

the
mother



of

all
mothers

On this world or off, we are in constant search of who we are.

We travel to distant planets or go far back into Earth's history to find out who we are and what makes us think and believe in the things we do. In the United States we start many conversations with, "Where are you from?". We ask this in search of a common bond. We often talk about where we originated from. Our origin is always of interest. But perhaps the real questions lie beyond origin, race, religion, and the politics of sex. Perhaps we are here as human beings to be able to live in peace and harmony. Perhaps God placed all of us on this earth as a test to see how we all manage ourselves with others in this world. God may have wanted us to be humane to one another and live together in harmony but somehow we all become caught up with social pressures, political issues and material values and forget to look deeper.

As a Chinese woman in the United States I find it a constant struggle dealing with cross-cultural issues. In the US there is a constant drive for independence and individualism. On the other hand, in the Chinese culture there is a strong push for family and keeping with your own kind. For example, when one turns 18 in America, one is legally an adult and is capable of being on their own. However, being raised as a Chinese I was taught to stay with the family until circumstances of education or career caused me to move away. There is a tremendous push for family bonding which lies deep within the Chinese culture. In fact, family is of great importance to many cultures. Yet, with so many of us in America being from different areas of the world, we find ourselves in conflict not only between our motherland values and American values, but we are often in conflict with other ethnic groups at the same time.

As a woman I have found advantages far beyond these limitations. My father always told me, "Jean, be strong but don't forget that because you are a woman you have an advantage over men. You need to utilize your assets to achieve in life. Women have gentle power. It is something which is difficult for men to understand, although some do. Use your gentle power to your advantage and always know what is burning within your gut". That gentle power my father spoke of "burning within my gut" is the knowledge that I have within myself and how I express it to others.

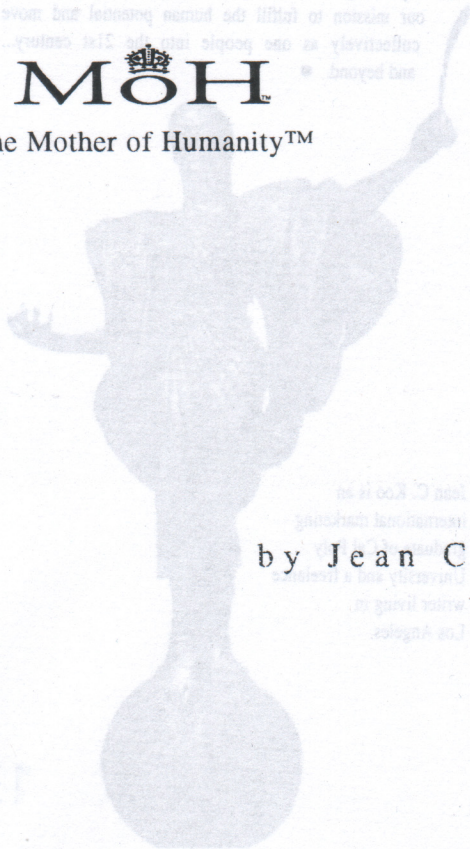
As women and mothers it is up to us to use our knowledge and gentle power to soften the hardness of the world around us. Mothers are the root of all families as well as the branches for the fruit of humanity. What better to represent the root of humanity and all her flowering than in through a symbol of universal motherhood.

Standing in Watts, California, 16 feet tall and weighing 2 tons of bronze is a figure of a woman. It is one of the largest bronze monuments in the world to call attention to the scientific and anthropological origins of humanity. It's creator hopes that it will become a symbol for the millennium and fuel the dialogue between those who seek to acknowledge the singularity of the human experience and initiate the Aquarian age of peace, truth, love and understanding and those who struggle to hold fast to notions of racial superiority, regionalism, and separation.

by Jean C. Ko

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The Mother of Humanity™



This symbol was a vision of a sculptor born in Battersea, England. His name, given to him by his mother at birth, is a combination of English and ancient Hebrew meaning "Black Prince of God" (BPG). And he carries himself that way, but not arrogantly. To the artist, it is a name he strives to live up to in all that he does. That name, his name, is Nijel and his monument of a multi-ethnic woman could well become the defining symbol for a new generation.

