

Newsletter 3
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HAGIA
International Academy
for Modern Matriarchal Studies

Since 1986

Direction: Dr. Heide Goettner-Abendroth and Cécile Keller
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1. A basic book by Heide Goettner-Abendroth

“Matriarchal Societies. Studies on Indigenous Cultures across the Globe”

Peter Lang Publishing, New York, Fall 2013

Paperback version, 533 pages \$ 49.95

Please send your order to customerservice@plang.com

Bringing the world back into balance means creating equilibrium and peace at every level: between the genders, the generations, different social groups, and different peoples. Over the past decades a new field of knowledge offering definitive insights for this process has been developed: research on matriarchal societies, known as modern Matriarchal Studies.

Widespread misconceptions about matriarchy notwithstanding, women’s strong position does not mean that matriarchies are women’s autocratic rule. Contrary to this, matriarchal societies are based on gender equality. Their social rules have developed out of thousands of years of experience, and demonstrate a perfectly balanced relationship between women’s and men’s spheres of action. All political decisions are reached through consensus among community members, and insightful, thoroughly worked out principles and social guidelines ensure that unanimity will eventually be achieved on each issue. The resulting social structure is egalitarian, non-violent, and enables a good life for all.

This book gives the philosophical and theoretical foundation for modern Matriarchal Studies, including a complete and detailed new definition of matriarchy, which presents the deep structure of this form of society, a definition which was missing in traditional research on this subject.

Based on a vast case-by-case cross-cultural research, the structures and guidelines that function across all levels of matriarchal societies are elaborated. This has been done by investigating and presenting most of the still existing matriarchal societies across the continents of Asia, South and North America, and Africa, which exhibit a fascinating richness of matriarchal forms and patterns. The focus is not only on the *microstructures* of matriarchal societies (family and clan), but also on their *macrostructures*, i.e. the institutions that refer to larger social structures, which can even encompass connections of several matriarchal peoples.

Topics include:

- Philosophy and Methodology of Modern Matriarchal Studies
- A Critical History of Perspectives on Matriarchy
- Matriarchy in North-Eastern India

- Matriarchal Cults in Nepal
- Ancient Queens Realms, and Group Marriage in Tibet
- Matriarchal Mountain Peoples of China
- Women Shamans in Korea
- The Islands of Japan: Women's Cultures of the South and North
- "Alam Minangkabau" – the world of the Minangkabau in Indonesia
- Matriarchal Patterns in Melanesia
- Pacific Ocean Cultures

- Matriarchal Cultures in South America
- The Spread of Matriarchy to Central America
- North America: Matriarchal Immigrants from the South
- North America: At the Cultural Crossroads of South and North
- Matriarchy in South India
- Ancient Matriarchy in Central Africa
- Matriarchal Queen-Kingship in West Africa
- Matriarchal Pastoral Peoples in North Africa

Voices on the book "Matriarchal Societies"

With the publication of this important book, Heide Goettner-Abendroth's brilliant critical conceptualization of the deep structures shared by matriarchal societies around the world becomes fully available in English. Her theory has developed, not abstractly, but inductively from the analytical investigation of numerous societies by non-indigenous and indigenous researchers. It provides the basis for a full fledged interdisciplinary and cross-cultural field of Matriarchal Studies where previously only isolated studies were possible.

Matriarchal Studies is a deeply political and liberatory field grounded in an understanding that the destructive patriarchal power structures pervasive today are a historically recent development. *** *Angela Miles, Professor of Adult Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, Toronto.*

If in the millenium of women, future generations look back to find the origin of their peaceful societies, they will find that the work of Heide Goettner Abendroth opened the way. Modern Matriarchal Studies break through patriarchal capitalist ideology, and provide the new/old models for viable ways of life of which our present globalizing market is only a destructive abberation. *** *Genevieve Vaughan, Author of the books For-Giving, a Feminist Criticism of Exchange; Women and the Gift Economy: A Radically Different Worldview is Possible.*

