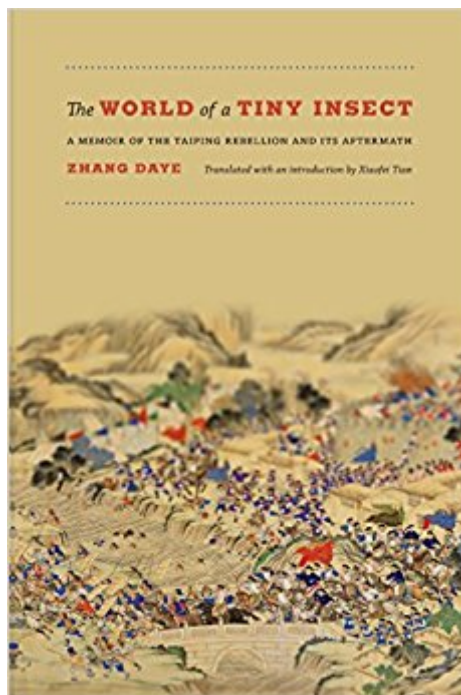




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# The World Of A Tiny Insect: A Memoir Of The Taiping Rebellion And Its Aftermath



## Synopsis

"From the cry of a tiny insect, one can hear the sound of a vast world. . . ."So begins Zhang Daye's preface to *The World of a Tiny Insect*, his haunting memoir of war and its aftermath. In 1861, when China's devastating Taiping rebellion began, Zhang was seven years old. The Taiping rebel army occupied Shaoxing, his hometown, and for the next two years, he hid from Taiping soldiers, local bandits, and imperial troops and witnessed gruesome scenes of violence and death. He lost friends and family and nearly died himself from starvation, illness, and encounters with soldiers on a rampage. Written thirty years later, *The World of a Tiny Insect* gives voice to this history. A rare premodern Chinese literary work depicting a child's perspective, Zhang's sophisticated text captures the macabre images, paranoia, and emotional excess that defined his wartime experience and echoed through his adult life. The structure, content, and imagery of *The World of a Tiny Insect* offer a carefully constructed, fragmented narrative that skips in time and probes the relationships between trauma and memory, revealing both history and its psychic impact. Xiaofei Tian's annotated translation includes an introduction that situates *The World of a Tiny Insect* in Chinese history and literature and explores the relevance of the book to the workings of traumatic memory.

## Book Information

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"The author and narrator recounts his terrible experiences and miraculous survivals with a child's curiosity and in a vivid, straightforward way. But he also embeds what happened to him in a larger historical, philosophical, moral, and aesthetic context. No comparable primary source available in English does anything like this for the Taiping Rebellion."â•Judith Zeitlin, University of Chicago

Good read those interested in Chinese history. Journal account.

The World of a Tiny Insect is a wonderful memoir of a childhood spent in the violence of the Taiping Rebellion. The author was 7 years when the rebellion began. He wrote his memoir in 1893 , 30 years later. It is now translated into English in 2013. The translator Tian Xiao Fei is professor of Chinese literature at Harvard University. She has usefully annotated the text. According to her she stumbled upon this manuscript when the title The World of a Tiny Insect caught her eye though it is a pity she did not give the year of her discovery. For a good history of the Taiping Rebellion i highly recommend God's Chinese Son by Jonathan Spence and Autumn in the Heavenly Kingdom by Stephen R Platt .

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