

Japanese Rationale of the Nanking Massacre

by  
Angela Tam

A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

Honors College

in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the  
degree of

Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in History  
(Honors Scholar)

Presented April 24, 2020  
Commencement June 2022



## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Angela Tam for the degree of Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in History presented on April 24, 2020. Title: Japanese Rationale of the Nanking Massacre.

Abstract approved: \_\_\_\_\_

Paul Wanke

After days of countless shelling of the city from the Japanese, Generalissimo Chiang and other military leaders retreated from Nanking, leaving their soldiers defenseless. On December 13, 1937, the Japanese army entered the city and within weeks, around 300,000 Chinese civilians and soldiers were not only killed but tortured and raped. No one was spared from the harsh treatment of the Japanese, including the elderly, young children, and pregnant women. Many, including Iris Chang, author of the acclaimed book *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II* claim that these actions were solely planned out and systematic. For example, Chang begins her narrative by quoting a command sent directly to the Japanese 66th Battalion that she stated to be a catalyst for the event: "...To comply with orders from brigade commanding headquarters, all prisoners of war are to be executed." However, the rationale behind these actions are unfortunately not as simple as mere commands from the very top of the Japanese forces. As such, the systemic ideas and issues of Shinto, cultural language, Bushido, and Japanese military practices will be emphasized. International political and economic relationships between will also be explored, as well as General Chiang Kai-Shek's military strategies that lead to the events witnessed at Nanking during the cold, winter months in the year of 1937.

Key Words: Nanking, Bushido, Shinto, World War II, war crimes, International Military Tribunal of the Far East, Kojiki

Corresponding e-mail address: [taman@oregonstate.edu](mailto:taman@oregonstate.edu)



©Copyright by Angela Tam  
April 24, 2020

Japanese Rationale of the Nanking Massacre

by  
Angela Tam

A THESIS

submitted to  
Oregon State University  
Honors College

in partial fulfillment of  
the requirements for the  
degree of

Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in History  
(Honors Scholar)

Presented April 24, 2020  
Commencement June 2022

Honors Baccalaureate of Arts in History project of Angela Tam presented on April 24, 2020

APPROVED:

---

Paul Wanke, Mentor, representing the School of History, Philosophy, and Religion

---

Kara Ritzheimer, Committee Member, representing the School of History, Philosophy, and Religion

---

Hung-Yok, Ip, Committee Member, representing the School of History, Philosophy, and Religion

---

Toni Doolen, Dean, Oregon State University Honors College

I understand that my project will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University, Honors College. My signature below authorizes release of my project to any reader upon request.

---

Angela Tam, Author

After days of countless shelling of the city from the Japanese, Generalissimo Chiang and other military leaders retreated from Nanking, leaving their soldiers defenseless. On December 13, 1937, the Japanese army entered the city and within weeks, around 300,000 Chinese civilians and soldiers were not only killed but tortured and raped<sup>1</sup>. No one was spared from the harsh treatment of the Japanese, including the elderly, young children, and pregnant women. Many, including Iris Chang, author of the acclaimed book *The Rape of Nanking: the Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*, claim that these actions were solely planned out and systematic. For example, Chang begins her narrative by quoting a command sent directly to the Japanese 66th Battalion that she stated to be a catalyst for the event: "...To comply with orders from brigade commanding headquarters, all prisoners of war are to be executed." However, the rationale behind these actions are unfortunately not as simple as mere commands from the very top of the Japanese forces. As such, the systemic ideas and issues of *Shinto*, cultural language, *Bushido*, and Japanese military practices will be emphasized. International political and economic relationships between will also be explored, as well as General Chiang Kai-Shek's military strategies that lead to the events witnessed at Nanking during the cold, winter months in the year of 1937.

## **Shinto**

One of the main religions in Japan is a traditional religion called *Shinto*.<sup>2</sup> The word *Shinto* is written as the characters 神道, and when translated, means "the way of the gods" due to

---

<sup>1</sup> Chang, Iris. *The Rape of Nanking: the Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*. Penguin Books, 1998.

<sup>2</sup> *Shinto* is the Japanese *romaji* and the *romaji* does not have the suffix "-ism." Only the English translation has the suffix



the fact that *Shinto* is a polytheistic religion and honors multiple gods through shrines as well as religious ceremonies. *Kojiki* (古事記) meaning “records of ancient matters” is the oldest *Shinto* text, dating from as early as the 8th century. Empress Genmei had the text commissioned by the nobleman Ō no Yasumaro, who compiled a collection of myths, early legends, songs, genealogies, oral traditions and semi-historical accounts concerning the Japanese islands and gods<sup>3</sup>.

Two of the main gods mentioned in the *Kojiki* are the two gods of creation: the goddess Izanami-no-Mikoto and the god Izanagi-no-Mikoto.<sup>4</sup> However, how they chose to bring life to the Japanese archipelago is extremely revealing about the Japanese viewpoint on sexual intercourse:

“Now the mighty one [Izanagi-no-Mikoto] turned to the mighty one [Izanami-no-Mikoto<sup>5</sup>] and questioned his sister, saying:

‘How is your body formed?’

She replied, saying:

‘My body is empty in one place.’

And so the mighty one [Izanagi-no-Mikoto] proclaimed:

‘My body sticks out in one place. I would like to thrust the part of my body that sticks out into the part of your body that is empty and fill it up to birth lands. How does birthing them in this way sound to you?’

---

<sup>3</sup> Brownlee, John. *Political Thought in Japanese Historical Writing: From Kojiki (712) to Tokushi Yoron (1712)*. Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991.

<sup>4</sup> Ō Yasumaro and Gustav Heldt. *The Kojiki: An Account of Ancient Matters*. New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2014.

<sup>5</sup> The source translation translated the names Izanagi-no-Mikoto and Izanami-no-Mikoto to their literal translations: He-Who-Invites and She-Who-Invites respectively. In this paper, the gods will be referred to in their *romaji* translations

The mighty one [Izanami-no-Mikoto] replied, saying:

‘That will be good.’

