

ASASE YE DURU

Divinity of Earth

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Meaning

Literal: The Earth Has Weight
Symbolic: Divinity of the Earth

Authority, Divinity, Might, Power,
Providence, Wealth

Tumi nyina ne asase.
All power emanates from the earth.

Asase ye duru sen epo.
The earth is heavier than the sea.

Asase is in the traditional religion of the Akan the Mother Earth personified thought as female goddess. The name is created from ase = Twi-language for "underside of something" and in his doubling Asase = Earth as realm of the deads but also as the location of creation of new life (together with the divine water of the male creator god). This dichotomy as location of the deads and as location of the creation of new life is symbolized by this "Asase ye duru"-symbol. One is speaking also from "Asase Yaa" (Asase born on a Thursday (Ashanti)) or "Asase Afua" (also "Asase Efua" = Asase born on a Friday (Fanti)), which has different consequences. Asase has the highest position in the hierarchy of the Akan gods and stands parallel to the godly triade "Nyame-Nyankopong-Odumankoma". Asase can be seen as relict of an older religion of a matriarchal society which was present in the territory of the contemporary Ghana before the Akan immigrated in these areas. - Wikimedia

Asase Yaa (Mother Earth, Aberewa) is the great fertility spirit of the Akan. She's the wife of Nyame and mother of Bea/Bia, Tano and Anansi. She's the nurturer of earth.

Symbol: Jupiter

Day: Thursday (Akan), Friday (Fante)

Worship of the Asase Ya goddess was transported via the transatlantic slave trade and was documented to had been acknowledged by enslaved Akan or Coromantee living in Jamaica. Jamaican slave owners did not believe in Christianity for the Coromantee and left them to their own beliefs. Hence an Ashanti spiritual system was dominant on the plantation. According to Jamaican historian and slave owner Edward Long, creole descendants of the Ashanti coupled with other newly arrived Coromantee joined in observation and worship of the Ashanti goddess Asase Yaa (the English people recorded erroneously as 'Assarci'). They showed their worship by pouring libations and offering up harvested foods. Other Ashanti Abosom were also reported to be worshipped. This was the only deity spiritual system on the island, as other deities identities in the 18th century was obliterated because of the large population of enslaved Coromantee in Jamaica, according to Edward Long and other historians who observed their slaves. - Wikipedia

The Akan regard the earth as a female spirit because of its fertility and its power to bring forth life, and they further personalize it as a mother because human beings depend on it for their continued nurturance and sustenance. Asase Yaa is of paramount importance to the Akan because it is through her, by way of libation and dance, that they gain access to and maintain familial connections with their ancestors. - Yaba Amgborale Blay

There are no shrines dedicated to Asase Yaa, nor are their priests to serve her, because she is not an abosom (deity) whom people may consult through divination. The Akan believe that everyone has the ability to show her reverence, whether through libation or simply by keeping the earth clean, and that her abundance is accessible to all. - Yaba Amgborale Blay

Asase Yaa is also known as Mother Earth, Aberewaa, the Ol' Lady who is recognized as the nurturer of the earth provides sustenance for us all. She is called in our libations immediately after God. She cannot be compared to any of the other Deities. Asase yaa does not have priests or priestesses. However, there are very specific taboos and qualities associated with her. The day set aside for Her is Thursdays. For Akans, there is no farming, no planting, no burying the dead. The day is very sacred...She abhors spilling of blood, therefore sacrifices are made to her when a person is in an accident, or a person is killed. She upholds the truth and people who swear they are telling the truth are challenged to touch the tip of their tongue with soil which is akin to people in the Diaspora swearing on their mother's or grandmother grave. Before you dig in the earth, it is best to ask permission and pour libation. - Nana Akua Kyerewaa Opokuwaa

Prayer-Poem

This prayer-poem was taken from Wikipedia.

Old Woman Earth
She who Lent the Rights..
Of Cultivation to the Living
My Prayer to You, of Thanksgiving.

"Earth, When I am about to Die,
I Lean on you.
Earth, While I am Alive,
I Depend on You".

Lilacs in your Hair .. Ever Present Mother
In each Grain of Sand is thy Story.

Giver of Nkwagye the Salvation of Life
And Nkwa to live Life without Strife
To your Everlasting Glory.

That Man is Tame is thy Domain...
Giver of Law and Ethics
Scales of Justice.

With Each Field I till..
With Thee I am Still
And when Death comes to Claim..
I become One with thy Fame
Bringing Life to the Land with my Will.

The Fertile Fields and the Woman's Yield
All Have felt thy Hand
Hail and Thanks Be Great Mother
For your Back upon which we Stand.

Upholder of Truth, our Lady Fair
To kiss the dust of thy Breast...
Is proof of the Tale.

Hail Great Mother
Whose Love is in the Earth
Thy gifts to your Children
Are an Unending source of Mirth.

A Smile to the Lips with a Song in the Heart
Praises we Sing, when the Plantings to Start.

Hail bringer of Life, bringer of Law and Order
Hail Old Mother Earth, your Children
Have Crossed the Border
Into the Lands of Sweetness and Heart.

Asase Yaa, Aberewa, Asase Efua
Names without End do we Call You
Blessed Be, Asase Yaa
To Be Cherished Forever, We Adore You.

Sources

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