It was 1992 after the Los Angeles riots when the sculptor, himself a resident of La Ciudad De Los Angeles, witnessed the conflagration first hand and felt the despair among his close Korean and African-American friends. As President of Nijart International, his own sculpting firm, he proposed a peace monument of bronze and granite for the city of Los Angeles.

Prior to this the company's banner accomplishments had been two major works of art, the Maasai Princess 1990, a gold plated bronze statue for music legend Stevie Wonder, and a 12 inch portrait bronze sculpture of Michael Jackson presented to the singer by Sony Records in honor of his accomplishments as "Artist of the Decade". The proposed peace monument was 36 feet tall, and the largest of the sculptor's career. It was called "The Greater Los Angeles Goodwill Monument" and was favorably received by civic leaders, local and federal government officials from then Mayor Tom Bradley to the Secretary of Commerce, the late Ronald Brown.

"I had sensed a greater need", says Nijel BPG. "After the rebellions, few people, perhaps for political reasons were willing to go to the roots of the problem and instead were treating the symptoms. Well meaning concerts and get togethers after the rebellions were mere band aids to some very deep wounds that have still not fully healed. But I was resolved", says the artist "that we must never forget this incident and more importantly, I wanted to leave a marker to point the way to greater cultural unity in the years ahead."

By the following year, the concept had matured towards embracing the vision of global unity by paying tribute to that one African woman "Lucy" whose DNA became the starting point for all humanity. In this idea, the vision of the "mother" of humanity was born. It is the artist's goal to place seven identical models of "The Mother of Humanity™" around the world in Africa, Australia, Brazil, China, India and Spain. Today the first of seven, and the only one in America, stands on the grounds of the Watts Labor Community Action Committee at "The Center" in Los Angeles.

As I walked onto the grounds of The Center on a warm summer day in August I saw before me the majestic hand of welcome from The Mother of Humanity™. Her face is the representation of all humanity. She stands strong with her left foot in stride taking action, to go forward and to stamp out evil. Her right breast exposed to nourish the world, and holding a feather in her right hand symbolizes peace, truth and righteousness. I stood watching her gentle power and I thought to myself, "The Mother of Humanity™ uses her gentle power and knowledge to help break the color lines". But The Mother of Humanity™ brings forth a deeper message and that message can

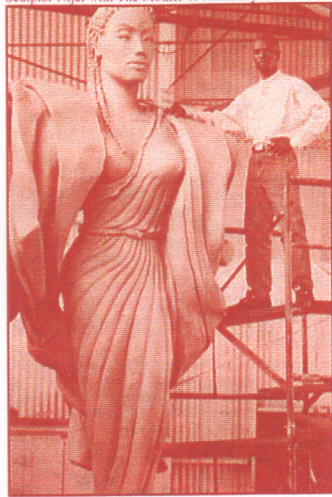
best be described by BPG himself.

"Some", says Nijel "have called her the "Black Statue of Liberty". Many, perhaps out of deep psychological denial, cannot bring themselves to utter her real name at all. Regardless, the entire human family understands her mission and faces the challenge posed by her message as we move into the 21st century.

In my quest for a means to promote truth and understanding for humanity after the 1992 rebellions in Los Angeles, I created a monument which embodies a unique set of physical features and spiritual symbols. She is African, Indian, European, Oriental, Latin American, Native American, Old World and New. She is "The Mother of Humanity™", and I believe she is the symbol of our times.

The legend and meaning behind The Mother of Humanity™ reveals her to be a true time capsule. Why do some see her as a "Black" Statue of Liberty? Perhaps in our collective wisdom we recognize the unspoken truth that the original design for the Statue of Liberty was a Black woman! Edouard Rene Lefevre de Laboulaye was the

Sculptor Nijel with The Mother of Humanity™



...and holding a feather in her right hand symbolizes peace, truth and righteousness.

head of the French Anti-Slavery Society in 1865 when he envisioned a monument to America for freeing her slaves. Racism prevented the installation of the Statue of Liberty with her original African features, but the broken chains of slavery, as they appeared in the original design, can still be found at the feet of the Statue of Liberty today.

