



IFE AXE Creative Designs
By *Gerardo*
Jewelry Inspired by The Orisha

Chapter Nine

THE ORACLES (cont.)



THE COWRIE SHELLS (Los Caracoles Dilogun)

The cowrie shells los caracoles, "talk" through the natural opening of the shell. Before you can use them for divination, you must file the domed side of the shells flat until you have made a hollow shell medallion. Leave the side with the opening in its natural state.

A "hand" of shells is made up of 18 cowrie shells. Set two of the shells aside and do not file them down. They are known as the Edele and become the guardians of the oracle. To the 16 remaining shells, add a small black stone and a piece of egg shell which will be used in manipulating the oracle and a small bone which proves that the cowries have drunk blood (see the section on the initiation ceremony).

The person consulting the oracle holds the little black stone in one hand and the piece of egg shell in the other. According to whether the Ordun, the "letter" thrown is left or right handed, the Santero manipulating the oracle asks the questioner for the item held in that hand. If it is the black stone, the Ordun's meaning is negative. If it is the piece of egg shell, the Ordun's meaning is positive.

An unfavorable reading is an Osobo. The Ordun comes down "a bad path" and the negative aspects of the reading are to be stressed. A favorable reading is

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known as an Iré. The Ordun comes down "a good path" and the positive aspects of the reading are to be stressed.

The Ordun are divided and placed as follows:

Division of the Ordun

The Lesser Ordun: 5,6,7,9, and 11.

The Greater Ordun: 1,2,3,4,8,10,12,13,14,15, and 16.

Placement of the Ordun

Left hand: All the major Ordun. All double numbers and, 6-7, 6-9, 6-5 11-9, 9-7, 9-5, 7-5, 1-5, 3-7, 8-9, 10-6, 12-6, 11-5, 10-11, 2-6, 4-11, 1-2, 11-6, 2-5, 1-4, 1-6.

Right hand: All the lesser Ordun and, 5-9, 11-3, 5-12, 5-6, 6-12, 7-6, 11-1, 9-12, 5-11, 5-7, 11-10.

During the development of the oracle reading, the greater Orduns are thrown once and the lesser Ordun are thrown two times. The throw is repeated after a lesser Ordun comes up. However, the first throw is always repeated, regardless of whether a major or a minor Ordun comes up.

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How to Consult the Dilogun

The person consulting the oracle and the Santero operating the cowrie shells should sit on a mat on the floor. Both should be in their bare feet.

The shells are washed in Omiero and receive a blood offering.

The Santero will then ask the questioner to write his or her name and date of birth on a small piece of paper. It is placed in the blood.

A Moyuba is made to the Orishas, Olodumare and the spirits of the dead using the same formulas as for consulting the Biague.

After the Moyuba, the Santero says:

sunsorobi baofó unsorofóbaobi.

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The Santero picks up the handful of shells and blows into them to give them his Ashé. He then puts them before the questioner's mouth so that he or she may blow on them as well.

The cowrie shells are tossed on the mat. The number of shells that fall with their natural openings facing up is counted. This number determines the Ordun, the "letter". The Santero then interprets the meaning of the Ordun according to his or her experience, knowledge and Ashé.

The first Ordun is read. It will always be made up of two numbers, since the first throw is always repeated. The dominant hand of the throw is determined and the black stone or the eggshell will be revealed, determining whether the Ordun brings good or evil.

Ebo, prayers and sacrifices, are made to the Orishas that speak through the Ordun. If the initial throws indicate that the general answer to the question is positive, Iré, the oracle is questioned to narrow down the answer.

The first question should be:

eboda? Is it beneficial? Does it bode well for the questioner?

The second question should be:

ire ariku? Are the spirits of the dead, the Iku favorably disposed towards the questioner?

The third question should be:

ire ariku moyale? Is their favorable disposition good and firm?

When the answer to these three questions is affirmative, it's clear that the questioner's path is free of any obstacles. It is only necessary to perform the Ebo according to the Ordun's instructions. The questioner will then be certain of the announced good fortune.

If a negative response, is received to any or all of the previous questions, a more extensive Ebo is required to obtain a better Ordun or to improve the reading of the Ordun that have already come up.

If the first Ordun are negative, Oso, another series of questions should be made to avoid, or at least determine the extent of the coming misfortune.

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The first question should be:

ocha kuaribó? Is the misfortune sent by the Orishas?

If the answer is no, ask:

egún kuaribó? Is the misfortune sent by the dead?

