A History of Pederasty

Homosexuality is and has been controversial topic that has recently been brought to the spotlight once more. As gay and lesbian people campaign for marriage equality, a large number of people continue to protest against gay marriage.

Same-sex relationships are nothing new, but the modern concept of "homosexuality" is a relatively recent phenomenon. The ancient Greeks, Romans, Japanese, Chinese, and many other ancient cultures recognized and practiced same-sex relationships, which were generally accepted as normal.

But there is something of an even more sensitive nature than mere same-sex relationships. It is something that was widely practiced in the ancient world, and it is still prevalent in many places today. What I'm talking about is pederasty, or "boy love."

Our modern sensibilities often render the objective analyzation of pederasty difficult. Modern society frowns on adult-child relationships because it is believed that such relationships result in traumatic experiences for children. People are reluctant to discuss anything involving pederasty or pedophilia because of the sensitive nature of the topic. Nevertheless, to avoid discussing these subjects is an affront to history. These things happened, and if our goal is to better understand the societies of yore, we must examine these societies fully and completely.

WHAT IS PEDERASTY?

Pederasty is defined as a sexual relationship between a man and a boy. The word comes from the Greek words for boy (pais) and lover (erastes). The use of the word pederasty differs from pedophilia in several ways, though the two words essentially mean the same thing. Pederasty is usually used exclusively to refer to "boy love," and it generally describes a sexual relationship between a man and a pubescent or post-pubescent boy. Pedophilia literally means "child/boy love," and it is a general term used to refer to adult-child relationships. The term usually signifies an adult's sexual desire for pre-pubescent children.

PEDERASTY IN THE OLD WORLD

Pederasty was prevalent in many ancient cultures. Not only was it prevalent, but it was supported and encouraged. Young males were often seen as the epitome of beauty and youthfulness, and older men would seek out relationships with these young males. Let us examine the practice of pederasty in the ancient world.

Ancient Greece

Perhaps the most well-known practitioners of pederasty in the ancient world were the Greeks. The Greeks were known for their open attitudes toward what we would today call homosexuality, and pederasty was the most common form of same-sex relationships:
"The form of homosexuality that was most common in ancient Greece was pederasty, meaning a relationship between an adult man and a male youth. For the Greeks, pederasty was more than a sexual pasttime or preference - it was nearly a social institution. A same-sex relationship between an older man, probably in his 20s or 30s, known as the erastes, and a beardless boy, the eromenos or paidika, became a cultural ideal. The relationship was regarded as mutually beneficial, as the older man would educate, protect, love, and provide a role model for his lover, while the eromenos offered his partner with beauty, youth, admiration, and love.

The relationship began with a courtship ritual, involving gifts and other norms, and the erastes was to demonstrate that he had nobler interests in the boy rather than a purely sexual concern. The boy was not to submit too easily, and if pursued by more than one man, was to show discretion and pick the more noble one." -- Religion Facts, Homosexuality and the Ancient Greeks [http://www.religionfacts.com/homosexuality/ancient_greeks.htm]

As the quote mentions, **pederasty was an accepted social institution.** Older males (erastes) would court younger males (eromenos), showering them with gifts and adoration. The erastes was expected to be civil in his pursuit of the eromenos, and the eromenos was expected to choose the best and "most noble" candidate.

Though sex played a role in these relationships, to the Greeks, **the relationships were not exclusively sexual.** The erastes was supposed to act as a teacher or mentor to the eromenos. He was charged with educating the young eromenos, teaching him about society and bringing him into adulthood. The eromenos, in turn, provided the erastes with love and sex.

**The most common form of sex practiced between the erastes and the eromenos was intercrural sex.** The erastes would place his penis between the thighs of the eromenos and thrust. Anal penetration was rare, as it was considered demeaning to the recipient. Intercrural sex was known as **diamērizein,** which means "to do between the thighs."

http://www.thinkaboutit-knowaboutit.com/2013/03/an-objective-history-of-pederasty.html
Pederastic relationships in Ancient Greece were often depicted in art, poetry, and mythology. Even the god Zeus partook in the practice of pederasty, taking on a young lover named Ganymede:

"Ganymede is the young, beautiful boy that became one of Zeus' lovers. One source of the myth says that Zeus fell in love with Ganymede when he spotted him herding his flock on Mount Ida. Zeus then came down in the form of an eagle or sent an eagle to carry Ganymede to Mount Olympus where Ganymede became cupbearer to the gods.

