

SCRIPT: MAME COUMBA LAMBA THE MOTHER OF WATERS

The coastline of Rufisque, where an invisible but powerful presence has blown for centuries, that of Mame Coumba Lamb, the protective spirit of the sea. A respected figure, sometimes feared, but always honored.

Here is the story of Mame Coumba Lamb and her sacred pact with the Rufisque communities, told by Lamane Bakou Mory Mbaye, member of the National Council of the Lebous of Greater Cape Verde, and Mamadou Diop Thioune, Jaraaf Thioune Baye Khaly, an initiate among the Lebou notables.

In Rufisque, on the Atlantic coast of Senegal, where water flirts with the memory of the elders, a name still floats between the waves and the spirits; it is Mame Coumba Lamb, the Mother of Waters of Rufisque, the Protective Spirit of the Rufisque Coastline.

Mame Coumba Lamb is not a ghost but a genius, a protective, a bridge between the living and the invisible world. A presence. Invisible to the naked eye, but felt by all who live near the ocean.

Mame coumba lamb is our great mother, she comes from very far away and that is why she is unknown to most. Mame coumba lamb is a "Djin" who comes from Egypt like our Lebou ancestors and she settled on the Rufisque coasts long before our arrival. More precisely, she comes from Tamehou an Egyptian city and Tamehou is translated in Wolof by the installations on the bank and who says coasts speaks of the Lebous. Before she settled in Rufisque, she went to Podor on the Senegal River in a village called Mboul where she was called Coumba Nguessou She has an Egyptian name which etymologically means: Ma: truth, Coum: the spirit of the sky which illuminates the earth and the sea and all the waterways and Ba: means the soul. This Ba is the origin of the incantations that the Lebou use during therapy sessions.

Furthermore, "Lamb" is the father of "Ma Coum Ba." She is also the mother of Coumba Bang in Saint Louis, Coumba Mbossé of Kaolack with the sea arm, Coumba Castelle of Goré, Djarré Panjour of Yenne, Djarré of Yoff, etc. This is why we speak of Coumba as the daughter of Lamb and his Coumbas.

Mame Coumba Lamb came to Senegal with seven wise women or goddesses spread across the country. She was very mobile, and thus, wherever she settled, she changed her name and kept her first name, Ma Coumba, which also crossed borders, and we find this same Ma Coumba in Brazil and in the United States, in California.

When Mame Coumba settled, the people were in Kounoune, where there was a river. Some time later, they moved to Ndeunkou, a neighborhood near the sea where there was a very dense forest. They began cutting down trees until they disturbed Mame Coumba Lamb's peace and awakened her. Then, she asked them who authorized them to cut down the trees in order to settle. A heated argument ensued, and fires burned all around the coast. Ultimately, it was in this context that a sacred pact was established between the genie and the Lebou: "Respect the sea, respect its spirits, and I will offer you protection and abundance." The latter pledged to respect the rites and traditions. This pact is not simply an agreement; it also embodies the harmony between the visible and invisible worlds, between humans and the forces of nature.

Mame Coumba Lamb does not live in isolation. She is connected to a network of protective spirits along the Atlantic coast, demonstrated by research in Brazil and Benin with voodoo, where African descendants have perpetuated their worship in other forms, and even in the Americas.

Mame Coumba Lamb is the goddess of the waters, and the people make offerings to the sea.

The Rufisque people are aware of the existence of this pact, and even foreigners who trade with her. You respect the pact by making offerings to the goddess, and in return, she offers you prosperity.

This pact also protects us Lebous from evil spirits and bad religious and mystical practices all over the world.

She sometimes escorts citizens home late at night, assuming the silhouette or face of a familiar being. All of this falls within the framework of the protection stemming from the pact.

Sometimes other malicious spirits, passing through or displaced from their place of residence, come to Rufisque with an evil spirit; it is the pact that holds them back. Mame Coumba, through these Lebou initiates, offers the nature of the offering to the sea, which can be the blood of an ox, a goat, a sheep, a rooster, or milk, cola, etc., in return to stop or chase away these passing evil spirits.

Pierre Crémier is a clear example. He established his SOCOCIM factory on a site inhabited by spirits, and every year he makes offerings to Mame Coumba to preserve her prosperity.

Mame Coumba, the protective spirit, communicates with humans through these initiates who see and hear her. A genie can live for more than 1,500 years and it is his initiates who transmit the messages through incantations and sessions of dances and rituals called "Ndeup".

Rituals like the Ndepp are at the heart of the pact, and this connection must be preserved and maintained.

The Ndepp is a ritual of possession and trance; it is a therapeutic ceremony where the spirit of Mame Coumba Lamb descends to heal, purify, and restore balance.

These rituals are not only spiritual; they are also social: they strengthen community cohesion and respect for ancestors, and initiates can free a possessed spirit through incantations.

Humans live on land with other invisible forces, but Mame Coumba lives by the sea and has other connections with other spirits.

In Rufisque, we have a tangible and intangible heritage to preserve, especially with the totems. The goddess is symbolized in Rufisque by the cat, an animal that must not be mistreated.

The Saltigués, these divine Lebous, hold the power to speak with the invisible world. They hold the cycle of information and communion, a cycle of alert, prevention, communication, and protection. They are whistleblowers. They are the guardians of the pact, the mediators between men and spirits. They must be at the forefront of those protected, capable of freeing people possessed by evil spirits through rituals and incantations.

The Lebou are mystical beings who use the color red. Red, the color of blood and fire, is omnipresent in the cult of Mame Coumba Lamb.

It symbolizes life, strength, protection against dark forces, but also sacrifice and purification.

In rituals, red is a call to divine power, a shield against evil, and a sign of belonging to this sacred community. It is not a danger among us.

There were times when word spread within the old city that one of its sons had gone astray, so the children of the old city had to tie a red ribbon in their left hand so as not to be mistaken for the missing son. It is a

coded language to warn of danger threatening the community. The elders say that when a child disappears at sea, it may have been taken by Mame Coumba Lamb—either to punish a failing or to protect them from a greater danger. But she always maintains the balance between the worlds. Every year, Lebou families hold a purification ritual in her honor. Men and women in red boubous sing, men pour offerings into the sea, and if she is honored, she protects.

When a person is possessed by an evil spirit, they must be freed. This liberation requires incantations, a ritual, and the offering requested by the protective spirit, commensurate with the extent of the influence.

The "Ndeup" is a therapy. The Lebou have their own hospital, and the initiates who embody the therapy are called psychoanalysts.

Mame Coumba Lamb is our protective spirit, our mother, our grandmother.

Rufisque is the town of Mame Coumba Lamb, the city of the Lebou. It's an ancient city. A mystical mirror, reminding us that everything has a soul, even the sea.

"Whether we believe it or not, these stories are keys. They remind us that living with the sea isn't just about enjoying it... it's also about respecting it." And the spirit of Coumba Lamb will continue to watch over the coastline and the communities.