For decades, Dr. Heide Goettner-Abendroth's extensive research has taken her through strong, historical matriarchies, both on her own continent and on other continents, drawing together the research of the most modern, international scholars on matriarchy. Her book now brings to undeniable light the matriarchal alternatives available to humanity. *** *Barbara Alice Mann, Ohio Bear Clan Seneca, Associated Professor at the Honors College, University of Toledo.*

Heide Goettner- Abendroth has devoted her life to the study of matriarchal societies and the development of Modern Matriarchal Studies. Her monumental work is presented in this book. My own work on motherhood, sexuality, racism and above all peace and peace building has been significantly altered by Goettner-Abendroth's scholarship. I believe her work offer Western feminist and other progressive scholars as well as social change activists a new, innovative vision of an alternative society.

*** *Erella Shadmi*, feminist and peace activist and scholar, Israel, Former Head of Women's Studies Program, Beit Berl College Isha L'Isha - Haifa feminist center.

Films in English

"Societies in Balance"

Documentary of the First World Congress on Matriarchal Studies, 2003

By Uschi Madeisky and Gudrun Frank- Wissmann, 84 minutes

"Celebrating the Year of the Earth"

A poetic presentation of the Matriarchal Mystery Festivals at the Academy HAGIA

By Uschi Madeisky and Gudrun Frank-Wissmann, 90 minutes

(The films are available at Academy HAGIA, Email: akademiehagia@aol.com)

2. Recent lecture tours

2.1. Report on the lecture tour in Israel, summer 2013

Genevieve Vaughan, Heide Goettner-Abendroth, and Cécile Keller went to Israel on a 10 day speaking trip organized by Erella Shadmi. She had been preparing the trip for months, perhaps even years, and now is developing the ideas of the Gift economy and modern Matriarchal Studies herself and passing them on to her own networks there.

Genevieve and Heide spoke at four major events she organized, in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Haifa and Nazareth, and they also had a more personal meeting with many of the prominent progressive women who are Erella's friends, at her house in Haifa. The three women also did a lot of touring, mostly with Erella as driver, constantly explaining things to us. She is quite conscious of the many contradictions that plague her country.

With their presentations, Genevieve and Heide wished to contribute to create a mother-centered, women-centered movement where it is possible to do things that are really useful for peace without desperate sacrifices. People always want to know how do we do this? How do we make it happen? In the 80's Genevieve used to hope that some small progressive country like Cuba or Nicaragua would begin to practice the Gift Economy, and she saw their excellent free hospitals and their literacy campaigns as steps in that direction. In more recent years, the Bolivarian movement

represented by Hugo Chavez and Evo Morales has also done a lot of free giving to poor people using wealth from nationalized oil resources.

However in all the above cases as well as in others, no particular connection with women or mothers is made. Without that connection and the connection with indigenous matriarchies it seems to Genevieve that the movement will not make the necessary changes. But of course she is personally trying to make that connection all the time. She has thought for years that it would be good to create mid size intentional communities, maybe funded by the government. It was interesting to think of this in Israel where the kibbutz movement has basically failed, many women said, due to patriarchal leadership.

Heide came up with an interesting idea. Since women do at least half the work, governments should give women half of the money collected from taxes so they could start matriarchal communities. The women in Jerusalem liked that idea a lot and said they would meet again regularly to discuss it.

The three women really appreciated Erella's having invited Genevieve and Heide on this trip. It let them spread and nurture some seeds about the gift economy and matriarchy, and it also let them learn more about the situation in Israel. They sincerely hope that the ideas will circulate and that they will eventually have a positive effect for peace.

(By Genevieve Vaughan, short version)

2.2. Report on the lecture tour in America, fall 2013

This lecture tour was a six-weeks-trip through the American continent from Canada in the north till Colombia in the south. It was an exciting adventure and a wonderful tour for Heide Goettner-Abendroth and Cécile Keller. Both women travelled from one good friend to the next, spending some time with each of them.

