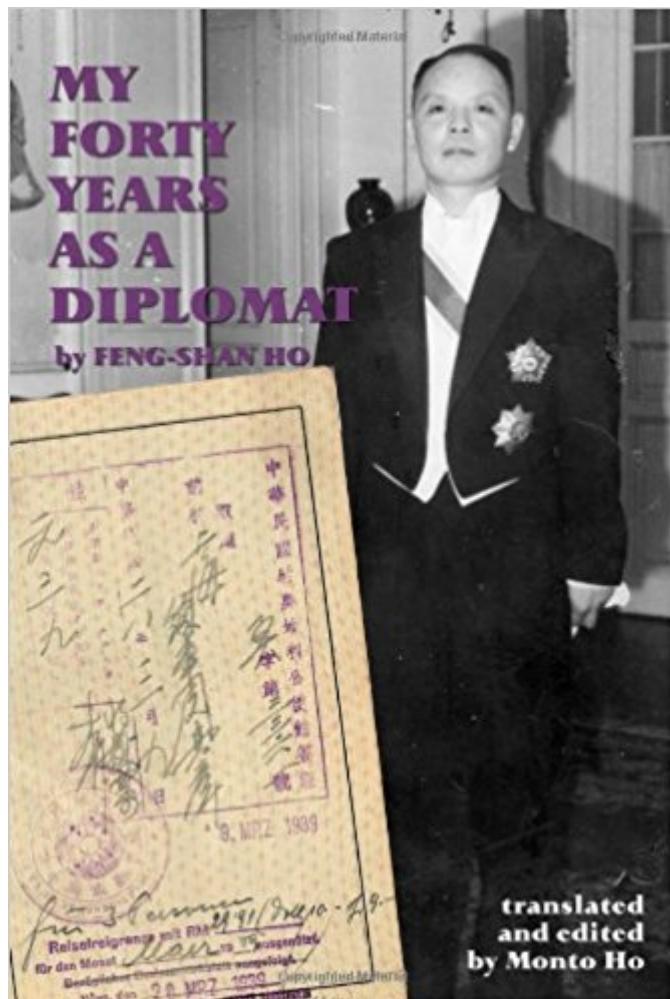


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My Forty Years As A Diplomat



Synopsis

Feng-Shan Ho was a diplomat for China during a turning point in the county's history. In 2001, he was posthumously honored by Yad Vashem for issuing visas to Jews when he was Consul General in Vienna from 1938 to 1940. His struggle in diplomacy was fighting for the dying Republic of China under Chiang Kai-shek as the country shifted from a republican to a communist state. This struggle is brought to life through Ho's account of his ambassadorships in Egypt and Mexico. In retrospect, the efforts of Ho and the Nationalists ultimately failed; however, Ho's career is marked by many professional and personal successes that promoted the cause of Nationalist China. My Forty Years as a Diplomat recounts Feng-Shan Ho's personal observations and conversations with important political and diplomatic figures around the world, providing a unique view of this important moment in Chinese history. Throughout his diplomacy, Ho was a steadfastly loyal and moral man who possessed ambition and fortitude, valued education and discipline, fought for righteousness, was compassionate to those in need, and liked nothing better than a good conversation with a friend. His autobiography contains valuable material for the study of modern history, as well as for the observation and contemplation of intelligent readers.

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Customer Reviews

About the Translator Monto Ho is the son of Chinese diplomat Feng-Shan Ho. Monto earned his bachelor's degree at Harvard College in 1949 and his M.D. at Harvard Medical School in 1954. Now retired, Monto Ho worked as a Professor of Medicine, Pathology, and Microbiology; the Chair of the Department of Infectious Diseases and Microbiology, Graduate School of Public Health; and the

Chief of the Division of Infectious Diseases, Department of Medicine, School of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh from 1965 to 1997. He was elected by Academia Sinica (Taiwan). He was also a Distinguished Investigator with the National Health Research Institutes in Taiwan from 1997 to 2002. Monto and his wife, Carol Tsu Ho, live in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and they have two children: Bettie Pei-wen Ho Carlson and John Chia-wen Ho.

This book is not very informative. I was hoping for more, especially information about his work in Vienna as part of the Chinese consulate.

