osun is depicted as a little metal rooster standing in what looks like a chalice. In Africa, Osun is a metal staff as tall as the practitioner, capped by a bird, and stuck in the ground in front of a practitioner's home. This tells people that a Tata lives on the premises.

#### MAKING LUCERO

*(Warning: Only duly initiated tatas, santeros, orisha priests, babalawos, houngans, or other priesthood holders at a similar level have the necessary ashé to make an efficacious Lucero deity—it is dangerous for the non-initiated to attempt to make a Lucero. What the un-initiated can do in order to have a temporary Lucero is take a coconut, dress it with palm oil, and place it behind his/her door, honoring it as a Lucero.)*

To make a Lucero deity, a stone the size and approximate shape of a potato is chosen by divination. The stone is bathed in chamba. At the bottom of the stone, with cement mixed with chamba, stick several nickels that have been obtained from different, successful, businesses such as banks. Add copper coins, a piece of silver, a piece of gold, dust from inside and outside the main door of the person who is to receive the Lucero, soil from outside a grocery store, dirt from a crossroads, and other ingredients such as mercury and pieces of kola nuts. Eyes, nose, and mouth fashioned out of cowry shells can be glued on to the stone. A chicken is then sacrificed allowing its blood (*menga*) to flow over the deity while songs to Lucero are sung. Afterwards Lucero is buried in a crossroads for a total of twenty-one days, after he is unearthed, the hole that remains must be filled with a sacrifice. Lucero is then brought to the house in which he'll stay, a party having been organized in his honor. Lucero loves palm oil, honey, dry white wine, dried fish, dried possum, candy, rum, cigar smoke, cool water, and a candle.

Before a person receives a Lucero from a padrino or madrina, both parties should be aware that this exchange makes them responsible to each other, since after a padrino confers a Lucero on someone, that person is forever to be considered the padrino's godchild. People who do not respect each other or do not get along should not enter into a godparent/godchild

relationship, for there is a Kikongo proverb that says "it is better to be torn apart by four elephants and eaten by ten vultures and seventeen hyenas than to speak badly of one's godfather." A godchild's disrespect for a godparent will be punished by the orishas, but a godparent's abuse of his or her godchild will also receive punishment.

The following are Lucero's attributes.

Colors: Red and black.

Fruits: Guava, sugar cane.

Herb: Pasture.

Beverages: Aguardiente, rum, dry white wine.

Mineral: Jet.

Animals: Chicken, small goats, rooster, chick.

Condiment: Palm oil.

Stick: Abre-camino.

Numbers: 3, 21.

Lucero is lord of the lonely death; he kills those who deserve it by making them bleed to death. Lucero loves parties, food, and sweets. When entering a place where a Lucero deity is present, the initiate will salute Lucero with the following praise:

Eshu a ke buru bori ake boye to ri to ru la  
ye fi yo'ru a're a la le ku'pa she eyo me'ko

Lucero should be petitioned to keep away evil in the following manner:

Ko si iku  
Ko si ofo  
Ko si araye  
Ko si ewan  
Ko si fitibo  
Ko si ashelu  
Ko si egba  
Ko si arun

keep away death  
keep away loss  
keep away tragedy  
keep away prison  
keep away obstacles  
keep away the police  
keep away paralysis  
keep away illness

Lucero is humankind's teacher par excellence, always putting people through tests. Lucero has twenty-one manifestations in Palo, but all are

one. The oldest Lucero is called Elufe. He is fashioned out of wood and goes inside the Nganga.

#### TIEMBLA-TIERRA/KENGUE/OBATALÁ

Owner of everything white, protector of albinos, said to be his legitimate children. Creator of human heads (intelligence). Tiembla-Tierra brought fertility to the world by splitting into male and female halves, thus introducing sexual intercourse into the world. Most orishas were born to this primordial couple.

The following are Tiembla-Tierra's attributes.

Color: White.

Fruits: Soursop, cantaloupe.

Herb: jasmine.

Beverages: water, milk.

Mineral: Platinum, white marble.

Animals: White doves, white she-goats.

Condiment: Cocoa butter.

Stick: Silk-cotton.

Numbers: 8, 24.

#### SIETE RAYOS/NSASI/SHANGÓ

Arguably the most popular of all Palo deities, my father told me that this deity was actually a real king in South Africa named *Cetewayo* who lived in the late 1800s and was considered an incarnation of the god of thunder. Siete Rayos does not like the dead, for his vibrant personality loves everything sensual such as drumming, dancing, fighting and copulating. He lives on the top of the extremely tall royal palm trees.

The following are Siete Rayo's attributes.

Colors: Red and white.

Fruits: Red bananas, red apples.

Herb: Palm frond.

Beverages: Aguardiente, rum, red wine.

Mineral: Stone arrowheads; ruby.

Animals: Rooster, goat, quail.

Condiment: Palm oil.

Stick: palm.

Numbers: 4, 6.

Men must not mistreat daughters of Siete Rayos, for the god fiercely protects his female devotees. The following mambo is sung to Siete Rayos:

Abukenke jugo con lo'Sambi  
 Yo no va casa lo'santo  
 Zarabanda son mi zapato  
 Lucero son mi camisa  
 y a el si lo acato enseguida  
 Siete Rayos son bendito

All Paleros worship Siete Rayos, even those dedicated to evil. He is considered the first Palero, the greatest magician, the king of our religion. Another mambo to Siete Rayos goes like this:

Matari Nsasi, matari mukiana  
 Matari monovelo es la envoltura  
 La piedra en que Nkita Nsasi cae del cielo  
 Nsasi mura nsulu  
 Fula inoka muinda  
 Muna nsulu sucrida  
 Nsasi kimfunla inumantato  
 Nsasi 'ta en cielo  
 Estrella, cae en tierra, y baja.

This mambo talks about how Siete Rayos rules the heavens, sending lightning to his enemies, lording over all heavenly bodies. Siete Rayos is the most attractive of all male Nkisis.

#### **MADRE DE AGUA/MAMA KALUNGA/YEMAYÁ**

First-born of Tiembala-Tierra, wife of Brazo Fuerte, Mother of Humanity. Madre de Agua rules the oceans from where all life emerged. She is said to possess wisdom as vast as the ocean, and can offer her devotees unimaginable riches.

The following are Madre de Agua's attributes.

Colors: Blue and white (her necklace consist of blue and clear beads).

Fruit: Watermelon.

Herb: Seaweed

Beverages: Aguardiente, molasses.

Mineral: Aquamarine.

Animals: Ducks, roosters, sheep.

Condiment: Molasses.

Stick: Bamboo.

Numbers: 7, 12.

#### **MAMA SHOLA WANGUE/MPUNGU/OSHÚN**

Orisha of beauty, very vibrant, known for her expansive laughter. She is the goddess of love, but is also a fierce warrior. Mama Shola rules all rivers. She loves her devotees, but can be brutal with them if they fail to meet her expectations. Once Mama Shola turns against a devotee, she may never forgive him. Mama Shola demands that promises made to her be kept. Priests who work with Mama Shola must be paid in advance and in full for their services.

The following are Mama Shola Wangué's attributes.

Colors: Yellow and amber.

Fruits: Oranges, yellow cantaloupes.

Herb: Chamomile.

Beverage: Beer.

Mineral: Gold, copper, amber (not really a mineral, but functioning as one).

Animals: Castrated goats, yellow hens.

Condiment: Honey.

Stick: Cinnamon.

Number: 5.

#### ZARABANDA/CHIBIRIKI/OGÚN

Owner of iron, so respected in those parts of Africa that worship him that to swear on him is accepted in court as equivalent to swearing on the Bible or the Holy Qur'an. He is one of four nkisis collectively called "The Warriors." Zarabanda is present where ever iron is found, he is therefore almost always found in ngangas, since most are contained in iron cauldrons. To prepare a Zarabanda deity, the following ingredients must be gathered: A stone picked out in the wilderness, certain human bones, soil, a horseshoe, handcuffs, an iron chain, an iron ball, mercury, two bottles of rum, dry white wine, cigars, and a pigeon. A small black dog must be sacrificed, his skull being kept forever in the cauldron. The ritual of making Zarabanda must begin at midnight. The vulture, *mayimbe*, must be praised by singing, "Dió, Dió, Dió Mayimbe, Mayimbe, Mayimbe."

When you go forth to the wilderness in order to find the required stone needed for Zarabanda, take an egg as an offering. When you see a blackish or gray stone that catches your eye, take it. The following sticks are indispensable to Zarabanda: palo hueso, palo jiqui, quiebra hacha, malambo and palo yaya. Another feature that must not be overlooked In Zarabanda's prenda is the addition of a heavy, padlocked chain which is wound tightly around the outer rim of the cauldron and is said to function as a barrier to keep Zarabanda's enormous energy inside the cauldron until the Palero is ready to use it. Zarabanda's *firma* ( ) is painted outside and inside the cauldron. The cauldron is then covered with a black and white cloth after a possum, *jutia*, or guinea pig, plus a black rooster, has been sacrificed to Zarabanda. It is then buried near Iroko or another sacred tree

for twenty-one days, feeding the earth appropriately after the cauldron has been unearthed. This is the mambo that has to be sung while making Zarabanda:

Yo mimo cheche  
 Que kuenda ntoto  
 Tu kuenda la finda  
 Tu kuenda carabasa  
 Ndoki que yo bobba  
 Tu mimo son mi pare  
 Tu mimo son mi mare  
 Tu mimo son to lankan  
 Mo Ko jumansen kiyumba

The cauldron is now ready. Zarabanda's *firma* is now drawn on the floor or table where the deity will be placed. The circle represents the world, each point of the cross represents a cardinal point, and the center of the cross represents the crossroads--choices. Seven piles of gunpowder are lit to welcome Zarabanda to its home, the new owner of the nganga may now decorate it with vulture feathers. A cat bone--usually the tailbone--is sometimes added to Zarabanda. Pick the right bone by placing a magic mirror near it, if it gets cloudy, that is the bone you'll choose.

