

Mimosa hostilis - Jurema Tree

- Leguminosae - Mexico and Brazil



Sertão is a fertile environment rich with Jurema Branca (*Mimosa Verrucosa*), Jurema Negra (*Mimosa Hostilis*) and Cannabis -- a true "Garden of the Gods" that is today overrun by conflict. During the healing ritual of The Truká tribe, Jurema is taken with "cura", a drink prepared with aquardente (alcohol) and garlic. Celebrants sit on the floor around a Jurema table and enter trance possession.

There are very intriguing similarities between these Jurema rituals and the Ayahuasca rituals of the Amazon Forest. The Jurema rituals exhibit all the characteristics of psychoactive influence although these Indians also drink alcohol to induce an altered state of consciousness. Alcohol is the only available medium through which their rituals can be enhanced and attendant spirits served. (cultural tradition). At the ritual's end, many empty bottles of cachaça (aquardente from sugar cane, the strongest alcohol available in Brazil), are scattered around the altar. However, the participating mediums, through whom the spirits have been drinking, are sober. (Phenomena registered in Umbanda, Cadomblé and other African traditions that are part of the Brazilian syncretism of religions).

The first Brazilian tribes to develop a ritualistic use of Jurema as a psychoactive brew are extinct. The descendants of those tribes, mixtures of whites with blacks, slowly lost their ancestral homes, because they lost their legal identity as Indians (also called caboclos). The current war for land in the interior of Bahia, Pernambuco and Paraíba, the so called Sertão, began over 80 years ago. In order to regain recognition as Indians and rightful ownership of their homeland, tradition had to be strengthened. The Jurema Cult (O Culto da Jurema) was revived to re-establish and sustain indigenous identity. This ageless wisdom was secretly preserved from father to son as the ritualistic use of their psychoactive brew brought severe prosecution from the white man.

TRADITIONAL PREPARATION: The preparation of the brew from fresh Jurema root bark for trance possession rituals, is, in itself, a complex ritual of the Atikum tribe. The process begins at the bottom of the mountain Omã, home to a wild plantation of the sacred plant. O Paje, the spiritual leader, handles the Jurema. Only those roots that face the rising sun are picked, then beaten, rock against rock, until all dirt and outer bark is removed. Only the inner root is used for the brew. The remaining Jurema is placed in a plastic container filled with cold water and squeezed over and over again, until the water turns a very deep reddish brown colour. The foam that forms on the surface is discarded, along with the coarse residue, leaving only a

that beckon the spirits of the caboclos called "Encantados de Luz" (Enchanted Beings of Light) to descend into the bodies of the mediums to promote healing while dancing the Toré. Viva a Jurema! (Long live the Jurema!)