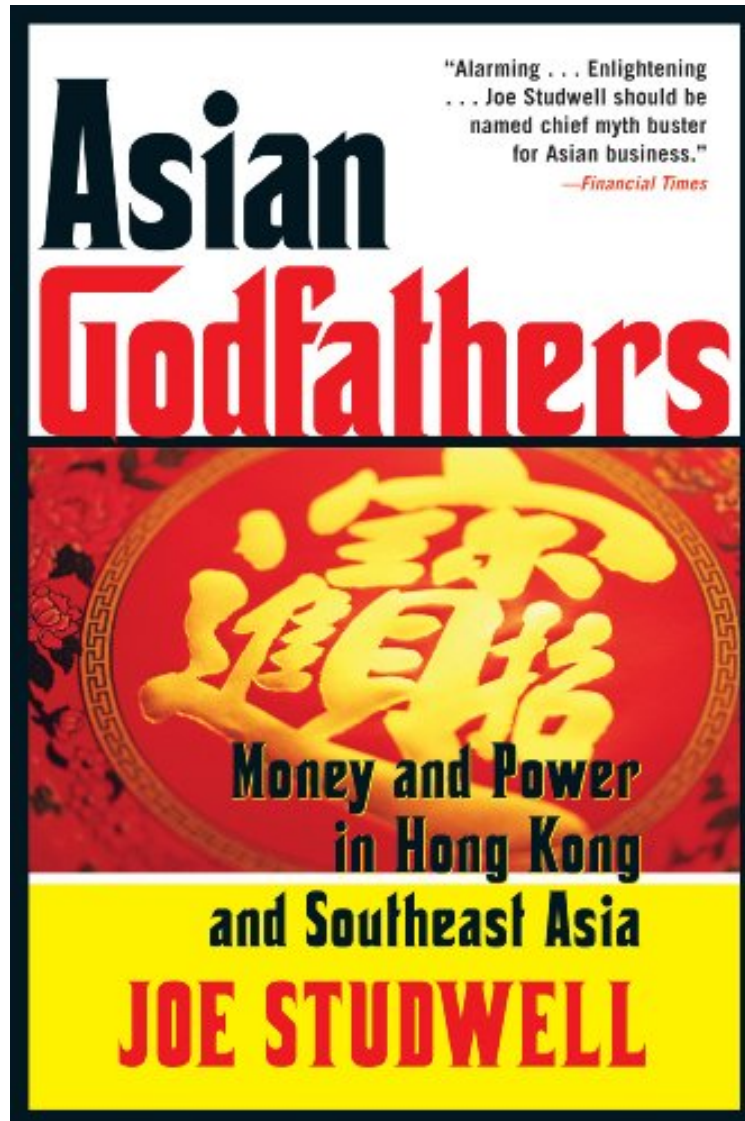


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# Asian Godfathers: Money and Power in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia

Joe Studwell

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**Joe Studwell : Asian Godfathers: Money and Power in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Asian Godfathers: Money and Power in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia:

11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. This and How Asia Works, best books on the Asian plague miracle  
By Maria Lourdes Barcelon Locsin To catch your attention, let me--I am the husband of Louie, my name is Teodoro Locsin, Jr.--say that as Cory Aquino's speechwriter she called me in a few years before she died of cancer and

