

SOCIETIES OF PEACE

Second World Congress on Matriarchal Studies
September 29 – October 2 in San Marcos, Texas/USA

DECLARATION

In 2005, the *Second World Congress on Matriarchal Studies*, titled *SOCIETIES OF PEACE* was held in San Marcos, at the Texas State University. It took place thanks to the generous sponsorship of Genevieve Vaughan, founding director of the “Center for the Study of the Gift Economy”, and was guided by Dr. Heide Goettner-Abendroth, founding director of the “HAGIA. International Academy for Modern Matriarchal Studies” in Germany.

It was the subsequent event to the *First World Congress on Matriarchal Studies* titled *SOCIETIES IN BALANCE* which took place in 2003 in Luxembourg/Europe. The first congress was mainly sponsored by that country’s Minister of Family and Women's Affairs, Marie-Josée Jacobs, and was also organised and chaired by Dr. Heide Goettner-Abendroth.

Both congresses were ground-breaking events, because they represented the largely misunderstood matriarchal societies – that have been shaped primarily by women – to a wider public. Matriarchal societies have a non-violent social structure. They are based on gender equality; their political decisions are made by consensus; insightful and well thought-through principles and social guidelines ensure a peaceful life for all. Before the inauguration of modern Matriarchal Studies 30 years ago, matriarchies had not been impartially investigated by Western social sciences. Matriarchal societies have a long and fascinating history, and despite the destructive disrespect they have been subject to, they continue to exist on various continents.

The First Congress in 2003 brought together for the first time scholars from across the world who have up to now been working on this issue in relative isolation. They came from Europe, China, the USA. Thus, a wide-ranging, alternative scientific community came into its own. This Second World Congress went even beyond what had been achieved by the 2003 Congress; this time it brought together indigenous researchers, mostly women, from many of the world’s still existing matriarchal societies. They came from different continents: from North, Central and South America; from North, West and South Africa; from Asia, including China, Sumatra and India. This made the Second World Congress a significantly intercultural event; it set an unparalleled precedent with respect to the meeting of indigenous matriarchal speakers from all over the world. They corrected the distorted perspective often held by non-indigenous peoples, and taught the audience about the non-violent social order of their communities; these are places where all living creatures – humans, animals and nature – are respected and reciprocal equality – regardless of sex and age – is practised.

As a whole, the presentations can be seen to constitute a new research area, an area which has indeed become a social science in its own right, and which now emerges as a new paradigm of human history and society. Overall, the creative impact of women’s contribution to human development was splendidly presented throughout the congresses.

Both congresses were received with great enthusiasm as well in Europe as in the USA. In Luxembourg, there were between 450-500 people present – they came from all over Europe – and in the USA, between 300-400 – they came from all over the world. Most of them were women; among them were many scholars, academically educated or self-educated persons and political activists.

At the last day, a political declaration was developed. The speakers and many participants expressed their ideas how to generate concrete alternatives and practical solutions to the patriarchal system of exploitation and what steps could be taken to promote the re-establishment of peaceful societies. This declaration emphasizes the political significance of both of these congresses and of modern Matriarchal Studies.

1. What Matriarchal Politics mean

Dr. Heide Goettner-Abendroth (Germany)

“What is matriarchal politics? It is based on modern Matriarchal Studies and its aim is to create an egalitarian economy and a peaceful society. How this can be achieved is clearly demonstrated by matriarchal societies whose patterns have lived over millennia. Their economics, politics, social organization, and spirituality are inseparably connected, and the purpose of all of it is to provide a good life for everybody.

Economically, the lesson of matriarchies is to develop a new subsistence economy, based on local and regional units. It is self-sufficiently and creates circles of gift giving. Women are the mainstays of these economic structures. Regionalization under the guidance of women is a way to a matriarchal economy.

On the social level, we learn from matriarchies to create and support communities that are based on affinity. They are formed on the basis of a spiritual-philosophical rapport between the members, who feel like siblings by choice. They form a symbolic matri-clan, because these clans are initiated, created and lead by women. The decisive factors are the needs of women and children who are the future of humanity. Men are intergrated as equal members.

On the political level, the matriarchal consensus principle is of utmost importance for a truly egalitarian society. It is the foundation for building new matriarchal communities. The symbolic matri-clans are the true decision makers, even if the consensus principle is broadened onto local and regional levels.

