

Kathoey: transgender and thai

[Health & Medicine](#), [Sex](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Robert Wilson Specific Purpose: To inform my audience about the large number of Transsexuals found in Thailand. Central Idea: There is a growing number of transsexuals living in Thailand and the Thai are comfortable with it, which is not the norm in the west, these transsexuals play a part in many aspects of Thailand's culture and society Method of Organization: Topical I. Introduction A. A little girl, Miss Moon, was once given a crushed paper flower by a passing man of magic. He told her that if she took care of it it would grow into a beautiful tree of blossoms. She planted it and took care of it for years, ignoring the villagers who laughed at her telling her that her flower was just made of paper. And yet nothing happened. Some years later she woke up to find that the flower had grown into the most beautiful tree imaginable: full of sweet blossom. Everyone from miles around came to admire it. But some villagers still laughed, saying that it was just a paper tree, and wasn't real at all. The young girl smiled, answering that she knew it was not real, but she didn't care, for her tree was the most beautiful tree that she had ever seen. (Old Thai folk story) (Martin) B. Though the tree was not as it seemed, the Thai still admired it for what it was. The Thai also have an aspect of their culture that is definitely not what it seems. C. Halfway around the world, Thailand is home to quite a bit of the world's population of Transexuals, hermaphrodites, and transvestites, over 3 million of them. (Winter) D. Over there, it is quite normal to see a few here and there, as opposed to us in the west, where seeing one is similar to seeing bigfoot. E. I am about to take you into the world of Thailand's transexuals, where I shall inform you about transexuals and transvestites in Thai society, how they are viewed in society, how they function in society, and the role they play in

Thailand's culture. II . The Kathoey A. In Thai culture, western social norms dealing with sex are not clearly distinguished, heterosexual and homosexual actions all have one word, phet. (Nanda 72) a. THE THAI BELIEVE, SEXUAL IDENTITY IS CREATED BY ONE'S SOCIAL SURROUNDINGS, AND IS CLEARLY UP FOR NEGOTIATION, UNLIKE OUR WESTERN BINARY SEXUAL CULTURE. B. THUS, INTRODUCES THE KATHOEY, THE THIRD SEX OF THIALAND. a. KATHOEY HAD AN ORIGINAL BIOLOGICAL CONNOTATION AS A BEING WITH INDETERMINATE SEX OR A HERMAPHRODITE, ALTHOUGH THE MEANING HAS BEEN EXPANDED TO REFER TO TRANSVESTITES, OR TRANSSEXUALS. (ESTERIK 213) C. THE THAI VIEWS ON THIS DIFFERENT " SEX" ARE SURPRISINGLY ACCEPTING, COMPARED TO OUR CUT AND DRY VIEWS ON SEXUALITY IN THE WEST. a. THE THAI BELIEVE THAT BEING A KATHOEY IS PERFECTLY NORMAL, BECAUSE IT IS THE PERSON'S KARMA TO BE SO. AND IN SAYING THAT, THAI BELIEF IS TO NOT RIDICULE THOSE WHO ARE DIFFERENT BECAUSE OF KARMA. AS WELL AS THAT, THE BUDDHIST BELIEF OF KARMA ALLUDES TO BEING A TRANSGENDER IS FORCED UPON THEM, NOT A CHOICE. (BECAUSE THEY ARE SOCIALLY ACCEPTED IN SOCIETY, THIS IS ANOTHER ASPECT TO EXPLORE IN THE KATHOEY'S EXISTENCE) III. THE KATHOEY IN SOCIETY A. THE KATHOEY ARE SIMPLY REGULAR PEOPLE IN SOCIETY, THEY WORK, THEY ARE SEEN IN PUBLIC JUST ANOTHER PART OF SOCIETY. A. ACCORDING TO SAM WINTER, 40% PERCENT OF KATHOEY FEEL AS THOUGH THEY WERE ACCEPTED OR ENCOURAGED BY SOCIETY, 27% FELT THAT THEY WERE SIMPLY TOLERATED, AND ONLY 15% BELIEVED THAT THEY WERE REJECTED. B. THE FAMILY ASPECT OF THAI LIFE HAS A STRONG INFLUENCE OF THESE INDIVIDUALS MAKING THEIR CHOICE OF BECOMING A

KATHOEY. 40% OF FATHERS WERE ACCEPTING, EVEN ENCOURAGING OF THEIR SON'S CHOICE, 66% OF MOTHERS FELT THE SAME WAY, IN THE WESTERN WORLD, THERE IS NO PARALLEL. B. HOWEVER, THERE IS ALSO A STIGMA THAT GOES ALONG WITH BEING A KATHOEY. ACCORDING TO SERENA NANDA, AUTHOR OF GENDER DIVERSITY: CROSSCULTURAL VARIATIONS THAI TRADITION IS TO HONOR TALKING, DRESSING, AND ACTING LIKE A MAN EVEN THOUGH THAT MAY NOT BE HOW ONE FEELS, INDIVIDUALISM, WHICH IS A WESTERN IDEAL. SO FATHERING A FAMILY, THOUGH YOUR PREFERRED SEXUAL PARTNER IS MALE, IS FOLLOWING THAI CULTURAL TRADITION. C. THE KATHOEY ARE NOT LIMITED IN THEIR JOBS, BUT THEY DO HAVE TO OVERCOMPENSATE FOR THEIR DECISION. SO THEY MUST BE INTELLIGENT, DECENT LOOKING AND WELL QUALIFIED TO HOLD A JOB. OTHERWISE, THEY ARE FORCED INTO WORK AT BARS, BROTHELS, AND OTHER " FEMALE" VOCATIONS. (WINTER) (NOW LETS TAKE A LOOK AT THE KATHOEY THEMSELVES) IV. BEING A KATHOEY A. THE THAI BELIEVE THAT THE KATHOEY POSSES A BETTER BODY THAN AN ACTUAL FEMALE (ESTERIK) A. THESE TRANSGENDERS ARE BELIEVED TO ALSO HAVE A SUPERIOR KNOWLEDGE OF FASHION AND FEMININE DEMEANOR. B. KATHOEYS ARE ALSO A SEXUAL OUTLET FOR YOUNG MEN. WOMEN ARE TO BE VIRGINS UNTIL MARRIAGE, SO SOME MEN GO AND FIND SEXUAL SATISFACTION IN KATHOEYS. A. THE KATHOEYS ARE TO BE THOUGHT OF AS SEXUAL LIBERTINES, TO FREELY DO AS THEY PLEASE SEXUALLY, THOUGH THE IDEAL SERIES OF EVENTS FOR A KATHOEY IS FOR A WESTERNER TO FALL IN LOVE WITH THEM, AND TAKE THEM SOMEWHERE BETTER, WHICH IS PRETTY MUCH THE SAME DREAM OF SOME WOMEN FROM THE THIRD WORLD. (WINTER) C.

