



**TAMBIKO FOR THREE SIMBA/SAIDI OF US:
LIONS OF AUGUST AND ALL-SEASONS SOLDIERS**

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DR. MAULANA KARENGA

THIS IS *TAMBIKO*, SACRED WORDS AND water offered in remembrance and rightful honor of three Simba/Saidi of Us, three Lions of August and all-seasons soldiers: Nana Sebati Wasifu Tangulifu, Nana Omowale Tambuzi and Nana Robert Tambuzi. Let us honor them in the African names they chose for themselves: Wasifu, worthy one, interpreter of character, Tangulifu, one who goes before and shows the way; Omowale, one who has returned home, back to Black, Kawaida and Us, Tambuzi, well-informed and clear-sighted; and Tambuzi, knowledgeable and insightful. We pay rightful homage to them here by talking about the lives they lived, the philosophy of Kawaida that grounded them and the organization Us in which they came into their own and did some important good in the world. Thus, we pay homage to them not in isolation but in the midst of their community and their organization Us, and in shared praise and honor in this month for all our advocates, each and all -- departed and present. For they were/are all all-seasons soldiers, sisters and brothers in struggle for our people and the good world we all want and deserve and who have sacrificed so much to achieve the struggle's end and the new beginning this promises and makes possible.

As August, this month of great moment and meaning to us as an African people and to our struggle comes to a close, we raise and praise the names and work of these three Lions of August, these Simba/Saidi and all-seasons soldiers: Nana Wasifu; Nana Omowale and Nana Tambuzi in this context as worthy ones among the worthy ones. Thus, in this momentous and meaningful month of heroes and heroines, sacrifice and upraised and intensified resistance, we turn also inward to

remember and raise up the all-seasons soldiers of our own, these three African men of great meaning in our lives. And again, we do this with clear understanding that it is a shared honor with the many sisters - Malaika, Muminina and Matamba - and other brothers, Simba and Saidi who also gave and give a great goodness in their own unique and equally valuable and greatly valued way.

So, we lift up and praise at the same time all those all-seasons soldiers of our organization Us, those who've made transition and those who remain on the battlefield for a better world, an inclusive and expanded realm of freedom, justice, flourishing and all kinds of goodness in the world. These are those who would not and will not walk away from the battlefield until the struggle is won, who put to shame the weekend warriors, the summer soldiers, and the ones dressed for TV and bad-talk posing and posturing, but who did not and do not stay standing in the crushing storms of counter-resistance, the heavy headwinds of oppression and the destructive hurricanes of history. And they rightfully dismiss the broken-spirit and bitterness "brigade," who having left the frontline in the heat of battle, returns with a list of those to hate and claiming all revolutionary space and relevance for themselves.

We speak of Nana Wasifu, Nana Omowale and Nana Tambuzi as Lions of August here, using three meanings of the word *august* for us. First, August is the birth month of all three and thus they share its spirit, message and history of righteous and relentless struggle. Also, it is the month of the formative and refining fire of the August Watts Revolt out which the organization Us emerges and assumes its vanguard role in the Black Liberation Movement, and they play a key

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role in its development and endurance. And thirdly, the word *august* is used here to speak of them in the original honorific meaning of the word. For it is a Latin synonym of the ancient Egyptian word *shepes* which means distinguished, dignified, noble, worthy of honor and honored.

In the early and formative years of Us, we called the young male advocates or members of Us, Simba Wachanga, the Young Lions. Later these would include young and older female advocates with the older men and women called Simba Wazee, the Elder Lions and then eventually everyone was simply called Simba. Also, at the beginning, the older men were called Saidi, the Lords or Noble Ones. But as we taught and teach, there is no nobility or royalty except in righteousness. And as Nana Marcus Garvey taught us, there is no aristocracy except in service to our people. Thus, if we rightfully understand and assert ourselves, we are all Simba, soldiers in all seasons; Saidi, Noble Men and Siti, Noble Women, not by blood, heritage or class, but by service to our people and our struggle and by the good we dare and do in the world. In other words, we are all royal in our righteousness, noble in our service and worthy of the highest honor by the good we bring in the world. And Nana Wasifu, Nana Omowale and Nana Tambuzi were/are proudly and loudly among those all-seasons soldiers, and the Noble Ones who gave their lives in their youth and older age in service, sacrifice and struggle for the good and liberation of our people and a shared good in the world.

No one honest and truthful can deny that the Simba Wachanga which we of Us built in the Sixties was one of the most disciplined, radical, ideologically grounded, service-oriented, combat-prepared and struggle committed youth groups in the Black

Liberation Movement. And Nana Wasifu, Nana Omowale and Nana Tambuzi were a vitally active part of this project. Their self-understanding and self-assertion in community and the liberation movement as Simba and Us advocates were based on five dual commitments. These dual aspects expressed in the letters of the word SIMBA are commitments to be (1) a Shield for the people and a Spear against the oppressor; (2) an Inspiration to youth and Innovators of revolution; (3) a Monument to the ancestors and a Movement for liberation; (4) a Brotherhood (later, and Sisterhood) to ourselves and Builders of our nation; and (5) Advocates of Us and an Alternative to them.

Thus, the essential tasks of the Simba, the Young and Older Lions, were and remain to be first and foremost a shield in defense of the people and in consistent service to the people as a visible and valuable practice of a radical and transformative love of our people. And it is to be an active, assertive and living weapon and warrior against all oppressors and all forms of oppression in the ongoing struggle of our people to be themselves and free themselves and bring good in the world. As a sustained and sustaining source of inspiration to youth, Simba are also to be a model and mirror for them. And they continuously strive to think deep and develop new and revolutionary ways to achieve and secure African and human good and the well-being of the world and all in it. Likewise, they honor the ancestors by living and expanding their legacy, and they build and rebuild the Movement by strengthening and building brotherhood and sisterhood among themselves and maintaining and expanding our community and culture of struggle. As advocates of Us and alternatives to them, the oppressors of the world, Simba are also about developing and

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posing alternatives to the established order of things. Indeed, they self-consciously practice our duty to know our past and honor it; to engage our present and improve it; and to imagine a whole new future and forge it in the most ethical, effective and expansive ways.

THUS, *ODU IFA* TEACHES US THAT THE struggles we wage must always add to our honor, *Odu* 152:2 says, “May the battle I fight (the struggle I wage) always add to my honor.” Surely, the struggles Nanas Wasifu, Omowale and Tambuzi waged added to their honor. The example of such an honor-bringing struggle used in the *Odu Ifa* is that

of the lion. Indeed, *Odu Ifa* 152:2 “The battle that brings honor belongs to the lion.” We in Kawaida interpret the battle that brings honor as righteous and relentless struggle. And we interpret the metaphor lion as one who is lion hearted, *Simba-hearted*, that is to say, *noble in conduct; courageous in combat and uncompromisingly committed to victory*. May the joy they brought and the good they left last forever. And may we honor their legacy by living it, teach their philosophy, Kawaida, by practicing it, and ensure the victory of the liberation struggle they gave their lives to by continuing and intensifying it.▲

Dr. Maulana Karenga, Professor and Chair of Africana Studies, California State University-Long Beach; Executive Director, African American Cultural Center (Us); Creator of *Kwanzaa*; and author of *Kwanzaa: A Celebration of Family, Community and Culture* and *Essays on Struggle: Position and Analysis*, www.AfricanAmericanCulturalCenter-LA.org; www.OfficialKwanzaaWebsite.org; www.MaulanaKarenga.org.