I just finished this book that I obtained as an inter-library loan from the public library. The impetus to read this book was reading about Feng-Shan Ho's courageous act saving thousands of Jewish residents of Austria during WWII. In fact this amazing and historical act takes up a mere few pages and with very little detail. And this is an example of what kind of man he was. He never seemed to be looking for glory in his glorious career. His drive was to serve as an advocate for his country and he did so with a great deal of honor and respect. This biography is a translation and therefore reads with a bit of awkwardness, however if you can get past this minor flaw you will find a presentation of history from a unique perspective. The most interesting part for me was Feng-Shan Ho's attempt and preventing communist China from finding recognition with the superpowers as nationalist China fled to Taiwan. I had no idea the role Indian Prime Minister Nehru played in this historical event. When I discussed the book's mention of Nehru's duplicitous acts during this sensitive time with my mother (who was born in India), well let's just say, WWIII almost started lol. What the book highlights is how history is told by the victors and that the history we learn as youngsters is just one version of history. It's important to hear about how events that made one's own country prosper may well be the same things that hinder another country's growth.

Feng-Shan Ho was appointed ambassador of the Republic of China by Chiang Kai-shek in the 1930's. As the title states his career spanned forty years and saw several governments in various countries come and go. His initial job was to establish relations with countries to help China in their "War of Resistance" against Japan and later in a race to get countries to recognize the Republic of China as the legitimate government of the Chinese people rather than Mao Zedong's communist regime. While Ho's writing (translated by his son) is not written in a flow-able storyline it is a book worth reading for the wealth of information it provides. Ho recounts his work as Ambassador to Austria during Hitler's regime, the development of leadership in Middle Eastern companies and his

efforts to keep them from sympathizing with Communist China. He describes the tactics of Communist China in their efforts to gain support throughout the world as well as the sad shrinking of the Republic of China until it is finally delegated to the island of Taiwan. His work in Germany is probably most notable for his efforts to get as many Jews out of the country as was in his power. Many Jews were not accepted in the Allied countries but they could get a Visa to Shanghai and stay there until they were able to move on to Israel or the United States. Ho was instrumental in providing Visas to many Jews. Even after his government back home told him to desist and ultimately recalled him, he continued to hand out Visas. As his train was leaving Vienna, he passed Visas through the train car window to outstretched hands. It's interesting to note that some of these Jewish refugees stayed many years in China, receiving their education and employment there. In 2001 Ho was posthumously recognized in Israel as one of the Righteous Among the Nations. One of the most interesting aspects of Ho's memoirs is his efforts to get Chang Kai-shek's China recognized and to prevent the People's Republic of China (communist) from making headway in countries around the world. His book exposes the double talk and hypocrisy of many political leaders-such as the ones in Egypt and other Middle Eastern countries and India as they said one thing to the Western countries and another to the Communists. Also interesting is his description of the development of the Arab nations as they went from being poverty-stricken nomad countries living in a 2000 year old way of life to being the richest countries in the world at the expense of American and British engineers who harvested their oil for them. One of the most provocative things he wrote about was the strategies of Communist China to get themselves recognized and consequently validated throughout the world: "I had long known of the seriousness of the Communist infiltration. Their ultimate objective was to establish diplomatic relations. I had already experienced the 'three-phased' strategy of the Communists when I was in Egypt. The first phase was to offer to buy goods, to entice with profit. The second was to apply for opening a trade fair, in order to exchange delegations and establish a permanent trade relationship. The third phase was to shift from commerce to politics, the final purpose being to request diplomatic recognition..... In seven years, the Communists launched fourteen infiltrative activities in Mexico. They sent to Mexico an economic delegation and a trade delegation, which started to trade and do business... They tried to infiltrate culturally by sending a circus troupe." (pg. 193) Hmm... none of that has transpired in the U.S., has it? Ho also describes how the Communists worked to infiltrate into the media, fine arts and performing arts (television, movies) of their targeted countries (including the US). Surprise, surprise. While Ambassador Ho met with varying success in the Middle East, he did successfully counter Communists efforts in Mexico. A colleague had this to say about him: "Mexico is a large

country in North America. She has a boundary of over a thousand miles with the United States. It is here that Ambassador Ho blocked the infiltration of the Chinese Communists."(pg. 208)All in all, anyone interested in the history of the international political arena for the past eighty years from the viewpoint of someone from another culture and time (and who does not always paint a flattering picture of Western countries) would benefit greatly from reading this book. I personally think anyone who cares at all about the future welfare of our own country (which should be everyone) should read this book.I received a complimentary copy of this book from Dorrance Publishing CO in exchange for my honest review.

This vanity press translation of my father's memoir was my brother Dr. Monto Ho's retirement project. My brother was a renowned virologist, but not a translator or writer. His 250-page translation is a highly truncated version of my father's 700-page memoir "Forty Year of My Diplomatic Life" (A 40 Year of My Diplomatic Life - Hong Kong University Press 1990), and is not totally accurate or faithful to the original. Interested readers who are able to do so are advised to read my father's original memoir.

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