Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom

Also available from. The west, which initially favored the Taiping on account of its founders professing a kind of Christianity gleaned from translations of the bible that had found their way into the interior of China, became ambivalent. So much so that it comes very close to actually ending the Qing Dynasty which lives to fight another day, or five decades in this case. He worked as a preacher's assistant in Hong Kong before traveling back to Nanjing to become and the Epic Story of the Taiping Civil War Shield King, aka the Heavenly Emperor's right hand man. Men between were enslaved as porters to carry the wealth of the city back to Hunan, the young women were distributed among the soldiery, and the rest of the population, the elderly and the children, were put to the sword. And his observation, looking back on the dynasty's continued reign after the war, that "Nothing the Manchus have done since then affords the slightest evidence that they deserved to be saved" the West a statement with which a very large number of Chinese in his own time would have readily agreed. Third, the author does a good job of putting into perspective how these events affected subsequent events "downstream" - in the sense of the flow of time - such as the eventual fall of the Qing Dynasty and the and the Epic Story of the Taiping Civil War of communism in China. Mar 12, Zoe rated it it was amazing. The narrative follows three main courses; I the rise to power of Hong Rengan, a western Rather than a full history Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom: China the Taiping Civil War, a decade-and-a-half long conflict in the middle of the 19th century that killed tens of millions of people, this was a bit different to what I expected. The most bothersome aspects of the book are its circular military descriptions and its over-engagement, in my opinion, with minor Western figures. It was not the East that seemed inscrutable in these exchanges so much as the West. For example, during the Taiping campaigns, Western military leaders would capriciously change sides, not to mention that some Western envoys insisted on protocols that were opaque or contradictory. I don't quite buy this. In other words, this review is the West me. I can't help but also feel disgust towards Britain's actions. It was painful reading about how selfish and blindly self-righteous the British and the Epic Story of the Taiping Civil War. Pass it on! The focus on the characters of Hong Rengan and Zeng Guofan are fascinating looks at Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom: China figures. Their strategy was good and their intentions seemed honest - to befriend the foreigners, control the south and starve out the failing Qing dynasty in the north But they were to be undone by the steadfast determination of the complex scholar-warlord, Zeng Guofan, whose vision was ultimately more successful than theirs. Three companions must navigate their way through centuries of Russian and Chinese the West as primary source witnesses to epic events. Often these battles include minor Western figures. The West Taipings are not the Boxers - yes, there was more than one crazy religious cult doing their thing in China in the 19th century. Platt even acknowledges that some of them, for instance 'Chinese' Gordon, have had historiographically embellished roles in the conflict. On the one hand, it focuses on Hong Rengan, the Taiping "Shield King" and right hand man of the Heavenly Brother, who was instrumental in the Taiping's near victory in its foreign relations with Western nations. Yet a few Western representatives who wrote dispatches back to governments halfway across the globe managed to critically misrepresent Taiping intentions. Platt's mainly interested in the Chinese protagonists: Zeng Guofan, the scholar-turned general who restructured the Imperial Army from scratch; Dowager Empress Cixi, a concubine accumulating power in the fractious Manchu court; and Hong Xiuquan, the Taiping messiah who considered himself Jesus's brother. Additionally, pro-Taiping and pro-Confederacy factions fought each other with various "whataboutist" arguments leading to stalemate on diplomatic recognition for both. In Marx's terminology, what was happening in China was not merely a rebellion or a hodgepodge Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom: China uprisings but "one formidable revolution," one that demonstrated the interconnectedness of the industrial world. The white walkers end up vacillating between a policy of strict neutrality in the war so long as it doesn't mess with their tea tradeo thinking that it's in their interest to support the Lannisters, changing their minds and supporting the King in the North, going back to neutrality, then deciding that if they only attack the armies of the King in the North within a 30 mile radius of King's Landing, then it still counts as neutrality. After the collapse of the Han dynasty in the third century CE, China divided along a north-south line. This is an essential and enthralling history of the rise and fall of the movement that, a century and a half ago, might have launched China on an entirely different path into the modern world. I don't think most of us in the West fully understand the resentment and mistrust the Chinese, even today, feel toward us. One transcript has Kissinger order: "A massive bombing campaign in Cambodia. View all 3 comments. The British and French were able to open trade and extract concessions out of the imperial Chinese. The author's most compelling twist is the laying out of just how bumbling, contradictory, and confused the British were in their handling of China during this period. Want to Read saving…. Dec 22, Kenneth rated it really liked it. Showing The brilliantly treacherous Senggelinquin. At the end of the war, with the Qing dynasty roiled by a succession struggle in which the Empress Dowager was to emerge triumphant to the sorrow of future Chinese, he was in command of the richest provinces in China and the Epic Story of the Taiping Civil War the commander of the largest and most
effective army in China that was personally loyal to him. Platt does a great job bringing the conflict to life. A man who was originally a student of Confucius and government official who wanted to just be involved with scholarship he nevertheless was tapped for the important role of raising a local militia to check the threat of the Taipings invading his home province of Hunan. See all books by Stephen R. So the Manchurians then had him beheaded. Regardless, I think that this is a very compelling, very dramatic account of an under-served subject. Return to Book Page. Despite the scarcity of clear information, raw accounts of the civil war in China radiated outward from Shanghai and Hong Kong to capture the imagination of the Western world. So the British start teaming up with American mercenaries to fight for the Qing, even selling ships to the imperial fleet. Mainly Great Britain. Europe had been through its own convulsions just five years earlier with the revolutions of and the events in China seemed a remarkable parallel: the downtrodden people of China, oppressed by their Manchu overlords, had, it seemed, risen up to demand satisfaction. This was an interesting argument, and globalizes the conflict in some respects. Even at his pace, Platt never compromises an opportunity for historical insight for the sake of the story; he never presumes to turn the Taiping Rebellion into a rollicking yarn.