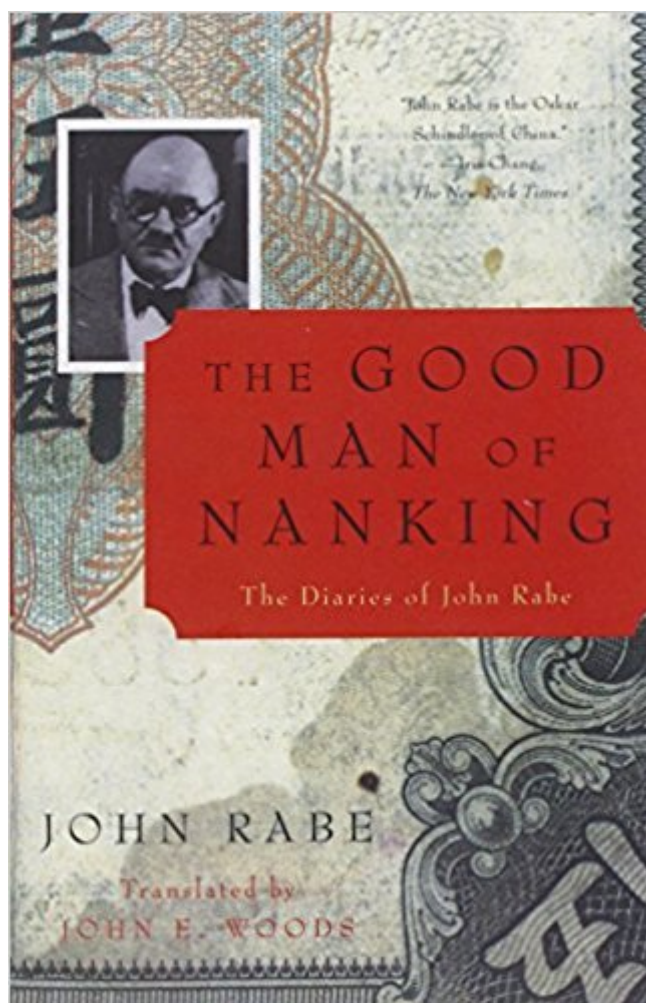


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# THE GOOD MAN OF NANKING: The Diaries Of John Rabe



## Synopsis

The Good Man of Nanking is a crucial document for understanding one of World War II's most horrific incidents of genocide, one which the Japanese have steadfastly refused to acknowledge. It is also the moving and awe-inspiring record of one man's conscience, courage, and generosity in the face of appalling human brutality. Until the recent emergence of John Rabe's diaries, few people knew about the unassuming hero who has been called the Oskar Schindler of China. In November 1937, as Japanese troops overran the Chinese capital of Nanking and began a campaign of torture, rape, and murder against its citizens, one man—a German who had lived in China for thirty years and who was a loyal follower of Adolph Hitler—put himself at risk and in order to save the lives of 200,000 poor Chinese, 600 of whom he sheltered in his own home.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

In November 1937, the Japanese Imperial Army took Nanking (Nanjing), the capital of China and home to 1.3 million people, and began an orgy of murder, rape, and looting. By the time discipline was restored two months later, hundreds of thousands of Chinese were dead, with hundreds of thousands more homeless, starving, and traumatized. The Rape of Nanking, as it is commonly known, still causes international controversy, as Japanese politicians refuse to apologize unequivocally to China and school textbooks continue to misrepresent the events. Like Oskar Schindler of Schindler's List, John Rabe was an enterprising and fundamentally decent German businessman caught up in war. Head of the Nanjing branch of Siemens, the German electronics

firm, he had lived and worked in China for almost 30 years. Rather than flee from the threatened city, he stayed to organize a safety zone as refuge of last resort for Chinese civilians. The Good Man of Nanking is his firsthand description of the terrible events and his ultimate success in saving perhaps a quarter of a million lives. The diary format provides a forum for the extraordinary power and immediacy of John Rabe's words, including his gallows humor, placing the reader there in Nanking as the bombs explode and the Japanese soldiers begin their massacres. Rabe's trials were not over when he returned to wartime Germany; diary entries that he wrote during the occupation of Berlin by the Soviet army form a fascinating coda to this book. --John Stevenson --This text refers to the MP3 CD edition.

Considered the Oskar Schindler of China, Rabe was a German businessman who saved the lives of 250,000 Chinese during the infamous siege of Nanking. But Rabe was also a member of the Nazi party and a man whose motto was "Right or wrong-my country." This gaping paradox adds a fascinating complexity to his newly translated diaries, which primarily focus on the six-month Nanking siege in 1937 and 1938. When the Japanese air raids began over Nanking?where Rabe was regional director of the German industrial giant Siemens?Rabe's wife, along with most foreigners, evacuated the city. But Rabe stayed to protect his Chinese staff and co-workers; as he put it, "I cannot bring myself for now to betray the trust these people have put in me." As the magnitude of the Japanese assault became apparent, Rabe, along with American doctors and missionaries, created an International Committee whose purpose was to set up a Neutral Zone where Chinese civilians could take refuge. Six hundred of the poorest Chinese were soon living in Rabe's own house, symbolically protected by an enormous canvas painted with a swastika; thousands more took shelter in the arbitrary Neutral Zone that Rabe continually begged the Japanese to respect. Lacking food and medical supplies, Rabe was mobilized to continue his good works by the atrocities he witnessed; his descriptions of the sadistic rapes, torture and slaughter perpetrated by Japanese soldiers are chillingly vivid. Similar in some ways to Giorgio Perlasca, the Italian fascist businessman who helped save Budapest's Jews (Enrico Deaglio's *The Banality of Goodness*, *Forecasts*, June 1), Rabe was a complicated figure whose ultimate reasons were very matter-of-fact: "You simply do what must be done." Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the MP3 CD edition.

