

# Thailand as a three-gendered society *by Alexis Rodriguez*

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As a three-gendered society, Thailand views gender variance as something natural. 'Kathoey', the local term covering males with generally feminine attributes has a special place in society. There are movies about the lives of trans gendered women, and with trans gendered casts. Hormone therapy can be bought at any pharmacy without a prescription, and sexual reassignment surgery is relatively safe and easy to access, though not inexpensive. Sex tourism and the sex industry facilitate a niche for kathoeyes (semi-reassigned or otherwise) and allows for a means to earn money to support family and become independent. While Thailand is not the 'gay paradise' it appears like to some, it is far from the worst place a gender non-conforming individual could be born in. Kathoeyes/trans people can find themselves among a community of their peers, and are free to be themselves without obstruction.

Keywords: kathoey, Thailand, sex tourism, sexual reassignment, third gender