SEXUAL ORIENTATION AND GENDER IDENTITIES THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Lesbian, gay bisexual, transgender, intersex and related identities have been present in various forms throughout history. All cultures have included, with varying degrees of acceptance, individuals who practice same-sex relations as well as those whose gender, gender identity and gender expression challenge prevailing norms, and many cultures still do.

Among the Igbo people of Nigeria (and parts of Benin), a married woman with independent wealth may choose to cross-dress and other behavior blurring the lines of social structure. Other indigenous peoples in the region have similar traditions.

Among the Nandi people, women may marry other women.

In the Mayan culture of the Yucatan Peninsula, sexual relations between men were accepted as part of the social structure. Other indigenous peoples in the region have similar traditions.

In Lisbon, communities of men and women were known to have same-sex relationships, and were targeted by the Inquisition.

Some indigenous Chukchi people in Siberia identified seven genders in addition to male and female.

1st-2nd Century BCE - 6th-7th Century CE: Songs and poems from the ancient Silla Dynasty spoke of same-sex love among men, especially among a group of elite male warriors, the hwarang, who were known to form same-sex relationships.

1st-2nd Century BCE - 12th Century CE: Homosexuality was considered a sign of cultural elitism, was not persecuted, and has been documented as early as the Qin, Han and Tang dynasties in poetry and songs.

In the 16-17th Century, women identified as burunsha, who take a chaste vow at a young age, can live as men and assume traditionally male roles in society and in their family.

6th Century BCE - 6th Century CE: Male homosexuality was an accepted phenomenon, practiced by high status individuals usually with younger men. The poet Sappho wrote about her affection and desire for other women. The philosopher Plato spoke of a third sex, which was both male and female, as part of original human nature.

Islamic hadith (report of the deeds and sayings of Prophet Muhammad) state that the Prophet of Islam issued rulings regarding the personal rights of gender variant people identified as mukhannathun, especially concerning inheritance.