Not only were the Japanese comfortable with writing about sex between men and women, but they specifically chose to glorify the act by showing it was crucial to all life, including the very life of Japan as a country. Compared to the western ideals that Christianity holds towards sex and the original sin that comes with it, *Shinto* is very starkly contrasted. Another important detail to keep in mind is that these two gods, Izanami and Izanagi, can reproduce asexually. For example, Izanami was able to give birth to other gods with her blood while Izanagi gave birth to the sun and moon from his eyes. This demonstrates that Ō no Yasumaro placed this erotic scene solely to demonstrate Japan’s appreciation for the act and the fact that Empress Genmei approved of the *Kojiki* book in its entirety only solidifies the Japanese outlook. Shintoism was very common ever since its establishment as a state religion since the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and continued to be the state religion until its disbandment after WWII. Before its disbandment in WWII, it was a major driving factor for Japanese nationalism throughout the war as Shintoism essentially fuels Japanese ethnocentrism: Japanese gods are the true gods and the Japanese way of life is the true way of life.<sup>6</sup>

Another crucial point that this selection highlights is the fact that Izanagi, the male deity, was the one who initiated and chose the method of reproduction in this situation. Izanami, the female deity, seemed almost nonchalant or half-hearted in her consent to Izanagi’s suggestion. However, there is no follow-up or detail to what she truly wanted, implying that females do not have much of a role in making such a decision but rather, it is mainly the male’s decision. To

---

<sup>6</sup> Hardacre, Helen. *Shinto and the State, 1868-1988*. Princeton University Press, 1991.

solidify the power dynamic between these two gods, another selection demonstrates Izanami's position in comparison to her male counterpart:

“The mighty one [Izanami] spoke first, saying:

‘What a fine boy!’<sup>7</sup>

The mighty one [Izanagi] spoke after her, saying:

‘What a fine girl!’

After they had each finished pledging themselves to each other, the mighty one [Izanagi] chided his sister, saying:

‘No good will come of the woman speaking first.’

Izanagi's fear was not unfounded, however, as Izanagi and Izanami's first set of children had not formed as they desired. The heavens explained that it was because Izanami had spoken first in their consummation and that it had cursed them. This further reiterates the lower status women have in traditional Japanese society as it seems fated that if a woman were to speak out of place or before a man, dire consequences would be experienced.

Another Shinto folktale about the gods revolves around Izanagi and Izanami's son: Susanoo. In the beginning, Susanoo would rule the celestial plains with his sister Amaterasu but would show to have extremely violent tendencies. He would cause trouble by destroying forests and even killing humans on earth. As a result, Izanagi created an edict that banned Susanoo from the heavens. But before he left, Amaterasu and Susanoo decided to have one final challenge to determine the measure of each other's strength for the last time. Amaterasu birthed three goddesses from Susanoo's sword, while he birthed five gods from her necklace. As the male

---

<sup>7</sup> In reference to Izanagi

gods were birthed from her necklace, while his object could produce only women, she determined that she had won the challenge. Frustrated at the outcome, Susanoo went on a final rampage throughout the celestial plains, destroying Amaterasu's rice fields. However, he did not stop there. He destroyed her weaving loom by hurling a flayed horse and killing one of her female attendants.

After descending to earth, Susanoo came across an elderly couple who were about to sacrifice their last daughter to a monstrous serpent by its demand. For the past seven years, the serpent had consumed one of their daughters every year, and she was the only daughter left. Susanoo, hastily, immediately rushed into battle against the monster, but was defeated. He returned to the couple with a plan, but first asked for the promise of their daughter's hand in marriage before offering his assistance in killing the monster. The couple readily agreed, and Susanoo manages to defeat the monster before taking the daughter as his consort. It is significant that the human daughter is a consort rather than a wife as Susanoo, along with many other heavenly gods, has a harem of women at his side.

Susanoo, even as a powerful god and deity in Japanese lore, could not prevent his natural tendencies of violence and anger, universal stereotypical tendencies that have been contributed to the male gender. He knowingly displays such tendencies, even when he knows and understands that Izanagi had been angered by his actions, demonstrating his undisciplined and hot-blooded nature. His behavior on earth is also extremely misogynistic and oppressive of the female gender. For example, he had never consulted with the daughter herself, but rather her parents when asking for her hand in marriage. Her opinion on the matter would not matter to her parents nor Susanoo himself. He treated her as a war prize, the battle against the monster being the price of

his consort. The ideology of viewing women as a reward of war or battle can also be reflected in the concept of “comfort women” in imperial Japan, not unlike Susanoo’s ancient myth. The comfort women, much like his consort, would not be able to speak against the Japanese soldiers and officers that desired their “prizes” in return for military service.

Although the Shinto folktales were most likely known by even commoners in nationalistic Imperial Japan, it is crucial to keep in mind that these folktales are more circumstantial evidence of the cultural standing of women’s and men’s roles within Japanese tradition.

### **Cultural Standing of Women Within the Japanese Language**

How the Japanese viewed women as lesser to men, engrained both in cultural folktales and their very language is crucial to how their soldiers would later treat the women at Nanking. For example, two significant insults in the Japanese language relate to a woman’s ability to bear children. The first one, 石女 (*umazume*) directly translates to “stone female,” which is an insult that refers to a woman who is unable to bear children. As in many other Asian traditions and cultures, the woman’s most important role in society is to bear children, specifically strong, male children. On the other hand, 畜生腹 (*chikushō-bara*) translates to a beast’s womb and is used when women give birth to more than one child at a time, such as twins or triplets. Japanese folk wisdom claims that the ability to bear more than one child is only found in animals, not humans. As such, Japanese mothers throughout history frequently try to hide the fact that they have delivered twins, with some resorting to extremes such as infanticide.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>8</sup> “Science: Japanese Twins.” *Time Inc.*, November 9, 1936.  
<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,770452,00.html>.