The following are Zarabanda's attributes.

Colors: Green and black; white and black in some munanzos, red in others.

Fruit or tuber: African yam, green plantain.

Herb: Ginger, lemongrass.

Beverage: Zarabanda loves hard liquor, but should only be offered some on special occasions.

Mineral: Iron.

Animals: Dogs, young bulls.

Condiment: Black pepper.

Stick: Algarrobo.

Number: 3, 7.

#### **PATA-EN-LLAGA/KUBAYENDE/BABALÚ AIYE**

A terrifying entity in Africa, where he is known as the one who brings plagues, in the Americas he has been truly syncretized with the beloved old beggar depicted in Catholic lithographs accompanied by two small dogs that lick the sores which cover his body. Pata-en-llaga was born lame, showing us that even the gods may be faced with physical challenges. In fact, Pata-en-llaga had to overcome not one, but several disabilities, including severe skin problems, syphilis, and ignorance of the language and customs of the land to where he was sent as an exile, Arará. Because of his indomitable

spirit and his enormous strength of character, Babalú has become the most beloved orisha in Cuba, the people of our country identifying with this great fighter who went from royal prince to exiled criminal to king of his own land. Pata-en-llaga's perseverance becomes emblematic of the Cuban ethos. Syncretized with St. Lazarus, not the friend of Jesus, but the old man of the parable of the rich man and the poor man, on December 17th massive pilgrimages to a little church outside Havana which houses a miraculous image of the alleged saint (theologians will tell you that parables are allegories, so this particular Lazarus probably never existed). People from all parts of Cuba and from all walks of life and religious traditions walk, crawl, or ride to the little church and leprosarium where Pata-en-llaga/Babalú is said to reside disguised as an old white man in crutches.

The following are Pata-en-llaga's attributes.

Colors: Purple, brown, yellow.

Fruits: Dates, raisins.

Herb: Escoba amarga, apazote.

Beverage: Dry white wine; milk for his dogs.

Mineral: Quartz.

Animals: Guinea fowl, castrated goats.

Condiment: Sesame seeds.

Stick: Arbol del sebo.

Number: 11, 13, 17.

Pata-en-llaga protects the elderly, people with skin conditions, people with blood infections, graveyard workers, pimps, dogs, and the poor. Burlap is another one of his attributes, it reminds Pata-en-llaga of a time when he was so poor he had to dress himself by fashioning clothes out of discarded burlap bags. A common sacrifice offered to Pata-en-llaga after he grants a boon is for the devotee to dress in burlap, either for a prolonged period, such as a month, or for one day per month, usually on the 17th.

A simple way to honor Pata-en-llaga is to take a toasted or dried corn-on-the-cob, such as the kind sold in the U.S. as ornamentation during Halloween, dress it with palm oil, attach seven different-colored ribbons, each about a foot in length, from the cob, and hang it inside your home from the middle of your front door. Nail a piece of bread or dinner roll right above the corn-on-the-cob so that you'll never lack food and prosperity.

### CENTECLA NDOKI/MARIWANGA/OYÁ

The fiercest female warrior and beloved wife of Siete Rayos, Centella Ndoki rules over Nfuirí, the Angel of Death--known as Ikú in Santería. Centella Ndoki protects merchants, as she is called "*La Dueña de la Plaza*" (The owner of the marketplace). She is said to be present at the gates of cemeteries. This indicates that part of her role is to aid people who are making the transition from the material to the spiritual plane. Along with her sisters Mama Shola Wanga and Mama Kalunga, she rules over waters, her particular dominion being rainwater. Her power as a mediator is also evident here, for she not only rules over rainwater, but also over lightning, which is fire. Centella Ndoki's most important aspect, however, is as the ruler of the wind, especially storms. Her dominion of air implies that she is one of the forces that sustains life, for there can be no life as we know it without the air we breath. All of these attributes make Centella Ndoki, in my opinion, the most powerful female force in the universe. She has four sets of twins and a ninth son called *Abikú* said to be an incarnation of death itself.

The following are Centella Ndoki's attributes.

Colors: All colors except black, brown.

Fruit: Papaya.

Herb: *Caimitillo*.

Beverage: Aguardiente, beer.

Mineral: Bronze.

Animals: Guinea fowl, hens.

Condiment: Eggplant.

Stick: Guara.

Number: 9.

*These are some of the most honored orishas. There are many others, but to describe all of them would require a large volume dedicated to just that, a work I may undertake in the future-R.C.*



## CHAPTER VI

### *Chomolongos/Ibbo/Diloggun*

#### Cowry Shell Divination

Diloggun, also called IBBO, is one of the foundations of ZAMBIA-PALO MONTE. It is the mouth of the ORISHA. The deities eat and talk by way of the cowry shells. Only Santeria padrinos or Palo TATAS have the authority to use this form of divination. LUCERO gets 21 cowries, most other orisha 18, though in all cases only 16 are cast. The traditional way of casting the shells is as follows: All present must sit on the floor around a straw mat. The TATA gets the LUCERO shells out, setting five aside as he says over each one, respectively, "KO SI IKU, KO SI ARUN, KO SI OFO, and KO SI ARAYE" which means "keep away death, sickness, envy, losses, and tragedy." I assume that the Tata has already, early in the morning, said his MO JUBA prayers, so I won't go into it here. The taking away of the five shells is called the AGDEYE ceremony. With the remaining 16 shells, the TATA proceeds to ask the GUARDIAN ANGEL of the person being read for permission to touch the person's forehead with both hands containing cowries, naming the person saying "So-and-so comes before us today asking guidance." LUCERO is then petitioned to help the individual by talking to the caster through the shells. The shells are taken into the right hand and are gently dropped on the straw mat. The first two "throws" are considered the most important.

There are 16 possibilities the shells can fall on, depending on how many fall with the natural aperture facing up. Each of these positions is called an ODDU, or chapter, in the diloggun corpus. All other combinations are OMODDU, children of the ODDU, and are obtained by combining two throws, for example, if the first throw is seven shells (Odi) and the second six (Obara) the OMODDU is "Odibara." Which some people simply read as a combination of Odi and Obara, but knowledgeable priests know to be a totally different chapter, just as a child of two parents is a totally different person from either of his/her parents, although he/she may resemble both. Cowries prepared for reading are opened on the closed side, so they will have a natural opening and an artificial opening. Most TATAS learn to read only to ODDU number twelve, only the most experienced TATAS know how to read all 16 ODDUS. Some houses that have grown subservient to priests of IFA will not read beyond ODDU 12, taking the client to a BABALAWO (PRIEST OF IFA) to interpret ODDUS 13 through 16 if any of these come up on the first throw.

In our munanzo we always throw the shells twice at first, reading both individually as well as the OMODDU which results from the combination. We then find out whether the ODDUS bring IRE (good fortune) or OSOGBO (obstacles). We have some implements we use in this section of the ceremony called IBBO. Traditionally, five IBBO are used, though two are all that is really needed if one is to simplify things. The five IBBO

are: a white stone called OTAN FUN, a dark stone (OTAN DU), a small, long shell (EYO), the head of a tiny doll (ERI AWORAN), a bone from a goat's foot or from a human hand (EGUN), and a piece of cascarilla chalk (EFUN). The first question to ask with the IBBO is whether the ODDU comes with IRE or OSOGBO. The white stone and the dark stone are given to the person being read, he or she is told to gently mix the two stones, later separating one in each hand, making two fists and presenting the close fists to the reader. The reader then throws the cowries. If a major ODDU comes up (1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, and 16) comes up, the reader asks for the left hand. If a minor ODDU comes up (5, 6, 7, 9, and 11), the reader asks the person being read to give him/her the IBBO that he/she is holding in his/her right hand. If a white stone is obtained, the ODDU comes with IRE, if the dark one, with OSOGBO. Some TATAS use the white stone as OSOGBO and the CASCARILLA CHALK as IRE as a means of minimizing the bad fortune! The long shell is used in questions of health and/or money, the doll's head when it must be determined whether the person being read or another member of his/her immediate family is being alluded to. The bone is used to ask about death or the dead. Some PALEROS use a small cross to ask if the IRE is firm in the heavens. Using this method, a great deal of information is acquired, for each ODDU that comes up, including the ones used to determine which hand is to be opened, have something to say. At the end of the reading, it must be determined which EBBO if any is needed to establish balance in the client or godchild's life.

The sixteen ODDU are: 1-OKANA 2-EYIOKO 3-OGUNDA 4-IROSO 5-OSHE 6-OBARA 7-ODI 8-EYEUNLE 9-OSA 10-OFUN 11-OJUANI 12-EYILA 13-METANLA 14-MERINLA 15-MANUNLA 16-MERINDILOGGUN.

Firstly, let us deal with some problematic "throws."

If IROSO TONTI (4-4) comes out, the person being read may be an elder from another house come to test you. so beware of strangers that come up 4-4!

If OGUNDA TONTI (3-3) comes out, immediately ask if tragedy awaits you or the person you're reading for. and if a rooster is enough to break the ODDU. If OGUNDA TONTI brings IRE, wash the cowries in cold water, place them behind your door on the floor for a minute, and keep refreshing them throughout the reading, if it comes with OSOGBO, leave the reading for another day and go out to look for a rooster for Ogun immediately!

If OFUN MAFUN (10-10) comes up with osogbo, eight lines must be drawn behind the door with cascarilla and cocoa butter. At the end of the reading, the shells must be washed with herbs sacred to OBATALA. as must the person being read.