Once the source of the misfortune is determined, ask:

lariche? Are the Orishas going to speak about the impending misfortune?

If the answer is no, ask:

adimu? Should a small offering be made to pacify an Orisha?

If the answer is no, ask:

ebochure? Is an Ebo of a little bit of all the Orisha's foods required?

If the answer is no, ask:

enoqueun eduqueun? Do the Orishas or spirits want something to eat today and then something to eat tomorrow?

If the answer is no, ask:

ebo? Do the Orishas want sacrifices or prayers other than those already indicated by the Ordun?

If they will accept an Ebo, then it's necessary to ask what they want and how they want it. If the answer to that is no, the Orishas do not want anything to do with the questioner and they desire nothing from him or her.

You should only consult the Dilogun once a month.

Of the 16 Ordun that can be formed by the cowrie shells' fall, only 12 can be read by a Santero. Numbers 13, 14, 15, and 16 can only be deciphered by a Babalawo. However, there is a common interpretation of number 16 which is:

16. MEDILOGUN

You already belong to an Orisha whether you know it or not. You are a "child" of Olodumare.

You will be taught the science of Ifa. You will study the arts of healing and, because of your learning, you will act within Santeria as a teacher and a judge for Olodumare. It is imperative that anyone receiving this Ordun consult a Babalawo immediately.

If all the cowrie shells land with their openings down, a zero, throw water up into the air so that it falls down like rain. If this happens during a double throw, interpret the single number that comes up by itself

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THE ORDUN

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1. OCANA SODE One opening up.

Elegua, Chango, Obatala and the spirits of the dead speak.

ORACLE: Ocanshosho Ofotele Obitele. -- With one, the world began. If there is no good, there is no evil.

INTERPRETATION: Pay attention and listen well to what you are about to hear.

If there is no sickness in your house now, there soon will be. Most likely, an elderly person, not you. Summon the doctor immediately. The sickness will be serious, a matter of life or death.

Take care not to be bitten by a dog.

Don't curse yourself or your luck. Don't allow your companions and relatives to do so. This habit is attracting evil influences to you and your home.

You are being held back. You are going through bad times both economically and emotionally.

You will take a trip far from home. Beware. You may be assaulted. Make sure someone takes care of your home and belongings, since you may be robbed and lose your valuables.

Resist that urge you have to do harm. Avoid arguments. Keep your mouth shut, even if you are insulted. Do not fight.

You are moody and somewhat of a joker. This may prove harmful. If your jokes and actions shame another person, there may be serious repercussions.

EBO: When this Ordun comes up, say: ocana sode okuá ti sode sode oke sode oma sode oguó batiosode arikú babagwá. Place the cowrie shells in a gourd

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filled with water. Rinse them well. Take out the shells and throw the water out the front door. Throw the shells on the floor. Examine the new Ordun that comes up. Step on the shells three times with your left foot. If there is a maiden in the house, ask her to pick up the shells. Based on the second Ordun, ask the oracle if the misfortune is on the way. As soon as the question is spoken, take a piece of red meat, smear it well with corajo butter and touch everyone present with it. Touch their foreheads, the nape of the neck, the shoulders, the palms of their hands, and their knees. Toss the meat out the door for a stray animal to take away. This will alleviate the negative influences. Sacrifice a chick at your front door for Elegua. Rub the blood on the door frame. Hang a bunch of bananas from the door for Chango. To one side of the door, make an offering of fresh fish, a gourd filled with corn, and a tamale. If someone comes to spread gossip, spill water three times on the floor and drink a sip of what is left in the glass. Don't get up to investigate when you hear a fight, loud voices or noise. Offer the Orishas a rooster, two doves, a plantain, two tamales, honey, toasted corn, smoked fish, smoked jutia, cow's meat, two coconuts and a yam.

Double Ordun

1-2 Ocashonsho Abure:

When you release arrows, release them with care. If you are careless, you might injure yourself or your best friend.

1-3 Ocashonsho Ocana:

Your dead enemy wishes the worst for you. The dead may not be so dead.

1-4 Eyeru:

A revolution inside your body. Hemorrhages of the mouth, the nose, and the anus.

1-5 Oshe Iku Rono:

Jealousy is the mother of mistrust. Your jealousy destroys everything.

1-6 Leri Leri Iku:

Don't lose your head. If you don't lose your head, you won't lose yourself. The dead walk.

1-7 Ordi Yemaya Dubuele:

One who dreams with the dead or with the sea cannot fear either one.