All of Zeus' scandalous liaisons have allegorical meanings. Some sources say that Zeus' affair with Ganymede was a (religious) justification for homosexuality within the Greek culture, yet others state that this is merely a reflection of Greek life at that time. Before the popularity of the Zeus and Ganymede myth spread, however, the only toleration for sodomy was an external form of goddess worship. Cybele's male devotees tried to achieve unity with her by castrating themselves and dressing like women.

Apollodorus argued that this myth emphasized the victory of patriarchy over matriarchy. This showed that men did not need women to exist, therefore they did not need the attentions of women. The philosopher Plato used this myth to justify his sexual feelings towards male pupils." -- Pantheon.org, Ganymede [http://www.pantheon.org/articles/g/ganymede.html]

Pederasty in Ancient Greece was widespread. It was an accepted social institution that was especially prevalent among the aristocracy. From Athens to Sparta, Megara to Boeotia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pederasty_in_ancient_Greece#Regional_characteristics], pederasty in Greece flourished for centuries.

**Ancient Rome**

In Ancient Rome, same-sex relationships occurred perhaps even more frequently than they did in Ancient Greece. Pederasty was a part of this, though the practice of pederasty in Rome differed substantially from the pederasty practiced in Greece. From Wikipedia: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pederasty#The_Romans]

"From the early Republican times of Ancient Rome, it was perfectly normal for a man to desire and pursue boys. However, penetration was illegal for free born youths; the only boys who were legally allowed to perform as a passive sexual partner were slaves or former slaves known as 'freedmen', and then only with regard to their former masters. For slaves there was no protection under the law even against rape.

The result was that in Roman times, pederasty largely lost its function as a ritual part of education and was instead seen as an activity primarily driven by one's sexual desires and competing with desire for women. The social acceptance of pederastic relations waxed and waned during the centuries. Conservative thinkers condemned it — along with other forms of indulgence. Tacitus attacks the Greek
customs of 'gymnasia et otia et turpes amores' (palaestrae, idleness, and shameful loves). The emperors, however, indulged in male love — most of it of a pederastic nature — almost to a man. As Edward Gibbon mentions, of the first fifteen emperors, 'Claudius was the only one whose taste in love was entirely correct' — the implication being that he was the only one not to take men or boys as lovers."

Homosexuality was widespread in ancient Rome. This is a depiction of a pederastic relationship as seen on the Warren Cup. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warren_Cup]

In Rome, there was no official, institutionalized pederasty. Man-boy relationships were driven primarily by lustful sex, and there was no educating or civil pursuit involved. Furthermore, whereas the Greek erastes was charged with protecting the young eromenos, no such obligation [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pederasty#The_Romans] existed in Rome:

"The puer delicatus was an 'exquisite' or 'dainty' child-slave chosen by his master for his beauty as a 'boy toy', also referred to as deliciae ('sweets' or 'delights').[85] Unlike the freeborn Greek eromenos ("beloved"), who was protected by social custom, the Roman delicatus was in a physically and morally vulnerable position. The 'coercive and exploitative' relationship between the Roman master and the delicatus, who might be prepubescent, can be characterized as pedophilic, in contrast to Greek paiderasteia. The boy was sometimes castrated in an effort to preserve his youthful qualities; the emperor Nero had a puer delicatus named Sporus, whom he castrated and married."

Because Roman pederasty was not institutionalized, we don't know as much about pederastic relationships in Rome as we do pederastic relationships in Greece. Nevertheless, pederasty was as widespread in the Roman Empire as it was in Greece, albeit in a very different form.