#### THE IRES

IRE ARIKU (Dead bring good fortune)

IRE OTONOWA (firm in heaven)

IRE AYE (firm in the earth)

IRE ELESE (at the feet of an orisha[ask which one])  
 IRE LOWO (by own hand)  
 IRE OMO (through a son)  
 IRE ELEDDE (through own head)  
 IRE ENYOKO ( Through karma)  
 IRE OKUNI (through a man)  
 IRE OBINI (through a woman)  
 IRE T'OLOKUN (through the sea)  
 IRE ELESE EGUN (through a guardian spirit/ancestor)  
 IRE OWO (through money)  
 IRE ELESE ARUGBO (through an elderly person)  
 IRE ELESE ABURO (through a brother or godbrother)  
 IRE ARA OKO (through the countryside)  
 IRE ARA ONU (through the great beyond)

#### THE OSOGBOS

IKU (death)  
 ARUN (sickness)  
 EYO (envy, blood)  
 OFO (loss)  
 ONA (obstacles)  
 AKOBA (revolution)  
 FITIBO (problems)

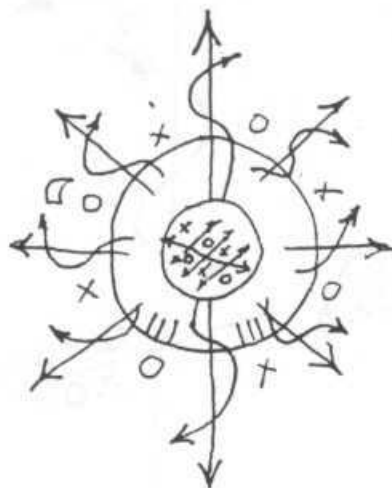
#### THE ODDUS

**NOTE: THERE ARE GOOD BOOKS IN SPANISH ABOUT THE ODDU, THE BEST BEING SECRETOS DE LA RELIGION YORUBA. IN ENGLISH, THE BEST SO FAR IS WILLIAM BASCOM'S SIXTEEN COWRIES. BABA RAUL CANIZARES' UPCOMING BOOK ON ALL THE ODDU PROMISES TO BE THE MOST EXTENSIVE. INCLUDING ALL THE ODDU IN THIS TREATISE WOULD BE BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THIS WORK.**

## CHAPTER VII

### *Spells and firmas: Working the spirit*

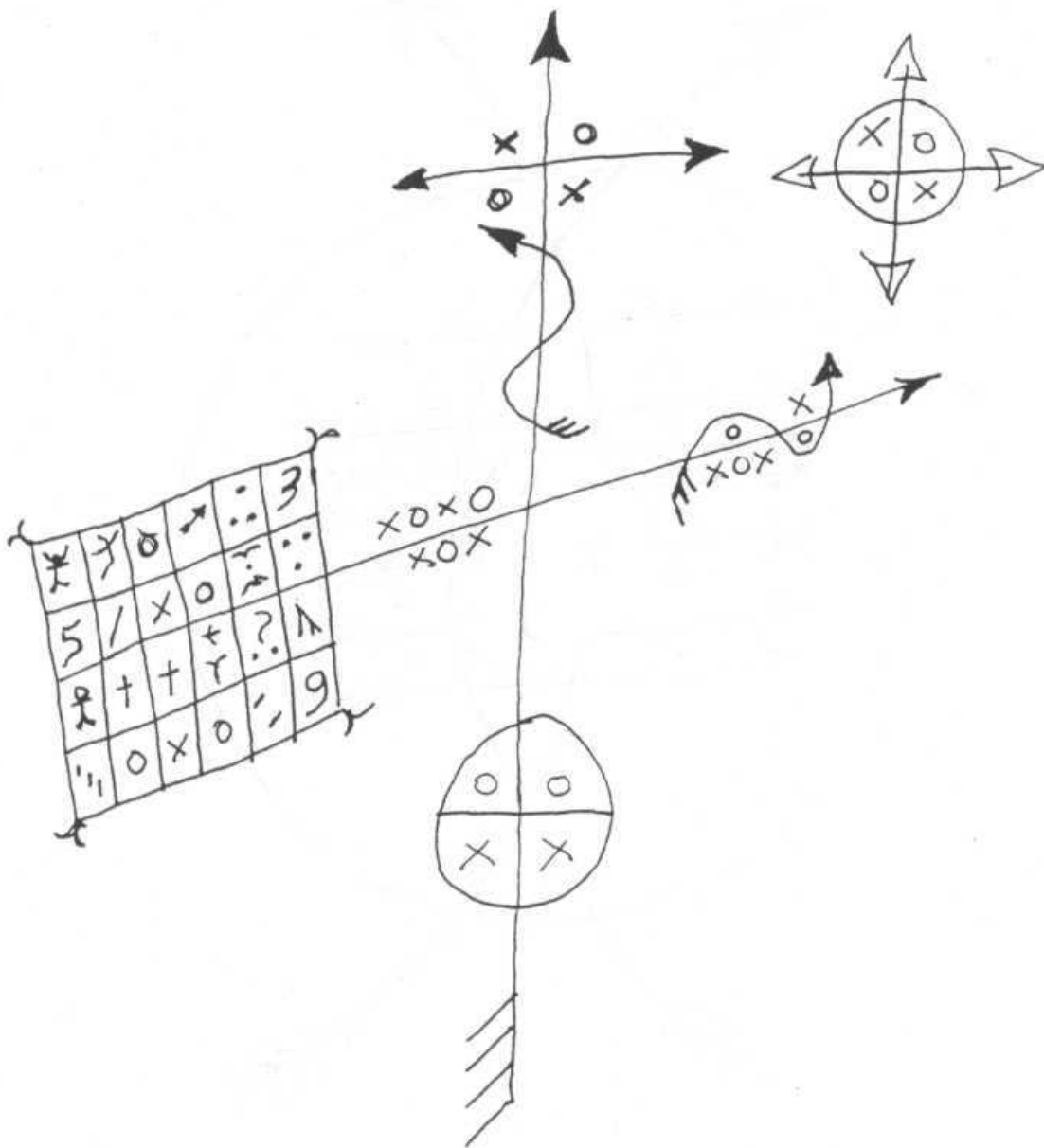
firma Siete Rayos to help an inmate achieve  
freedom



Paint the above firma in four different colors. You may paint it on the ground or on a piece of cedar wood about three feet by three feet. Always paint from the center out. A white quail and a brown one must be sacrificed to Siete Rayos and left in the middle of the sygill to rot. White flour must be used to trace the inner circle, gunpowder over the outer circle. The mambo that empowers this work is the following:

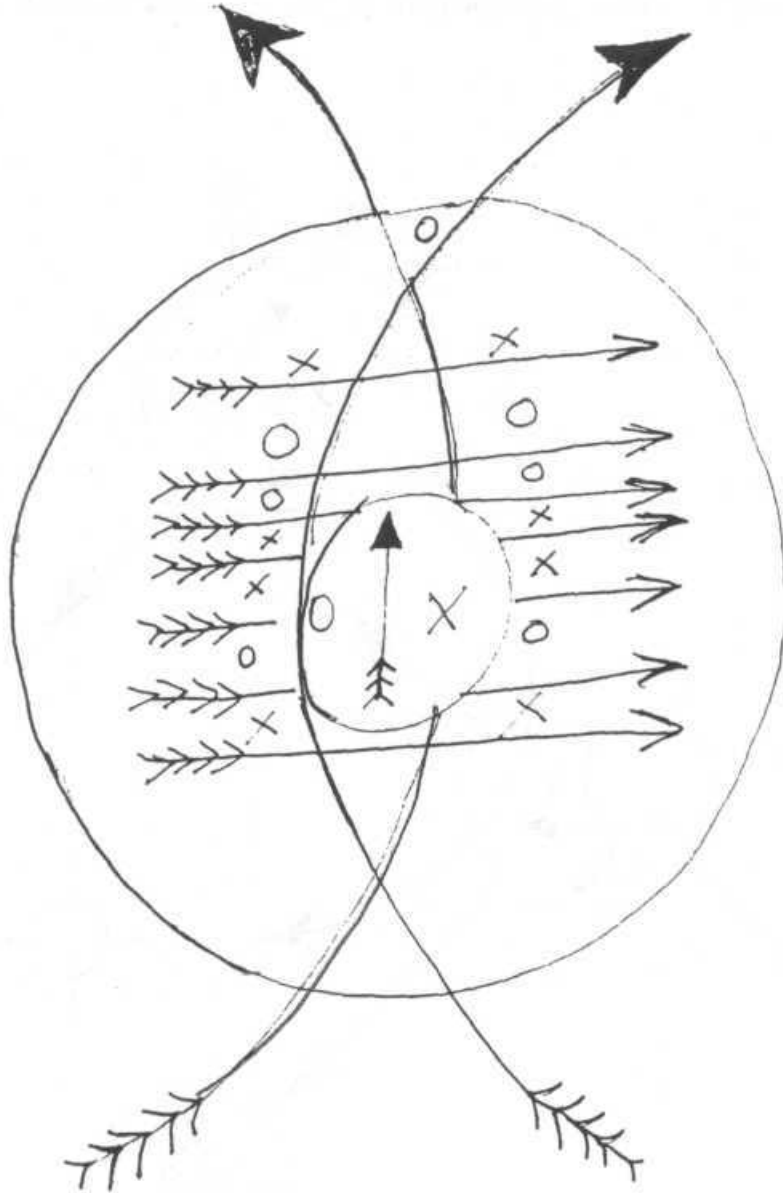
**Licencia agó, se va que cuenda Sambiampongo  
Sambianliri, Nsambi Sururucuru,  
Sambia bilongo, Siete Rayos me cutare ndian,  
ndian cuenda salansanyo,  
mundo garabatea,  
mumbara. Licencia mi Tata, licencia to nfunbi,  
licencia to ndianbe, licencia cuadrilla Congo,  
licencia Cuatro Vientos, licencia Tango,  
lisencia nsulu, licencia ntoto, licencia  
Mama Nsala, Que va cuenda bajo ntoto.  
Sala maleko, maleko sala.**