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1-8 *Obatala Eri Ole:*

When you think that you will be robbed, shut your door tight and use your head.

1-9 *Osa Enrofeo Eque:*

A fight between man and wife brings tragedy. Envy brings gossip. Divorce.

1-10 *Aseyu Afefa:*

He who is overly fond of gold never has any. He who embraces a lot, cannot squeeze very hard.

1-11 *Oshosi Ogure:*

He who is troublesome and stubborn comes to a bad end with his bones in jail. Bad, very bad.

1-12 *Ican Ina Omi:*

Don't try to put out fires with mouthfuls of water.

1-13 *Oma Metanla Ocu:* The careless leader is killed and his position usurped.

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2. EYIOCO Two openings up.

The Ibeyi, Oshosi, Elegua, Ogun, Obatala and Chango speak.

ORACLE: *Ofa Abure* -- A fight among brothers. Today, your brother is your enemy.

INTERPRETATION: Two brothers fight over something valuable. Your brother wants to injure you with witchcraft. Beware of your business partners. Don't take vengeance against those trying to harm you. You will triumph. You are a hot head. You lose your patience and, at times, get so furious that you talk to yourself. Your *Eleda*, your guardian spirit, is trying to calm you down. Pay attention.

You are in bad economic straits. Your misfortune comes from your capricious character and your tendency not to listen to advice.

Go work in the fields. You will find money. Your situation will change radically.

You were born outside the city and will live outside the city again. You will have your own house and a large plot of land. At the very least, you will have well being and satisfaction.

You are part of identical families and will have or have twins. The Ibeyi watch over you and guide you through life. If you are single, you will marry a twin.

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The marriage will produce many sons.

Look after your own interests. Relatives watch you. They hold treason in their hearts. Whomever you feed and support is talking behind your back. Keep feeding the needy. Don't worry if kindness is not returned. The Ibeyi will reward you.

You have a relic or talisman that is not properly made. It does not protect you as you think.

Avoid drafts. Your constitution is weak, even though you appear strong.

EBO: You must make *ebo*, otherwise, you will find yourself in the midst of legal problems that will not allow good luck to reach you. Take care of what you eat and drink, both at home, and out.

Hunt two birds. Gather two coconuts, two eggs, corajo butter and smoked fish. Sacrifice the birds to Ogun. If you have collars, feed them some of the food and the blood. If you do not have collars, get them immediately to avoid the tragedy between brothers.

Sacrifice a rooster and two pigeons. Paint a child's chair with the blood. Keep the chair behind your front door for seven days, sitting in it frequently for another seven days. Hang the chair from the rafters or on the wall until you feel your situation is changing.

Double Ordun

2-1 *Same as 1-2.*

2-2 *Ironi:* A lying woman loses her husband. A lying man loses his wife.

2-3 *Tiyi Tiyu Egun:* Where there are arguments, there is no peace. They bring bad spirits.

2-4 *Otan Ibe Chenshen:* There is a rocky path before you. Remove what bothers you and you will walk with ease.

2-5 *Oguo Nindiyale Caniosha:* Where there is money, tragedy arises.

2-6 *Oshacuaribo:* The Orishas bring a revolution.

2-7 *Ilile Yeon Ane:* He who eats a lot is killed by his mouth. Indigestion.

2-8 *Abure Oba:* They want to depose the king by filling him with arrows.

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2-9 *Ore Gata Obini*: Your best friend wants your woman. Tragedy. Confusion and rumors within the family.

2-10 *Icoco Oguo*: He who arises early always has money in his pocket.

2-11 *Ajuani Oshosi*: Your birds die in their cage. Don't imprison your children. Arguments between father and son.

2-12 *Ebo Osha*: He who does not petition the Orishas fails in all endeavors.

2-13 *Otocu*: For each dead king, a new king.

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3. OGUNDA Three openings up.

Ogun, Oshosi, Obatala and Olodumare speak.

ORACLE: *Lucumi Guila Acuin Urara Malama. Cuila Acuin.* Arguments and tragedy.

INTERPRETATION: Sometimes, you feel a great desire to hit another person on the head. Don't use or carry a weapon; knife or firearm. You'll hurt yourself. Let Ogun be your weapon.

Avoid fights and arguments. You may be attacked and not have time to defend yourself.

Avoid dark places, especially bars. Danger follows you. Don't climb around in dangerous places. Avoid machinery. You may receive a puncture wound and fall ill if you don't beware.

