

THE CONTRIBUTION OF KOMAJA IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SEXUAL CULTURE IN MACEDONIA

by

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Sexuality in a patriarchal and traditional country in transition that is Macedonia is still a taboo topic hidden under the veil of mysticism, fear, shame and un-freedom. Social ambient toward important questions of sexuality in Macedonian society unfortunately is still burdened with patriarchal, conservative and religious prejudices. Official statistics data show that the number of abortions, sexual infectious diseases, and sexual violence acts is increasing, as well as the number of sexually abused women and children, divorced marriages, traumatized children from divorced marriages, drug addicts and alcoholics.

The basic tool for investigating sexual behaviour is the analytical concept of "sexual culture" which is defined as the system of meaning, knowledge, beliefs and practices, that structure sexuality in different social contexts. Culture shapes individual sexuality through roles, norms, and attitudes, which then contribute to the construction of a shared experiential meaning. Research on sexual culture situates the behavioural analysis of sex into its wider social and cultural context to define its boundaries and identify which variables are found within populations. The scope of analyzing sexual behaviour is to three key issues which include: sexual categories and classifications; variations in sexual partnerships; and the range of sexual practices and their indigenous categorization. First, cultural categories and sexual classifications primarily afford insights into indigenous linguistic codes, illuminate motives for sexual behaviour, sanctioned roles, and underlying cultural ideologies of gender such as masculinity and femininity. Second, the study of the sexual behaviours includes the identification, characterization, selection, number and frequency of changing sexual partners. Third, specific practices include all the forms in which sexual contact occurs and generalized sexual expressions such as heterosexual, homosexual, structured, institutionalized, spontaneous, individualized, or collective. Analysis of specific practices also includes cultural information about taboos, prohibitions or requirements for the context of certain sexual behaviour. According to all these researches there is a low level of sexual culture in Macedonia.

Fields study and comparative analyze on the institutions and organizations which in some area work with sexuality to this day

show that in Macedonia the only organized social factors that persistently make efforts to achieve development of a healthy sexuality and connected with it: acknowledgment, promotion and respect of the sexual rights defined in the Declaration of the Sexual Rights on the World Association of Sexology are the Komaja - Society for the Development of the Art of Living from Skopje and the Komaja Society for Development of Consciousness and Culture of Love from Ohrid. Komaja Society from Skopje from April 2007 is a member of World Association of Sexual Health. For more than 13 years these nongovernmental organisations have successfully spread valuable information about sexuality, based on scientific research, offering understandable knowledge and education about sexology to all interested parties and with a small budget that supports sexual health in the sense of prevention and treatment of different sexual problems and disorders which are the main initiators of psychosocial problems.

Through the regular weekly activities, workshops and seminars, public lectures and media appearances, as well as through different project activities, Komaja contributed in raising the level of the love-erotic and sexual culture in Macedonian society. Lectures, debates, courses, publishing books, printing and distributing educative materials, brochures and flyers, cultural events and original techniques and methods for self-development and improving the sexual health, based on the international philosophical - spiritual system Komaja, contribute to humanization, demystification and removal of taboos on sex as well as recognition of its major role in our lives; successful recognition, awareness and liberation from different types of deviations, fears, complexes and frustrations, that are a consequence of the unnatural relation that science, religion, culture and society have to the human being as a sexual and psychosocial being; awareness and liberation from the chains of primitivism as well as from the physical, emotional, and mental violence that rules in patriarchal societies; emancipation of the soul and spirit of the woman in all aspects of her individual, marriage and social life; informing the public about the recent developments and achievements in the world in the sphere of sexology, sexual education and sexual health; building and developing a society that is healthy in all spheres of the body, soul and spirit; society that cultivates, supports and realizes high ethnic and moral values.

Among the most notable successes that the Komaja Society in Skopje had achieved in past years are the I initiative and campaign for the introduction of love-erotic and sexual education in the educational system in the Republic of Macedonia. Several public lectures have been organized; several articles have been published in the printed media and several appearances in the electronic media. A proposed curriculum has been prepared and seven high schools were visited in which introductory lectures were realized and a questionnaire was made in which the opinions of the high school students were polled about sexuality and the need for sexual education. An expert committee hands over the curriculum and the summed up results of the questionnaire to the Ministry of Education and Science with the purpose of further review. Unfortunately, in this phase the activities are temporarily suspended because of the crude persecution led by one daily newspaper against the project for sexual education and the Komaja Society, and which is a mirror of the religious and sexual prejudices, taboos and conservative values rooted in part of the population. Then, participation and assistance in the international project of Komaja "Orgasmic woman" – training for the improvement of the sexual health and the orgasmic ability of the woman, presented at the 18th World Congress for Sexual Health in Sydney, April 2007. Then, project Love-Erotic Therapy which offers a quality, full and experience-based approach in the prevention and treatment of addictions, the release of creative potentials in the human being and the improvement of the quality of partnerships, through a combination of systematic, practical and efficient scientifically approved methods and techniques. This program with a 95% success rate enables people to develop into strong, healthy and conscious individuals, free of all kinds of addictions (cigarettes, alcohol, drugs, medications, food, Internet, TV, sex). The project was financed by the American governmental agency USAID in cooperation with ISC (where of the offered 265 projects only 25 were selected which were deemed satisfactory for financing), and also got support from the governmental Agency for the Youth and Sport. The Love-Erotic Therapy was successfully presented at the 15th Congress for Sexology held in Paris in June 2001. Also, organization of the seven-day visit and appearances in the media by the American sexologist, marriage therapist and author Marty Klein, founder of the American Award for Sexual Intelligence, which in 2004 was awarded to Makaja, the founder of Komaja. Doctor Klein, during his appearances in the Macedonian media expressing support for Komaja's activities, stated "Komaja strives for sexual freedom and research into the sexual life, creating a progressive institution in Macedonia which helps people lead better lives". In mutual collaboration with the Komaja Foundation from Switzerland, organization of the 25th international summer school of Komaja on the subject "Love", as well as seminars from the program "Art of Love" under the leadership of Makaja. During these events, Komaja received institutionalized support and an invitation for cooperation from the Mayor and Ohrid Municipality, for, among other things, "the activities of Komaja which is especially useful and is of special significance for the citizens in our community". Lastly, Komaja Green Action realized in April - June 2002, under the motto "Some like it clean!" The Ministry for the Environment and Spatial Planning recognized this action as one of the biggest and most massive eco-actions in the history of Macedonia realized in the

city of Skopje.

All these project and activities are a step forward in Komaja's meaningful contribution in the development of sexually healthier society, more natural approach to sexuality, the advancement and protection of the sexual health and sexual rights and building a new culture of love and erotic in the Macedonian society.

[Return to SSSS Program page](#)