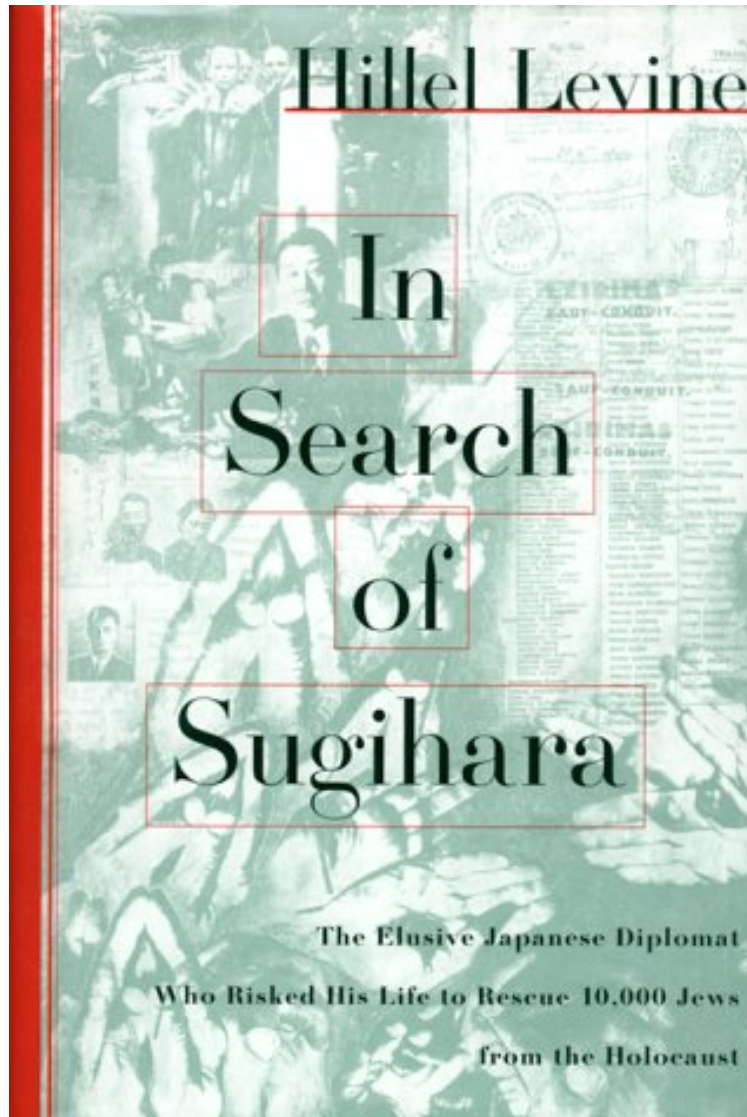


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In Search of Sugihara: The Elusive Japanese Diplomat Who Risked his Life to Rescue 10,000 Jews From the Holocaust

Hillel Levine

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Hillel Levine : In Search of Sugihara: The Elusive Japanese Diplomat Who Risked his Life to Rescue 10,000 Jews From the Holocaust before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In Search of Sugihara: The Elusive Japanese Diplomat Who Risked his Life to Rescue 10,000 Jews From the Holocaust:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A Fabulous Journey By R. Pylman I was born in Japan, and grew up in America in a Jewish community. So when I heard about Sugihara-san, I thought "Ah, something that links communities I feel part of!" I sought out this biography and read it eagerly. The author spent two years tracking down the evidence of what Sugihara did in Lithuania. He reviewed the Japanese foreign ministry records, talked to survivors, talked to those who had known Sugihara. The author appears to have deeply grappled with his sense of the man, and the moment, trying to understand... and he takes the reader along on that journey. It wasn't always enjoyable... reading about the things that made it necessary for Sugihara to do what he did is not enjoyable. But his reaction to his times, and the situation in which he was placed, is simple and decent, and adds to one's understanding of the holocaust, and the character of Japan in the years leading up to World War II. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Fills in gaps but... By Mark Fishaut Prof. Levine fills in many of the gaps and intentional omissions of Mme. Sugihara's "Visas for Life", notably his whole first marriage. His access to the vast array of WWII deciphered Japanese government communiques is a major contribution to separating fact from myth. However, his personal musings are an intrusion to an otherwise well told tale and the leading rhetorical questions and speculation are more worthy of cable TV than of even a quasi-scholarly publication. The acts of Sugihara, Zwartendijk, and others along the way that save our family and many others should simply be allowed to speak for themselves. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Much About Him And His Timmes By Charles W. Gallagher An in depth biography of a courageous compassionate man. Book has much historical information and brief biographies of many of the rescued. My only criticism is too much information. Needed some tough editing. Having said that, I will recommend it to anyone interested in this remarkable man.