## Firma Siete Rayos to empower a house, and make the tata strong and healthy



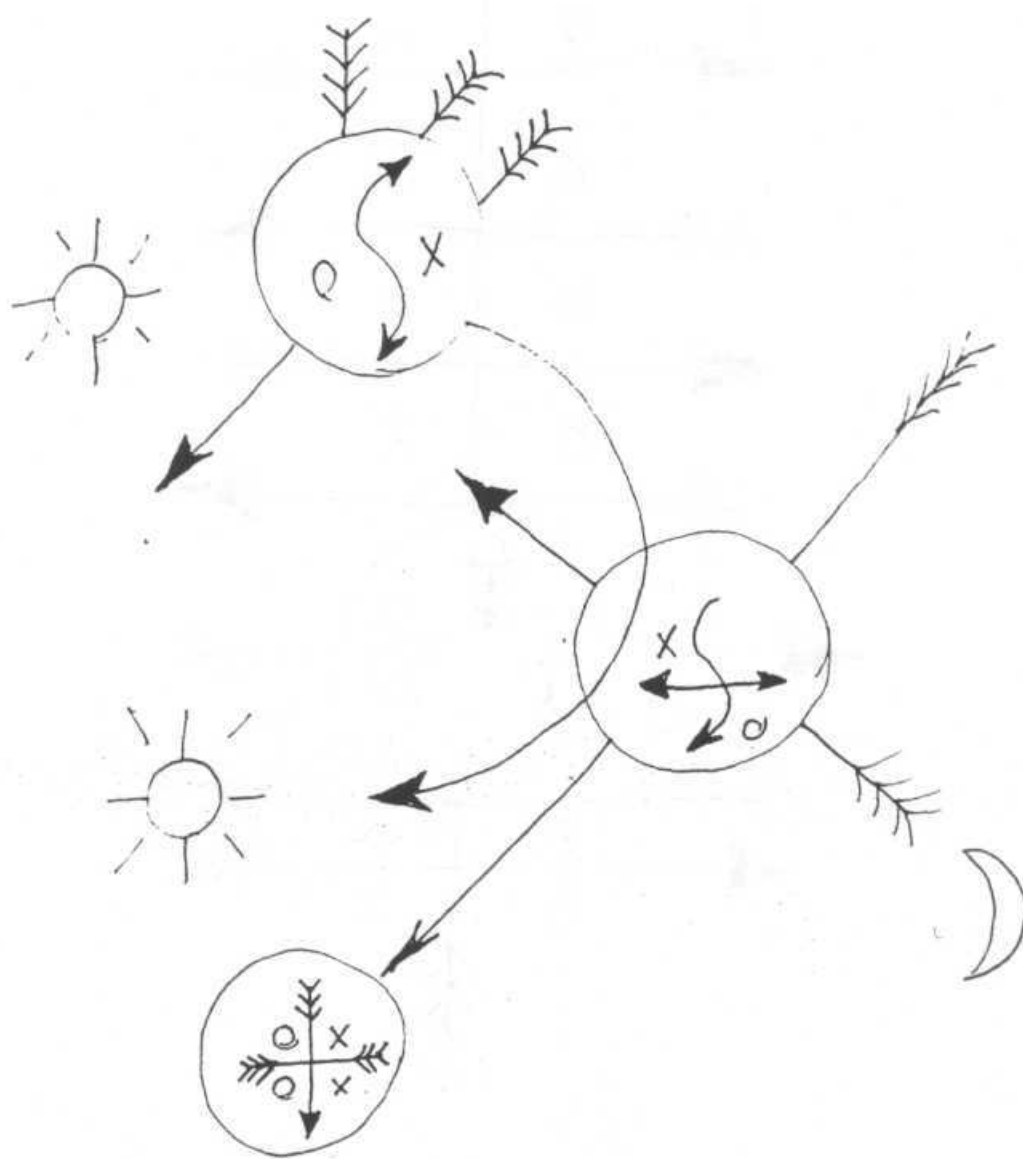
Draw firma in front of the main *nganga* using *cascarilla*, *pembe*, or chalk. A ram, two white quails, two brown ones, two white roosters, and two tortoises must be sacrificed to Lucero and the *nganga*. Add red wine, dry white wine, *chamba*, cigar smoke, twenty-one little piles of gunpowder, and all of the main firmas of the house written on parchment.

## Zarabanda firma to obtain material wealth



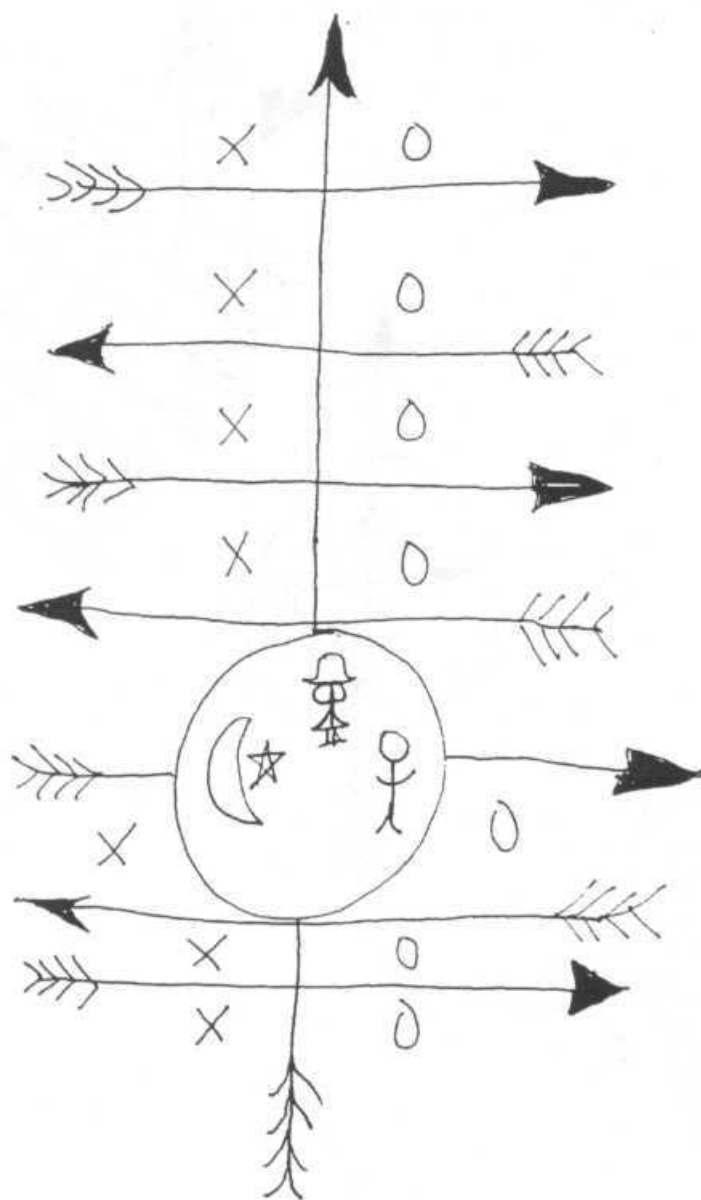
Sacrificial animals needed: two black roosters which must be passed over the person for whom the money work is being performed, the roosters are then killed without decapitating them, their bodies left on the nganga for twenty-four hours.

# Zarabanda firma to exorcise evil spirits



Draw firma with pembe or cascarilla on the floor in front of ngangga, person to be cleansed should step on firma barefooted. Tata or Yayi now passes two roosters over person, killing them without decapitating them, sprinkling some blood on the person's bare feet, offering the rest of the blood to the ngangga. Person being cleansed should erase firma with his/her feet. As the firma disappears, so does the trouble-causing ghosts.

