

peoples from all parts of Africa- South and North, West and East- in the true spirit of Pan-Africanism.

The origins of Kwanzaa on the African continent are in the agricultural celebrations called "the first fruits" celebrations and to a lesser degree the full or general harvest celebrations. It is from these first fruits celebrations that Kwanzaa gets its name which comes from the Swahili phrase *matunda ya kwanza*. The first fruit celebrations are recorded in African history as far back as Egypt and Nubia and appear in ancient and modern times in other classical African civilizations such as Ashantiland and Yorubaland. These celebrations are also found in ancient and modern times among societies as large as empires (the Zulu) or kingdoms (Swaziland) or smaller societies and groups like the Matabele, Thonga and Lovedu, and all of southeastern Africa.

It is from a critical selection and synthesis of the common values and common practices of people of African descent that Kwanzaa is conceived and constructed.

The Values of Kwanzaa

There is no way to understand and appreciate the meaning and message of Kwanzaa without understanding and appreciating its profound and pervasive concern with values. Kwanzaa's reason for existence, its length of seven days, its core focus and its foundation are all rooted in its concern with values.

After completing an exhaustive study of traditional African societies, Dr. Karenga discovered that all were built upon and guided by seven basic principles, which he called the *Nguzo Saba*.

These seven communitarian African values are: *Umoja* (meaning unity), to strive for and maintain unity in the family, community, nation and race; *Kujichagulia* (meaning self-determination), to define ourselves, name ourselves, create for ourselves and speak for ourselves instead of being defined, named, created for and spoken for by others; *Ujima* (meaning collective work and responsibility), to build and maintain our community together and make our sister's and brother's problems our problems and to solve them together; *Ujamaa* (meaning cooperative economics), to build and maintain our own stores, shops and other businesses and to profit from them together; *Nia* (meaning purpose), to make our collective vocation the building and developing of our community in order to restore our people to their traditional greatness; *Kuumba* (meaning creativity), to do always as much as we can, in the way we can, in order to leave our community more beautiful and beneficial than we inherited it; and *Imani* (meaning faith), to believe with all our heart in our people, our parents, our teachers, our leaders and the righteousness and victory of our struggle.

The *Nguzo Saba* are the core and consciousness of Kwanzaa. They are posed as the matrix and minimum set of values African-Americans need to rescue and reconstruct their lives in their own image and interest and build and sustain an Afrocentric family, community and culture. They (the seven principles) were selected because of their prevalence and recurrence in communitarian African societies, therefore reflecting a Pan-African character, because of their perceived relevance to the liberational project of African-Americans (i.e., their struggle for freedom, rebuilding community and contributing to a new history of humankind), because of the cultural and spiritual significance of seven in African culture, and finally, because of the manageability of the number seven in terms of teaching, memorization, learning and core emphasis.

The Symbols and Activities of Kwanzaa

Kwanzaa, like all holidays, has its symbols. And like all symbols, Kwanzaa symbols serve as instructive and inspirational objects which represent and reinforce desirable principles, concepts and practices. Kwanzaa has seven basic symbols and two supplementary symbols. The seven symbols are: *mazao* (crops), signifying the historical roots of the holiday itself and the rewards of collective productive labor; *mkeka* (mat), signifying tradition and history; *kinara* (the candle holder), signifying our parent people, the continental Africans; *muhindi* (corn), signifying children and all the hopes and challenges attached to them; *zawadi* (gifts), signifying the seeds sown by the children and the fruits of the labor of their parents; *kikombe cha umoja* (the unity cup), signifying libation for ancestors; and *mishumaa saba* (the seven candles), signifying the seven principles that are the heart and spirit of Kwanzaa. The two supplementary principles are a poster or other representations of the *Nguzo Saba* and the *bendera ya taifa* (the black, red and green national flag or standard).

These symbols are both traditional and



modern items that reflect both traditional and modern concepts which evolved out of the life and struggle of African-American people, and are essential in the activities of the Kwanzaa celebration.

All of the activities of the Kwanzaa celebration are in honor and in reinforcement of the *Nguzo Saba*. Activities include: collectively drinking from the unity cup; making the Libation Statement in honor of African-American ancestors; lighting the *kinara*; and taking the Kwanzaa *karamu* (the feast).

Each day during Kwanzaa, from December 26 to January 1, a different principle is especially emphasized. For example, on *Umoja* night, the family discusses the principle of *Umoja*. Then the *Umoja* candle is lighted by the person who volunteers to discuss that principle for that day in terms of its meaning and importance.

Each day can also have different activities for adults as well as children. Adults usually plan night activities, especially since parents work during the day. So parents/

adults may plan different cultural/heritage-building activities for these days. The Kwanzaa activities, above all, is to reinforce the bonds between African-Americans as a people.

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"Strive for discipline, dedication and achievement in all you do. Dare struggle and sacrifice and gain the strength that comes from this. Build where you are and dare leave a legacy that will last as long as the sun shines and the water flows. Practice daily *Umoja, Kujichagulia, Ujima, Ujamaa, Nia, Kuumba* and *Imani*. And may the wisdom of the ancestors always walk with us. May the year's end meet us laughing and stronger. May our children honor us by following our example in love and struggle. And at the end of next year, may we sit again together, in larger numbers, with greater achievement and closer to liberation and a higher level of human life."—*Tamshi La Tutaonana* (The Farewell Statement).

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KWANZAA

An African-American Celebration

Umoja, Monday, Dec. 3: Dr. Maulana Karenga, the creator of Kwanzaa, will be speaking in Hamilton 100 at 8pm. Reception following in Student Union.

Kujichagulia, Tuesday, Dec. 4: *Three Nights of Kwanzaa* by Precious Stone will be presented by the Collegiate Black Caucus. 6:30pm in Toy Lounge of Dey Hall.

Ujima, Wednesday, Dec. 5: Candle light vigil commemorating historical African-American leaders. Union Auditorium at 7pm.

Ujamaa, Thursday, Dec. 6: African and African-American vendors will be in rooms 211-212 of Student Union from 12-4pm. BSM to sponsor UMOJA series at 6pm Lenoir North Dining Hall. Candle lighting for day of Ujamaa in BCC at 5:30pm.

Nia, Friday, Dec. 7: Story telling activity in the Student Union Auditorium at 12pm

Kuumba, Saturday, Dec. 8: Delta Sigma Theta Sorority and the Special Projects Committee of the Carolina Union Activities Board to sponsor a talent show at 7pm in Gerrad Hall.

Imani, Sunday, Dec. 9: Kwanzaa Extravaganza to be held in Great Hall of the Union from 2-4pm. Afro-One dance troupe from Willingsboro, NJ and Chapel Hill, NC Afro-One to perform.