女 (*onna*), directly translated to woman, also usually signifies something with highly negative connotations when it is a part of other phrases and words. For example, 姦 (*kan*) holds the female radical three times in the character, and translates to adultery, although women are not the only people responsible for adultery. However, the character seems to insinuate that women bear the weight of the responsibility and in Japanese culture, it is indeed reflected when cases of adultery come to light. The character for male in Japanese is 男 (*dan*). When the female radical is sandwiched between two male radicals is 嬖 (*nabu*), which translates to “tease” or “disturb,” once again insinuating that a woman interacting with more than one man is unacceptable. Women do not want to be referred to as a 男勝り (*otoko-masari*), excelling past men or mannish, as it seems arrogant.

A universal insult within the Japanese language is the phrase 女性的 (*joseiteki*), which is used to describe one’s behavior as feminine or woman-like. 女以下 (*onna-ika*), translating to “below a woman’s status” is an especially harming insult towards Japanese men.

One of the most alarming phrases that showcase Japan’s cultural misogyny is 痴漢 (*chikan*), which commonly refers to male molesters or perverts. However, the characters translate directly to “fool” and “man,” leading to the literal translation of the phrase meaning “foolish man.” This phrase downplays the severity of molestation and perverseness of these men as mere acts of “stupidity,” implying that the men who engage in sexual assault do not know any better rather than implying that these men are sexual predators and are dangerous. In other words, the connotation of sexual violation is not as negatively connoted.

## **Bushido**

One possible explanation behind the extreme Japanese militarism, and consequently the Nanking Massacre in World War II is the fact that in feudal Japan, martial strength would determine one's own social position and honor. Wealthy feudal lords would employ private armies in order to extend their political control by gaining more land, or to defend the land and power that they already held. These armies who had served these feudal lords eventually developed into the Japanese warrior class known as the samurai and began abiding by a code of conduct called *bushido*. *Bushido*, in Japanese, essentially means "the way of the warrior" and has a total of 8 different main virtues which include righteousness, courage, benevolence, respect, honesty, loyalty, self-control, and honor.<sup>9</sup> However, it is important to note that the concept of *bushido* varied from clan to clan, and each clan would choose to emphasize different aspects or create their own. Nitobe, a well-known Japanese educator and later advocate against Japanese militarism, illustrated an articulation of these eight virtues which offers only one interpretation. However, despite this fact, the interpretation has been one of the most commonly accepted forms of *bushido* since the publication in but has been one of the most commonly accepted forms of this code of conduct since his publication in the 1900s, well before the onset of World War II. *Bushido* is a code only technically valid for the Japanese warrior class; however, all Japanese highly respected and revered this style of living as these warriors represented the peak of self-discipline and strength. It was considered an honor for the Japanese to become a warrior and fight for the country.

The character 義 (*gi*) that represents the word "righteousness" in the *bushido* code can also mean justice and morality. Samurai warriors would act according to not necessarily what is

---

<sup>9</sup> Nitobe, Inazo. *Bushido: the Soul of Japan*. Kodansha International, 2008.

“morally” correct, however, which is why the words “justice” and “morality” may not be the best words that can be used in this context. Instead, samurai warriors would choose to act what they personally perceive as correct given a specific situation based upon their own judgement.

However, once they decide to, they must commit to their decision completely and without any hesitation, which is where the feeling of “righteousness” is invoked from, which can be another factor that prevented Japan from altering its course once the Nanking Massacre had begun.

Courage in Japanese is written as the kanji 勇氣 (*yuuki*), and when translating the characters, the first part 勇 means “bravery” while the second part 氣 means “spirit.” Both of these characters together would, therefore, describe the Japanese concept of courage as “the bravery of the spirit,” implying that courage must come from deep inside each individual samurai warrior. In the early 1700s, the samurai philosopher Yamamoto Tsunetomo voiced the concept of courage as the ability to face death and that ability also represented the highest attainment of courage<sup>10</sup>. According to Yamamoto, the acceptance of death would also give way to a higher state of living, infusing a samurai’s life with beauty and grace that was beyond the scope of those concerned with self-preservation. Without the fear of death, samurai warriors would not hesitate or have a desire to doubt their role to a feudal lord when fighting on their behalf.

仁 (*jin*) is the character that represents benevolence in the *bushido* code. The left part of the character, 亻 is the radical representing “man” or “human”, symbolizing that the root of benevolence comes from human nature itself. Nitobe’s interpretation of the concept of benevolence emphasizes the need for the warrior to have genuine distress or concern and worry

---

<sup>10</sup> Yamamoto, Tsunetomo and Alexander Bennett. *Hagakure: The Secret Wisdom of the Samurai*. Tuttle Publishing, 2014.



for not only fellow warriors but other people of different classes as well. The power, strength, courage, and fighting skill of a warrior can be dangerous if not tempered by internal benevolence. By balancing these two sides of a warrior, he would be able to act in the best interest of his commanders and comrades, as well as society. Although samurai warriors had to have benevolence, their commanders had to show the same care and share the same distress. The commander's role would be to hold the best interests of any subordinate at heart and give them multiple opportunities to set things right, while still holding them accountable for their actions. In war, the samurai would be expected to treat civilians well and to show mercy whenever possible.

The character 礼 (*rei*) can be translated to mean respect, but it can also be translated to mean gratitude as well. Respect is shared between all members of the samurai's rank, and it stems from a sense of gratitude for life and many other things that a samurai may be blessed with. For example, a samurai is conscious of his own abilities and should know that his skills are rare to have. Although this mindset may seem like a possible hubris for the samurai, it is, in fact, the opposite. A practitioner of *bushido* should have nothing to prove, and nor should they have any fear of being lessened by others. By understanding this ideal of the *bushido* code, it enables each samurai to remain humble and respectful as they know that they have already won the battle.

Honesty is represented by the kanji character 誠 (*makoto*). Although speaking the truth and taking responsibility is a large part of honesty for a samurai, the concept of honesty is not as simple. Although the difference between honest and deceitful words is clear, a samurai must learn to understand the sensitivity behind some situations. To be brutally honest when not

necessary requires no thought, grace and careful attention, which is unlike the nature of the samurai warriors. Instead, it is important that a samurai must remain honest to himself and keep his own conscience clear. For example, in times of injustice, it is paramount that a samurai speaks up, even if the social situation worsens or tenses. In the end, the samurai must decide what is right and just to say, and that morality can only come from within himself.