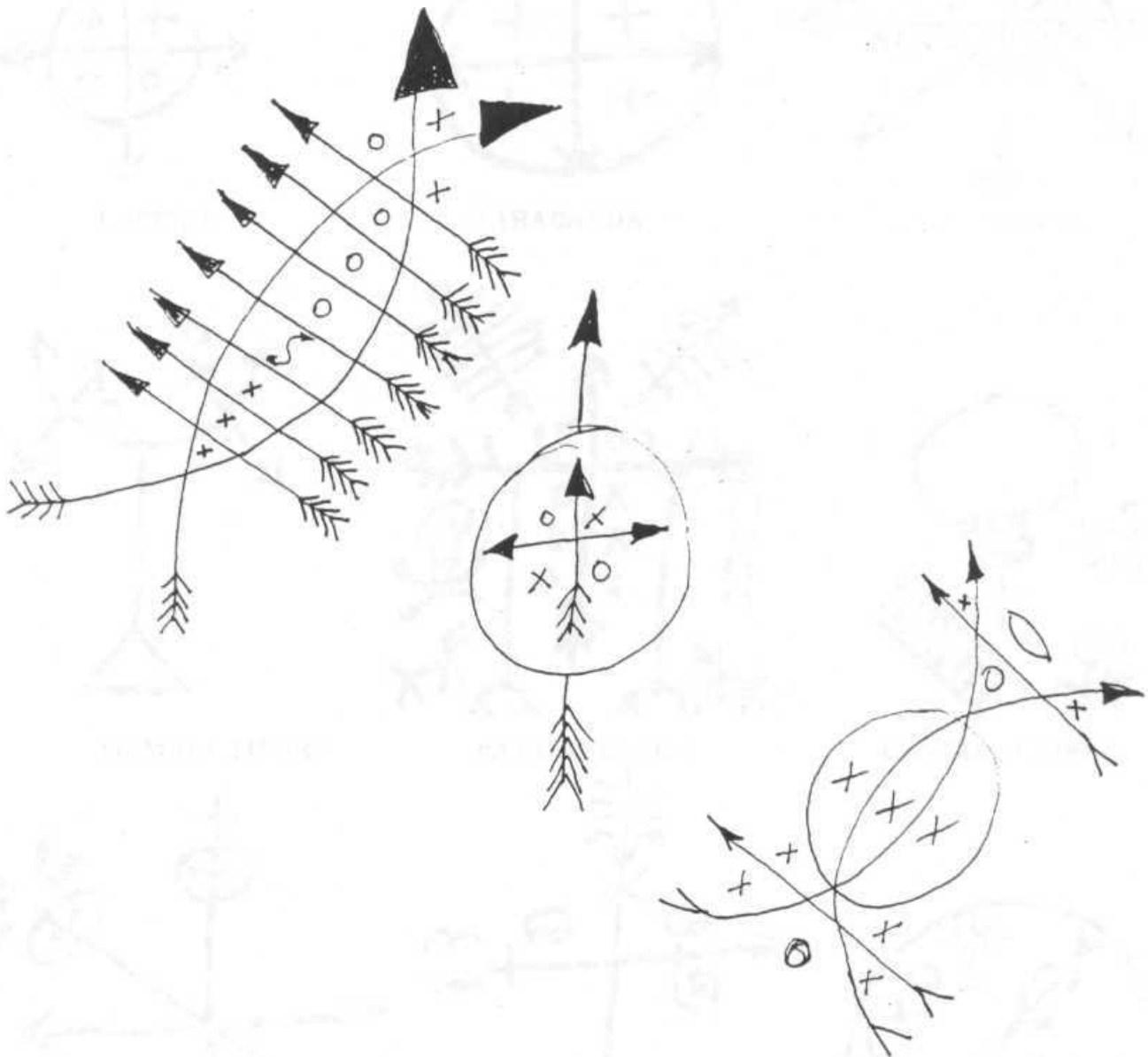
## Zarabanda firma for permanent protection



This firma should be painted in the nso, the temple where the person who seeks protection keeps his/her nganga. I have made this firma a permanent part of the decoration of my munanso. It requires the sacrifice of two guinea fowl, a black rooster, and a quail.

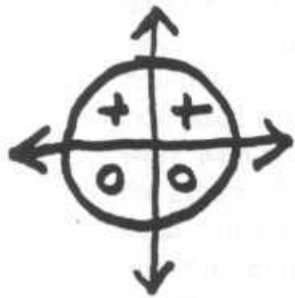


## Zarabanda firma to make an amulet that makes one invisible to the police

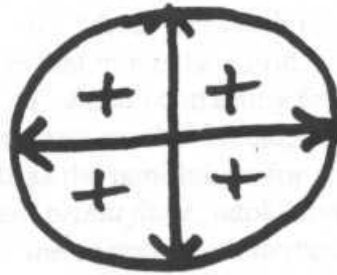


Draw this firma in parchment or a piece of brown paper bag. Place on top of nganga, sacrifice two black pigeons, a red rooster, and two white quails. Make sure some of the blood of each animal reaches the paper. Afterwards, fold paper and place inside small leather bag along with a hummingbird heart. Carry amulet (*makuto*) with you at all times.

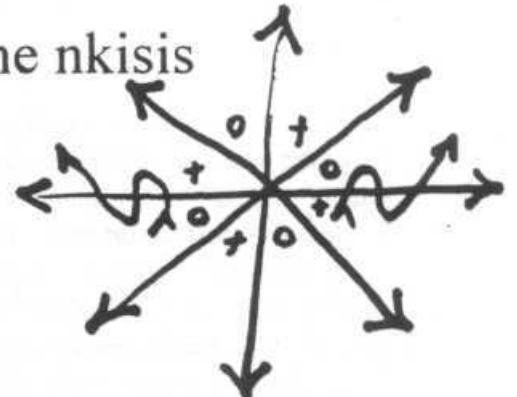
Some simple firmas depicting the nkisis



LUCERO



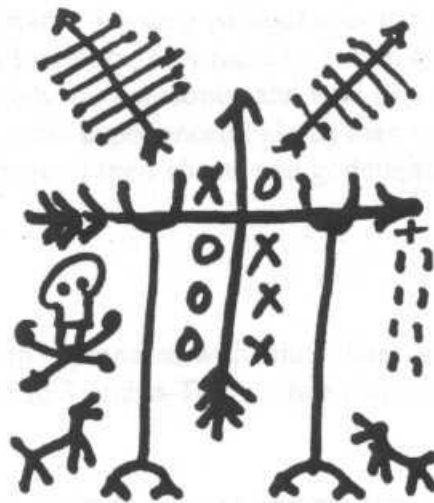
ZARABANDA



SIETE RAYOS



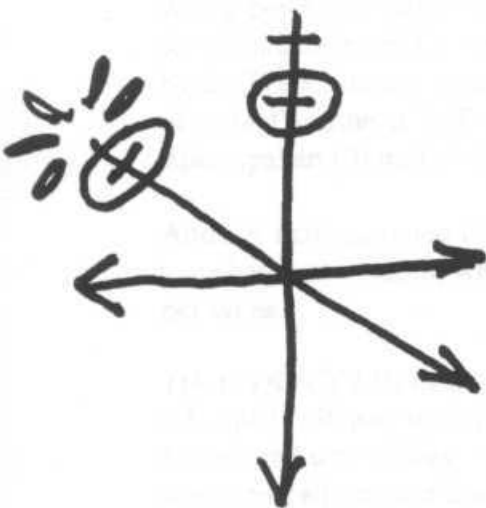
TIEMBLA TIERRA



PATA EN LLAGA



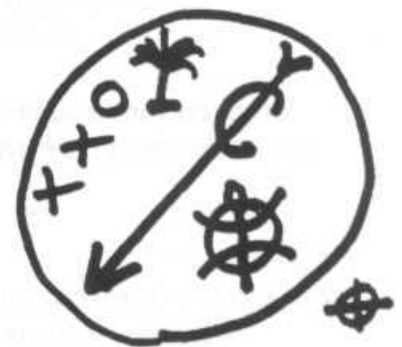
CENTELLA NDOKI



MAMA CHOLA WANGA



MAMA KALUNGA



NGURUFINDA

### BATHS, SPELLS, AND OTHER WORKS

Palo's reputation for being "evil," "dark" or "black magic" comes from a misunderstanding of the forces that move the world. Zambia's all-encompassing energy is expressed in creation as expanding and contracting forces, the yin-yang of Taoism. Paleros work with both currents, ndoki and nsanbi. Ndoki, the negative manifestation of being, is the aspect of divinity that acts as the punishment for wrongdoers: "karma." Ndoki is dark, lunar, hidden, fluid, and primal. *prima facie*, ndoki appears to be evil. Ndoki is identified with the contracting aspect of the cosmos, with implosion, destruction, death, and disease. Nsanbi is the positive manifestation of being. Nsanbi is bright, solar, exposed, solid, and developed. Nsanbi is identified with goodness; with the expanding cosmos, with life, birth, growth, and healing. In reality, ndoki cannot exist without nsanbi and vice versa. Imagine an organism constantly inhaling without ever exhaling, it would explode! When Paleros work with ndoki, therefore, they must be extremely careful not to incur the wrath of the Lords of Karma. Only very seasoned and well-balanced practitioners should work with the forces of ndoki. Less experienced Paleros may seriously imperil their spiritual development as well as those of their clients and godchildren if they misuse the power of ndoki.

#### *FOR GOOD LUCK*

The basic "good luck" bath is prepared with white lillies, adding its petals to your bathwater. Light a candle to Tiembla-Tierra while you are taking the bath. Do it eight Thursdays in a row.

If you find signs of a work against you outside your home, such as a dead chicken or a bunch of bananas etc. urinate on the work, then discard it. If in your household there's a young boy (girls' urine is not thought proper, for some reason), then let him urinate on it, for an innocent child's urine is a more powerful spiritual cleanser than holy water blessed by the Pope. In fact, to ensure the spiritual integrity of your home, add a couple of drops of a child's urine as well as some holy water from a Catholic, Orthodox, or High Episcopalian Church to the water you use to clean your home's floors.

Another bath designed to attract good vibrations consists of adding three bay leaves to your bathwater, along with seven different perfumes/colognes. Repeat seven times, once per week.

#### *TO ATTRACT LOVERS*

Fill a pail half-way with water, add to it a splash of apple-blossom cologne, five drops of honey, and some lillies. Immediately after you take a shower, pour the previously-prepared pail on your body from the neck down. Do this three Wednesdays or Fridays in a row. Add parsley to the ingredients and it becomes a money-drawing bath as well.

Another bath to attract a lover is made by filling a pail 3/4 of the way with water, adding to it parsley, petals from five carnations, five drops of honey, a white rose (petals only),

and a splash of Florida Water. Pour pail on your body from the neck down--make sure your genitals get plenty! Repeat bath five Wednesdays or Fridays in a row.

To make a man you know fall in love with you (this spell does not work on a woman) steal one of his handkerchiefs, pass it all over your naked body and leave it in as intimate a part of your body as you can for twenty-four hours. If you can get hairs from him, mix them with your own hair and burn them in the flame of a seven-day white candle. Look at the candle's flame intently, visualizing the man's face. When his features appear clear in your mind's eye, the spell has been successful.

Adding a couple of drops of your menstrual blood to coffee you make for your loved one makes him fall madly in love with you; he will not be able to think of anybody else.

To make a loved one come back after he has left you, take a pumpkin and hollow it out, keeping the top as a lid. Take five nails from the feet of a rooster and put them inside the hollowed pumpkin, adding an egg, marjoram, the name of the loved one written on parchment paper and any personal item you may have of the person you want back. Spit inside the pumpkin three times, then close the pumpkin using the lid. Place the pumpkin next to Mama Chola Wanga for five days, then offer it to the river along with five pennies. Your stray lover will come back within twenty-one days.

