

LIFE AT THIRTY THOUSAND FEET: OBSERVATIONS FROM A FLIGHT ATTENDANT

高空三萬呎的人間報告

A mashup of philosophical musings, travel photography, and an insider exposé of life as a flight attendant, Life at Thirty Thousand Feet is a unique record of one man's reflections on his chosen profession.

Any insider account of an often glamorized profession is bound to contain a lot of spoilers, and Ko Chia-Wei's book of reflections on life as a flight attendant is no exception. Beyond the professional smiles and free travel vouchers lie, inevitably, the trials of perpetual jet lag and personal relationships strained by constant travel. Far less expected is Ko's ability to draw connections between his career and the ideas of the philosophers and cultural critics he studied at graduate school. With a cultured mind like Ko's at the helm, a discussion about maintaining order within the flight cabin digresses into a quick history of utopian thought from the 16th century to present. A chapter about an in-flight medical emergency kicks off with a quote from *Pride and Prejudice*.

The core of the book, however, remains the stories Ko has collected in his years of work as a flight attendant, divided broadly into two sections, "In Flight" and "On the Ground". From operational details like flight crew scheduling to personal challenges like losing touch with friends working conventional 9-to-5 jobs, from the familiar frequent flyers to the difficult passengers who hurl abuse, Ko observes all with a keen eye for the ways in which everyday occurrences can border on the fantastic when observed from 30,000 feet. Ko's starkly compositional travel photographs of lone seagulls on the pavement and rickety fences buried in snow perfectly complement the quirky and introspective tone of his writing.



Category: Memoir

Publisher: Linking

Date: 7/2020

Rights contact:

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Pages: 296

Length: 87,451 characters

(approx. 57,000 words in English)

Rights sold: Film

Whether you read it to learn what it's like to be a flight attendant, or to enjoy a philosophical travelog, *Life at Thirty Thousand Feet* will provide all you are looking for. Readers will come away better informed, and better primed to appreciate the strikingly thought-provoking moments that make up our so-called ordinary lives.

Ko Chia-Wei 柯嘉瑋

After completing a master's degree in foreign languages, Ko Chia-Wei was on the verge of starting his Ph.D. when his life took a left turn, and he decided to become a flight attendant. He blogs, writes songs, has a pilot's license, and one day hopes to become an air traffic controller. *Life at Thirty Thousand Feet* is his first book.