**Japan and China**

[http://www.thinkaboutit-knowaboutit.com/2013/03/an-objective-history-of-pederasty.html]
In Japan, pederastic relationships were known as *wakashudo* ("the way of the young"), or *shudo*. Such relationships often occurred in Buddhist monasteries and among the Samurai class.

In the monasteries, the *nenja* ("lover/admirer," Japanese equivalent to the Greek erastes) would be a monk, priest, or abbot. The younger male was known as the *chigo*, and was usually a student or acolyte. As in Greece, it was expected that both parties be fully committed to and serious about the pederastic relationship, and both parties were expected to be civil.

Among the Samurai, pederasty was also widespread:

"From religious circles, same-sex love spread to the warrior (samurai) class, where it was customary for a boy in the wakashū age category to undergo training in the martial arts by apprenticing to a more experienced adult man. The man was permitted, if the boy agreed, to take the boy as his lover until he came of age; this relationship, often formalized in a brotherhood contract', was expected to be exclusive, with both partners swearing to take no other (male) lovers. This practice, along with clerical pederasty, developed into the codified system of age-structured homosexuality known as *shudō*, abbreviated from wakashūdo, the 'way (do) of wakashū'. The older partner, in the role of nenja, would teach the wakashū martial skills, warrior etiquette, and the samurai code of honor, while his desire to be a good role model for his wakashū would lead him to behave more honorably himself; thus a shudō relationship was considered to have a "mutually ennobling effect". In addition, both parties were expected to be loyal unto death, and to assist the other both in feudal duties and in honor-driven obligations such as duels and vendettas. Although sex between the couple was expected to end when the boy came of age, the relationship would, ideally, develop into a lifelong bond of friendship. At the same time, sexual activity with women was not barred (for either party), and once the boy came of age, both were free to seek other wakashū lovers.

Like later Edo same-sex practices, samurai shudō was strictly role-defined; the
nenja was seen as the active, desiring, penetrative partner, while the younger, sexually receptive wakashū was considered to submit to the nenja's attentions out of love, loyalty, and affection, rather than sexual desire. Among the samurai class, adult men were (by definition) not permitted to take the wakashū role; only preadult boys (or, later, lower-class men) were considered legitimate targets of homosexual desire. In some cases, shudō relationships arose between boys of similar ages, but the parties were still divided into nenja and wakashū roles."

The Japanese practice of pederasty is said to have come from the Chinese [link], who also engaged in man-boy relationships:

"Like so many early civilizations, ancient China institutionalized pederasty of boys, child concubinage, the castration of small boys so they could be used sexually as eunuchs, the marriage of young brides with a number of brothers, widespread boy and girl prostitution and the regular sexual use of child servants and slaves. Under the popular ancient sim pua system of marriage, parents would adopt a girl during infancy, bring her up as a sister to their son and then force them into a marriage that must be considered as incestuous in every way except genetically. Alternatively, they could adopt a son to marry his sister. Sexual use of adopted girls was said to be common. Parents would send their boys to aristocratic households for sexual use – if volunteered as a eunuch, the parents would have their boys’ genitals cut off, which the parents carried with them in a jar. In some areas, male marriage to boys was so popular that there are records of sacrifices to patron deities of pederasty." -- Perversion in Ancient China: Pedophilia and Incest?

**PEDERASTY IN MORE MODERN TIMES**

Today, pederasty is not societally or culturally accepted in most places. It is punishable by law almost everywhere. However, there are still places in the world where pederasty is practiced. It is a difficult situation to handle. On the one hand, the practice of pederasty is ancient and is still acceptable in some cultures. On the other hand, we cannot turn a blind eye to the fact that pederastic relationships are, more often than not, extremely traumatic to children. It is obvious that pederasts and pedophiles take advantage of and exploit young children, and we feel obligated to put an end to what we consider to be a heinous practice. Nevertheless, the practice of pederasty continues to flourish (and grow) in a lot of places, and there doesn't seem to be an end in sight.