#### ***MONEY-DRAWING BATHS AND WORKS***

In a bathtub full of warm water, pour five cups of milk, five bunches of curly parsley, and five drops of honey. Bathe for at least twenty minutes asking Mama Chola Wanga to bless you with money.

To attract business, clean the doorway of your place with parsley, cinnamon, and honey in water. Afterward, spread some cornmeal around.

When writing a letter asking for money, pass some cascarilla over the paper in which you are to write the letter before setting pen to paper.

#### ***HEALING HERBS***

Boiled leaves, stems, and bark of myrtle make a great skin cleanser.

Soursop leaves should be boiled and applied directly to the side of the face that is affected by neuralgia.

Linden flowers and leaves make a great calming tea for nervous or easily excited people.

Chamomille tea is good to settle an upset stomach and as a natural shampoo for the hair.

Mango seeds, ground to a powder and mixed with water make a first-rate disinfectant.

***SEPARATING SPELLS***

To bring serious discord to a home, take nine peony seeds, black pepper, and leaves from a peanut plant, burn all to a crisp. Blow the resulting ashes on the door of the people you want to see fighting among each other.

To separate a couple, take seven pumpkin leaves, mix with twenty-one kernels of black pepper, grind to a powder, blow on door of targeted couple.

To keep someone away, take dirt from the bottom of a nganga, seeds from three okras, dirt from a crossroads, and the name of the person you want far. Put on a bottle weighted so that it goes to the bottom of a river, where you must throw it at twelve midnight.

***MORE ON HERBS AND PLANTS***

Although many of the herbs used in Palo may be difficult to find in some areas, there are enough common plants available in most places to honor each orisha. The following are certain fairly common plants and herbs associated with the following deities.

***LUCERO***

Asafetida  
Chili pepper  
Grass  
Black eyed pea leaves

***TIEMBLA TIERRA***

Lillies  
Cotton  
Almond  
Avocado leaves  
Coffee  
Guava  
Dried rosebuds

***SIETE RAYOS***

Bananas  
Palm fronds  
China berry

***ZARABANDA***

Cayenne pepper  
Black pepper  
Oak leaves

**MADRE DE AGUA**

Indigo  
Seaweed  
Purple basil  
Bell pepper  
Lotus  
Sponge (not a plant, but functions as one)  
Driftwood

**MAMA CHOLA WANGA**

Fern  
Orange blossom  
Papaya  
Anise  
Witch hazel  
Vervain  
Purple grapes  
Roses  
Coriander

**PATA EN LLAGA**

Ivy  
Myrtle  
ginger

**CENTECLA NDOKI**

Camphor  
Cypress  
All beans  
Peanut  
Hemp  
Rose of Jericho (stem only)

## CHAPTER VIII

### *Some important prayers and mambos*

When the Tata inserts the sacrificial knife in the throat of an animal, all present should sing the following:

**Meme** (or *ensuso if its a rooster, etc.*) **kabwinda**  
**embele kiamene**  
**eki menga nkisi**

When the Tata's helper lifts the animal up, allowing its blood to flow on the prenda, all members present must sing as follows:

**Ahora si menga va corre, como corre**  
**Ahora si menga va corre, si señó**  
**Ahora si menga va corre**

When feeding other implements after nganga and Lucero have received the first offering, the following mambo is intoned:

**Fogoro yarifo**  
**menga corre menga**  
**Fogoro yarifo**

At this time a plate or dish made out of half a gourd containing some salt is placed under the animal's throat to collect its remaining blood, while this is going on, all present will sing:

**Sangra sala lai la lai la,**  
**lai la lai la, lai la lai la.**

#### ***OTHER ESSENTIAL PRAYERS***

##### **ENTERING THE NSO (PRESENCE OF THE NGANGA)**

Burunkisa nganga  
 Nguangara nkunia  
 Munanfua monunkuame  
 Tata ndibilongo tuyembere

**OPENING PRAYER**

Guiriko nganga  
 Mbonda Tata Nganga Monte Mayombe  
 Kuenda Camposanto Medianoche  
 Andres Petit Zarabanda Mata Mundele  
 Licencia Zambia  
 Zambia arriba, Zambia abajo,  
 Zambia en lo cuatro costao  
 Licencia Lucero Tata Ndoki  
 Licencia Ntango  
 Licencia Mposi  
 Licencia Nsambi  
 Licencia Ndoki  
 Licencia Ntoto  
 Licencia Nsulo  
 Licencia Kalunga  
 Licencia Kunalemba  
 Licencia Kunasinda  
 Licencia Kunafinda  
 Licencia Nfunbi vititi bacheche  
 Nfunbi vititi guariguari  
 Licencia to lo nfunbi  
 Guiriko nganga  
 Somo o no somo?  
 SOMO!

**OATH OF LOYALTY/CREDE**

Tendundu  
 Kienpunguele  
 Mani masango  
 Nsilan banza  
 mandie  
 Sese mandie  
 Bikan bioko  
 Bigan diame  
 Ndilicuame  
 Nsambi ndiganga!



**PRAYER FOR THE RAZOR BLADE**

Kabanga Tengue Yaya

Pian kilanga

Tala moko

Nganga nkisa

Nkita mulanga

Ngungu nsanguila

Sogulo basula

Kuenda muini

Mbanzo

Nmusi naba

Nguenguere

**PRAYER TO SACRIFICE A GOAT (TO BE WHISPERED IN ITS EAR AND NOSE)**

Turunbanguete!

Turunbanguete!

Turunbanguete!

Turunbanguete!

Turunbanguete!

Turunbanguete!

Turunbanguete!

**PRAYER TO SACRIFICE A TURTLE OR TORTOISE (NEVER USE A KNIFE. USE A POINTED STONE INSTEAD)**

Nfuru

Batiakitatio

Fotankualo

**PRAYER TO SACRIFICE A DUCK**

Baluande kiambi ko

Kiamfunda Kalunga

Kiambonga nsusu Suakara! (its head is then placed by its side)

**SALUTATION OF THE NGANGA**

Zambia mpungi, vititi losa

tava sili, mono panibele

Machuco Kongo, Lunguanda buengue.

Coro.—Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Gula.—Yo saludo a Lucerito, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo a Tiembla-Tierra, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo a 7 Rayos, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo a Madre de Agua, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo a Sholán Guengue, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo a Pata en Ljaga, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo a Centellita, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo a Zarabanda, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo al Palo en Nganga, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo al Padre en Nganga, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo a Viento en Ceiba, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo a Manzanero, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo a Limpia Piso, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo al Mayordomo, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo a mi Padrino, saludándolo a usted.  
Buenas Noches Nene, saludándolo a usted.  
Yo saludo a Lucerito, saludándolo a usted.  
Mambe-(Dios), Mambe (Dios) Mambe (Dios).

## " P O R Q U E "

Guia.—Porque Gallina, no siembra Gallo.....Porque.  
 Coro.—Porque Gallina, no siembra Gallo.....Porque.  
 Guia.—A Chapear Cantero.  
 Coro.—Porque Gallina, no siembra Gallo.....Porque.  
 Guia.—A Chapear Cantero.  
 Coro.—Porque Gallina, no siembra Gallo.....Porque.  
 Guia.—A Chapear Cantero.  
 Coro.—Porque Gallina, no siembra Gallo.....Porque.  
 Guia.—Porque Gallina, no siembra Gallo.....Porque.  
 Coro.—Porque Gallina, no siembra Gallo.....Porque.  
 Guia.—A Chapear Cantero.  
 Coro.—Porque Gallina, no siembra Gallo.....Porque.  
 Guia.—A Chapear Cantero.  
 Coro.—Porque Gallina, no siembra Gallo.....Porque.  
 Guia.—A Chapear Cantero.  
 Coro.—Porque Gallina, no siembra Gallo.....Porque.  
 Guia.—A Chapear Cantero.  
 Coro.—Porque Gallina, no siembra Gallo.....Porque.  
 Guia.—Mambe.  
 Coro.—Dios.  
 Guia.—Mambe.  
 Coro.—Dios.  
 Guia.—Mambe.  
 Coro.—Dios.

## " E N D U N D O "

Coro.—Endundo, Endundo.  
 Guia.—Misma Palma son Endundo.  
 Coro.—Endundo, Endundo.  
 Guia.—Mismo Toto, son Endundo.  
 Coro.—Endundo, Endundo.  
 Guia.—Mismo Fumbi, son Endundo.  
 Coro.—Endundo, Endundo.  
 Guia.—Misma Nganga, son Endundo.  
 Coro.—Endundo, Endundo.  
 Guia.—Misma Tierra, son Endundo.  
 Coro.—Endundo, Endundo.  
 Guia.—Mismo Palo, son Endundo.  
 Coro.—Endundo, Endundo.  
 Guia.—Misma Kinyumba, son Endundo.  
 Coro.—Endundo, Endundo.  
 Guia.—Mambe.  
 Coro.—Dios.  
 Guia.—Mambe.  
 Coro.—Dios.  
 Guia.—Mambe.  
 Coro.—Dios.

" M A Q U I N I T A "

Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Son las hora  
 Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Jura Menga  
 Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Jura Empaca  
 Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Jura en Palo  
 Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Jura en Fumbi  
 Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Maquinita  
 Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Jura Embele  
 Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Lucecita.  
 Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Jura en Nganga  
 Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Maquinita.  
 Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Jura en Kisa  
 Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Jura Menga  
 Coro.—Lligui Lligui Máquina Vapo  
 Guía.—Mambe.  
 Coro.—Dios.  
 Guía.—Mambe.  
 Coro.—Dios.  
 Guía.—Mambe.  
 Coro.—Dios.