On August 2, 1940, as on every other morning for weeks before, a long line of Jewish refugees waited outside the Japanese consulate in Kaunas, Lithuania. Many had already witnessed Nazi atrocities in Poland and other Axis-occupied lands, and they were desperate to escape. To leave Europe they needed foreign transit visas. And at the window, the smiling Japanese consul was issuing them. Before his government closed down the consulate and reassigned him to Berlin, he would issue thousands of such visas. This is the story of Chiune Sugihara, a diplomat and spy who saved as many as 10,000 Jews from deportation to concentration camps and almost certain death. Because of his extreme modesty, Sugihara's tremendous act of moral courage is only now beginning to become widely known. Unlike Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat whose government sent him to Hungary with the express purpose of saving Jews, and Oskar Schindler, the German industrialist who at least initially had a vested economic interest in protecting the lives of "his Jews," Sugihara had no apparent reason to perform his acts of rescue. Indeed, he acted in direct violation of official Japanese policy, which directed all government and military personnel to cooperate with the murderous policies of their Nazi allies. Examining Sugihara's education and background -- a background shared with the colonial administrators and military men who committed "the rape of Nanjing" -- author Hillel Levine finds nothing that explains his extraordinary behavior. Levine's search has taken him from the old Japanese consul building in Kaunas (now Kovno), Lithuania, to the Australian outback; across Japan from the rice fields of Sugihara's native town to the boardrooms of conglomerates where his younger schoolmates still hold power. But the more Levine sought answers to Sugihara's puzzling behavior, the more he encountered questions. Remarkably, Chiune Sugihara was not the only Japanese official to save Jews. Yet none was ever punished for insubordination. Was there a secret Japanese plan to save Jews from Nazi genocide? Much Holocaust scholarship focuses on the perpetrators of evil, trying to illuminate what drove ordinary men and women to commit horrifying and murderous acts. But perhaps as difficult to understand is the phenomenon of rescue: what inspired courageous individuals to swim against the tide of cruelty and indifference. This sensitive and nuanced biography concludes that there is no link between a person's background and his moral inclinations. Mercy remains a divine mystery despite our human craving to reduce it to behavioristic formulas. This book does not attempt to explain "man's humanity to man." Instead Levine has woven a fascinating narrative of one man's heroic efforts to save lives, in the midst of so many seeking to destroy them.

From Publishers Weekly This remarkable biography is, in the author's words, a study of the "banality of good." Honored in Israel and Japan, yet still largely unknown in the West, Japanese diplomat and spy Chiune Sugihara, with this book, joins the ranks of Raoul Wallenberg, Oskar Schindler and other rescuers of Jews escaping Nazi persecution. While stationed at the Japanese consulate in Kovno (Kaunas), Lithuania, with his wife and three children, and later in Nazi-occupied Prague and Konigsberg, Sugihara issued life-saving transit visas to thousands of Jews over the vehement objections of his superiors, thus enabling the fortunate recipients to traverse the Soviet Union, then Japan, to a new life. Levine, a sociologist who directs Boston University's Center for Judaic Studies, combed archives in Europe, crisscrossed Japan and interviewed Holocaust survivors whom Sugihara helped rescue. The cosmopolitan, affable Japanese diplomat was fired upon returning to Japan in 1947; he died in 1986 at the age of 86. In Levine's compelling analysis, Sugihara's rescue effort was motivated by love of life and a strong sense of justice, not by any special relationship to Jews or driving obsession? an ordinary man turned extraordinary hero. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Levine (sociology and religion, Boston Univ.) profiles the life of

Chiune Sugihara, the "Japanese Schindler," who helped as many as 10,000 Jews escape the Nazis. Born in 1900 in Gifu Prefecture, Sugihara was trained to be a colonial official beginning in 1919. After a stint of military service he continued his education and taught Russian for a time. Sometime in the late 1920s, Sugihara entered the foreign service. One of his posts was that of consul in Kaunas (Kovno), Lithuania, in 1939 and 1940. During that time he issued, on his own authority, thousands of visas to help Jewish refugees transit Japan via the USSR on their way to the United States. In 1947 the Japanese Foreign Ministry ordered Sugihara to resign. Among the questions Levine (*Economic Origins of Anti-Semitism: Poland and the Jews in the Early Modern Period*, Yale Univ., 1991) attempts to answer are: Who was Sugihara? Why did he rescue Jews? Who helped him? Why was he punished? This is a fascinating look at a little-known hero. For academic and large public libraries. William L. Wuerch, Univ. of Guam Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist

In 1940, Chiune Sugihara, the Japanese vice-consul in Kovno, Lithuania, issued an estimated 3,400 transit visas for Jews to travel eastward through Moscow and Siberia, then to Japan and beyond. Sugihara ultimately granted visas to anyone who applied, no matter what documents or what explanation for not having documents they offered. Some sources put the number of Jews Sugihara saved during the Holocaust as high as 10,000. On September 1, 1940, Soviet authorities ordered him to leave the city. Sugihara later served in Prague, Konigsberg, and Bucharest before returning to Japan at the end of World War II, where he was ordered to resign. Sugihara died in 1986, thus much of what is known about him comes from his wife and oldest son. Levine interviewed them as well as other relatives and some of the Jews he saved. This is not quite the "untold story" claimed by the publisher, but Levine has done a meticulous job of research in bringing to life the man and his act of courage. George Cohen