**Afghanistan**

The most visible example of modern pederasty is the pederasty practiced in Afghanistan. Known as "bacha bazi, [link]" pederasty in Afghanistan has been practiced since ancient times, and it is on the rise. Young "dancing boys" are made to wear women's clothes and dance seductively for older male audiences. Often, these boys are made to have sexual intercourse with the "highest bidder," and they may even live as permanent sex slaves.
Pederasty is so prominent in Afghanistan because, according to the strict interpretation of sharia law in that nation, women are unclean and should be avoided when possible. Men and women who aren't related rarely associate with each other in Afghanistan. Same-sex relationships between males (including pederasty) are thus extremely common in the nation:

"According to Reuters, there is a lot of homosexuality going on in Afghanistan, but those engaging in it don't think of themselves as gay, so that makes it okay since Islam officially disapproves of the gay and lesbian lifestyle.

They regard themselves as non-gay because they don't 'love' the sex object so Allah is happy. These are the men who avoid their wives as unclean. Apparently there is very little love of any kind in Afghanistan, which explains a lot," according to Reuters.

'Having a boy has become a custom for us,' Ena Yatullah, a 42-year-old in Baghlan province, told a Reuters reporter. 'Whoever wants to show off should have a boy.' Sociologists and anthropologists say the problem results from a perverse interpretation of Islamic law. Women are simply unapproachable. Afghans cannot talk to an unrelated woman until after proposing marriage. Before then, they can't even look at a woman, except perhaps her feet. Otherwise she is covered, head to ankle, according to columnist Joel Brinkley, a professor of journalism at Stanford University, and a former Pulitzer Prize-winning foreign correspondent for the New York Times." -- Afghan Pedophilia; A Way of Life, Say U.S. Soldiers And Journalists

There have been many protests from humanitarians, politicians, and laymen against the dancing boy phenomenon in Afghanistan. Indeed, when one researches the phenomenon, it is evident that these young boys have been severely traumatized. Imagine being a nine-year-old boy, forced to dance for a crowd of grown men who want to have sex with you. Imagine the hopelessness, the helplessness, the embarrassment, and the pain (both emotional and physical) those young boys feel. Unfortunately, such pederasty is not prosecuted in Afghanistan. It is technically illegal, but it is widely accepted, especially among the Pashtun.
CONCLUSIONS

When we examine pederasty in a historical context, we must do our best to remain objective in our research. This is by no means a justification for pederasty; rather, it is a reminder that things change with time. What was acceptable in the past may no longer be acceptable now. Who is right and who is wrong? According to modern society, pederasty is immoral and evil. To the ancient Greeks, it was normal, and look at how Ancient Greece flourished.

When we examine modern pederasty, on the other hand, it is harder to remain objective. We now know what can happen when children and adolescents are sexually exploited. We're no longer talking about some ancient practice: we're talking about things that are happening right now, and we're witnessing the results. Many of us know people who have been victims of sexual exploitation, and many are victims themselves.

Whatever the case may be, pederasty and pedophilia have played major roles in the history of human sexuality, and they will continue to do so. Attitudes regarding such relationships will change, but the relationships will continue to exist.

Think about it.

Peace.

Posted 29th March 2013 by Dante McAuliffe

Labels: bacha bazi, history of pederasty, Pederasty, pederasty in Afghanistan, pederasty in Ancient Greece, pederasty in Ancient Rome

View comments

Anonymous  November 6, 2013 at 6:32 AM
A little less than objective here.

Reply
Dante McAuliffe  November 24, 2013 at 8:05 AM
Thanks for that wonderful bit of insight.

Kim  March 20, 2014 at 5:05 PM
What load of horse manure this is.....this is exploitation of a child. Please don't try to wrap it in a pretty theological bow and call it anything else.....manure still stinks.

Dante McAuliffe  March 21, 2014 at 11:59 PM
There is nothing theological in this article. There is nothing exploitative in this article.

Shane  December 8, 2013 at 9:20 AM
This comment has been removed by the author.