The dot on the Mother's forehead is a symbol far older than the Statue of Liberty. It can be found in ancient cultures throughout the world. Many women from India wear a dot on their forehead. The earliest settlers of India, the Dravidians, shared a spiritual tradition with ancient Kemet (Pharonic Egypt) where such symbols as a dot or any mark on the forehead, were symbolic of higher spiritual insight. This is why the mark has been called the "third eye". In the Orient images of Buddha always show a dot on the forehead. The dot is also symbolic of the pineal gland which is located in the center of the brain. The pineal gland is about the size of a pea and is responsible for the production of melanin, the substance that gives skin its color and is a key to higher levels of spiritual thought, physical coordination, and so on.

The feather in Mother's right hand is an ancient Kemet symbol. It was used by the Goddess Maat. In the Kemet tradition, when we die our hearts were placed on one end of a scale and the feather of Maat on the other. If we lived a righteous life, our hearts, in the balance, should be as light as a feather. That tradition of peace, truth, and righteousness became the Native American way of life. It is a little known fact that the Native American and the ancient Egyptian are cousins, with a common reverence for such shared symbols as the feather of Maat.

Mother's exposed right breast represents the milk of Mother Africa that continues to nourish all nations on earth. Indeed,

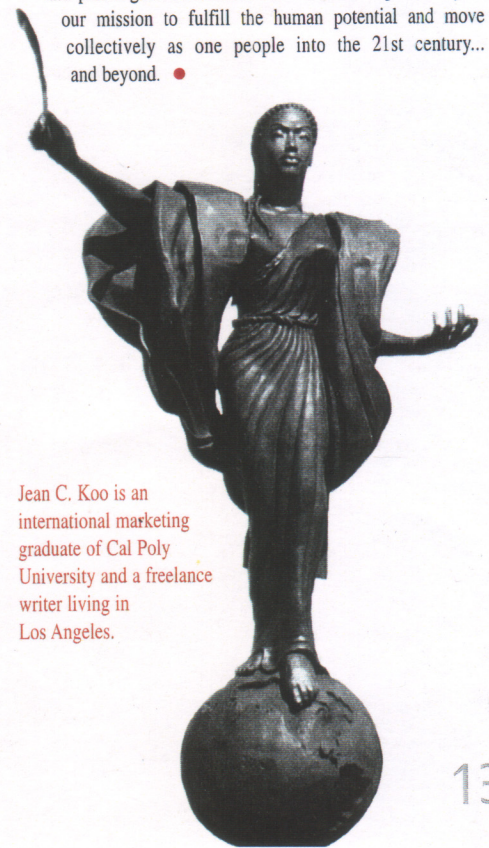
many nations today have not yet weaned themselves from the gold, diamonds, and precious minerals they take from the African soil. Here on the North American continent, the exposed breast reminds many elders of a day not long gone when White slave masters gave their children over to be suckled at the breast of Black enslaved mothers. But The Mother of Humanity™ is not just a symbol of the nurturing woman. She also represents the woman as warrior. In the ancient tradition of the Amazons, she reminds us of the courage of those women archers who took valor to new heights when they would have their left breast surgically amputated to make it easier to draw the bow. Their skills as archers are legendary.

Even linguistically, in the word "amazon" (or "mother - sun"), the message of the Mother still strikes a resounding cord for unity. "Ama" means "mother". It is the same "ama" used in the Korean language for "mother." It is the same "ama" as in the Spanish language for "mother". In the English language we find the "ama" in "Mama". The message of our first teachers of truth and peace empowers women, our mothers. The Mother's left hand is extended in a gesture of welcome, calling all of her children together.

The left foot of the Mother strides forward in the ancient Kemet tradition. Their statues were crafted with the left foot going forward. The heart, being on the left side of the body, was in unison with the movement taken by the left foot to go forward, take action, and stamp out evil. Could this be why military soldiers today start their march with "left - right - left - right"? The Mother of Humanity™ too is a soldier who strides forward for truth and righteousness throughout her North American

continent and the world.

In these days, falsehood will evaporate like mist, leaving no residue. The look of peace and wisdom on Mother's face warns us against false pride in the knowledge of our past. Her deep and placid gaze understates the awesome responsibility of our mission to fulfill the human potential and move collectively as one people into the 21st century... and beyond. ●



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