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**SHARING JOYS OF JUNE WITH LIMBIKO:  
BUILDING BRIDGES OF MEMORY THAT SUSTAIN US**

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**DR. MAULANA KARENGA**

**A** GAIN, IN THE SACRED TRADITION OF OUR ancestors of ancient Egypt of writing letters to loved ones who have made transition and ascension, I reach out to you in writing in this the month of your lying down in peace and rising up in radiance in the heavens. It is one of those bridges of memory we build that supports and sustains us in dealing with the awesome ache of your absence and the persistent longing for your presence. And it is musing and meditating on these memories that also offers an invitation and opens a door for others to deal with the grief of loss and the pain of longing without forgetting the good shared and using it to sustain us in beautiful and meaningful ways. Coming to terms with your physical absence, even accepting your spiritual presence, is always difficult in various degrees, but especially during the month and day of your passing into the spirit world. And so, in this month of June, we turn to memories of joys shaped and shared in our time of good and beautiful togetherness, making alternative meanings for what would otherwise be more difficult to deal with.

Certainly, writing you in this month of your passing and rising has always been more difficult than writing you in May, the month of your coming into being, and in December, the month of Kwanzaa and the global sacred celebration of ourselves as a people. For both months, as all others are filled with memories of life well-lived, work well-done and struggle waged with a special sense of deep satisfaction in the service of our people. These were years and decades of doing and bringing good in the world, as we always say, in the good, beautiful and uplifting ways we live our lives, do our work and wage our righteous and relentless struggle. It is following the

sacred teachings of our honored ancestors in the *Odu Ifa*, that say “Let’s do things with joy. For surely, humans have been divinely chosen to bring good in the world”. And we definitely did and do things with joy in June, May and every other month, and we did them also with the love, dedication, discipline and sacrifice that reaffirmed the Kawaida interpretation of this sacred teaching, that this is the fundamental meaning and mission of human life.

It is my tendency to focus on and celebrate your coming into being and living well rather than marking and mourning your leaving this shared physical life of ours and joining the spirit world. Indeed, as I’ve always said and written, I am not as grounded in the ways and wonders of the spirit world as my parents, siblings and others. But still, the sacred teachings of my father and mother remain with me, deeply embedded in me with their gentle and strong embrace of parental love, a steadfast commitment to both the here-and-now and the hereafter, and a firmness of faith that holds that the sacred circle of life and eternal linkages will not be broken even in death and departure from the world as we know it. And thus, even with all my still-in-process reservations and rightful reasoning, even about sacred traditions, I continue to believe in what the ancestors called in the sacred *Husia* “that which endures in the midst of that which is overthrown”, our commitments to each other, our highest values and the enduring and enabling presence of our ancestors who created and left this legacy for us.

And so we, keepers of the sacred tradition, do libation for you and all our ancestors, paying rightful and regular homage to you

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all, beloved ones, no longer present physically, but still holding an inerasable place in our lives, a special place of love, honor, legacy and sacred memory. And thus, we say in the Kawaida Maatian tradition of ancient Egypt, “Homage to you, beautiful Black and radiant spirit. You shall always be for us, a glorious spirit in heaven and a continuing powerful presence on earth. You are counted and honored among the ancestors. Your name shall endure as a monument, and the good you have done on earth shall never perish or pass away”. *Hotep. Ase. Heri.*

Moreover, in our memorial service conducted and committed to an everlasting and ever-living love of our loved ones, we remember the good and make meaning out of our physical loss of you and others by calling attention to the color of the clothes we wear at memorials. And we say “though our grief is great in their passing, let us rejoice in the knowledge of their certain rising. We come here, then, wearing on our bodies and in our hearts *white* for the winter of their passing and *green* for the spring of their rising”. And we come knowing, as it is written, that those who do good, build for eternity, and that those who build for eternity, live for eternity. And so, it is with each of our departed loved ones whose lives are both a lesson and legacy to us all. So, in our missing and mourning them, let us also be uplifted and rejoice in their rising. For as our ancestors taught, it is their passing from this world that starts them on their journey to eternity, their rising in radiance and peace and their life of eternity.

You are always uplifted and honored among us, Limbiko, and it is a joy to remember you, to uplift and honor you, to share with others the good you gave and shared. We went back to the Hekalu to meet together for the first time since the Covid pandemic. We all had missed seeing and being with each

other, embracing each other, sitting together and talking abstract and serious in both separate focused and mixed ways. It’s the African in us, we say, discipline when the situation or issue demands it, but flexible and not contained or constrained by rigid forms of relating and exchange with each other.

Tiamoyo, Chimbuko and I send you warm greetings of appreciation, solidarity and continuing struggle, and good memories of San Francisco, of our shopping for antiquarian Kemetic and other Black books, eating fine foods at the wharf, calling Nathan, recently passed, and Julia to see if they were available to join us, and returning to LA that evening or early morning. We still have an unfulfilled aspiration to return and set a place for you, pour libation and welcome your presence in a special way. And we remember too our varied sharing: all the meetings and movies, the national and international trips, the demonstrations and rallies. the conferences and our rich conversations mornings, evenings and afternoons, and the seaside hotels, especially for long and relaxing lunches.

Since last I wrote you, Nana Thabiti Oshun Ambata, another of our all-seasons servants of our people, has made transition, risen in radiance in the heavens and now sits in the sacred circle of the ancestors with you, Nana Seba Limbiko Tembo, and Nana Wasifu Tangulifu, Nana Robert Tambuzi, Nana Omowale Tambuzi, and Nana Mpinduzi Khuthaza, among the doers of good, the righteous and the rightfully rewarded. As before and always, we ask you to give them warm greetings from us all, and tell them we will continue to live the legacy of good you all left. Tell them we will indeed continue the struggle, keep the faith and hold the line. And

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tell them that we will not forget, but remember and forge on, and that we will not give up an inch or iota in our unbudging Blackness.

**I**T IS GOOD TO REMEMBER YOU AND RAISE up your name and work in the midst of the people and to share with others the gift of knowledge, service and achievement you gave and left us to lift up and live, each in our own special way. I enjoy raising your name, referencing and quoting you as I did recently in a lecture on Kawaida pedagogy. Sharing your work as teacher and principal and your Kawaida thoughts on education as well as

continuing the work of the Limbiko Tembo School of African American Culture, which we renamed in your honor, is another bridge of memory that keeps alive the link and carries us over the rough waters of grieving and missing to a sustaining place of remembrance, reflection and rejoicing around the beautiful good we will always share. For you are a beautiful Black spirit always rising, present in the rains washing the world clean and leaving your signature kente cloth rainbow sign of continuing promised good in the sky.▲

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