

Feature: Rabe family carries on friend China

Source: Xinhua Editor: huaxia 2024-04-23 13:30:16



Thomas Rabe speaks during an interview in Frankfurt, Germany, Jan. 27, 2024. (Xinhua/Zhang Fan)

John Rabe saved the lives of around 250,000 Chinese people between 1937 and 1938. Earlier this year, his grandson Thomas published a book named "Rabe and China," based on the diaries of his grandfather and other family documents.

"I would be delighted if many new readers would engage with the history of this book," Thomas Rabe said, "so that my grandfather's humanitarian spirit, his understanding of morality and leadership, and his desire for peace can be passed on."

HEIDELBERG, Germany, April 23 (Xinhua) -- For the Rabe family, the city of Nanjing carries a special meaning.



II, John Rabe, then working as a representative of Siemens in the war-ravaged Chinese city, set up an international safety zone with other foreigners to protect civilians from Japanese invaders.

John Rabe, who saved the lives of around 250,000 Chinese people between 1937 and 1938, was thus dubbed the "Oskar Schindler of China."

Earlier this year, his grandson Thomas Rabe published a book named "Rabe and China," based on the diaries of the grandfather and other family documents, which are considered important documents in China for studying the history of the Nanjing Massacre.

Thomas Rabe donated his grandfather's diaries to China's Central Archives in 2016.



Undated photo provided by the John Rabe and International Safety Zone Memorial Hall of Nanjing University shows John Rabe and his wife standing in front of the main building of No.1 Xiaofenqiao in Nanjing, east China's Jiangsu Province. (John Rabe and International Safety Zone Memorial Hall of Nanjing University/Handout via Xinhua)

The purpose of publishing the book, "Rabe and China," is to pass along the international humanitarian spirit behind his grandfather's story, Thomas Rabe said.

"I would be delighted if many new readers would engage with the history of this book," he said, "so that my grandfather's humanitarian spirit, his understanding of morality and leadership, and his desire for peace can be passed on."

According to Thomas Rabe, this book also tells of the friendship between China and the Rabe family, which spans four generations.

medical exchanges with Chinese universities and has published multiple medical books in Chinese, in his way to carry on the torch of the family legacy. His son, 25 years old, is now learning the Chinese language.

Thomas Rabe is encouraging his son to study in China. "Hopefully, as he promised me, next year, he will go to Beijing for one year to continue his study of the language and culture."

Thanks to the efforts by Thomas Rabe, the book "Rabe and China" will be published in more languages soon, including in German, English, and Spanish, which would help more people know about the Rabe family's friendship with China.

"Young people must understand what it means to have responsibility for others and what it means to fight for others," Rabe said. "When you have friendship, you should continue your friendship even in hard times."■

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