Don't drink. Alcohol goes to your head and makes you lose your senses. It may eventually drive you crazy. Take care if you have broken the law. You may be found out and imprisoned.

If you are married, don't fight with your spouse. A curse between man and wife may affect the children for many years.

Three people are struggling for the same thing you want. They feel their rights to it are superior. They all want to lead. They don't want you to stand out and take on responsibility.

Beware the one bearing gifts. Examine what is offered, it may harm instead of helping.

What you have lost, you will regain soon. What will be lost, will be found.

Your crying will turn to laughter.

EBO: Set up an Ogun in your house. If you have one, sacrifice a goat to him. Ogun will tell you how to protect yourself.

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Make an *ebo* to the Orishas of fresh fish, corajo butter, tamales, and coconuts. Sacrifice a dove and a rooster. Offer their tongues.

Double Ordun

3-1 and 3-2 *Same as 1-3 and 2-3.*

3-3 *Ocumajana Laroye*: The drunk believes one thing and the bartender another. To offer a toast, one must first learn how to drink.

3-4 *Ocuni Iyu*: A single man may save his people.

3-5 *Icun Chere*: Don't pick up what you discarded. Loathing.

3-6 *Eyioroso Meyi*: Return what the visitor offers. Twins are coming to your house.

3-7 *Orunmila Oyu*: What is known is not questioned. Look at what is in front of your eyes. Guess the riddle.

3-8 *Tere Tere*: Don't kill mice. Don't kill what is in your house.

3-9 *Emu Fofo*: No flies enter a closed mouth. Don't gossip. Don't stick your nose in other people's business.

3-10 *Ananagu Eyorozunde*: If you are cursed, forgive he who curses you. He who forgives is saved. He who does not, is doomed.

3-11 *Otaniyu*: A person throws a stone and all his people have to carry the blame. Don't take on the problems of others. 3-12 *Ocan Ise*: Put your heart into what you do so it comes out well.

3-13 *Ade Omi Emu*: Water from a clean gourd does not stain the tongue.

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4. EYOROSUN Four openings up.

Chango, Yemaya, Oshosi, Orunmila and the Ibeyi speak.

ORACLE: *Acute* -- No one knows what is at the bottom of the sea.

INTERPRETATION: You have a lot of projects, but you can't decide what you are going to do with your life. This is causing you to pull money in with

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one hand and throw it away with the other.

You will run into an attractive business proposition. Beware what you sign. Have everything in writing to avoid misunderstandings. Don't worry and don't complain. The gods will provide.

You will be robbed, if you haven't been robbed already. Don't display your valuables. Don't hide money at home. Beware of visitors. Not everyone has good intentions.

A woman has evil thoughts and an evil tongue for all that surround her. She is quarrelsome and a snoop. Stay away from her. She wants to see you in jail. Don't listen to gossip about your loved ones.

If you are a married man, another man is making eyes at your wife. He wants to seduce her. He is creating arguments between the two of you for his amusement.

Don't tell anyone your innermost secrets. Envy and jealousy are everywhere.

You will become a Babalawo or an Iyalosha. You are Yemaya's "child".

Babalu-Aye and Obatala protect you as well.

You must make *ebo* to avoid losing a sick relative.

EBO: Go to the sea. Give a duck and a watermelon to Yemaya. She will set you on the path that is best for you.

Wear blue and white often. Offer two red roosters, four coconuts, smoked fish and corajo butter to the Orishas. Don't walk through the woods. If you do, cleanse yourself with a herbal bath.

Don't eat grain or tripe. Don't suck on the heads of animals or gnaw on bones.

Don't jump over ditches or over ropes.

Keep your house clean and well lit. Do not hang things from the walls or rafters. If you have promised an *ebo* to Babalu-Aye, pay him.

Place a chick, an arrow, a stick, three stones, unsalted lard, smoked jutia and smoked fish in a frying pan. Wrap the frying pan in a sheet and present it to the Orishas.

Double Ordun

4-1 to 4-3 are the same as 1-4 to 3-4.

4-4 *Levi Levi*: The son that was born strong, healthy and straight is now crooked from lack of care.

4-5 *Iku Oshe*: The dead are out and about, looking for someone to capture. Run. Don't let the spirits of the dead chasing you catch you.

4-6 *Oloyuo Chenshen*: Cats walk along fences. Men do not. Make up your mind.

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4-7 *Meye Oya Elese*: If your head does not sell you, no one can buy you. The head moves the feet. The feet take the body to the auction block. Think with your head and not with your feet.

