

# Press release

## CONGRESS ANNOUNCEMENT

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## SOCIETIES OF PEACE

PAST, PRESENT, FUTURE,

**Second World Congress of Matriarchal Studies**

*Texas State University Performing Arts Center  
San Marcos/Austin, Texas, USA*

Congress Website:

[www.second-congress-matriarchal-studies.com](http://www.second-congress-matriarchal-studies.com)

The First World Congress of Matriarchal Studies took place with great success in September 2003 in Luxembourg, Europe, titled: *SOCIETIES IN BALANCE. Gender Equality, Consensus, Culture in matrilineal, matrifocal, matriarchal Societies*. It was organized and chaired by Heide Goettner-Abendroth (International Academy HAGIA, Germany) and generously sponsored by Luxembourg's Minister of Family and Women' Affairs, Marie-Josée Jacobs.

We are excited to announce that the ***Second World Congress on Matriarchal Studies*** will be held in the USA on September 29<sup>th</sup> to October 2<sup>nd</sup> 2005. It will be held in San Marcos, Texas, at the "Texas State University Performing Arts Center". Once again the congress will be organized and chaired by Heide Goettner-Abendroth. The sponsor is Genevieve Vaughan, director of the "Center for the Study of the Gift Economy" (Austin, Texas) and is organized by the Center in co-operation with the International Academy HAGIA.

The language used in the Congress will be English, exclusively.

***Matriarchal societies*** have a social structure exclusive of violence. Contrary to the common prejudice, which misunderstands matriarchy as "women's rule", these societies are based in a tradition of gender equality, negotiate their political decisions through consensus and have

intelligent rules to ensure a peaceful life. Prior to the beginning of modern Matriarchal Studies, 20 years ago, matriarchies had not been explored objectively and impartially by Western social science. Despite the disrespect they have suffered, matriarchal societies continue to exist on different continents and have a long and very interesting history.

It is now our intention to give a worthwhile presentation to a wider public of these largely unrecognized societies, which have mainly been shaped by women. We are therefore very happy to announce that indigenous women and men from many still existing matrilineal or matriarchal societies will be speaking about their ways of life and about their political struggles with surrounding patriarchal societies.

At the beginning of this new millennium, there is a lively interest in what has become a new social science. Matriarchal studies make visible a form of society, which is peaceful and balanced both in regard to gender and with respect to the generations, and which demonstrates an ecologically appropriate way of dealing with all living beings. The example of matriarchal societies can inspire us to find better social and cultural models for the solution of many contemporary problems.

At the same time, this new discipline makes it clear that women have always been the creators of societies and cultures although their important history has been made invisible. Regaining this deeper knowledge of history is crucial, especially for women.

In this respect the *First World Congress* was already a ground-breaking event. For the first time it brought together scientists from across the world who have previously worked on this subject in a rather isolated fashion. The speakers came from Europe, Africa, the US and China. Their presentations were by no means merely preliminary approaches in this field of research, but deep and thoroughly elaborated lifeworks on the subject, presented in precise and concentrated form. Thus a widespread alternative “scientific community” came to the fore. It became apparent that the discussion on Modern Matriarchal Studies has developed to the greatest extent in German speaking countries, aided by the pioneering work of the indefatigable Heide Goettner-Abendroth. In her principal address she gave a new definition of “Matriarchy” and lectured on the scope of present research. There was general assent to this definition from the great majority of the scientists present.

The *Second World Congress* is a great expansion on the first. This time the aim of bringing together speakers from almost all living matriarchal societies can be achieved. Only a small number of indigenous speakers were heard at the First World Congress, coming from China and North Africa. In comparison, this time half of the speakers are from matriarchal cultures. They come from North America, Central America, South America, North Africa, West Africa, South Africa, India, Sumatra and China. Due to this fact the Second World Congress is going to be an intercultural event, second to none, giving members of matriarchal cultures from around the world their first opportunity to meet. This congress could give them the possibility to start in co-operating with each other in their fight for recognition of their unique cultural identity, which they have, up until now, fought for mostly alone and isolated.

Another aim is to bridge the gaps in the international discussion between the European, especially the German, and the US-American discussion, on matriarchy. In spite of the existence of characteristic differences, the knowledge and scientific exchange between the continents can only be of benefit for the further development of the subject.

Therefore European women are warmly requested to be present at this congress in great numbers and not to avoid the long-distance flight across the ocean, especially as the Americans were not put off previously when they came in great numbers to the First World Congress for Matriarchal Studies.

At the first congress it was American enthusiasm, which voiced the wish for a second congress in the US. Genevieve Vaughan, who attended the World Congress in Luxembourg took up the challenge and surprisingly invited Heide Goettner-Abendroth to hold the second World-Congress in Texas. In this gift-giving way, Genevieve Vaughan is providing the opportunity to build this bridge and to give space to academics and to indigenous matriarchal speakers from across the world to present their culture and comment on their present situation.

### **Bibliography:**

Genevieve Vaughan:

*For-Giving. A Feminist Criticism of Exchange*, Plain View Press, Austin, Texas 1997

(Ed). *Athanor, Il Dono/The Gift, a feminist analysis*. Meltemi editore, Rome. 2004.

See also [www.gift-economy.com](http://www.gift-economy.com)

Heide Goettner-Abendroth:

*Das Matriarchat I. Geschichte seiner Erforschung*

*Das Matriarchat II,1. Stammesgesellschaften in Ostasien, Indonesien, Ozeanien*

*Das Matriarchat II,2. Stammesgesellschaften in Amerika, Indien, Afrika*

Kohlhammer Verlag, Stuttgart 1988-2000

Her other books on the subject of matriarchy can be found at:

[www.goettner-abendroth.de](http://www.goettner-abendroth.de)

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***At the Second World-Congress you will hear:  
(in the order of appearance in the program)***

Heide Goettner-Abendroth, Germany

Genevieve Vaughan, USA

Sandra Mayo, USA

Claudia von Werlhof, Austria

Barbara Mann, Seneca, Iroquois, USA

Jeanette Armstrong, Okanagan, Canada

Mililani Trask, Polynesian, Hawaii

Taimalie Kiwi Tamasese, Samoan, New Zealand

Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, Germany

Rosa Martha Toledo Martinez, Juchiteca, Mexico

Dona Enriqueta Contreras, Oaxaca, Mexiko

Antje Olowaili, Germany

Mariela de la Ossa, Kuna, Panama

Uschi Madeisky, Germany

Hélène Claudot-Hawad, France

Fatimata welet Halatine, Tuareg, North Africa

Malika Grasshoff, Kabyle, Algeria  
Wilhelmina J. Donkoh, Akan, West Africa  
Gad A. Osafo, Akan, West Africa  
Cécile Keller, Switzerland  
Yvette Abrahams, Khoekhoe, Khoisan, South Afrika  
Bernadette Muthien, Khoekhoe, Khoisan, South Afrika  
Patricia Mukhim, Khasi, Northwest India  
Savithri de Turreil, Nayar, Kerala, Southwest India  
Peggy Reeves Sanday, USA  
Ibu Ita Malik, Minangkabau, Sumatra  
Lamu Gatusa, Mosuo, South China  
Danshilacuo, Mosuo, South China  
Joan Marler, USA  
Lucia Chiavola Birnbaum, Italy/USA  
Vicki Noble, USA  
Marguerite Rigoglioso, USA  
Susan Gail Carter, USA  
Annette Kuhn, Germany  
Kurt Derungs, Switzerland  
Kaarina Kailo, Finland  
Christa Mulack, Germany  
Max Dashu, USA  
Lydia Ruyle, USA

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