



**ANOTHER LETTER AND LIBATION FOR LIMBIKO:
NURTURING, LIVING AND LINKING THE GOOD**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

HOMAGE TO YOU SEBA LIMBIKO TEMBO, beloved sister and sacred friend, esteemed and honored teacher of the good, the right and the possible, on this your birthday, May 3, 6259. We pay homage and pour libation to you, Limbiko, saying the Zulu praise poem of royal greeting. For you are royal in your righteous and loving service to our people. And so, we say, “*Bayede, Nkosazana*, homage to you royal one. *Bayede, wena omnyama omuhle*, homage to you, you beautiful Black one. *Wena waphakati*, you of the center – in the center of your people and in the center of our lives and love. *Wena wohlanga*, you descendent of the original ones, the awesome ancestors that brought us into being. *Bayede*, Limbiko, righteous and royal one. *Olungileyo akaqedwa*, the good and righteous one cannot be defeated or undone, even by death.”

It has now been ten years Limbiko since you made transition, rose up in radiance in the heavens and assumed an honored place in the sacred circle of our ancestors. And as the ancestors taught, even as you are “a glorious spirit in heaven,” you are also “a continuing powerful presence on earth,” in what we do, think and feel and hold sacred, dear and indispensable. Indeed, in the tradition of the ancestors, let it be said countless times, we continue to love and miss you and will never get used to your absence or find ourselves among the short-memory people whose memory or love diminishes or dies with the cremation or burying of the body. As it is written, experienced and lived, you remain a powerful presence among us; your name endures as a monument; and the good you and all our other ancestors have done shall never perish or pass away.

This year in celebration of your life and work, we held again our Annual Limbiko Tembo Majadiliano on Education. It is a continuing conversation on education as a life project and practice, on teaching our children in

caring, culturally rich, rewarding and excellent ways, and on defining, reaffirming and expanding the conception and criteria of a Kawaida education. This year we celebrated Thabiti Ambata’s birthday with yours and in our conversations, we linked your lives and work. The theme was “Nurturing Young Hearts, Minds and Bodies: Linking the Lives of Work of Limbiko Tembo and Thabiti Ambata.” And we called our gathering together: A Birthday Celebration, Conversation and Kikoa.

Now, as you know and remember, our Kawaida celebration always contains and requires lifting up lessons from the lives and work of those we celebrate. For what better way can we celebrate their lives than by lifting up and living the life lessons they left us. Indeed, our ancestors and those of exemplary service among us are each and together a light to be constantly lifted up to show a rightful and righteous way forward. And they are a mirror to measure ourselves by the best of our history and culture; and a life-map suggesting routes and roads we must travel in continuously advancing upward and onward in the world.

The annual forum on education dedicated to you and called *majadiliano* reflects not only our aim of a depthful, comprehensive and engaging conversation, but also the communitarian shared values we seek always to practice as African persons. The word *majadiliano* comes from the verb *jadiliana*, which by its ending “*ana*” stresses reciprocal action of giving and receiving, of doing things together in shared interest and mutual benefit. Thus, *majadiliano* means discussing together, inquiring and questioning together and reasoning together and in this case, to do this in celebration, honor and pursuit of an expanded knowledge and understanding and a rightful and effective assertion in the interest of human good and the well-being of the world.

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Always, we have a *kikoa*, our communal meal, with the *majadiliano*. For the sharing of food in the context of celebration or simply in the midst of coming together to share in various other ways is an enjoyable, binding and relation-building practice. Indeed, it's never just the sharing of food, but also fostering an increased unity, cooperation and commitment to each other, to our values and always to the life we live, the work we do and the struggle we wage as African people. In a word, it is a sharing of good that nourishes, not only thru food, but also thru the joy, pleasure and beauty of just being together and sharing thoughts, hopes, memories and aspirations for our future, our people and the world.

We talked about you in teaching and Thabiti in nursing, linking your lives and work as Africans, African women, nurturers of our children, servants of our people, advocates of Kawaida and of Us, sisters of the Senut society, and your coming into being on the same date, May 3. Also, we talked about each of your work in the context of your patron ancestors – Dr. Mary McLeod Bethune for you and Nurse Mary Eliza Mahoney, the first African American professional nurse. And we linked you together thru your embrace of some of the essential values they modelled in their lives and work, i.e., caring, commitment, knowledge, self-determination and righteous struggle.

Likewise, we discussed the fundamental principles of a Kawaida educational practice. That is to say, the caring, committed and comprehensive teaching of the children in our school, the Limbiko Tembo School of African American Culture: knowledge of the world; knowledge of themselves in the world; knowledge of how to successfully engage the world; and knowledge of how to direct their lives toward good and expansive ends.

And we talked too about the Kawaida principles of nursing with which Thabiti did her work: respect for the dignity and rights of persons and patients; beneficent caring and avoidance of harm; responsibility as responsiveness and accountability; personal and professional integrity; and active advocacy in the interest of the patients, the community and the profession. Also, we presented a joint PowerPoint developed by Tiamoyo and me to serve as a focal point of our images and outline for our conversation. And teachers from the School presented examples of your lesson plans and other work, including: Chimbuko, Thanayi, Jan, Tulivu and Tambuzi. It was a good and beautiful experience and exchange and we all left uplifted, reaffirmed and recommitted.

I BEGAN TO WRITE THE LAST PART OF THIS letter and report in the early morning before dawn, and now the day is coming forth, distinguishing itself from the night. It is a beautiful day outside. The sun has risen and the morning mist has lifted and melted away. And I walk out on the patio to feel and breathe the early morning freshness. There are still clouds remaining from yesterday's rain and I look up to see if I can find your face and form in them. And in my mind's eye and eager imagination, you are there, holding your signature arc of kente cloth in your hand, writing rainbows of remembrance and promise in the sky. The sunlight of your smile falls softly on my face. And I say to myself, as I've said since the Sixties, "It's a good day to struggle." For an essential understanding of our ancestral legacy is one of a life well-lived, rooted in self-giving love, work and struggle. And in good conscience I can do no less in the life I live, the work I do and the struggle I wage. ▲

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