



# The European Diary of Hsieh Fucheng

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The remorseless undermining of Imperial China by the Western powers and the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1912 have too often led to an overstated condemnation of the Chinese government of the period as unvaryingly sterile, archaic, and corrupt. This first English translation of Hsieh Fucheng's diaries, however, gives a very different picture, in its portrayal of a progressive, thoughtful, and deeply perceptive senior official and his encounter with the West. Hsieh (Xue) Fucheng (1838-94) wrote this diary over the last four years of his career in Imperial service. It describes his journey to Europe, his diplomatic activities and - perhaps most strikingly - his impressions of the alien world in which he found himself. The Diary is an invaluable source for understanding the Chinese view on the major points of friction between the Empire and the West, including the Christian missions in China, the protection of overseas Chinese, and the frontier disputes with Britain and Russia. In addition, the Diary provides a wealth of fascinating observations on the countries Hsieh Fucheng encountered during his journey to Europe and on life in London and Paris.

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