

BURIAL OF THE PLACENTA CEREMONY

A mama writes a prayer to her baby and Burial of The Placenta Ceremony begins!

My goal is to bring attention, and spiritualize an aspect of birth that is often overlooked. Placenta burial is the very final act of birth, it is the completion of the birthing journey. Placentas are not a clinical waste.

"A common theme of hospital placenta stories is a sense of loss some women felt when it came to the placenta, and their missed chance to respect or honor it in some way"

"It is a ritual. And it's giving it back to the Earth with my participation, so I feel that's respectful to the process for my baby and for me is to say something and mark it somehow, and it's such a connected thing I guess, with that nurturing and nourishing element of the placenta. It's a life giving thing, so giving it back to the Earth feels symbolic in some way. It sits better inside me"

"In Indonesian culture the placenta is called Ari-Ari, and it's considered the physical body of the child's guardian angel, and the angel's spirit stays with the child for life. The placenta is wrapped in cloth and placed within a coconut to be buried"

"In the Hmong culture, the placenta is buried with great care and ritual at the home, as the placenta is believed to be the spiritual jacket that the baby wore to come into this world. Once the baby lived his life, his spirit will after death, retrace his life's journey, back to the very site of the placenta burial. His spirit can again wear the placenta as the spiritual jacket that will allow him to cross back over to the other side. The Hmong word for placenta literally means 'jacket'"

"In Icelandic culture call the placenta the baby 'fylgia' which means 'guardian angel'"

"In the Navajo culture, burial of the placenta within the boundaries of the child's family tribal land will bind or root the child's spirit to his ancestors and to the land. The Navajo believe that this will ensure the child will always return home"

"In the Igbo tribe of African culture, it is believed that burying the placenta connects the child to the spirits in the ground, and the placenta was given the name 'Our Mother'"

"In Native American tribes Chinook and Quinault, the placenta is called 'Grandmother'"

"In Maori of New Zealand culture, they bury the placenta on tribal land to tie the child to the land. The Maori word for placenta and word for land have the same name 'Whenua'"

"In Mayan culture, they revere the tree the placenta was buried under, believing the sacred relationship created gives the tree protective powers over the child"

"In Japanese culture, a formal burial ceremony is included, as the placenta was considered linked to the child's destiny. The placenta was washed first in water, then in sake. Next it was wrapped in colored silk clothes, and placed in a wooden box. Good luck emblems to ensure a successful life were added, such as writing brushes or needles and thread"

"In Chinese culture, after washing the placenta in special water or even wine, it should be wrapped in silk, enclosed in a tightly sealed vessel, sometimes with the addition of auspicious items like a calligraphy brush or coins, and buried in the ground in carefully chosen locations"

"In Egyptian culture, where they believed in duality of the souls, the placenta had its own hieroglyph. Entire tombs may have been built to house the royals placentas of the pharaohs"

As we can see.. the placenta has been honored as baby's spiritual twin, as a sacred link of the child to his/her land and heritage and to bestow blessings and protection for the child's future.

Many families today find personal meaning with placenta burial ceremonies. Some create rituals celebrating the completion of the pregnancy and birth, and honoring a woman's journey into motherhood. Families also recognize the life giving properties of the placenta, and bury it as an offering of nourishment to the land and a blessing to the Earth.

"Did you know that, unless you or your baby has a monozygotic twin there is nothing else in this world apart from your placenta that is genetically identical to you? It is amazing! No wonder it is called 'little twin' in some cultures"

In contemporary times this practice is becoming more prominent regardless of ethnicity and culture. Some people may wish to keep the placenta until they have the opportunity to return to their homelands, or find a place of significance where it can be returned to the Land. Upon burial of the placenta, people may wish to plant a tree or use another significant landmark to indicate the place of the placenta.

I offer ceremonies for single mothers, couples, or families with grandparents, uncles, aunts and siblings. The ceremony includes: handling of the placenta by me, if others do not wish to touch it. Placenta prints! they tend to become the most cherished keepsakes through the years. Blessings of mother's ears, eyes, hands, and heart! Holographic removal of any negative emotion the mother felt during pregnancy! Biodegradable flax-leaf placenta cocoon! Flowers, prayers, and pictures!

Important: To be able to take the placenta home, a hospital release form needs to be signed before the due date.