Shane  December 8, 2013 at 9:24 AM
i think we should take the age of consent as a guideline with cases taken on a case by case basis.The age of consent should at least be 16.I know of people in long term sexual relations at 14,15 and 16 with people with people literally twice their age(and ive been pursued by at least a dozen 14-16 year olds online)I also know that at 14-15 i would have wanted a relationship with someone who would have been mature than the kids i was surrounded with(I was discussing shakesphere,politics and would go clubbing with 15/16 year olds at the age of 9).people mature at different rates at different ages.Only by taking things at a case by case basis with an age of at least 16 being a guideline can we weed out sexual predators from those that are not.I think that age of consent laws have gotten too strict though that doesnt mean they should be completly lax or disposed of entirely.Unless there has been actual evidence of physical and emotional abuse inflicted on an adolescent then I dont see anything wrong with relationships between adolescents
The best we can do is educate our kids from at least 12/13 to approach sex responsibly and devlop critical thinking with regards to knowing when they are being manipulated or abused and help them make the decision themselves.
would anyone like to discuss this?

Reply

Dante McAuliffe  December 9, 2013 at 1:08 AM
I can understand the desire to converse with more mature people about subkects like Shakespeare and such, but a sexual relationship is taking it too far. I don't believe any grown man or woman should be pursuing a sexual relationship with anyone
who is not yet emotionally mature enough to make informed decisions. A 16 year old, no matter how mature they may be for their age, is still an immature child and has no business being with a grown person. Better said, a grown person has no business being with a child of that age.

Anonymous  March 1, 2014 at 2:07 PM
I think you are wrong pubescent kids are really cute and sexually prepared, what it's important is that the boy or girl:

1) He or she is not being forced in anyway into it

2) That the kid do not feel it is a sin or that is morally wrong if they feel that sex is wrong they will feel very very bad afterwards

3)if it is a gay relationship the kid should not be homophobic if he has homophobic feelings he/she should not have gay sex because they will feel bad afterwards

I say this from my own experience when I was 12 I was a sexually active boy, and now am a happy and healthy adult and married man

Anonymous  May 21, 2014 at 12:51 PM
I agree, 100%.
I was sexually active with older men since 8.

Anonymous  March 1, 2014 at 1:59 PM
I was a very cute 12 year old boy, honestly cute with a really awesome body....

so is really just natural and healthy that a lot of men and woman wanted to have sex with me, I myself loved the way I looked naked in the mirror. I wanted sex at that age, but only in my own terms, I don't want just anybody to have sex with me, nor did I wanted to be forced in to it.

I am sure you would wanted to have sex with me if you would have seen me at that age on my speedos.
What I mean is not to offend anyone but just to say that is natural, when we are pubescent boys we are just beautiful and sexy and cute, it is a simple true fact.

I think is healthy to have sex at the age of about 11 or 12 and up since I and several friends of me had sex with adult men and woman at about 11 or 12, we also had sex among our selves, and it was great healthy and wonderful.

In any case, my friends and me loved the sex, the friendship and the nice attentions from both adult women and men and we are healthy happy now am married with children.
So, first hand evidence shows that as long as you consent to it, and the adult is caring the sex is wonderful, I really mean it was wonderful. Also as long as you do not feel it is a sin, and in the case of sex with an adult man, as long as you do not have homophobic feelings.

Of course it is a taboo and a sin in present day society, and if the underage kid feels that it is a sin he will feel very bad about it so is not a good idea for a kid who feels it is a sin to go on and have sex because he will feel very sinful, so sinful that he could go as far as to kill himself. Also, it maybe better just not to feel that it is a sin so if you do it you don't feel bad about it.

**Reply**

**Anonymous March 1, 2014 at 8:04 PM**

Just to make things clear:

Am totally against forcing intimidating a kid to get sex from him/her, and am totally against turning a kid into a prostitute, those are horrible crimes.

What I am referring to is that is not true that most sexual relationships that kids have with adults hurt the kid, it depends on how the kid feels about it, if s/he is consenting and willing, and if the adult loves the kid and cares for the kid.

So am talking about my sexual happy early experiences with both adults and other kids, a lot of adults, am sure, had such happy experiences and are fond memories to this day.

cheers!!!!

**Reply**

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