Loyalty is written as the character 忠 (*chu*). In order for one to become a samurai and serve a feudal lord, one must have the utmost loyalty to the feudal lord that he is to serve. Without loyalty, the feudal lord may easily be without protection if the samurai were to be bribed or lead astray. Without loyalty, there would be no trust between the samurai and feudal lord, weakening both of the separate class systems as both classes are reliant on each other. Although the samurai must show complete loyalty to their lords, they must also devote themselves to those under their protection, such as other warriors or civilians, no matter their station.

Self-control is written as the characters 自制 (*jisei*), and although 制 can be read as “control,” it can just as easily translate to “suppress” or “restrict.” Self-control can refer to the self-control needed to suppress instinctive human behavior in order to follow the *bushido* code exactly, but the samurai had to suppress themselves even further. In this case, it refers to the self-control that is needed in order for samurai to restrict their emotions and put on a stoic expression. In fact, a strong and admirable character was that of a man who could show no sign of joy nor anger and a samurai who even gave a hint of emotion would be seen as effeminate and weak, both highly undesirable characteristics of any samurai warrior.

The concept of honor is expressed as the two characters 名誉 (*meiyo*). The character 名 (*mei*) is translated to mean “name” and 誉 (*yo*) can mean “glory” or “reputation.” In the literal

translation of these characters, the concept of honor can be understood to mean the reputation of one's own name, be it the family name or for personal glory. By following all the other virtues of *bushido*, a samurai will be able to maintain honor and someday achieve the glory or recognition he deserves. However, if a samurai were to do anything that tainted his reputation or his family name, there was a solution: seppuku, a ritualized form of suicide. This form of suicide was reserved only for samurai, and the samurai would have to attain permission from his master for this ritual as well. Different samurai would have different masters, such as a daimyo or a shogun, and would request permission from their respective masters. During the ritual, the samurai would cut his abdomen open, a death so painful that a second person would usually cut his head off to end his suffering. The reasoning behind an abdominal cut was because of the belief that the soul was located there and by cutting open the abdomen, the samurai could "open" his soul to the people who witnessed the ritual and allow them to judge the purity of his soul.

Because the *bushido* code was a code of honor and chivalry, many historians believe that the code must have been distorted by World War II and in the Nanking Massacre. Civilian life was disregarded, and even the women and the children were shown little mercy, even though members of the Japanese military were expected to follow the values of *bushido*. There is historical evidence that the Japanese soldiers did not treat the Chinese civilians and the enemy soldiers of Nanking with respect or benevolence. At a shallow examination of the events at Nanking, the soldiers seem to be directly violating the code of *bushido*. However, when examining the outlined virtues and the details of *bushido*, many concepts are left up to individual interpretation, such as the concept of righteousness that allows a warrior the choice to act on their interpretation of what is correct. By using the name of *bushido*, they are able to execute

what they believe to be as correct, even in the most extreme ways possible. It is also important to note that *bushido* can vary widely between each warrior, so some may choose to disregard concepts such as benevolence, believing that benevolence may be a sign of weakness. In the end, the fluid nature of *bushido* may have led to the corruption of its fundamental purpose to pave the path for more disciplined warriors in WWII. More specifically, in the scope of Nanking, *bushido* never explicitly discusses ways of conduct, such as the treatment of civilians and following orders.

Prince Asaka, as commanding officer during the time of Nanking Massacre, would have followed *bushido*, but likely in his own interpretation of the honored virtues. With his knowledge of war immunity, if he may ever need it, Asaka's interpretation of *bushido* may have been more daring or bold than the average commander. The Japanese also hold members of the royal family in high regard, as they believe the emperor is a sort of god. Commoner civilians made up the soldiers during the Nanking Massacre, which may have contributed to Asaka's bold leadership in China's capital city.

The concept of *bushido* also emphasizes death for an individual soldier or warrior, and the Japanese embraced it, willing to fight at the cost of many deaths at Shanghai and throughout the Second World War. However, the Japanese may have enforced their extreme *bushido* belief on the Chinese as well, resulting in the Nanking Massacre. The Chinese had hidden themselves away rather than surrendered nobly. Not only did they not surrender, but in the eyes of the Japanese, who had been raised since young that death was the most noble thing to do in war, the Chinese were nothing but cowards as they ran from death rather than seek it out.

## View of the Chinese

Before Nanking or even Manchuria had been invaded in World War II, the Japanese had already been viewing the Chinese as their lesser counterparts in the group of East Asian nations. Japanese began to assert cultural influence on China as early as the 1880s, after Japan had successfully executed their program of modernization during the Meiji period from 1868 to 1912. Furthermore, the program of modernization culminated with China's defeat in the first Sino-Japanese War of 1894-1895.<sup>11</sup> From that point on, China had lost all respect and dignity in the eyes of the Japanese who began to look upon China as territory to be exploited as a colony in a way similar to the European and American claims on Asian cultures. China had become Japan's "manifest destiny."

The Japanese goal of manifesting their destiny in China remained clear by the time of the Nanking invasion in World War II. General Iwane Matsui was an officer in the Japanese army and, being the commander of the expeditionary force sent to China in 1937, was the general leading the army into Nanking in December. His main goal after capturing Nanking was to establish a Chinese government to Japan's liking, making clear that his intentions for the Chinese people after the war were to shape and mold their society in a way similar to the Japanese society and culture.<sup>12</sup> Under General Matsui, the soldiers were not very well-disciplined and frequently disrespected the upper-command. However, this could have been due to the fact that Matsui was a small and aging man, without many significant military victories to his name.