They opened the doors for teaching modern Matriarchal Studies on this continent: In Canada, Heide presented modern Matriarchal Studies at the University of Toronto. It was attended by a much committed adult women's audience. The next stay was in Toledo at the University of Ohio. Heide gave a short introduction into Matriarchal Studies to a class of very young students, and a day later, at an evening presentation, she spoke more officially in a big hall, which was filled with about hundred participants.

Then, Heide and Cécile spent some beautiful days in San Francisco/California. Here, Heide gave a two-days-seminar at the CIIS, teaching a full class of students, i.e. adult women from a great diversity of cultural backgrounds. Some days later, Heide presented in Ava Park's Goddess Temple and in Sebastopol at the place of Joan Marler. Many women here have a true understanding of modern Matriarchal Studies, and the room was crowded.

The next stay was in Colorado, where lectures at the universities of Greeley and of Boulder were arranged. A nice number of students and people of all different kinds participated, although the time for discussions was short. In Albuquerque/New Mexico, Heide gave a full day teaching course at the Women's Center.

The last stop in the U.S. was in San Marcos in Texas, where the second World Congress on Matriarchal Studies had taken place in 2005, and where I was again invited at the Texas State University to present this topic to the students now. Many were there, and they asked many good questions.

In Colombia, a matriarchy conference took place in Nashira, a women's eco-village, situated close to the city of Cali in Southern Colombia. The first day was dedicated to matriarchal societies and politics, which Heide presented, and after it, some hours of lively discussions and statements in the circle followed. At the second day, Cecile Keller, Bernedette Muthien and Erella Shadmi gave lectures, Cécile spoke about matriarchal medicine, Bernedette about "ubuntu", the gift economy African-style, and Erella gave a vision how the gift economy and matriarchal politics could be used to create peace in the Middle East. At the third day, I had a conversation especially with the women of Nashira about their questions and problems. It was a great stay, and it was a great tour! May the seeds of knowledge about matriarchal societies and cultures grow and flower in the minds of so many women, men and young people, whom Heide and Cécile were happy to meet with in America.

2.3. Report on the lecture tour in Italy, fall 2014

After a 17-days-trip in Italy, Heide Goettner-Abendroth and Cécile Keller are back with the good news that modern Matriarchal Studies is spreading in Italy like a storm.

Both women were invited to speak at several places, where they also met good friends: In Verona Heide lectured at a philosophical circle, where most of the participants were academics and a high standard discussion arose. The next event was a matriarchy conference in Pistoia (close to Firenze/Florence), organized by a women's association; parts of the conference took place at the university and parts in the city hall, and about 150 women and men attended. Luciana Percovich, Heide, Cécile, the psychologist Gulia, and the filmmaker Francesca Rosati gave presentations.

After these two intense days, the women stayed in Bolsena at the lake Bolsena, meeting a German friend at her quiet house in the open landscape. Heide and Cécile lectured at a women's bookshop, and because they stayed here in the heart of the ancient Etruscan culture, they could not help to be busy again with excursions.

In Rome, they again met Genevieve Vaughan, and at two days, all three gave speeches at the "Casa Internazionale delle Donne". Cécile's lecture on the basic concepts of matriarchal medicine was much appreciated by the women, they didn't want to let her go at the end.

Early in the morning of the next day, they continued in Bologna, where another women's association had organized a conference on matriarchy. It began in an

official building of the city, with about 100 participants, and continued in the afternoon at a women's building. Here Cécile gave a much applauded speech among other speakers. The second day was a full day for Heide, because she was teaching all day about matriarchal politics and offered new ideas in this field.

In Milano, Heide lectured at the famous "Libreria delle Donne", and one of the first who arrived there was the renown philosopher Luisa Muraro. The room was full, and a very interesting discussion developed, to which Luisa contributed. Torino/Turin was the next stop, Heide and Cécile walked this splendid city with its many majestic buildings. The lecture in the evening was in a smaller, but very interested circle of people.

