The Taiping Rebellion

Overview
- Lasted from 1850-1864.
- Resulted in 25 million deaths
- 16 out of 18 provinces were affected
- The founder of the Taiping was Hong Xioquan, after he failed the examination four times.
- Jan 1st 1851, Hong declared a new dynasty the Taiping Tianguo with him as the heavenly king.
- The Taipings began to advance on Nanjing, taking control on March 10 1853, then renaming it Tianjin.
- They sent an expedition to capture Beijing which failed.
- They took lots of control of towns along the Yangxi River.
- In 1860, they attempted to regain their strength by taking control of Shanghai, this failed.
- By 1862 Zeng Guofan and his armies surrounded Tianjin, the city fell in July 1864.

Hong Xioquan
- Hong was a Hakka, growing up near Canton in Guangdong. He was born into a wealthy farming family.
- After travelling to Canton to take the examination for the third time, Hong failed. During this trip a missionary handed Hong a brochure about Christianity. He didn’t look into it too much.
- Hong experienced a delirious hallucination in which he dreamed of him being with Jesus and God, believing himself to be God’s Chinese son, he was given the responsibility of killing all the demons.
- He didn’t think too much of it until after he failed the examinations for the fourth time, he then looked back on the pamphlets and made sense of his dreams.
- After that Hong emerged an entirely different person and went about converting his friends and family, whilst studying biblical texts.
- Hong’s vision for China was radical egalitarian mission, all were to be equal before God.
- Land, food and resources were to be divided equally. There was to be militancy, families were to be grouped into militias consisting of 25 families.
- The intention was to convert the country to Christianity but it developed into Anti-Qing, the Manchus were seen as the devils.
- In 1844, Hong and his followers went into Guangxi Province, gaining thousands of supporters. There they set up the heavenly kingdom.
- Jan 1st 1851, Hong declared a new dynasty the Taiping Tianguo with him as the heavenly king.

Taiping Ideology
1. To create a communal society where all ‘under heaven should be well fed and clad’.
- Appealed to peasants and other impoverished people, who were attracted by the idea of having a better life.
2. The subject of study for the examinations for officials (formerly civil service exams) changed from the Confucian classics to the old testament
- Those like Hong who had failed the examinations after dedicating their lives to it were attracted to the Taiping for their amendments to the examinations, so they could now achieve the status earned after passing the now easier exams.
- This ideology point clearly shows one of Hong’s motivations for the Rebellion, his anger for not being able to pass the examinations.
3. Private property ownership abolished and all land was held and distributed by the state.
- Everyone received a share of the land - even children.
- Appealed to landless peasants and again poverty stricken people.
4. The society was declared classless and the sexes were declared equal. It was the first Chinese regime ever to admit women into examinations. A women’s army was even organised.
- Appealed to those who had be crushed by the hierarchical nature of the Qing empire.
- As well as Hakka’s and other outside groups, ostracized by the Qings.
- However, it was often considered too radical, women didn’t want equality and people were scared off by the foreign mindset.