

The Consequences of Remembering
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The Consequences of Remembering hopes to convey the origin, substance, means and outcome of generational and collective *looking back*. It is meant to inform and offer physical, psychic, and spiritual remedy, as well as to raise questions about the significance of our relationship to the Earth in our healing cycles and patterns. The objective is to develop understanding and tools to embrace the past and become accountable for our actions and life experiences; to explore a clear awareness of the embodiment of our personal archaeology in the present; and to chart a conscious, joyful path into the future that allows all of our relations to come full circle and reconcile suffering, or more specifically, to remember, evolve, and *look forward*.

There are no unsacred places;
There are only sacred places
And desecrated places.
~ Wendell Berry

In the summer of 2004, I had the amazing opportunity to interview 30 indigenous wisdom keepers from around the world about their tribal prophecies, traditions, and visions for a book. Two days before I left for the indigenous gathering, I had a dream. In my dream at least 200 people were circled in a cave, holding hands and chanting the word “Khonmadi” over and over. I woke up knowing that I must remember this word, and so I wrote it down phonetically, and went to research its origin.

In Barbara Walkers book, *The Women’s Encyclopedia of Myths and Secrets*, I found that Khon Ma was the “Tibetan name for Mother Earth, the “old mother” Goddess who rules over all

spirits emanating from the earth element.” The rhythmic pulse of chanting *Khonmadi*, *Khonmadi*, *Khonmadi*, I then surmised, must be the heartbeat of Mother Earth. I aptly gave my book the preliminary title, *Khonmadi, The Heartbeat of Mother Earth*.

I traveled to California to the Elder Gathering where people had come from all around the world to share their stories and teachings. One man in particular took interest in my book. Thaayrohyadi, the Spiritual Chief and Guardian of the Otomi wisdom from Temoaya, Mexico, immediately corrected the spelling of the word *Khonmadi*. He told me, “The word is spelled *Jamadi* (pronounced *Kamadi*) in my language. It is a word of my ancestors, the Atlantean/ Lemurian people, which means Cosmic Mother.”

Staring at him in disbelief, I asked with great respect, “You know this word? You *use* this word?”

His eyes shined astutely as he replied in broken English, “It is the word we say in our prayers as you would use the words Amen, Namaste, Mitakuye Oyasin, or All my Relations. Sometimes we gather in caves and pray to our sacred Earth Mother in this way.”

Without thinking, I jumped up and threw my arms around him, hugging him like a long-lost friend. I was simply astounded. Jitterbugs circled round my head and butterflies filled my belly. Something akin to Déjà vu was happening, as a deep connection and memory began to awaken in me.

Kajangu Kykosa, a wisdom teacher and poet from the Bashi people, and a professor at Southwestern University in Austin, Texas, was very interested in the vision and encouraged me to share it with all the elders. My dream was beginning to breathe, and for a moment I had the

most profound feeling that I belonged. Not simply as an inhabitant of the earth, but to a larger collective weave of spiritual family that I had yearned for my entire life.

The following day, as I was speaking with the interpreter for the Bushmen of the Kalahari from Africa, I learned that the clan name for this particular group of Bushmen was the #Xhmani clan (# representing the clicking sound in their tongue that precedes the word). Xhmani San literally translated in their language means “Born with vision”, and the interpreter explained that they chant this word in caves to bring vision to their people.

Grace enveloped me as I stared in awe at these humble people squatting under the trees, who, making their inaugural visit to the US, traveled across continents with the gentle ways of their spirit, preserving their instinctive memories and traditional stories that led us to this day.

Again I shared my dream and the brilliant smiles of the Bushmen came alive. The translator relayed as the Elder Bushman explained, “that having #Xhmani in my dream represented my ancestors coming to tell me that I will bridge together many traditions. Being led in a dream in this way makes the vision strong.”

A 2009 National Geographic special on *The Human Family Tree* confirms, “The San people of southern Africa and the Hadzabe of east Africa carry more ancient evolutionary lineages in their DNA than any other people, and exhibit a direct living link to our oldest genetic ancestor, ‘Scientific Adam’. The San people’s “click languages” could be the last remaining tongues similar to the original ones spoken by humans in Africa some 40,000 years ago.”

I had stumbled upon a word—or a symbolic sound—that has cross-cultural, cross-continental, multi-linguistic meaning. Shared by many indigenous tribes around the world, this ancient sound seems to serve as a link to a memory that binds us as one, even to this day.

Chanting this cosmic sound, just as in my dream, serves a higher purpose of communing with spirit and honoring the divine feminine.

Khonmadi did not appear to be as prevalent in Latin languages, but rather had a definitive place in the various tribes' indigenous languages, with some differences in pronunciation. For example, when I interviewed Lauro Hinostroza Garcia, a recognized shaman and healer in Peru, who carries in his veins the legacy of ancient Peruvian traditions like the Inka and Shipibo lineages, he explained, "that Kumari is the mythical big bear in Quechua language. The bear comes from the cave and stands with its arms upward, holding his burden with strength."