Furthermore, General Iwane Matsui believed that through invading Manchuria and China, he was helping restore Asian culture to its former glory and unite Asia to make a greater

---

<sup>11</sup> Li, Peter. *Japanese War Crimes: the Search for Justice*. Transaction Publishers, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Ara, Ken'ichi. 南京事件」日本人48人の証言 (*Nankin Jiken Nihonjin 48 nin No shōgen*) 2002.

empire than the world has ever seen. In a speech delivered by the general in 1933, he stated that Japan must extend her help to China and “relieve them from their miserable condition of political, economic, and intellectual subjugation by various countries of the world. This serious responsibility and mission is a double burden for the empire.”<sup>13</sup> In a way similar to the “white man’s burden,” Matsui believed it was Japan’s duty to “relieve” China, implying that without Japan, the mindless Chinese are unwittingly being controlled by outside foreign countries. And without the Japanese invasion, Matsui believes, China would continue to be mindlessly controlled. Matsui also stated that he saw their Chinese counterparts as the “Asian brothers” to Japan; however, as the Chinese “younger” brother was putting up resistance, Japan, being the “older” brother had no choice but to force them into abiding by their vision of a unified Asian empire. In this way, Matsui believed his actions were out of love and care for the Chinese rather than hate or disdain.

Although General Iwane Matsui was one out of a very few who claimed to act out of love for the Chinese people and many others held only disrespect and hate, Matsui still viewed the Chinese as inferior to his people. They needed help and to be saved themselves, which served as a justification for his invasion of mainland China without any regard for what the Chinese may have thought or wanted for themselves.

Kita Ikki was a Japanese author, intellectual and political philosopher who was active in early-Shōwa period Japan (1906-1919). Like General Iwane Matsui, he too believed that the Japanese were acting out of love for the Chinese rather than hatred.<sup>14</sup> In his book *An Outline*

---

<sup>13</sup> Matsui, Iwane and Torsten Weber. “Dai Ajiashugi” (Greater Asianism). Kingu, May Issue Supplement “Jikyoku Mondai: Hijōji Kokumin Taikai” (The Problems concerning the Current Situation: A People’s Rally in Times of Emergency), 2–9. 1993.

<sup>14</sup> Kita, Ikki and Ryusaku Tsunoda. *Nihon kaizo hoan taiko (An Outline Plan for the Reorganization of Japan)*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1958

*Plan for the Reorganization of Japan*, Ikki claimed that the people in China have no path to independence other than that which is offered by Japan's guidance and protection. Unlike Matsui, however, Ikki seemed to more directly view the Chinese as inferior. Instead of viewing the relationship between the two countries as two siblings, Ikki viewed specifically Chinese women as inferior. He implied that the Japanese woman was much more serene and calm when compared to the "piercing" nature of the Chinese and claimed that the Japanese woman was on the correct path to become the ideal, civilized woman. If Japan were to conquer China as per Ikki's plan to liberate the nation, the Chinese women would also have to be liberated as well, to be saved from their own uncivilized nature. They, ideally to the Japanese, would lose their Chinese identity as the Chinese identity and culture were what had brought them harm during the Nanking Massacre.

Although Matsui and Ikki's writings and claims have a possibility of being nothing more than propaganda, Ikki brought up a problem that Japan had yet to deal with: overpopulation. Japan's population had doubled to around 70 million in the span of the fifty years prior to the publication of Ikki's work, which was published in 1958. Emigration was no longer a simple solution, as countries such as the US began prohibiting all Japanese from immigrating to other countries. If Japan were to continue with the trend and the population were to continue to grow, Ikki believed that Japan would need more territory, and unfortunately, the Japanese islands would not be enough to sustain the population. And so, by entering China, not only could the Japanese liberate them and give them freedom, but more importantly, provide the Japanese with the land they needed to sustain themselves.

Japan was hit hard by the Showa Depression of 1930 which was caused by the worldwide Great Depression. While it would recover more quickly than most of the Western powers did, Western nations began to impose protectionist tariffs and cut back on the purchase of Japanese goods, damaging the Japanese economy further. Much like their European ally Germany, a fascist movement began to emerge from the economically damaged country. Much of the blame for the Showa Depression was placed on party governments and their policies. Even ordinary Japanese people, who did not wish to needlessly return to war again, were disappointed with the performance of the government and became more and more sympathetic to the promises of reform that were advocated by the military. One of the major goals of these military and right-wing groups that the Japanese people seemed to agree upon was active military expansion. The “Shidehara Diplomacy,” a pacific conciliatory policy, was believed to have been too soft on China, mainly due to the fact that the Chinese were in the way of Japanese interests towards Manchuria and Mongolia.<sup>15</sup>

Kingorō Hashimoto, one of the founders of the right-wing ultranationalist Cherry Blossom Society, concluded that Japan was being unfairly shut out of world markets and, like many others, wanted Japan to develop its own self-sufficient economy, one that would not be dependent on an international economic system that would not accommodate to Japan's needs.<sup>16</sup> And, as many ultranationalists believed, Japan would gain self-sufficiency from controlling more territory throughout Asia and developing an Asiatic empire. However, Hashimoto claimed that Japan did not have any desire to annex other nations or claim the possessions of other nations.

---

<sup>15</sup> Ōno Kenichi. *Tojōkoku Nippon No Ayumi: Edo Kara Heisei Made No Keizai Hatten = The Path Traveled by Japan as a Developing Country: Economic Growth from Edo to Heisei*. Tōkyō: Yūhikaku, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Hashimoto, Kingorō and Ryusaku Tsunoda. “The Need for Emigration and Expansion.” New York: Columbia University Press, 1958.



Rather, the Japanese merely wanted “some place overseas where Japanese capital, Japanese skills and Japanese labor can have free play, free from the oppression of the white race.” They did not plan to co-exist with the Chinese, however, and instead planned to integrate both cultures into a larger, Japanese-dominated society.

However, Hashimoto also had a rationale for Japanese actions for when the military became too violent or forceful in Japan’s quest for territorial expansion. He addressed to his audience that if the Western powers attempted to prevent Japan’s expansion to recall the fact that the Western countries had invaded many regions as well, such as India, Africa, and Australia. Not only had they invaded the regions, but they had slaughtered innocent natives, “bound their hands and feet with iron chains, lashed their backs with iron whips, proclaimed the territories as their own, and still continued to hold them.” After such statements, he shares the Western rationale, which was that the lands were inhabited by uncivilized people who did not know how to develop the resources for the benefit of the human race. Therefore, through a few native peoples’ sacrifice, the entire human race would benefit. Using this rationale, Hashimoto pointed out that Japan should be able to do the same with China as well as the rest of Asia. By stressing the Europeans’ use of violence and torture, Hashimoto implied that even that should be excused should it happen during the Japanese quest of expansion.

