



# Wives, Mistresses and Matriarchs: Asian women today

*Louise Williams*

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## **Wives, Mistresses and Matriarchs: Asian women today** Louise Williams

This is the untold story of the women of Asia. It is not a tale of the submissive oriental beauties of western fiction, but the true stories of prime ministers, factory labourers, business magnates, mistresses and prostitutes. It is a true story of extraordinary power and humiliating poverty in a region which is facing the most profound social changes the world has ever seen. It is a book about the private and public power of the women of the elite, and the pragmatism of the women of the slums.

How can a region produce the first female prime minister in the world and yet tolerate the child prostitution of Bangkok and Manila? How can women in countries where their role is perceived by westerners as second-class citizens rise to the top of industrial conglomerates? Right across Asia women occupy positions of extraordinary power - and excruciating powerlessness.

Louise Williams has met and talked with the famous and the faceless, from Benazir Bhutto, Corazon Aquino and Aung San Suu Kyi to the one-time Viet Cong commando, the lover in the Hong Kong 'mistress village', and the Jakarta factory girl. A publisher in Seoul and a judge in Jakarta - these and many other women from the countries of Asia have enabled Louise Williams to provide a fascinating and unique view of changing patterns in a fast changing society.

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