

Lesson 15

Pleasure and Human Rights

Reading 1

Reading and Discussion: Learning about Sexuality in Two Different Societies
From *Older, Wiser, Sexually Smarter: 30 Sex Ed Lessons for Adults Only*

THE INIS BEAG PEOPLE

The Inis Beag people live on an isolated island off the coast of Ireland. For the most part, this small population of about 350 is poor and either fish or farm for a living. This culture has been referred to as one of the “most sexually naive cultures in the world.” One of the reasons for this is that sex is never discussed at any time. Daughters are not taught about menstruation, intercourse, orgasms, or childbirth. Both the onset of menstruation and of menopause are greatly feared, and menopause is believed to cause madness. Oral sex, fondling of the penis or breast, homosexuality, anal intercourse, and even French kissing are either unknown or considered totally depraved. The men believe that sexual intercourse will destroy their health. The only position for intercourse is the male-above “missionary position” with no foreplay. Female orgasm is considered a sign of possession by the devil.

Nudity is forbidden. Mothers bathe their children in a smock so that they never see them nude. Husbands and wives never see each other naked, and the children and adults only wash hands, feet, lower arms and legs, and faces. Men would rather risk drowning than wear swim trunks that expose their legs.

Marriage occurs late; for men at 36 and for women at 25. Marriages are arranged by the parents without concerns for the wishes of the couple. Premarital intercourse does not exist. Families are large, with an average of seven children. Sons are favored by their mothers, and this often results in open resentment between fathers and sons. Hostility frequently exists between husband and wife because there is usually no love in the relationship, and the wife often resents the husband’s freedom.

THE MANGAIAN PEOPLE

The Mंगाians inhabit the Cook Island in the South Pacific. In private, boys and girls are free to engage in all forms of sexual activity, with adults pretending not to be aware of these activities. In public however, Mंगाian boys and girls are segregated from the age of 3 to 4. Even hand holding is considered very immodest. Yet prior to the age of segregation, boys and girls run around naked and masturbate in public.

The Mंगाians believe that sexual pleasure should come first, before any affection, in the formation of an intimate relationship. They find the American belief that you do not have sex with someone you do not love or have a strong affection for very strange.

Adolescent sex is very open and encouraged by adults. Boys undergo a type of circumcision at the age of 13 or 14. Once the wound is healed, the teenage boy has intercourse with an experienced older woman. Both sexes are taught the art of sexual pleasuring, and masturbation is encouraged. Orgasm is universal for both boys and girls, and heterosexual intercourse, including oral and anal sex, is enjoyed in a variety of positions.

Parents encourage premarital sexual activity with many partners. In their teens and 20s, young men and women engage in intercourse several times a night. Extramarital sex occurs when a woman goes back to the man with whom she first had sexual intercourse. It also occurs when men and women are separated from their spouses. The Mंगाians believe that regular sexual activity keeps a person from becoming ill and losing his or her mind.

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