On the cultural level, the lesson of matriarchies is to leave behind all hierarchical religions with a claim to the total truth. Instead, it is necessary to regard the world as holy, to love and to protect it, because everything in the world is divine. Matriarchal spirituality includes matriarchal tolerance: nobody has to ‘believe’ anything. There is no dogma, but the participation in the continuous, manifold celebration of life and the visible world.

In that way, we can create working ‘matriarchal models’ which are the component parts of a new humane society.” www.hagia.de

Collective Political Declaration

read by Genevieve Vaughan

“International Matriarchal Politics stands against white supremacist patriarchal capitalist homogenization and the globalization of misery. It stands for egalitarianism, diversity and the

economics of the heart. Many matriarchal societies still exist around the world and they propose an alternative, life affirming model to patriarchal raptor capitalism.

The movement to preserve ethnic cultures should recognize the specificity and importance of matriarchies and the contributions these societies make to the sanity and health of the world. Instead they are being attacked by wave after wave of colonization. For example, WalMart is locating into Juchitàn, where markets controlled by women and integrated into life affirming relationships and practices will be taken over and erased. Under the disguise of progress, this economic colonialism tricks the people into giving up their precious cultural achievements in favor of false promises of jobs and a better life.

In mutual respect and honoring our diversity, we call on all women to make an activist commitment to preserve existing matriarchies and to recognize themselves as matriarchal peoples caught in the trap of patriarchal capitalism.

We oppose policies of governments and businesses that dispossess people of their spiritual and economic heritage including the treasure of indigenous languages. Capitalist patriarchy is breaking the laws of Mother Nature, invading sacred places, and plundering the biodiversity that has been the sustenance of, and under the stewardship of, indigenous peoples for millennia. We assert that it is a moral act to pull up and eliminate transgenic corn, and we stand in solidarity with our sisters everywhere in the assertion of a matriarchal morality that recognizes and rejects the lies of patriarchy, lies that mask exploitation as benevolence, and the bringing of death as the bringing of life. We know the difference.”

2. Three different viewpoints on Matriarchal Politics

2.1. The viewpoint of the international researchers on matriarchy:

The statements are about:

- developing modern Matriarchal Studies as a new socio-cultural science, that includes a vision and an outline of a new society based on justice and peace.
- the research strategies to create and expand this new paradigm, and at the same time, to form an alternative scientific community by collaboration and networking.
- the plans for future education; for example, the introduction of this new field of knowledge into schools, colleges, and universities.

Prof. Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen (Germany)

“The economic globalization is a project of the big international capital and its followers to create one single worldview worldwide, which says, profit sustains life. Matriarchal Studies are crucial in the opposition against this overthrow of human values. Its research reveals the social principles that create and support a moral economy and a peaceful society in past and present. It shows how a motherly economy and society, a motherly world looked like and how it can be developed. It is still women who bear children, they have daughters and the sons have mothers. This guarantees that compassion and caregiving will not die out completely. However we have to be aware of the far reaching social, cultural and economic dimensions of mothering, as well as of its contradictions. Matriarchal Studies contribute to this knowledge.”

Genevieve Vaughan (USA / Italy)

“It is important to include the idea of the gift economy in Matriarchal Studies because it gives the possibility of a point of view from which to criticize the market and Patriarchal Capitalism. It also gives an explanation of the values of women as the superstructure of an alternative economic structure. Women in Patriarchal Capitalism can consider ourselves matriarchs who have been deprived of our cultures and social structures yet continue to practice the gift economy and embrace its values, at least to some extent. In this capacity we can join with our indigenous sisters to stand against the economy of hate and domination whenever and wherever possible.”

Prof. Claudia von Werlhof (Austria)

“Patriarchy began with war. With capitalist patriarchy it became a global war system that is destroying life on earth. If we want to have a chance to build up a post-patriarchal civilization we have to stop patriarchy by starting to throw it out of ourselves. Otherwise we would not have the strength we need to throw patriarchy out of the world as well.”

Prof. Ruxian Yan (China)

“In the ancient time, maternal instincts forged humanity. In the future, maternal instincts will still lead humanity to sublimation.”

