



# God's Chinese Son: The Taiping Heavenly Kingdom of Hong Xiuquan

*Jonathan D. Spence*

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**"A magnificent tapestry . . . a story that reaches beyond China into our world and time: a story of faith, hope, passion, and a fatal grandiosity."--*Washington Post Book World***

Whether read for its powerful account of the largest uprising in human history, or for its foreshadowing of the terrible convulsions suffered by twentieth-century China, or for the narrative power of a great historian at his best, *God's Chinese Son* must be read. At the center of this history of China's Taiping rebellion (1845-64) stands Hong Xiuquan, a failed student of Confucian doctrine who ascends to heaven in a dream and meets his heavenly family: God, Mary, and his older brother, Jesus. He returns to earth charged to eradicate the "demon-devils," the alien Manchu rulers of China. His success carries him and his followers to the heavenly capital at Nanjing, where they rule a large part of south China for more than a decade. Their decline and fall, wrought by internal division and the unrelenting military pressures of the Manchus and the Western powers, carry them to a hell on earth. Twenty million Chinese are left dead.

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