Yet another ideology may have helped push the Japanese to assert violence over the Chinese people: Communism. China seemed to be at threat of being a communistic nation much like their neighbor: the Soviet Union. Even if the suppression of the Chinese people was not a direct cause of the fear of Communism, the fear of Communism is able to act as a piece of rationale for the Japanese soldiers to continue on, fighting for their ideals. As the war continued

on, exhausting the Nationalist troops and their resources, the Communist Party only continued to grow as people joined the war cause. Overall, compared to the Nationalist Party, the Communists fared much better with guerilla tactics, strengthening and solidifying Mao's political standing over Chiang as leader of China.<sup>17</sup>

### **Training of the Japanese Soldiers**

Training for the Japanese soldiers was extremely rudimentary as the influx of raw conscripts increased and placed a high level of pressure on training facilities since the 1920s and into the 1930s. Thousands of Japanese soldiers would go overseas with the bare minimum of skills and a mere three months of training.<sup>18</sup> In addition, military training in the barracks was not optimally organized. For example, the barracks chief, a non-commissioned officer, was in charge of training the new recruits in name but in reality, it was the veteran soldiers who dominated the process.

Life in the barracks unit followed a very strict and fixed routine which included reveille, dressing, inspection, meals, training, cleaning and other chores. If a soldier in training was late or if one of the veteran soldiers was simply in a bad mood, he could be punched or slapped. Oguma Kenji remembers his time in the barracks and says that, "There was never a day I didn't get hit. I often counted how many times it happened in one day." This routine beating of the new Japanese recruits was called *bentatsu*, and was an "act of love" by the veteran officers. Such discipline

---

<sup>17</sup> Lary, Diana. *China's Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

<sup>18</sup> Eiji, Oguma. *Return from Siberia: A Japanese Life in War and Peace, 1925-2015*. International House of Japan, 2018.

was also apparent in the Japanese navy through *tekken seisai*, or the “iron fist,” and was often called *ai-no-muchi*, or “whip of love.”<sup>19</sup>

Although these unofficial punishments were technically forbidden by military regulations, the Japanese believed that these traditional, abusive punishments were not only “acts of love,” but also crucial to the development of both physically and mentally tuned soldiers who were ready for anything that war might bring them. And as such, the military regulations banning these punishments were not upheld and such punishments became extremely common practice within the Japanese barracks.

The Japanese training of their new recruits provides some insight into why the Japanese soldiers were capable of such brutality at the city of Nanking. It was a case of “the transfer of oppression.”<sup>20</sup> The arbitrary and cruel treatment that the military inflicted on its own officers and soldiers was then transferred to their treatment of the enemy. In the case of Nanking, the unfortunate victims of the “transfer” were the Chinese civilians and soldiers who were the enemy of the Japanese. Nanking seems to be an anomaly throughout even World War II, due to the fact that civilians such as women and children were sexually targeted in such extremes. Not only were civilians targeted, but prisoners of war were not taken at Nanking and instead killed. Other Japanese war crime incidents such as the Bataan Death March punished and only captured prisoners of war rather than directly executing them. Although some were killed if they could not keep up with the march, the level of execution and torture seen at Nanking is not seen at the Bataan Death March.

---

<sup>19</sup> Tanaka, Toshiyuki and John W. Dower. *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

<sup>20</sup> Hicks, George L. *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War*. W.W. Norton, 2011.

Such training, however, also proved to be relatively ineffective. As early as the outbreak of the China incident which occurred in 1937 before the Nanking Massacre, Major General Naokazu Kawahara noticed many cases of undisciplined soldiers beginning to threaten the army's structure as well as morale. In his pamphlet "Plan for Improving Discipline," he reports that in the years 1937 to 1939, a total of 588 men were punished by courts-martial for threatening a superior with violence or being insolent while a total of 78 were punished for insubordination.<sup>21</sup> The purpose behind General Kawahara's pamphlet was to improve the discipline as well as the structure of training that may have led to the atrocities committed in China during World War II rather than to specifically prevent the atrocities from happening again in the future. The pamphlet had been written in the year 1955 after the war and the Tokyo Trials had occurred which had brought light to such atrocities.

Despite General Kawahara's motivations for writing a pamphlet and recording the actions of undisciplined soldiers, the significance is the fact that many soldiers were undisciplined and were simply doing whatever they had chosen to do. The training was clearly inadequate, and when faced with military action and mobilization, began to disregard not only their superiors' instructions, but they disregarded the humanity and the necessary respect for their superiors as well.

### **Decline of Japanese Morale**

This pre-existing mentality towards the Chinese only amplified after the Sino-Japanese battle at Shanghai on 7 July 1937. Although the Japanese had won the battle and the Chinese

---

<sup>21</sup> Kawahara, Naokazu. *Plan for Improving Discipline*. 1955.

retreated towards Nanking, the Japanese morale had only weakened rather than strengthened as one may have expected due to a hard-earned victory. Japan had sent reinforcements at least three times to the city: once on 15 August 1937 in order to “protect Japanese subjects in Shanghai,”<sup>22</sup> on 23 August 1937, and yet again on 11 September 1937. As the fighting in Shanghai continued, Horinouchi, the Japanese Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs said in a radio broadcast that Japan’s intentions were those of peace rather than hostility on 1 September 1937. He also stated that Japan’s actions in China were due to China committing anti-Japanese acts against the army. He continued on, stating that the ultimate goal of the current situation in Asia was the realization of a situation that would allow for genuine cooperation between the two countries. Five more battalions of Japanese reinforcements would arrive from China, as well as five more battalions from the Japanese mainland, signifying that the Japanese Supreme Command desired victory more than anything, even the return of their citizens. By the end of the battle at Shanghai on 26 November 1937, the Japanese had suffered many casualties. Losing so many people to the Chinese, who the Japanese saw as inferior and weaker, only infuriated the members of the army even more and added fuel to the fire of revenge.<sup>23</sup> Before the final assault on Nanking, thousands of Chinese soldiers surrendered, only to be machine-gunned down, showcasing the anger of the Japanese soldiers. One officer wrote that “many of our men had lost good friends. The unit hated the Chinese and there was a feeling of wanting to kill every one of the bastards.”<sup>24</sup>

---

<sup>22</sup> Pritchard, John. *International Military Tribunal for the Far East; The Tokyo Major War Crimes Trial: The Transcripts of the Court Proceedings of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East*. Edwin Mellen Press, 1946.