Xioaxing Liu (China)

“The existence of current matrilineal communities demonstrates that people can actually live a productive and humane life in the same time in the modern world. The matrilineal and matriarchal studies will help us to recognize and to choose a better way of life.”

Carolyn Heath, Ph.D. (Great Britain)

“Rationality (logos) and intuition (mythos) are two complementary dimensions of mind. In the Western world intuition has been sacrificed to rationality. Balance must be restored by seeing how rationality and intuition may complement each other in every human being. Indigenous people with non-hierarchical gender patterns may well provide a working model of a harmonious society for the Western world, one in which the power-balance between men and women is equal: ‘Not equal and alike, but equal and opposite’ (Labouvie-Vief, 1994).”

Karen Smith, Ph.D. (USA / Switzerland)

“Much of modern Matriarchal Studies owes a debt to existing matriarchal cultures. These cultures have been created and maintained over millennia, by indigenous peoples – in the midst of surrounding cultures that have threatened and oppressed them. They have undergone great hardship, suffering, and attempted genocide – in order to protect and defend these very traditions that we as researchers are finding to be so important to our work. To fulfil our responsibility to these cultures, modern matriarchal researchers must attend to, and support these peoples, in whatever way the peoples themselves suggest.”

Cécile Keller, doctor and healer (Switzerland)

“Modern Matriarchal Studies offers a new perspective on specific areas such as matriarchal medicine. Matriarchal medicine treats people holistically, and includes the social context, the

natural world and the cosmos itself. In this way, matriarchal medicine contributes not only to individual well-being, but to the entire society.”

Prof. Peggy Reeves Sanday (USA)

“The voices of indigenous peoples must be heard in Matriarchal Studies so that we can understand both the unity and the diversity in matriarchal practices, social structures, and worldview.”

Antje Olowaili, painter and writer (Germany)

“Mother Earth does not belong to us. We belong to her because she has brought us forth, therefore we have to share her fruits with all humans and animals. Sharing is important because: we are all brothers and sisters.

All nature is female. That’s why she has to be protected just as women have to be protected. Nature and women are the same. Therefore you can see that a person who venerates Mother Earth also respects and protects women as her reflection.”

Vicki Noble (USA)

“Knowing of the existence of matriarchal societies in the ancient past grounds us in a biological basis for peaceful human evolution organized around the female. Recognizing the presence of living matriarchal cultures in our own time supports our faith in human nature and provides a much-needed alternative model to stimulate our collective imagination. Let us go forward with conviction and courage to break with tradition and create new forms that honor natural processes and the sacred knowledge of woman and nature.”

Susan Carter, Ph. D. (USA)

“This second World Congress has confirmed my conviction that it is more important than ever that we take what we have shared here out into the world. Through the combination of our academic research in Matriarchal Studies, our personal stories about our lives living within existing matriarchal societies, and our deep soulful, heartfelt desire to manifest practical application of this information for social change on a planetary level, we can each individually and collectively create a world in which all beings thrive!”

Prof. Annette Kuhn (Germany)

“My main aim is to show the continuity of women’s power within history. This aim implies a re-definition of power on matriarchal terms and a double view of history, evaluating the creative, mental and moral powers of women within our symbolic and social world and based on the background of patriarchal attempts to take over.”

James DeMeo, Ph.D. (USA)

“The study of both matriarchal and patriarchal societies must proceed on an objective, scientific foundation, so as to best separate out myth from fact. Cross-cultural evaluations, to review specific practices, are one such objective indicator. The claim that a matriarchal society is more desirable or better than another social model must proceed from a clear detailing about just what it is we value in a society: higher women's status, greater overall freedom for everyone, low violence, absence of cruel sexual mutilations, and so forth.

Only with such scientifically critical and objective approaches can the study of matriarchal societies hope to defeat academic obstructionism, and benefit the world.”

Marguerite Rigoglioso (USA)

“This Second World Congress on Matriarchal Studies confirms that matriarchy exists in the present day as a real and valid social structure. Our collective research into history, mythology, iconography and linguistics provides increasingly persuasive evidence that matriarchy was the original social structure of humanity. Given the more positive and wholesome nature of matriarchy as a social system in contrast to the present patriarchal social system that dominates most of the world, it is imperative that education about matriarchy be disseminated globally.”