"YO SUBE PA LA LOMA"

Yo sube pá la loma, yo sube pá la loma,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Yo jala garabato, yo jala garabato,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Yo baja de la loma, yo baja de la loma,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Y corro pá la loma, yo corro pá la loma,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando el fundamento, buscando el fundamento,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando la kinyumba, buscando la kinyumba,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando mi palo, buscando mi palo,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando a mi padrino, buscando a mi padrino,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando a Viento en Ceiba, buscando a Viento en Ceiba,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando a Mala Fama, buscando a Mala Fama,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando a 7 Rayos, buscando a 7 Rayos,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando a Tiembla Tierra, buscando a Tiembla Tierra,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando a Madre de Agua, buscando a Madre de Agua,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando a Sholán Guengue, buscando a Sholán Guengue,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando a la Cuadrilla, buscando a la cuadrilla,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando al Mayordomo, buscando al Mayordomo,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando a tó lo empaca, buscando a tó lo empacas,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando a Manzanero, buscando a manzanero,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Yo jala garabato, yo jala garabato,  
 Jala y jala, yo jala garabato,  
 Buscando a Lucerito, buscando a Lucerito,  
 Mambe (Dios) Mambe (Dios) Mambe (Dios).

"PALO - MAYIMBE"

Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Me llevan pa la Loma, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Yo corro pa la Loma, yo corro pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Yo sube pa la Loma, yo sube pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Yo soy 7 Rayos, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Yo soy Tierra, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Yo soy Sholan Guengue, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Yo soy Madre de Agua, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Yo sube pa la Loma, yo sube pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Yo soy Pata en Llaga, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Yo soy Centellita, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Yo soy Lucerito, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Yo sube pa la Loma, yo sube pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Yo sube pa la Loma, yo sube pa la Loma.  
 Coro.—Palo Mayimbe, me llevan pa la Loma.  
 Guía.—Mambe.  
 Coro.—Dios.  
 Guía.—Mambe.  
 Coro.—Dios.  
 Guía.—Mambe.  
 Coro.—Dios.

## " N G A N G U L E R O "

Guía.—Adios Ngangulero, brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Coro.—Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Guía.—Adios Ngangulero, brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Coro.—Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Guía.—Adios Ngangulero, brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Coro.—Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Guía.—Adios Ngangulero, brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Coro.—Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Guía.—Adios Ngangulero, brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Coro.—Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Guía.—Adios Ngangulero, brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Coro.—Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Guía.—Adios Ngangulero, brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Coro.—Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Guía.—Adios Ngangulero, brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Coro.—Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Guía.—Adios Ngangulero, brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Coro.—Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Guía.—Adios Ngangulero, brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Coro.—Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Guía.—Adios Ngangulero, brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Coro.—Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Guía.—Adios Ngangulero, brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Coro.—Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Brisa que el viento me lleva Ague.

Guía.—Mambe.

Coro.—Dios.

Guía.—Maribe.

"PA QUE TU ME LLAMAS"

Coro.—Si tú no me conoces pá qué me llamas,  
 Guía.—Pa qué tú me llamas, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Lucerito, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Coro.—Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Guía.—Yo soy Tiembla-Tierra, pa qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy 7 Rayos, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Madre de Agua, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Sholán Guengue, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Pata en Llaga, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Centellita, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Zarabanda, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Palo en Nganga, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Tata en Nganga, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Viento en Ceiba, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Manzanero, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Limpia piso, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Mayordomo, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Sigue Rastro, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Palo en Nganga, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Madre Ceiba, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Si tú no me conoces pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Yo soy Lucerito, pá qué tú me llamas,  
 Coro.—Si tú no me conoces, pá qué tú me llamas.  
 Guía.—Mambe (Dios), Mambe (Dios), Mambe (Dios).



"AHORA VERAN, AHORA VERAN..."

Guía.—Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 Repite el coro.—A Lucerito en la Palma, ahora verán.  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A Tiembla-Tierra en la Palma, ahora verán:  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A 7 Rayos en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A Madre de Agua en la Palma,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A Sholán Guengue, en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A Pata en Llaga, en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A Centellita en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A Zarabanda en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 Al Tata en Nganga en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A Viento en Ceiba en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A sigue rastro, en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A Manzanero en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A Limpia Piso en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 Al Mayordomo en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 Al Padrino en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A tó lo empaca en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A la cuadrilla en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Ahora verán, ahora verán.  
 A Lucerito en la Palma, ahora verán,  
 Mambe (Dios), Mambe (Dios), Mambe (Dios).

"DEBAJO DEL LAUREL"

Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Yo tengo mi confianza, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Coro.—Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Guía.—Lucero es mi confianza, Lucero es mi confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Tiembla-Tierra, es mi confianza, Tiembla-Tierra es mi  
 confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 7 Rayos es mi confianza, 7 Rayos es mi confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Madre de Agua es mi confianza, Madre de Agua es mi  
 confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Sholán Guengue es mi confianza, Sh. Guengue es mi  
 confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Pata en Llaga es mi confianza, P. en LL. es mi confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Centella es mi confianza, Centella es mi confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Zarabanda es mi confianza, Zarabanda es mi confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Tata en Nganga es mi confianza, T. en Nganga es mi  
 confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Palo en Nganga es mi confianza, P. en Nganga es mi  
 confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Viento en Ceiba, es mi confianza, V. en C. es mi con-  
 fianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Manzanero es mi confianza, Manzanero es mi confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Limpia Piso es mi confianza, L. Piso es mi confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Sigue Rastro es mi confianza, S. R. es mi confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 El Mayordomo es mi confianza, el M. es mi confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 La cuadrilla es mi confianza, la C. es mi confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza,  
 Lucero es mi confianza, Lucero es mi confianza,  
 Debajo del Laurel, yo tengo mi confianza.  
 Mambe (Dios) Mambe (Dios) Mambe (Dios).

„LUMBE, LUMBE, LUMBE”

- Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si Lucerito, tá cere cere.  
Coro.—Palo Kindiambo ace ague,  
Guía.—Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si Tiembra-Tierra, tá cere cere,  
Palo Kindiambo ace ague,  
Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si 7 Rayos tá cere cere,  
Palo Kindiambo ace ague,  
Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si Madre de Agua tá cere cere,  
Palo Kindiambo acece ague,  
Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si Sholán Guengue tá cere cere,  
Palo Kindiambo acece ague,  
Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si Pata en Llaga, tá cere cere,  
Palo Kindiambo acece ague,  
Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si Centellita tá cere cere,  
Palo Kindiambo acece ague,  
Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si Zarabanda tá cere cere,  
Palo Kindiambo acece ague,  
Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si la Nganga, tá cere cere,  
Palo Kindiambo acece ague,  
Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si Madre Ceiba, tá cere cere,  
Palo Kindiambo acece ague,  
Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si la cuadrilla, tá cere cere,  
Palo Kindiambo acece ague,  
Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si limpia piso, cere cere,  
Palo Kindiambo acece ague,  
Lumbe, lumbe, lumbe, lumbe la cueva en Nganga,  
Si Lucerito tá cere cere,

"BUENAS NOCHES"

Coro.—Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Guía.—Buenas noches mi Lucerito,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas mi Tiembla-Tierra,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches mi 7 Rayos,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches mi Madre de Agua,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches mi Sholán Guengue,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches, mi Pata en Llaga,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches mi Centellita,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches mi Zarabanda,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches tenga mi Nganga,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches tenga mi palo,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches mi Madre Ceiba,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches a Limpia Piso,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches mi sigue rastro,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches al Mayordomo,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches a tó lo Empaca,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches a la Cuadrilla,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches a Manzanero,  
 Buenas noches, buenas noches,  
 Buenas noches a Lucerito.  
 Mambe (Dios) Mambe (Dios) Mambe (Dios).

"SALA MALE MALE, SALE MALE"

Coro.—Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Guía.—Ay qué yo jura, yo jura en kisa, sala malecón, malecón,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Ay qué jura, yo jura menga, Sala, malecón, malecón, sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Ay qué yo jura, yo jura en Nganga, sala malecón, malecón sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Ay qué yo jura, yo jura en Fumbi, sala malecón. M. Sala.

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo a Lucerito, sala malecón, malecón en sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo a Tiembla-Tierra, sala malecón, malecón sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo a 7 Rayos, sala malecón, malecón en sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón en sala,

Yo saludo a Madre de Agua, sala malecón, malecón sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo a Sholán Guengue, sala male, malecón sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo a Pata en Llaga, sala malecón, malecón sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo a Centellita, sala malecón, malecón sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo a Zarabanda, sala malecón, malecón sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo a Madre Ceiba, sala malecón, malecón sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo a Manzanero, sala malecón, malecón sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo a mi Nganga, sala malecón, malecón sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo a tó lo Empaca, sala malecón, malecón sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo al Mayordomo, sala malecón, malecón sala,

Sala male male, sala male, malecón sala,

Yo saludo a Lucerito, sala malecón, malecón sala,

Mambe (Dios) Mambe (Dios) Mambe (Dios).

## CHAPTER IX

### *Palo Monte Vocabulary*

The language called "Congo" in Cuba derives mostly from KiKongo, a tribal language still spoken in both Congos in Africa as well as in parts of Angola. What follows is a glossary of popular terms employed in the practice of Palo Monte. Where I know the Lukumi, I've also added it to the lexicon.-Raul Canizares.