Mrs. Pauline E. Tangiora is a tribal elder from Aotearoa, New Zealand and her tribal affiliations are to Rongomaiwahine and Kahungunu. She is one of the 21 members of the Earth Council. With the simplicity of a child and the vastness of a sage, Pauline told me that in her language the word is pronounced Kumara. "Kumara is the sacred sweet potato that Mother Earth has given us for sustenance," she declared fondly.

Ove Svensson from Sweden is dedicated to teaching and re-weaving the traditions of both ancient and modern Nordic peoples with other multi-indigenous cultures. Ove explained that in his Nordic language "Ku means Cow, which is equivalent to the feminine". In addition, Comadre in Spanish means godmother and defines the relationship between godmother and parent. Kumari, in Sanskrit, means the living goddess, and Kumari also means 'Virgin', a name to designate Sita and Durga. In her book, *Dakini's Warm Breath*, Judith Simmer-Brown defines the symbol of Kumari:

While Kumari is a feminine figure, within her body was revealed the limitless expanse in which the mandala of peaceful and wrathful deities could be seen . . . yet she takes feminine form in the realm of symbol. In one flash, she communicates

that the world of duality is a perfect and only means of expression of that which is beyond duality. Because she is non-conceptual, she cannot be known as an object of experience; because she holds the keys to direct realization, she is an emissary of awakening. She represents the lineages of awakening traced all the way back to Buddha, but at the same time she represents personal awakening in the present moment.

Khonmadi, a linguistic embodiment of the feminine, confirms my earlier studies of the origins of matriarchy and the creative blueprint of our beginnings. Archaeologist Marijia Gimbutas conducted excavations and research in Italy, Greece, and the Balkan Peninsula that formed the basis of her theory of what she called the Old European culture: a peaceful, egalitarian pre-IE (Indo-European) civilization. Gimbutas interpreted figurines excavated here as evidence of a female or mother centered (matrifocal) culture that was conquered by invading IE Kurgan riders from the steppes. According to Gimbutas in her book *Language and the Goddess*, these Kurgan cultures imposed their IE language and martial, hierarchical values on what remained of Old Europe.

Khonmadi as a symbolic word, I then determined, draws forth the very essence of feminality and Mother Earth-centered reverence, and embodies the blueprint of our deepest memory of peaceful co-existence. Chanting this word conjures forward the healing destination or goal, allowing us to remember the source of original wisdom. Maria Gimbutas adds, “To understand our ancestors, we must understand their belief systems.”

My final elder interview was with Michael Ortiz Hill, co-author of *Gathering in their Names*, a kinship story he wrote with his spiritual brother, Mandaza Kademwa of the Shona People from Zimbabwe; Mandaza is widely recognized in Southern Africa as a traditional healer (nganga). I revealed my story once again, and Michael looked at me oddly and reached into his

pocket. He pulled out a slip of paper and roughly scrawled in pen was the name Kumari and a phone number. Michael explained the coincidence with a half smile. “I was just checking my voice mail, and I had a message from a woman I’ve never met. She said her name was Kumari. This is very strange, but I must tell you that Kumari is coming here.”

It was on the following day, during the heat of noon, that Michael came hobbling up the stairs, eagerly exclaiming, “Kumari is here, Kumari is here!” Slowly making her way behind him was an older African American woman, long roots (dread locks) swaying with her gait, a shyness hiding behind her eyes. I stood to face her as she placed her hands together in prayer, and bowing ever so slightly, she said sweetly, “I am Kumari”.

Not knowing whether to laugh or to cry, I reached out and embraced her wholly. She was warm and round like the earth and I took a moment to feel her heart beating. The compassion in her eyes filled my soul and I instantly knew that my dream had come to life. The essence of Khonmadi / Jamadi / Khomani / Kumara / Kumari was no longer my dream. It was a collective dream that I had been given as a rare gift of remembrance that all people—all shapes and sizes, colors and nationalities, religions and languages—are united through the heartbeat of Mother Earth.

Returning to our human origins, remembering times when we were peaceful, agricultural, and creative earth-centered communities, before the advent of war and conquest, is at the heart of the blueprint we all share. Our ancestors are crying out to be heard, and by breathing life into their memories, words, and symbols, hope for a harmonious future is kept alive. We can choose to come full circle and resonate to a new paradigm that is encoded in our somatic archaeology as memory. This is the full consequence of remembering.

On the last day of the gathering, I watched as the elders assembled in a circle, a hoop of hope donning multi-colored wraps, ponchos, and turbans. Many spoke of the suffering their indigenous group has had to endure, of the hardships that have passed and continue to inflict their people. Many spoke of the prophecies that have been protected and hidden from view that have guided their people for many years. And many expressed that now the time had come, like a tree coming into flowering, for these truths, teachings, and sacred words to be shared. The sun had set on this gathering, and now I was standing, feet fully planted, in the hoop of hope with them. This is my story. I am honored to share it with you.