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The Taipans: Hong Kong's Merchant Princes (Oxford Paperbacks)

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The Taipans is a popular account of Hong Kong's merchant princes from the origins of the first trading houses in eighteenth-century Canton and Macau to the beginning of the First World War. The early taipans, hard-headed business men from Britain, the USA, and India, built up immense fortunes from the opium trade. In the 1830s a single company, Jardine & Matheson, controlled one-third of China's foreign trade. In later years some of the original trading houses diversified successfully while others crashed into bankruptcy. At the same time a class of Chinese middlemen and merchants grew up, establishing the foundations of Hong Kong's influential Chinese business class. First published in 1981, *The Taipans* is reissued with a completely new final chapter on Hong Kong's contemporary taipans.

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