

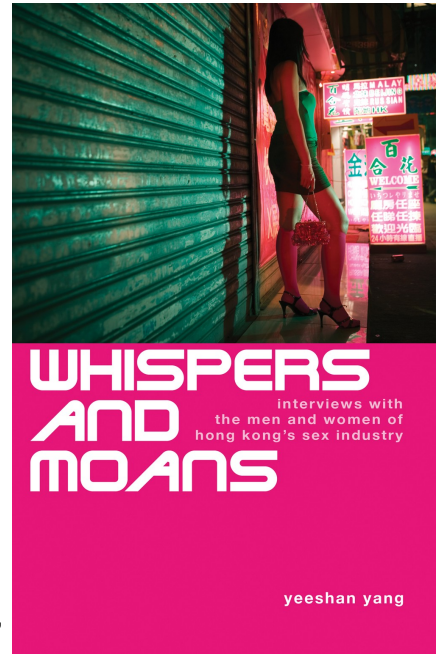
## Whispers and Moans: Interviews with the men and women of Hong Kong's sex industry

INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM by Yeeshan Yang

Hong Kong has a bewildering range of sex businesses offering services to suit all imaginable tastes and budgets: from the glitzy nightclubs of Tsim Sha Tsui East, through the saunas, karaoke lounges and one-woman brothels of Mong Kok, to the littered streets and short-time hotels of north Kowloon.

Chinese-language sex magazines print reviews of individual prostitutes, and promote an ever-widening array of bizarre sexual practices. Even mainstream newspapers engage pimps as columnists. Business appears to be booming – but there are hungry newcomers to this underground economy. How do local prostitutes deal with the ruthless competition posed by an endless supply of girls from mainland China?

To find out, Yeeshan Yang spent a year gaining the trust of the city's sex workers, interviewing 50 hookers, hostesses, toy boys, transsexual prostitutes, mama-sans and brothel owners. The result is an eye-opening book which shows the human side of sex for sale. *Whispers and Moans* contains tales of easy money, financial ruin and hopeless relationships – and unprecedented first-hand insights into Hong Kong's huge but hidden sex industry.



### Film Adaptations

Film director Herman Yau has brought this book to the big screen in two movies: *Whispers and Moans*, which had its premiere at the 2007 Hong Kong International Film Festival, and *True Women For Sale*, which was released in December 2008 and for which Prudence Liew received Best Actress at the Golden Horse Film Awards.

### Reviews

"Yang spent many hours talking to many different people in Hong Kong's sex industry, from Sham Shui Po street hookers addicted to heroin to fetish models, from gigolos who make over \$100,000 a night to Japanese mamasans, from suicidal transsexuals to mainlanders on seven-day visas. The author has clearly tried to exhaust every avenue of this most intriguing of professions in order to provide us with a comprehensive and truthful guide to the oldest profession in the world in Hong Kong." – *Dim Sum magazine*

"What's really striking about *Whispers and Moans* is its breadth. There are chapters on pimps, the Northern girls who come over from the China mainland, the gangster connection, as well as male prostitutes. Due to an early aggressive interview with one of the central figures of the 'Purple Vine', a non-government organization seeking to form the first sex workers' union in Hong Kong, Yeeshan is put on the defensive, and it is because of her need to prove herself that the book functions as more than the sum of its parts." – *Blogcritics*

"*Whispers and Moans* premiered at this year's Hong Kong International Film Festival and is currently playing in cinemas as this issue goes to print... the book may be several times more expensive than the price of a cinema ticket but even were you to buy what should make for interesting bedside reading in the high rent areas of Central, Causeway Bay or Tsim Sha Tsui, it is still HK\$60 cheaper than the set price of street hookers in areas like Yau Ma Tei." – *bc magazine*

"Yang embarked on a mission to investigate the change in attitudes as well as the reality that presently exists in Hong Kong. The result is a comprehensive exploration that has been put together in her *Whispers and Moans: Interviews with the men and women of Hong Kong's sex industry*. The format employed by Yang is a juxtaposition of academic study and storytelling." – *BookPleasures*

"As Yang notes, not all whores are even considered hookers. The ones who live in apartments in Shenzhen and juggle a small stable of Hong Kong married clients are called concubines. The ones who work their way up the film industry are called stars. The ones photographed by paparazzi escorting ageing billionaire tycoons are called lucky. For those that sell their minds or souls – the ones called upstanding members of the workforce – this is a book that will amuse and possibly amaze rather than arouse, provided they join the author in having a sense of humour, a thick skin and no sociological or feminist axe to grind." – *Hemlock's Diary*

### **About the Author**

Yeeshan Yang comes from a migratory family background. She spent her childhood years in Maoist China, where she saw her Indonesian-Chinese father politically persecuted as a spy; grew up in Hong Kong; studied Japanese in Tokyo; experienced migrant life again in Australia; then returned to Hong Kong to work in journalism, filmmaking and publishing while conducting anthropological research. She speaks Putonghua, Cantonese, English and Japanese, and lives in Hong Kong and Singapore.

### **Book Details**

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### **Further Information**

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