

Melissa Assilem

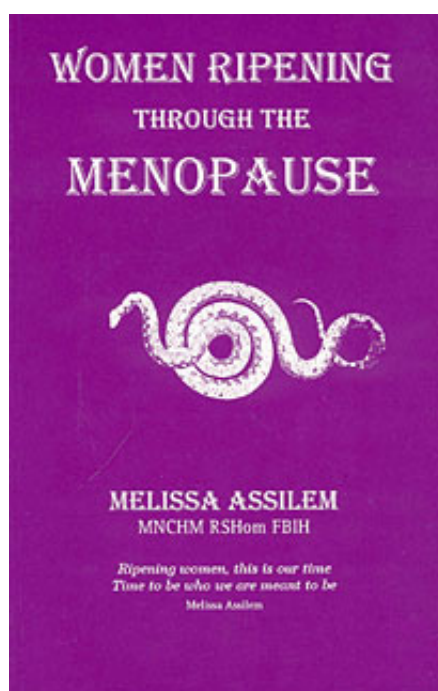
Women Ripening Through The Menopause

Reading excerpt

[Women Ripening Through The Menopause](#)

of [Melissa Assilem](#)

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Tel. +49 7626 9749 700

Email info@narayana-verlag.com

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OUR HERSTORY

Retracing Our Steps

(by the author with thanks to Monique Wittig)

*Once when you were strong,
You walked tall, full of joy, and
ran wild in the wind,*

*It is hard to remember but you
must try, recollect, recall, retrace
your steps.*

*Your voice was loud
your knowledge belonged
your bones were strong
your spirit was powerful.*

*It is hard to remember but you
must try, recollect, recall, retrace
your steps.*



Lany of our mammal sisters are the hunters, the herd, pride, or pack leaders. It is the she-lion with her litter sisters, who holds the pride together. They cooperate in raising the young, and in hunting. The wolf does the same. It

is the females who stay together and the young males who leave the pack to become lone wolves who may eventually join another pack. The elephant cows stay together and collaborate with each other as midwives and aunties to the young of the herd. The females have very sophisticated communication skills.

Our primate sisters live mainly in troops, and share in many tasks of survival. In primate societies the older females support the younger ones.

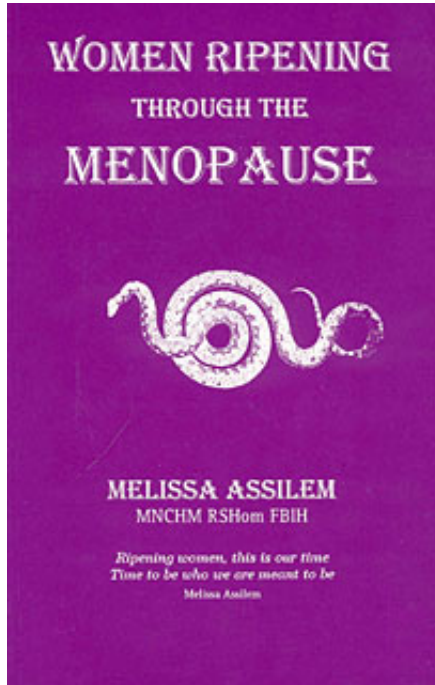
Males generally bow out leaving the females to intervene actively in the fate of their descendants, In effect female primates have two roles in regard to procreation as they provide physical and emotional security though they play them out sequentially. When a troop of langur monkeys is threatened by dogs or humans, *t* or by encroachment upon its territory by other langurs, it is typically the adult male or the oldest females who leave the rest of the troop to charge and slap the offenders.... Clearly then post reproductive female primates take up the defender's role that we had thought to be reserved for young and vigorous male. (Kerns and Brown: 226)

It is from these ancient sisters that we have evolved. Women were the clan leaders and the clan mothers. Our she-elders played an essential part in our evolution. Women were the healers and the wise ones.

Among indigenous Siberian people, there are different terms for a male shaman among different tribes but there is only one among them all meaning a woman shaman: *utygan* or *udagan* or *udaghan*, and never anything etymologically different. The inference is that these tribes are descended from groups that were closer together, or closer in touch, and then all shamans were women, known by a single term *utygen*, that stayed in use after the connections were broken. Male shamans appeared only after the separa-

tion, so the words for them were invented independently. (Ashe: 29)

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