In some ways, John Rabe is your typical German. He is orderly, calm, proper, and compassionate.He was a Nazi party member, too, and a good German, trying to live up to the ideals

of national socialism, such as they were. (Living abroad for 30 years, he heard only the rhetoric of nazism, not the reality.) The Germans were allied with the Japanese, and Rabe was careful not to condemn the alliance with hotheaded invective. This makes his diary all the more compelling. As the Japanese were invading mainland China, John Rabe and a few other Europeans took it upon themselves to create a safe zone for non-combatants, so that women and children could seek refuge from the war. The Asian view of warfare was total destruction of the enemy; the Europeans wanted to save as many civilians as they could. Filled with matter-of-fact diary entries about daily struggles to rescue, house, protect and feed a quarter of a million refugees, Rabe is believable. When he relates the terrors of air raids and the pitiful people in his bomb shelter, you believe him. When he writes about a massacre at the gates of the city, and describes the pile of corpses so thick that the road can not be used, you believe him. When he describes the corpse outside his door that lies decomposing for weeks, despite his pleas to be allowed to bury the poor soul, you believe him. (When the safety zone committee finally gets permission to begin burials, they can only accomplish about 300 corpses per day. It will take them months to bury the dead. You believe him.) When he decries the lack of safe drinking water because the ponds are filled with corpses, you believe him. 125, 150, 135 corpses in a pond, hands tied behind their backs. You believe him. When he talks about rape, looting, rape, rape, murder, arson, rape at night, rape of children, the murder of anyone who tries to prevent the rapes, soldiers climbing onto his property in order to rape and loot, raping and murdering for spite, rape, rape, rape, you believe him. Horrified, you believe him. The Japanese tried to burn the city to destroy the evidence of the inhuman brutality waged on the citizens of Nanking. His photographs and documents serve to back up his diary entries. John Rabe's compassion and dedication serve as shining examples for how to live among others. Always, and despite personal danger to himself, he protected the refugees to the best of his ability. He returned home to Germany and was NOT welcomed as a hero. It's hardly surprising that the Nazi leadership did not want the Japanese war methods to be publicly exposed -- they were allies, after all. He was compelled to shut up about what he had seen, heard, and done. This book is required reading for humanity. Not because of how the Japanese are portrayed; because of the goodness and decency of a few people who stood up against terror.

Arrived on schedule, book as described. John Rabe, having lived and worked as a Siemens representative in China for many years by the time Japan occupied Nanking, was naive enough about the Nazis in his native land to believe that Hitler would exert diplomatic pressure on the Japanese to curb their atrocities. I found his first-hand account of events in Nanking to be utterly

believable.

I came to this book after reading Iris Chang's *The Rape of Nanking*. While in Chang's book we get a glimpse of Rabe and an outsiders perspective at the events that took place between 1937 and 1938, in this book, we get to see the events as they unfold and from the perspective of someone who was actually there. It is a tragic and hard book to read, but it is very informative, and it is even filled with random clippings from other people who were there during the massacre. John's diaries also continue after the events that happened in Nanking and continues through Russia's invasion of Germany. I give this book 5 out of 5 stars because it is well written and it is informative. Warning for those who do not know much about the massacre, it can get pretty disturbing, and there are pictures of various war crimes and corpses.

This is a great backgrounder, especially if you've read Iris Chang's *Rape of Nanking*. John Rabe was a significant thread throughout her book bc he lived every day of the occupation, and saved thousands of lives through his efforts. Like a lot of diaries, you sometimes get the humdrum, but the insights into this kind, determined man is worth those.

A well done book that is painful to read. Even though Rabe and his fellow defenders of the safety zone come across as true humanitarians, with some curious foibles, the rest of world seems all too disinterested in the needless sacrifice of thousands and thousands of lives. The Book "Shanghai 1937" by Peter Harmsen does a good job of setting the stage for the disaster to befall Nanking.

I like this book, it has interesting details to the Nanjing Massacre. I also had to have this book for a history report. I rate this book 5 stars because its a interesting book and you'll keep reading just to see what he writes in his journals. I recommend this book and *The Rape Of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust Of World War II* by Iris Chang. This two books really need to go to together to understand the whole story of the Nanjing Massacre.

Very interesting book that shows heroes aren't always a soldier. It really paints a clear picture at the destruction of Nanking and the pillaging against the local population. Very much recommend it.

Very interesting reading, shows that some of the movies have generated a lot of fictional stories to pull in the audiences

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