#### A

ENGLISH	CONGO	LUKUMI
abdomen	nonaloza	ikún
Africa	Juankita	Afrika
aguardiente	malafo	oti
alcohol	malafo-fuaya	
arm (right)	guamono	lembem
ashes	koroa	bebe ina

#### B

bag (small)	nkuto	wú
beer	malafo-shola	oti agbado
believer	bobbo-kaleno	onigbàgbó
bell	egunda	agogo
bird	diendio	eiye
black	nkueto, bufiota	dúdu
body	nkombo	ara
bone	kangome	egungun
bottle	ntumbo	igo
bread	kalua	akàrà
bull	nyirango	ako màlù
bush	nfinda	igbo
buttocks	mundana	idi

#### C

candle	nkinda	ataná
cannon	matonde	ibon nlá
cat	kano-musuako	ológbò
cauldron (empty)	kindeno	ikokó nla
cemetery	campo-nfinda, kunasinda	ibi isinkú, ilé

child  
church  
cigar  
cleansing  
cocodrile  
coconut  
come  
cooking pot  
crab  
cricket

muana  
munanzo-Zambia  
nsunga  
nsala  
enkumbe-lango  
canya-emputa  
kuisa  
ikoko  
ngala  
checherengoma

yansan  
omo  
ile-olorun  
ashá  
ebó  
alegba  
obi  
sunmodo  
ikoko  
akan  
edolo

### D

darkness  
death  
deity  
Devil  
diviner  
dog  
donkey  
duck

tombe  
nfuiri  
nkisi  
Gongoro  
nasako  
bua, mbwa  
ceregoa  
yanlula

su  
ikú  
orisha  
Alosi  
awo  
ajá  
kétekéte  
kuekueye

### E

earth  
eat  
elephant  
enter  
evil  
evildoer

ntolo  
uria  
tere-nene  
kota  
ndoki  
alembo, nkisi

aiyé  
uddia  
ayanakú  
wo  
buruku  
alaú

### F

fan  
father  
fly (insect)  
friend

filé-filé  
ntunde, tata  
buanshá  
bakundi

abebé  
baba  
esinsin  
oluku

## G

go  
 God  
 goddaughter  
 godfather  
 godmother  
 godson  
 good  
 guinea-fowl  
 gunpowder

kuenda  
 Zambia  
 emborayaya  
 ndoyeke, tata  
 entua, yayi  
 emabró  
 mbote  
 nsunga-kuda  
 fula

lo  
 Olodumare  
 omobinrin orisha  
 babalorisha  
 iyalorisha  
 omorisha  
 rere  
 etú  
 ekún

## H

hat  
 hawk  
 head  
 healer  
 heaven  
 hen  
 homosexual man  
 honey  
 horn (animal)  
 house  
 husband

yerikuame  
 sinfuembo  
 lucena  
 nganga-mune  
 nsulu  
 yenfelefe  
 wari-wari  
 bonké  
 npake  
 munanzo  
 matroko, acar

aketé  
 àwodi  
 ori  
 okoga  
 orun  
 adie  
 adodí  
 onyi  
 abani  
 ilé  
 oko

## I

insane  
 incense

wire-wire  
 maba guindango

ashiwere  
 mu-binu

## J

jail  
 justice  
 jutia (Cuban rodent)

nso-zarabanda  
 nfumanbata  
 egunse-munanzo

awon  
 otito  
 akute



## K

kill  
king  
kneel  
knife

vonda  
iyamba, ntinu  
fukama  
embelekoto

pa  
oba  
kunle  
obe, pinaldo

## L

letter  
life  
lightning  
lion  
lizard

panda  
mojo  
mbandanu  
numa  
diansela

leta  
wiwa laye  
manamana  
kiniun  
alamú

## M

machete  
man  
mirror  
money  
moon  
morning  
mother  
mountain  
mouth

embele  
makala  
talatala  
nsimio  
agonda, mposi  
maksimeni  
marikiya  
mongo  
munama

adá  
enia, okunrin  
awoji  
owó  
oshu  
owúrò  
iyá  
oke  
enu

## N

necklace  
nose

coyera  
nasuro

eleke  
imú

## O

owl

sunsundaka

owiwi

## P

parrot  
peanut  
pheasantnkore  
nkia  
chechewenbala

odide

physician  
pigeon  
power  
pray  
prostitutecochino-radau  
yenkefo  
lendo, mpati, patti  
dodukila  
ndunga-nsameeyebi agbe  
ati aluko  
ologun  
eiyele  
ashe  
gbadura  
panchagara

## R

rain  
rainbow  
razor blade  
red  
rice  
river water  
rooster  
rootsmfula  
huyon-guerra  
gele-samba  
mbuaki  
loso  
lanso-ganswa  
nsuso  
nfitotoojo  
oshumare  
abe ifari  
pon  
sinkafa  
omilodo  
akukó  
gbongbo

## S

sea  
seawater  
serpent  
sheep  
sickness  
skull  
song  
soul  
speak  
spell  
starmbu  
lanso-kalunga  
yoka  
nkonde  
yari-yari  
kiyumba, kuniako  
mambo  
katukemba, nfumbi  
vova  
bilongo  
tenteguaokun  
omilokun  
eyioko  
abo  
arun  
agbari  
suyere  
emi  
wi  
ogun  
irawo

stone  
street  
sun  
sweet potato

matari  
kiaya  
ntangu  
bala

otan  
ona  
orun  
batata

## T

temple  
thanks  
thunder  
tiger  
toad  
today  
tongue  
tooth  
tree  
turkey  
tying spell

munanzo, estamfele  
entondele  
mbandanu  
ngo  
shupa  
awe  
irime  
enhuto  
nkuni  
ensu-asowa  
nkangue

igbodu  
adupe  
ara  
amotekun  
opolo  
  
ahon, ede  
ehin  
igi  
tolotolo  
linga

## V

vulture

mayimbe

kolé

## W

waist  
water  
white (color)  
white (person)  
wine  
wind  
woman

nkuete  
lanso, masa  
ojibo, pembe  
mundele  
sua, alee  
asolo, kunafinda, mpefe  
ndunka, nkento

ibadi  
omi  
funfun  
  
afefe  
obini

## Y

yes  
young

inga  
matoco-nkueye

en  
somode

## Z

zebra

donko-ceregoa

ketekete abila

### *A few useful phrases*

*Kiambote!:* hello!

*Wena mafimpi?:* Are you well?

*Inga, ye ngeie?:* Yes, and you?

*fioti ka-ka:* Ah, so-so.

*Nkumbu aku inani?:* What is your name?

*Nkumbu ame i Lumumba:* My name is Lumumba

*Nsala kiambote:* stay well

*Nwenda kiambote:* go well


*Quien kuenda?:* Who goes there?


*Somo o no somo!:* Are we paleros!?


*Somo!:* We are!


*Zambia arriba, Zambia abajo, Zambia en lo cuatro cotao:* God above, God below, God in all four sides.


## The Palo Alphabet

A. yugo 

B. yulo 

C. yili 

D. salvari 

E. buo 

F. came 


G. nie 

H. busili 

I. tituli 

J. yaluni 

K. tolada 

L. bi 

M. duli 

N. suli 

Ñ. bulu 


O. bisula 


P. dilonia 


Q. simbula 

R. yolito 


S. yuriko 

T. bolva 

U/V. soyke 

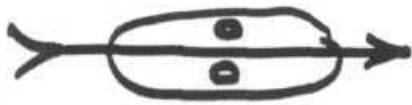
W. sume 

X. saulau 

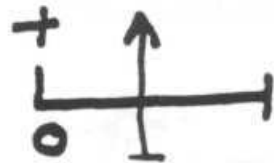
Y. teuse 

Z. kintoo 

*some simple Palo ideographs*



**Malongo (nature)**



**Ngo (government)**



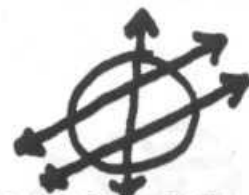
**Mama Nganga (godmother)**



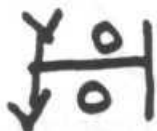
**vititi (view; look)**



**Kuenda (go)**



**Pele-fula (life)**



**Munanzo (house)**



**Ndumba (woman)**



**Ntoto (earth)**



**Bafioto Mbembe (African man)**



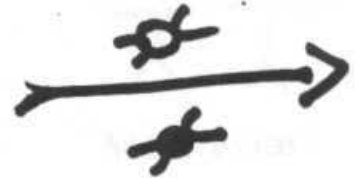
Ngueyo (brother)



Ensila (road)



Mayimbe (vulture)



Wanşa (river)



Sunsundamba (owl)



Kalunga (sea)



Ntangu (sun)



Nganga



Eyioko (snake)



Spring



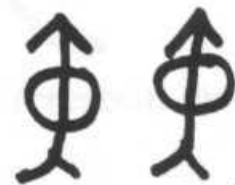
Nsulo (sky)



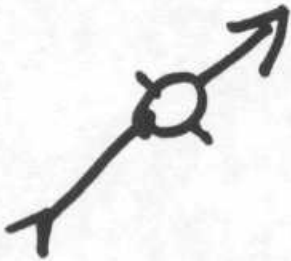
Lango nsulo (rain)



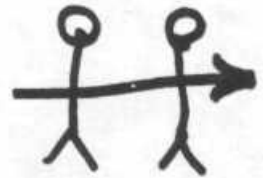
Bakonfula (assistant Tata)



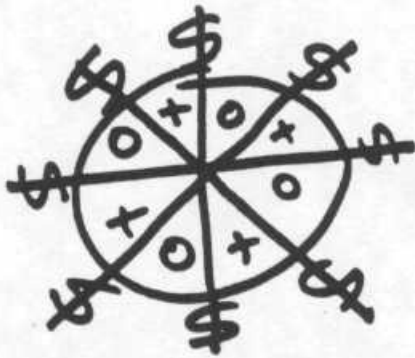
Omalembe (pain)



Watoko (young man)



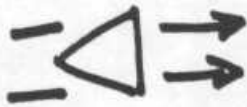
Meji (twins)



Yimbula (party)



Tata ngumbe (dead father)



Tribe



"before"



"after"



Ngonda (crescent moon)