THAILAND IS THE PREMIER PLACE FOR TRANSGENDER OPERATIONS. THE SKY IS THE LIMIT ON WHAT THE DOCTORS CAN PERFORM AND IS FAIRLY CHEAP COMPARED TO THE WEST. A. AS WELL AS THAT, THE THAI ALSO HAVE AN ARRAY OF FEMALE HORMONES, AND OTHER METHODS TO CONVERT ONE'S SEXUAL IDENTITY. V. MAA KHII A. WOMEN TRANSSEXUALS AND TRANSVESTITES HAVE PLAYED A MAJOR ROLE IN MANY OLD THAI RITUALS PERFORMED STILL TODAY. B. ACCORDING TO THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF SEXUALITY, ONE RITUAL IN SPECIFIC, THE NUAL RITUAL INCLUDES THE MAA KHII, FEMALE TRANSVESTITES AND TRANSSEXUALS WHO BECOME POSSESSED BY THEIR MALE ANCESTORS. A. WHEN THEY ARE POSSESSED BY THE " PHII" (THE MALE SPIRIT), THEY BEGIN TO ACT IN CRUDE AND ALMOST WILD BEHAVIOR. THEY BEGIN TO CURSE, DRINK, SHOUT OBSCENITIES, AND EVEN FLIRT WITH THE LOCAL WOMEN, WHICH ARE ALL MASCULINE TRAITS. B. AS WELL AS ACTING MASCULINE, THESE WOMEN ALSO ATTIRE THEMSELVES WITH MALE CLOTHING, AND GO AS FAR AS TO BEGIN SMOKING CIGARS TO EMBRACE THE PHII. C. ALL THE WHILE WHEN THESE WOMEN PRACTICE THEIR RITUALS REGARDING THEIR SEX, THEY STILL PERFORM THEIR WOMANLY DUTIES TO THAILAND, BEING THE MATRIARCH OF THE HOME, HAVING A HUSBAND AND CHILDREN ALL THE WHILE. (TAYWADITEP) D. THE KATHOEY ALSO HAVE A SIMILAR RITUAL OF THEIR OWN, KNOWN AS THE " FAWN PHII". THEY TO PARTAKE IN POSSESSION OF THEIR SOULS, ACT MASCULINE, AND DRESS MASCULINE, EVEN THOUGH THIS IS NOT THE KATHOEY WAY THEY TYPICALLY OPERATE. (TAYWADITEP) V. CONCLUSION A. JUST LIKE MISS MOON, THE THAI ADMIRE SOMETHING THAT IS WHAT IT DEFINITELY IS NOT. B. WHEN I SURVEYED THE CLASS, THE MAJORITY SAID

THAT THEY TOLERATED GAYS, NOT TRANSGENDERS, BUT SIMPLY GAYS, BUT WHEN I ASKED IF AMERICA HAD A NEGATIVE SOCIAL STIGMA TOWARDS GAYS, ALL BUT TWO PEOPLE SAID YES. AS I SAID BEFORE, THERE IS NO PARALLEL IN THE WESTERN WORLD REGARDING THIS EXTREME OF SEXUALITY. C. I AM ENLIGHTENED BY THEIR ACCEPTANCE OF PEOPLE, I BELIEVE THAT ONE'S SEXUALITY IS THE LAST VENUE THAT HAS TO BE SOCIALLY ACCEPTED TO ELIMINATE INTOLERANCE FROM THE WORLD. D. I CHOSE THIS TOPIC TO ENLIGHTEN YOU THAT THERE ARE PLACES WHERE DIFFERENCES DO NOT DIVIDE PEOPLE, AND THERE ARE OTHER WAYS TO VIEW PEOPLE, BESIDES OUR CUT AND DRY WESTERN VIEWS. WORKS CITED ESTERIK, PENNY V. MATERIALIZING THAILAND. OXFORD, NEW YORK: BERG, 2000. " MALE-TO-FEMALE TRANSSEXUALS." GENDER, SEX AND SEXUALITY. 29 SEPT. 2007 . (IMAGE SOURCE) NANDA, SERENA. GENDER DIVERSITY: CROSSCULTURAL VARIATIONS. LONG GROVE, IL: WAVELAND P INC., 2000. TAYWADITEP, KITTIWUD