Kaarina Kailo, Ph. D. (Finland)

“To create fertile conditions for post-capitalistic peaceful societies, we need to expose the horrendous honor/shame system, which is the psychological anchor of asymmetrical and violent gender relations. By attributing honor to the violent control of women’s life and sexuality, these systems support war and oppression. We need to adopt matristic notions of honor based on ecological, social, cultural and biological sustainability, gift circulation, and the life-enhancing, egalitarian principles of matriarchal cultures, adapted to diverse cultural contexts. We need to respond to the needs of Mother Earth.”

Prof. Paola Melchiori (Italy)

“It is important to actualize the matriarchal cultures, meaning to identify the aspects of matriarchal cultures that could be helpful to us NOW, today and in this world. This means to confront its basic concepts and practices with those of modern feminism, identifying where the ideas are compatible or in conflict, and in which aspects. The combination and critical confrontation of the knowledges and practices of feminism, matriarchal studies and indigenous women can be of enourmous help in imagining a new society. These knowledges and practices are particularly invisible as much as they are instead important in the new social movements such as the social forums and the indigenous movements.”

Dr. Heide Goettner-Abendroth (Germany)

“Despite all the hostility directed against modern Matriarchal Studies, it is not possible to disregard its findings. It presents us with a well balanced, egalitarian and basically peaceful society which can exist without life-destroying inventions like wars of conquest and the rule of dominance. This is why I am convinced that matriarchy will be successful in the struggle for a humane world.”

Michael Dames (Great Britain)

“All that I can offer is a handful of soil. Soil can be regarded as the fifth element, in which air, fire, earth and water meet and mix, to form the seed-bed of new life and hope. Similarly, when Male and Female collide and coalesce on this ground, bitter distinctions may turn to love.”

2.2. The viewpoint of indigenous researchers from matri-centred societies of different continents:

The statements are about:

- the significance of modern Matriarchal Studies for indigenous peoples; i.e. that these studies discover the deep structure of the traditional matri-societies all over the world.
- to visualize matriarchal patterns as models for a peaceful society of the future.
- to intensify the criticism of patriarchal patterns, from which indigenous peoples have suffered and are still suffering.
- the strengthening of indigenous net-working and political aims.

Barbara Alice Mann, Ph.D., Bear Clan of the Ohio Seneca, Iroquois (USA)

“It is profoundly demoralizing to indigenous peoples from matrilineal cultures to find their thousands of years of history ignored, dismissed, or downplayed by academic statements that present patriarchal oppression as a ‘given’ since ‘time began’, when, in fact, their own cultures serve as known and knowable templates for societies based on co-operation and mutual respect. Tacitly regarding patriarchy and domination as ‘the norm’ sabotages efforts to present alternative models as legitimate. Therefore, Matriarchal Studies must first explore and best document known models of open, egalitarian, participatory, and shared cultures, with any references to domination, oppression, and patriarchy as purely secondary and non-formative.”

Wilhelmina J. Donkoh, Ph.D., Akan, Ghana (West Africa)

“Matriarchal Studies provides a positive and exciting medium for the study of matrifocal societies. As a scientific and analytical tool it projects the positive values inherent in such systems without alienating other elements that they entail. Through the medium of Matriarchal Studies, matri-centred societies are elevated into mainstream discourse rather than as a sub-culture.”

Malika Grasshoff, Kabyle, Berber (Algeria / France / Germany)

“The disciplines of social sciences should come to a consensus on a definition of matriarchy and its structures. It is important to have more interdisciplinary sharing on matriarchal research with indigenous peoples. It needs to be accepted that the basis of life is female, and women’s ability to bear children has to be protected, and reproductive technology should not be allowed to replace mothers.”

Savithri Shanker de Turreil, Ph. D., Nayar, Kerala (Southwest India)

“Let us all be deeply aware of the tending instinct and live every moment honouring this instinct, acting according to the intuition that is born from this instinct. Moreover, let us do our best always to invite, incite and instigate all human beings, male and female, who are in our own personal universe, to consider the tending instinct our life principle and our constant motto for every kind of action.”

Patricia Mukhim, Khasi, Meghalaya (North East India)

“We have just discovered our common heritage and a common ancestress. We need to unite and support one another. Help us to stop WB and other financial institutions from exploiting us. This is an appeal to all of you here.”