<sup>23</sup> Reinforcements sent to Japanese Expeditionary Army, 11 September 1937. Japanese Army Studies, Central China Area Operations Record, 1937-1941, Prepared for Military History Section, HQ, Army Forces Far East.

<sup>24</sup> Ienaga, Saburō. *The Pacific War: World War II and the Japanese, 1931-1945*. Pantheon Books, 1978.

Generalissimo Chiang Kai-Shek, serving for the Chinese Nationalist Revolutionary Army, had decided to retreat towards the west, towards the capital city of Nanking. However, as the Japanese entered Nanking, a change in leadership occurred: Iwane Matsui was replaced by Prince Asaka, who held the military title of general as well as being a member of the royal family.<sup>25</sup> Unlike Iwane Matsui and the other military leaders, Prince Asaka was the only member of military personnel who held immunity to all possible war crimes due to his royal heritage. The prince of Japan knew of his own war crime immunity, which may have led to a certain type of courage that allowed him to treat the fighting and acts committed at Nanking much more lightly. However, the most significant fact was that the soldiers knew that Asaka had a commanding position at Nanking. It was no secret that the prince was deeply involved and engaged with the imperial military, even serving on the Supreme War Council for most of the war. He would stand by Iwane Matsui and other commanding officers at memorials for fallen soldiers. He also participated in the Nanking victory march, riding into the fallen Chinese city behind Iwane Matsui.<sup>26</sup>

Once Generalissimo Chiang returned to the capital, preparations were being made to defend Nanking. Eight of Nanking's city-wall gates would soon be closed, and soldiers began to build sandbag barricades and set up barbed-wire entanglements at the other four gates of the city. A telephone communication system was also set up to link defense positions commanding both the land and river approaches to the city. Around a thousand Chinese civilians were directed to contribute to the war effort, reinforcing existing gun emplacements, concrete pillboxes and dugouts with a trench network extending thirty miles from the city in seven semicircular rings

---

<sup>25</sup> "Minutes of Fourth Meeting of the Executive Committee." The International Military Tribunal for the Far East, U.Va., 29 Sept. 2014, [imtfelaw.virginia.edu/collections/morgan/1/3/minutes-fourth-meeting-executive-committee](http://imtfelaw.virginia.edu/collections/morgan/1/3/minutes-fourth-meeting-executive-committee).

<sup>26</sup> "The Nanjing Atrocities: Crimes of War." Brookline, MA: Facing History and Ourselves, 2014.

ending at the Yangtze River, which surrounds Nanking on two sides.<sup>27</sup> However, in the eyes of Chiang and his generals, that would not be enough to protect Nanking. After Kuyung fell to the Japanese on the night of Monday, December 6 and the Japanese began to advance to Nanking, Chiang began to deploy his “scorched earth policy.” From Tangshan on across fifteen miles of countryside into Nanking, almost every building would be set aflame. Entire villages would be burned, and many institutions such as the modern chemical warfare school and the agricultural research experimental laboratories were also reduced to ruins. It is estimated that the Chinese destroyed around 20 to 30 million Chinese yuan of property. The Chinese also set fire to many trees, bamboo groves, as well as underbrush. Chiang and other military leaders believed it was necessary to destroy anything and everything might be utilized by the Japanese.<sup>28</sup>

After the Japanese had arrived in Nanking, Matsui sent a command for the Chinese to surrender Nanking.<sup>29</sup> Chiang refused to surrender, and the Japanese thus began to execute a series of air raids upon the city.<sup>30</sup> To prevent civilians from fleeing the city, Chiang ordered troops to guard the port. Chiang did not want to sacrifice the lives of his top officers to the Japanese, but also did not want to surrender the capital city. The defense force of the Chinese military blocked roads, destroyed boats, and burnt nearby villages, preventing widespread evacuation. Fighting had also resumed once more, and the Japanese continuously bombed the city for roughly a few days without much pause and relief to the Chinese civilians.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>27</sup> “NANKING PREPARES TO RESIST ATTACK; Defenses Reinforced, Trench Network Built — City Scared by Munitions Dump Blast.” *New York Times*, 1 Dec. 1937

<sup>28</sup> “JAPANESE ATROCITIES MARKED FALL OF NANKING AFTER CHINESE COMMAND FLED; Nanking Invaders Executed 20000, Mass Killings by the Japanese Embraced Civilians – Total of Chinese Dead Was 33000.” *New York Times*, 9 Jan. 1938.

<sup>29</sup> Rabe, John and Erwin Wickert, *The Good Man of Nanking: The Diaries of John Rabe*. New York: A.A. Knopf, 1998.

<sup>30</sup> Pritchard, John.

<sup>31</sup> Rabe, John & Erwin Wickert

Not long after the Japanese bombing of the city had begun, many Chinese army leaders fled from Nanking towards the Yangtze River, deserting their troops which then resulted in a catastrophic panic among the ranks.<sup>32</sup> Due to this disorganization, a number of Chinese units continued fighting, not realizing that the Japanese had completely surrounded Nanking and that their fighting was completely hopeless. Many soldiers threw away their guns, shed their uniforms and changed into civilian clothing. Many soldiers also surrounded the safety zone headquarters and surrendered to the foreign committeemen who accepted their surrender and allowed them to enter the zone.

