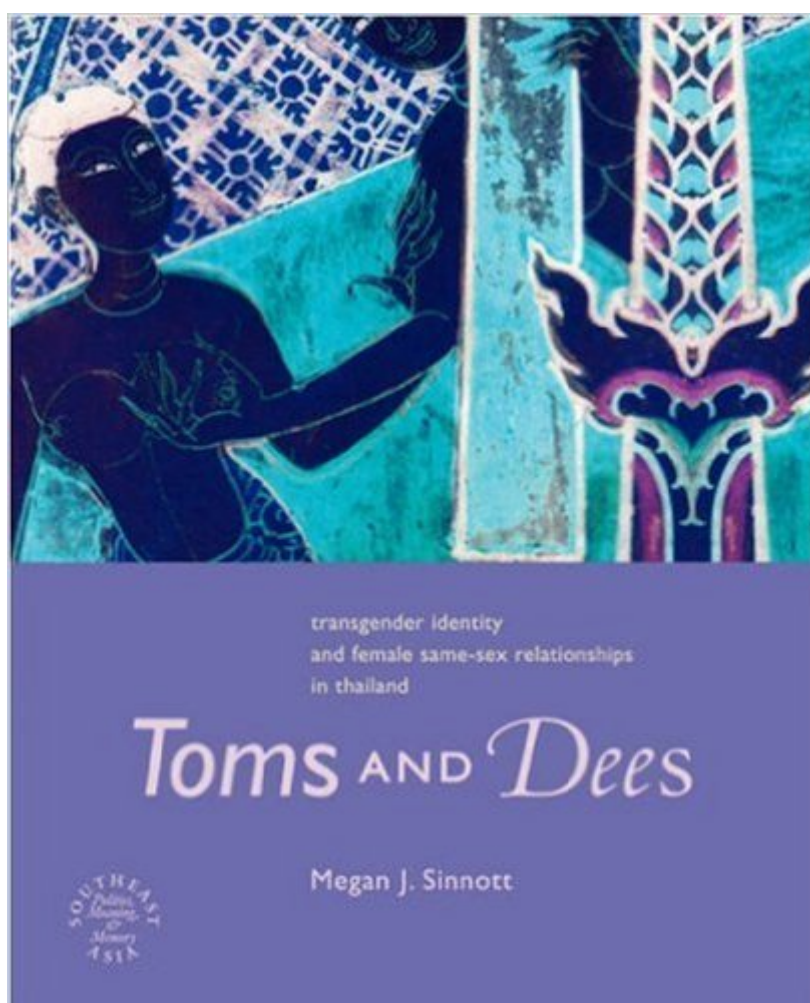


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# Toms And Dees: Transgender Identity And Female Same-Sex Relationships In Thailand (Southeast Asia: Politics, Meaning, Memory)



## Synopsis

A vibrant, growing, and highly visible set of female identities has emerged in Thailand known as tom and dee. A tom (from tomboy) refers to a masculine woman who is sexually involved with a feminine partner, or dee (from lady). The patterning of female same-sex relationships into masculine and feminine pairs, coupled with the use of English-derived terms to refer to them, is found throughout East and Southeast Asia. Have the forces of capitalism facilitated the dissemination of Western-style gay and lesbian identities throughout the developing world as some theories of transnationalism suggest? Is the emergence of toms and dees over the past twenty-five years a sign that this has occurred in Thailand? Megan Sinnott engages these issues by examining the local culture and historical context of female same-sex eroticism and female masculinity in Thailand. Drawing on a broad spectrum of anthropological literature, Sinnott situates Thai tom and dee subculture within the global trend of increasingly hybridized sexual and gender identities.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Dennis Altman asked whether gays in developing countries are adopting Western gay rights, nomenclature, and culture or do they view it as imperial. Sinnott notes that his focus is upon gay men, rather than women-loving women. She looks at Thailand to investigate these matters. For those that don't understand the essentialism-constructivism debates, this book will help to explain everything. Sinnott discusses "toms" and "dees" and doesn't even bring up the Western term "butch-femme" until the latter half of the book. According to Sinnott, gay and homophobic Thais both

embrace and reject the West. Homophobes will say homosexuality is a sign of Western decadence but then also say, "Let's hide Thai gays so that our Western heroes don't look down upon us." Lesbian Thai activists strive to show others that Thai lesbians have existed for centuries, but gay rights is also seen as modern and glamorous given its Western origins. Again, both activism and bigotry are different over there. It's considered impolite to be confrontational and "in your face" a la Queen Nation in the 1990s in Thailand, especially for women of any sexuality. Thus, this book includes several examples of Thai lesbians letting comments slide that Western lesbians would not. However, the author continually repeats that Thai parents would rather see their daughters involved romantically with women than "losing face" by being with unmarried men. As much as the author makes Thailand look greener than the America has been to lesbians, there are instances when Thailand seems dare I say "primitive" for lack of a better word. The author states that Thais only see hyperfeminine gay men and butch lesbians as liking their own sex.

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