Dra. Usria Dhavida (Ibu Ita Malik), Minangkabau, Sumatra (Indonesia)

“It really was a great thing coming here to this conference. It is because we could meet many different peoples of this world talking about woman/mother, and Matriarchal Studies. To me, the differences are the good thing to know so that we can get much information that we did not have before. In the future we should enlarge this program with exhibitions of women’s activities and festivals.”

Endri, Minangkabau man, Sumatra (Indonesia)

“The role of globalization is huge in my society, the Minangkabau of West Sumatra. Today, *Adat*, our matriarchal law and customs, is still strong, and so is religion. The two support one another in a way that lessens the bad influence of globalization. It is important for the peoples of the world who care for matriarchal traditions to erect barriers against the effects of globalization.”

Rosa Martha Toledo, Juchiteca, Oaxaca (Mexico)

“We need to remember that we are all goddesses. The power resides in the interior of each one of us. We are sacred and powerful, that is our strength. We do not need to defend ourselves aggressively, because nothing can hurt or offend us if we are strong at the core. We love life, we accept joy and pain as two sides of the same coin. We do not want war, because we do not believe in violence as a path to peace. We want a world in which our daughters and sons can grow healthy and happy.”

Mariela de la Ossa, Kuna, Kuna Yala (Panama)

“After having heard the experiences of other cultures, I have come to the conclusion of how our Vaquito Foundation can help preserve the Kuna culture on the islands of Kuna Yala. I have learned that we must keep Western culture and education from dominating our traditions and customs and how to take a strong role in diffusing our culture for the benefit of future generations.”

Bernedette Muthien, Ph. D., Khoisan (South Africa)

“Matriarchies encompass completeness, harmony, and interdependence of all creations. And hence scholarship should balance with, and be relevant to actual communities of (grassroots) people, rather than predatory cannibalization of ancient infinite wisdom and sacredness. In this compassionate, respectful way, Matriarchal Studies can be the most powerful revolutionary movement we have ever had. Matriarchy is less ‘hail the goddess’, and more ‘love the self (and others) as an embodiment of the divine’.

Even if I disagree with what another one of you says, it’s important that we do not tear down the person.”

Gad A. Osafo, healer, Akan man, Ghana, (West Africa)

“I am a woman and I am a man. You are a man and you are a woman. Both parts make it human.

The present patriarchal dominated models of global developments are evidently noxious. Immediate, official actions to arrest and reverse this trend is therefore of paramount importance, if we want our grandchildren to acknowledge and honor us as ancestors and elders. It is critical that matriarchies are conscientiously given more room in global development. Congresses like this, which address this issue, should therefore be encouraged and supported to sow the seeds for a better future.

Kudos to ‘International Academy HAGIA’. Kudos to the ‘Center for the Study of the Gift Economy’. Viva Heide! Viva Genevieve!”

Doña Enriqueta Contreras, healer and midwife, Zapoteca (Oaxaca/(Mexico)

“Respect should not be lost. We must strive to maintain equality of gender in order not to lose respect. Respect all living beings, animate and non-animate, so that respect will duplicate in other contexts, and in order to help from escalating aggression. We must respect sacred sites because they have been alive for thousands of years supporting and reinforcing women’s spirituality. Unity, communion and communication go hand in hand with the search for peace and tranquillity in re-establishing the environment for which we are looking.”

Yvette Abrahams, Ph.D., Khoekhoe, Namibia (South Africa)

“With regard to the overall direction of Matriarchal Studies, the topic is too big to do justice to in a few sentences. I can only say what I am doing in my own research, which is that I am worried about the greenhouse effect. Apparently South Africa is due to become one of the two driest areas in the world by 2015, it will become desertified. So I will hopefully complete the research I am doing on the plants of the Eastern and Southern Cape in the next two years and increasingly study our desert and semi-desert plants after that. So we can know what to grow for food. In that way I am preparing for the troubles that are coming and trying to preserve as much of our matriarchal culture as possible.”

Hengde Danshilcuo (He Mei), Mosuo, Yunnan (China)

“Start where we are, with what we have, do what we can.”

2.3. The viewpoint of women in patriarchal societies worldwide:

The statements are about:

- the significance of modern Matriarchal Studies for women in patriarchal societies; i.e. that these studies present a completely different kind of society than they are used to living in.
- their identities as women, their concepts of history, and their worldviews.
- their awareness of still existing matriarchal patterns in their own lives, and in the lives of other women.
- the creation of new matriarchal patterns and their significance for the political empowerment of women in general.