4-8 *Leñi Aensa*: You were born to be a head and stayed a tail.

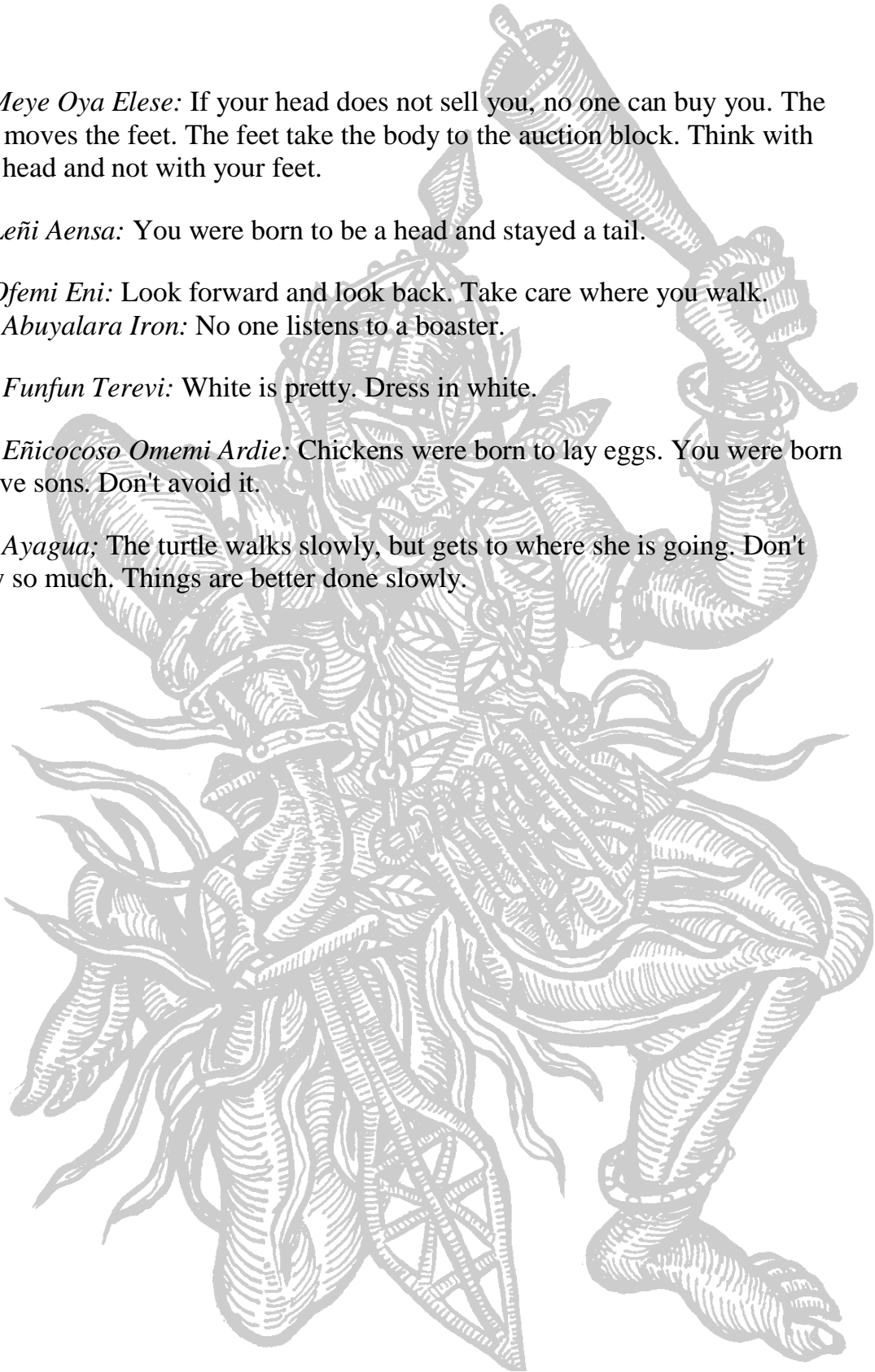
4-9 *Ofemi Eni*: Look forward and look back. Take care where you walk.

4-10 *Abuyalara Iron*: No one listens to a boaster.

4-11 *Funfun Terevi*: White is pretty. Dress in white.

4-12 *Eñicocoso Omemi Ardie*: Chickens were born to lay eggs. You were born to have sons. Don't avoid it.

4-13 *Ayagua*: The turtle walks slowly, but gets to where she is going. Don't hurry so much. Things are better done slowly.



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