The last stay was in Bolzano/Bozen close to the Dolomites, but those mountains preferred to disappear in dense clouds. A friend, who was a student at the International Academy HAGIA some years ago, organized this event so well that more than 100 people attended, always arriving more, that right to the finish the room was too small. Some officials of Bolzano were present, femal vice-mayor, female councillor of the region, female representative of the Women's Office of the town, and you could get the impression that this city is mainly governed by women.

Heide gave several interviews before and during the trip, some of them were even spread in mainstream newspapers. In that way, both women tried to matriarchalize Italy, where many women and some men welcomed them in such a kind way! They hope the seeds about matriarchal ways of life will grow and flower here, what might easily happen in such a soft climate as it is in Italy!

3. New bibliography "Matriarchal Studies" from Oxford University Press, 2015

We are delighted to announce that a new and complete bibliography on the topic of "Matriarchal Studies" is now available for scholars and interested women and men. It has gone live in 2015 on *Oxford Bibliographies* and can be seen at www.oxfordbibliographies.com

Barbara Alice Mann and Heide Goettner-Abendroth dedicated themselves to this project and completed it in 2014, and Oxford University Press published it in summer 2015.

4. Lectures in 2016

In 2012, Heide gave lectures at the Matriarchal Studies Day and at the ASWM conference (*Association of Women&Mythology*). She was honored with the Saga Award 2012 from the ASWM.

This year 2016, she will present again at both events:

On March 31, 10:00, she will speak as a keynote speaker on the Matriarchal Studies Day (via skype).

On April 1, 10:30, she presents on the ASWM panel "Matriarchal Studies". The title of her speech is: "Matriarchal Studies: Past Debates and Present New Foundation" (via skype).

5. 30th Anniversary of International Academy HAGIA (1986-2016)

In 2016, the International Academy HAGIA celebrates its 30th Anniversary. It was founded in Germany in 1986 by Heide Goettner-Abendroth who is the director since three decades. Since 20 years, Cécile Keller acted as co-director of the Academy and contributed a lot to make it attractive. During this long time span, modern Matriarchal Studies was taught here and the Matriarchal Mystery Festivals were celebrated. Knowledge about matriarchal societies were successfully spread in the German speaking countries, and internationally by three congresses in 2003 (Luxembourg), 2005 (Texas), and 2011 (Switzerland).

All the time, women came to learn, to discuss and to offer their help, so they became the main supporters of the Academy. It flourished by women's overwhelming solidarity, and also by the support of some extraordinary men. The students learned about the lifeways and values of still extant matriarchal societies worldwide, and about the important and splendid role women had in the history of cultures. And they were motivated by the visions of Matriarchal Politics to take action for a future society of balance and peace.

Enough reasons for celebrating!

We hold the festival at the Academy in Germany, on April 30, 10:00 a.m. - 5:30 p. m., and in the evening, 8:00 - 10:00 p.m., in commemoration of all the excellent and courageous women who fought before us for women's rights and women's culture.

6. Honoring Heide's work in anthologies

We are glad to announce that Heide's name and work has been included in two important anthologies to honor her lifelong commitment for women and matriarchal societies:

1. in the French encyclopaedia « Dictionnaire des Créatrices », alongside with Marija Gimbutas, published 2015 in Paris;
2. in the book "Foremothers of the Women's Spirituality Movement. Elders and Visionaries" (edited by Miriam Robbins Dexter and Vicki Noble), published 2015 in Amherst, New York.

7. Fund for Modern Matriarchal Studies

We started this fund as a part of the Association of the Academy HAGIA in order to support modern Matriarchal Studies. It is a challenge to spread this new field of

research internationally, because expensive translations in diverse languages have to be done and lecture tours have to be organized.

We are asking you for donations that would enable us to fulfill these new and exciting tasks.

The account number of the Fund is:

Raiffeisenbank D-94577 Winzer, Passauer Str. 62, Germany

IBAN-Code: DE30 7416 1608 0000 0512 92

BIC-Code : GENODEF 1HBW

We send our kind regards to all of you, wishing a plentiful and happy year 2016 to you!

The directors:

Dr. Heide Goettner-Abendroth and Cécile Keller