Uschi Madeisky and Gudrun Frank-Wissmann, filmmakers (Germany)

“Our careers as filmmakers took us to several matrilineal/matriarchal societies. There we experienced matriarchal consciousness for the first time. We received our second socialization from the Khasi, the Garo, the Kunama and the Palauan women. This rescued us from the handicap we inherited from patriarchies. For this we are grateful to our many mothers and sisters. But we also experienced that all these societies are forced to give up their roots and values by Christian missions with a powerful support. Therefore we call on all sisters to join the *Association for the protection and promotion of matrilineal/matriarchal societies and their values* because these societies provide us with the insides we need to live in a peaceful world.” www.ur-kult-ur.de

Mary Margaret Navar, translator (Texas /USA)

“From the passing ancestor clouds above, to the foam floating on a cup of chocolate, life is filled with sacred opportunities. Let us seize them with respect and passionately pull them to the center of our hearts, bodies and spirits so that we might be fed and have enough to feed others by giving with gentility and compassion – one world, one heart.”

Lydia Ruyle, artist (USA)

“The ancient mothers are calling each of us to remember and return the soul to the images and stories of the divine feminine, the goddess. –
If you want to change reality: just do it! That is what crones do. They don’t whine, they just do it.”

Maria Teresa (Mexico)

“Killings of the women in Juarez! It is our birthright to have safety, and the birthright of our young daughters who have to work in these factories. And that they can get home safely after work. Step out of your heads into your hearts and support us, we are women like you. Our daughters are dying. I ask for help, letters to the governor of Chihuahua, articles in your press! Mexico is not helping. Include birthright and safety in the declaration. Women there want support from the international community in terms of letters to Governor of Chihuahua and President Fox. A women’s conference must include this!
I learned patriarchy is not universal. But the market economy is making it become universal.”

Ana Isla, activist (Peru / Canada)

“We ignored the situation that it is patriarchy which we are living in. Development has amounted to an attack on the last indigenous lands. Latin America is destroying the biodiversity. Ecotourism is destroying every last religious site. Genetic material being destroyed and IP’s are a target for extermination. We need to link oppression by the patriarchy to capitalistic oppression.”

Amejo Amyot (USA)

“We declare: to acknowledge, to value, to see the importance of traditional crafts as the deepest connection to intuitive knowing, to Mother Earth. –
Write a declaration that we can take to the women and children in the schools!”

Beebe Frazer, midwife (USA)

“I declare that every baby has the right to be greeted to the planet in a circle of love and gentleness – rather than in an environment of machines and monitors and an overriding fear of pain and disease.

I declare that each woman has the right to feel the divine power of her blood mysteries of menarche, childbirth, and menopause.

I declare that the holy ceremonies of birth and death are given back into the hands of women, in the same way as it has been and still is in matriarchal cultures.”

Frieda Werden, feminist radio WINGS (Canada)

“Communication and stories are mothering tools and also a human right of all peoples. We declare against the use of global telecommunications to plant a monoculture of patriarchal stories modeling accumulation and violence. We declare in support of community media with equal access for all – especially women!”

Author unknown

“As we, each in our own way, work to move the concepts of patriarchy into the popular consciousness, let us confront patriarchy everywhere with expressions of love, creativity, and joy. A vigorous celebration of life is a most effective weapon in the hands of modern day non-violent amazon warriors.”

Caresse Bennett (USA)

“We declare that it is no longer acceptable to define any human being as superior to another. It is no longer acceptable to define any person as acceptable to exploit – whether that person be disabled, of a different race, an elderly person, a woman, or of any other differentiated group.

We will form networks and alliances between women and men of all nations who love and respect the Divine Feminine and live up to her principles. And who are willing to create life-based, successful, economic models that help to see that there are alternatives.

We declare that we will look to the wisdom of the indigenous peoples worldwide to help us to create the new models.”

Jean Hamilton (USA)

“I agree that global capitalism and market economy is an outcome of patriarchy. We have to underscore our sense of urgency in opposing the spread of harmful effects of global capitalism on both the earth (e.g. global warming) and on the cultures and well-being of indigenous peoples.