asked me to write the author of a book that quotes her as calling Lee Kuan Yew "an arrogant bastard". She wanted me to deny it as I was in the best position to do it because I never left her side during her meetings with ASEAN leaders in the early years of her regime when she was beset by military coup attempts. She found Suharto surprisingly candid when she apologized for the extra security that limited the venue of her ASEAN meeting to a hotel flush against the water of Manila Bay and beside the US Embassy. He said, "Oh, don't apologize, why do you think I take General Murdani with me all the time. I don't feel safe leaving him behind." This was greeted by laughter except from Mahathir. Murdani smiled sheepishly. Lee quipped that he put his son in the military just to make sure. Mahathir looked on with ill-concealed contempt of the frivolous turn the talks had taken, and in particular of Mrs. Aquino. He kept imposing his views during the meeting. She asked me later if I didn't find him arrogant but that was all. Mrs Aquino disliked any vulgarity because it was, I guess, vulgar. She was well brought up and went to convent school in New York. An ill word never escaped her lips except once when a trusted ally sided with a coup attempt against and she called him a blue bottle fly. She regretted this. I said I would write the publisher. She assumed I was familiar with the book. Mercifully I failed to contact any publisher. The book I had in mind was a simpering and flattering account of Asian godfathers by someone else. Mr Studwell's is after all the book she meant. I am sorry to be so late in clarifying that she never called anyone least of all Mr Lee "an arrogant bastard;" she rather liked him even if he was open about his contempt of the American-style democracy she had just restored. All that off my chest, let me say that I have not stopped recommending How Asia Works to every thinking person in my country, starting with Solita Monsod, our chief economist, who fought for serious agrarian reform and forfeited her post as a result. My father fought for it in the 50s, 60s and 70s until his arrest upon the declaration of martial law. The defense minister who had my father arrested--he was the publisher of the largest circulation and most prestigious political magazine in the country, the Free Press--told him that martial law was the answer to his prayer for agrarian reform because without the bother of democracy, it would finally be seriously implemented. "Then why did you arrest me?" my father asked. "You have a bad temper and might have reacted strongly to our new approach." How Asia Works vindicates the failed work of many like him and Solita Monsod. Their work was discredited by so-called informed opinion that land reform anyway does not work despite best efforts, the rural poor are too stupid to farm their own farms, and at any rate it is too late if it does work. I turned to Asian Godfathers after How Asia Works. It puts down in black and white what was merely rumored, the staggering scale of Southeast Asian corruption and detailed explanation of how it works and works still. If I ever find myself a publisher of a newspaper again, I will insist that all business reporters and analysts be tested on their command of Studwell's theses. I understand now what people like my father fought for and why it would have worked if only planters had not stood in the way and we had elected leaders who would push them out of the way if they tried. What a pity, what lost opportunity. I am curious only why, in Asian Godfathers, the author is not as detailed about corruption in the Philippines as he is about it in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong of all places, and worse under the British at that. Either our godfathers did not steal as much or they are better at concealing their loot than their counterparts in the rest of the region. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. More than Just A Players' Book By Johan Sulaiman A book about the rich and famous that really contains a story about South East Asia. Studwell rejects the racial explanation of SEA problems and instead pins most of the blame for the region's underperformance to the lack of political will (or some say conscience) of the political elites of Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, and the Philippines. Yes, the godfathers do steal, bribe, rob, transgress, and exploit, but they do so within a preset legal and executive systemic political players that enable them. All the while, the hundreds millions of regular citizens in poverty earning USD\$2 are waiting for a concentrated noble effort to finally come from a new breed of political elites (and the economic elites who will follow) the like never seen before in the region. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Jackal Really nice thank you.

Hong Kong and Southeast Asia are home to five hundred million people, yet their economies are dominated by only fifty families whose interests range from banking to real estate, shipping to sugar, gambling to lumber. At their peak, eight of the world's two dozen richest men were Southeast Asian, but their names would not be familiar to most regular readers of The Wall Street Journal. A complex mythology surrounds these billionaires, but in Asian Godfathers, Joe Studwell finds that the facts are even more remarkable than the myths. Studwell has spent fifteen years as a reporter in the region, and he marshals his unprecedented sources to paint intimate and revealing portraits of the men who control Southeast Asia. Studwell also provides us with a rich and deep understanding of the broader historic, economic, and political influences that have shaped Southeast Asia over the past 150 years. Asian Godfathers is a riveting and illuminating book that lifts the curtain on a world of staggering secrecy and hypocrisy, and reveals for the first time who the leaders of one of the planet's most important and tumultuous markets really are, why they got to the top, and how they keep themselves there.

A first-class study ... the product of an original, inquiring mind. Sunday Times The romp around the region's pleasure domes is a blast. Asian Wall Street Journal You badly need to read this book. Joe Studwell...should be named chief myth-buster for Asian business...his tone is ironic without being cruel...his mythbusting is as merciless as it is

enlightening...Studwell skewers myths with equal passion and panache. Financial Times "A first-class study... the product of an original, inquiring mind.' Sunday Times 'The romp around the region's pleasure domes is a blast.' Asian Wall Street Journal 'You badly need to read this book. Joe Studwell...should be named chief myth-buster for Asian business...his tone is ironic without being cruel...his mythbusting is as merciless as it is enlightening...Studwell skewers myths with equal passion and panache.' Financial Times"About the AuthorJoe Studwell has been a contributing writer to The Economist and was based in Beijing with The Economist Intelligence Unit. He is the founder and editor of The China Economic Quarterly.