

# Midwifery's Afrakan ancestral legacy, western discourse and reclamation.

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## Editorial

Midwifery's Afrakan ancestral legacy, western discourse and reclamation. It is a restorative address to the removal of the traditional black midwife sprouting a chronic, degenerative, invisible, cultural infection that has for 100 years produced infant and maternal mortality rates within the Afrakan American community disproportionately superseding all other ethnic groups in the United States. Contemporary scientific definition and comprehension of midwifery is a projection of the white male social construct - white supremacy. The system of birthing was an ancient indigenous female-centered integrative birthing science that was intertwined with the natural processes of spirit, community, nature and cosmic laws by Afrakan people before western colonization and medical industrialization. The ancient birthing system of the traditional black midwife entailed specialized skills in ancestral herbalism, ancestral rituals for preconception preparation/fertility/pregnancy/child loss/birthing/postpartum, child spacing, infant care, infant massage, food preparation, home cleanliness, spiritual counsel, relationship counsel, healing, spiritual/physical hygiene, ancestral medicine, self-care, community nurturer/sustainer, apprenticeship to another girl/woman with the 'calling' or same earthly purpose, child care, and well-woman care. This oral presentation will reveal the Afrakan midwifery system that continued from Alkebulan (Africa) through the trans-atlantic slave trade, slavery and post-slavery and how it's strategic replacement with a white-male scientific construct manufactured and maintains maternal health disparities and how the reclamation of the ancestral system of Afrakan midwifery will significantly reduce high black infant and maternal mortality rates and exponentially catapult healthy pregnancies and childbirths within the Afrakan American community and inspire evolutionary global indigenous midwifery restoration.

This story of asserting an indigenous stewardship on the earth and deep ties between Chamorros and the earth, captured in the expression *tao'tao tano* '(the people of the earth), are particularly timely given the latest US military ramp-up in Guam, in which the United States plans to transfer several one thousand sailors and their dependents from Okinawa to Guam

over the next few years. In this new cycle of militarization and Chamorro political unrest, around which Chamorro women have once again, we might ask, what are the political possibilities and dangers of a "Placental practice" - practices embodied by Aboriginal women, as midwives and godmothers, to manage and nourish both the earth and the Chamorro body, especially against the debilitating effects of colonial encroachments, particularly as a form of politics historical and cultural practices of Chamorro women concerned with the well-being and balance of Chamorro people and land? In what follows, I turn first to Guam's pattered and another story of women "delivering the body", then to Guam's most famous godmother, Agueda Johnston, for possible answers from the island's pa. The results demonstrate the continued existence and important role of various types of African American birth care providers in minority communities in the United States. Recognizing, supporting and increasing the number of midwives of color is important in tackling racial health inequalities. More research should explore minority access to women-centered care. Sankofa Ra is the visionary womb priestess, owner and facilitator of Khet Hemet Birthing & Wellness Center. She is a graduate student at Goddard College pursuing a Masters of Arts in Health Arts and Sciences self-specialized curriculum in the collection and restoration of the fragmented system of traditional Afrakan midwifery. She is writing and publishing her first book on healing ancestral trauma through purpose for Afrakan teen girls, producing a podcast and app on culture reclamation. She is also an energy healer, spiritual advisor, Afrakan folk medicine practitioner, fabric artist/instructor, workshop facilitator and entrepreneur.

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