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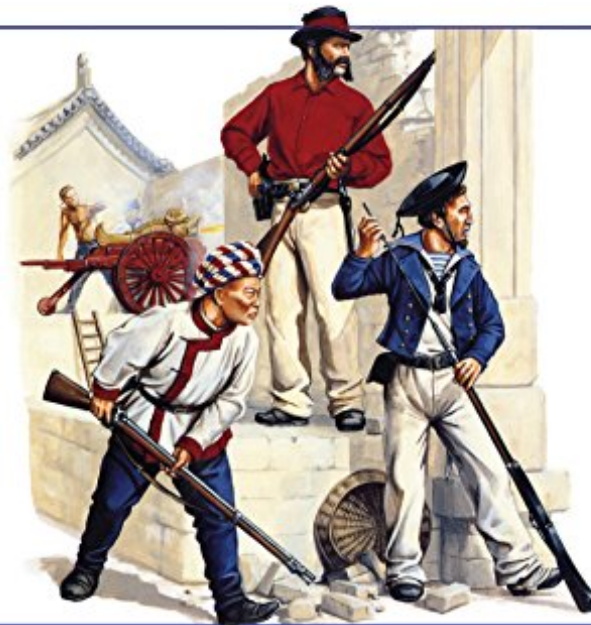
Ian Heath

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The Taiping Rebellion 1851–66



Ian Heath • Illustrated by Michael Perry

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Ian Heath : The Taiping Rebellion 1851–66 (Men-at-Arms) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Taiping Rebellion 1851–66 (Men-at-Arms):

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Stands on its own or as a companion. By DutchThe Taiping movement was started by Hong Xiuquan in southern China in the mid 19th century. The movement was a religious one based on a mix of Christianity and Chinese culture. Hong Xiuquan believed that he received revelation from God that he was actually Jesus Christ's younger brother. Hong was given the commission to bring his brand of Christianity to China and sweep the Qing Dynasty and the old ways from the Middle Kingdom. While the Taiping did not initiate the conflict (the Qing launched attacks on the early gatherings of the Taiping) the Qing saw this movement as a threat to their legitimacy. When the resulting conflict was over an estimated 50 million Chinese were dead. No other conflict, save the Second World War saw such carnage. This Osprey book is a concise account of the military campaigns of the

Taiping Rebellion that occurred in China the mid 19th century. Ian Heath outlines the organization of the participants' military. The weak Qing armies are well-portrayed by their respective organizations; the Bannermen, the Army of the Green Standard and the Tuan Lien militia. The more effective Ying and Yung Ying (Braves) volunteer armies are discussed as well. The Braves were the most successful military units that were ultimately able to fight the Taiping on equal terms. The pragmatic Taiping organization is outlined as well. The Taiping armies grew into a pre-determined structure as the string of victories brought in more of the population. The foreign forces and foreign-trained Chinese forces are presented in depth. Ward's Ever Victorious Army was the penultimate Western-armed and uniformed force on the field. This conflict as well as the First and Second Opium Wars began to awaken the Middle Kingdom to its own military and industrial weakness. A small force of British and Empire units were able to defeat larger formations of the Qing dynasty's military. The modern weaponry of the western units was the overriding factor of the defeat of the Qing forces. It seems as if the fear and awe of the weaponry won the field for the Westerners rather than the actual proportion of casualties caused. The Chinese awe prevented them from achieving their own Islandwana, which they were certainly in a position to do. The Qing did not want to risk their armies to the slaughter by the foreign devils and not be able to suppress their own population in the aftermath. This being said, the Taiping and Qing armies mainly fought with the traditional Chinese weapons of the spear, trident, sword and matchlock musket. Being the developers of gunpowder the Chinese had extensive smooth bore artillery on the field and at sieges. Cavalry was largely limited but when used it could effectively turn the tide. The Imperial Mongul/Manchu cavalry successfully kept the Taipings from pushing north towards Beijing. And the Nien "bandits" supported the Taiping effectively with their large horse contingents. Michael Perry's accurate portrayal of the participants is first rate. Since so little is available in this area I found the illustrations to be invaluable in bringing the conflict to life when reading larger accounts such as "Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom" by Stephen Platt and "God's Chinese Son" by Jonathon Spence. The novel "Rebels of the Heavenly Kingdom" by Katherine Paterson is a nice and accurate fictional account of the struggle from the point of view of a few of the foot-slogging soldiers of the conflict.

The Taiping movement began as the Pai Shang-ti Hui (the Society of God-Worshippers), founded in Kwangsi province in 1846 by Hung Hsiu-ch'uan. A sickly individual of questionable sanity. Hung had become subject to visions which interpreted as demonstrating that he was Jesus Christ's 'Divine Younger Brother', with God's mandate to govern China. This fascinating work by Ian Heath examines the organisation, dress and weapons of forces on both sides of the Taiping Rebellion – a conflict which saw the involvement of around 10 million troops during 15 years of conflict; as many as 600 cities change hands time and time again; and 20-30 million deaths.

From the Publisher Packed with specially commissioned artwork, maps and diagrams, the Men-at-Arms series is an unrivalled illustrated reference on the history, organisation, uniforms and equipment of the world's military forces, past and present. About the Author Ian Heath is a highly respected author, and has written a number of Osprey titles, including MAA 89 Byzantine Armies 886-1118, MAA 287 Byzantine Armies 1118-1461 and MAA 275 The Taiping Rebellion 1851-66. He is also currently working on a five-volume project covering the armies of 19th-century Asia. Ian lives and works in Cambridgeshire, UK.