Matriarchal cultures hold the key to helping us all. We learn how to preserve that knowledge, how to simplify, down-size, and to live in a more sustainable way, how to create women’s spaces and real communities – as existing patriarchal societies (here: USA) start to crumble.

Thus, I believe, we must both theorize and take action. What we do now is urgent! My path is to create women’s land and a women’s community in New Mexico.”

Maria Suarez, feminist radio FIRE (Costa Rica)

“The purpose of this congress is to unite us. The academic research which was presented here should be shared with people outside. –

Another point: In matriarchy the body was central, but in patriarchy this is denigrated. The beauty culture and business also is a new form of colonization. It has profound effects on the way it divides women. In many ways patriarchy makes women sick, so a part of our struggle has to be to heal ourselves. Militancy can burn us out quickly, so we have to heal ourselves. For this reason, there exist women's health collectives in Costa Rica." www.fire.or.cr

Peggy Reeves Sanday, anthropologist (USA)

"Speaking truth to power. I wrote a book about sex and privilege on campus. You can't always change things by being sweet. Speaking out derives from the strength I gained and what I learned from the Minangkabau. So I want to do a popular film on this subject."

Jeanne Johnson (USA)

"Walking away from patriarchy one step at a time!
Each one is powerful where you are. Each one teach one."

Author unknown

"We can create a women's walking circle. This means to act as host for meetings neighborhoodwise. Share numbers so when you want to go for a walk with someone, call a number. On the walks, we can tell them about the matriarchy."

Author unknown

"Teach girls about their divinity, present other positive models of femininity."

Annette Kuhn, historian (Germany)

"Don't believe what is written in the history books. Teach what you know by your own experience! Matriarchy is the force that keeps all of this going. If patriarchy were victorious, we would vanish. Gift economy is the basis of what we are doing. I am building a Museum of Women's History." www.hdfg.de

Linda Christiansen (Canada)

"Start rebuilding the women's movement. Figure out most egregious evidence of patriarchy in your communities and start resisting it, and include everybody's wisdom. Information, knowledge and wisdom are different, pay regard to the distinction. In Canada we have started to use CEDAW."

Chiquie Estrada (USA)

"We have an early education school for children to learn responsibility and ecology. They are using the Montessori model which is based on maternal love, just like gift giving and just like matriarchy."

Sally Jacques, Congress Coordinator (USA)

“Stay local in your community. Be known in the community so you can bypass all the institutions that are employed to stop you from helping people in crisis situations. Meet together, so you can strategize about how to be able to take action, because it will be more and more necessary now that Mother Nature is speaking.”

Dona Enriquetas Contreras, Zapoteca (Mexico)

“Giving birth. I have been attending births for 50 years. My grandmother was also a midwife and she had 22 children. Lived for 115 years, and no one showed her how to birth. She spoke her own language. I have 6 children, and no one is going to show me how to give birth. We decide for ourselves and we are no one’s instrument. Science is one thing, but conscience is another.

People pay the doctor so they can give you the illness. We exhibit ourselves and the doctor decides how we give birth. This violates a spiritual rule. I invite young women and all mothers here to engage in the task from this day forward to begin education from the very nucleus of our families.

We have to be right, physically and spiritually so we can offer something to others. We have a heart that beats and a divine light and we are connected with the entire universe. That is why we are called ‘women’. These values are so important, and we can’t buy them at any marketplace in the U.S. So if we seek cure for all these epidemics then we have to fight against the pestilence that is hurting us.

The importance of this gathering is that each and every one of us transmit the words of everyone here and, in this way, transmit a good future. So we can begin to make our change. No neighbour is going to fix what is broken in my house. That is something I must fix in my own house. Every interaction is sacred. Women are a garden of flowers. We need the value of respect.”

Thanks to all those who supported both of the *World Congresses on Matriarchal Studies* in the most generous way, and to those on whose lifelong research they were based. The congresses were great successes. The short and longterm consequences of these extraordinary events cannot be anticipated at this point.

May the example of matriarchal societies show us how to leave patriarchy behind, and may women lead the way again to societies of peace!

December 2005

*HAGIA. International Academy for Modern Matriarchal Studies and Matriarchal Spirituality
and
The Center for the Study of the Gift Economy*