### **Rationale of the Japanese Soldiers**

Although it is unclear whether or not there was a direct order to murder and rape the civilians of Nanking, it is certain that members of all ranks participated in the slaughter, rape and other such atrocities of the Chinese at Nanking. One main reason behind the massacres and group killings may have been due to the fact that Nanking had never officially surrendered to the Japanese as Chiang and the other military leaders had already fled, making the capital still an active warzone. As Nanking was still an active war zone by definition, the Japanese viewed the slaughter of civilians as an unfortunate byproduct of war and necessary for victory rather than the massacre of innocent civilians. Not only was Nanking in the area of an active war zone, the active war zone also encompassed the Nanking Safety Zone as the Japanese forces did not agree upon its neutrality which would allow them to enter and exit the safety zone as necessary to kill the soldiers as well as citizens of Nanking.<sup>33</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> "JAPANESE ATROCITIES"

<sup>33</sup> "A naval radio transmission from Shanghai, recorded at Nanking." 1937.  
<http://divinity-adhoc.library.yale.edu/Nanking/Images/NMP0129.pdf>



Another very apparent rationale on the Japanese behalf was the fact that the Chinese soldiers had essentially disguised themselves as normal civilians instead of formally surrendering. Some soldiers were still found by the Japanese to have been carrying weapons on their physical person. The Japanese were well-aware of this fact as they had surrounded the city and knew that the Chinese soldiers were still in Nanking somewhere, possibly readying themselves for an ambush against the Japanese at any time. However, there is not any evidence of the Chinese ambushing the Japanese as the majority either kept within the safety zone or hid in their homes in fear. The uncertainty of where and who among the civilians the Chinese soldiers were may have caused fear or anxiety in the Japanese soldiers, who had previously been exhausted at Shanghai by the Chinese troops. The combination of fear at Nanking and the anger and frustration due to massive losses at Shanghai may have directly contributed to the eagerness to end the war as fast as possible. In the eyes of the Japanese, one such way to end the war would be to kill as many soldiers as possible, before the Chinese soldiers had time to regroup and fight against the Japanese.

Mutilations and execution-style killings were also very common during the period of the Nanking Massacre. Mutilations may have been a form of torture or a fear tactic against the Chinese, but cultural religion may have also had a role in this method of killing the Chinese. The Japanese believed that if a person is missing a limb by the time of death that person's soul cannot reincarnate into another body. Due to the Japanese viewing the Chinese as lesser beings as them, they may not have wanted the Chinese to even have the chance of reincarnation. Some may have also felt guilt or realized the loss of morality in their actions and did not want the reincarnated souls of the people they killed to seek vengeance on the Japanese soldiers for their actions. Mass

execution-style killings, as described by a soldier at Nanking, were “killed to test the efficiency of the machine gun.”<sup>34</sup>

Other methods of killing included the bayoneting of local civilians and prisoners of war. Tens of thousands of Chinese prisoners were used for live bayonet practice. They were tied to posts with ropes or wires, and new recruits were forced to practice stabbing their victims to death with their bayonets to build up their morale and courage to last through the war. Kazuo Sone, an officer at Nanking, states that this kind of experience was every soldier’s test and ordeal. After the bayonet practices on living subjects, the goal was that the soldiers would be fearless in real battle and would glory in the act of killing.

Both Prince Asaka and General Matsui were still involved with the military at the time of Nanking’s invasion, but Prince Asaka had more of a direct role in leading the soldiers as Prince Asaka replaced General Matsui’s role of commanding the general army before the atrocities at Nanking occurred and was at Nanking when the attack occurred.<sup>35</sup> However, General Matsui was responsible for Prince Asaka and his responsibility was to oversee him.<sup>36</sup> This change in leadership may have made a significant difference in the way the army would have otherwise acted.

The Japanese troops would also loot the city, taking as many valuables, food, and clothing as they could.<sup>37</sup> Troops did not get paid much, with basic recruits receiving only around

---

<sup>34</sup> Pritchard, John.

<sup>35</sup> Possibility that Prince Asaka made the order to “kill all captives” within Nanking. Many secondary sources state that either he executed the order, or Lieutenant Isamu Cho did so secretly under Prince Asaka. No primary sources seem to definitively support or deny this claim

<sup>36</sup> Ara, Ken'ichi.

<sup>37</sup> Pritchard, John.

1-2 yen per month.<sup>38</sup> Generals, on the other hand, could make around 250 yen per month. In comparison, a 10 kg of rice would cost a little over 1 yen while a large bottle of beer would cost around twenty sen.<sup>39</sup> The Japanese troops were trained to live off the land; however, due to Chiang's scorched-earth policy, there was not much for the army to survive off of. Clothing was also extremely vital to the Japanese, as the winter months December and January would weaken them if they did not have the proper clothing. In order to conceal these crimes, the Japanese would kill any witnesses that caught them in the act so as to prevent the possibility of being convicted after the war for robbery.

There were also unofficial instructions regarding the rape of Chinese women. One soldier recalled them, saying that a company commander instructed the troops to "either pay them money or kill them in some obscure place" after they had finished.<sup>40</sup> The fact that a company commander not only allowed the rape to continue but instructed the soldiers how to avoid repercussions may have offered further rationale or assurance to the average Japanese soldier in Nanking. Even without such rationale, both Japanese soldiers and military commanders had come from a cultural background in which women were considered lesser beings. What women wanted or needed meant nothing to these men, and the common belief shared between the Japanese military members of all ranks was that women were ultimately created to serve men. Depending on a case-to-case basis, it seemed that rape cases were either of simply sexual desire, or a sense of revenge and power that drove them. For example, some paid money to the Chinese

---

<sup>38</sup> 独立行政法人国立公文書館 | National Archives Of Japan . “陸軍給与令中改正加除・御署名原本・明治三十六年・勅令第百八十六号.” 国立公文書館 デジタルアーカイブ. Accessed January 11, 2020. <https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/das/image/F0000000000000019776>.

<sup>39</sup> One sen would be equivalent to one-hundredth of a Japanese yen. It was discontinued after WWII

<sup>40</sup> Pritchard, John.

women who were willing to serve as comfort women, but other times, soldiers would rape women in front of their husbands or fathers and force them to watch.

Another possible point for Japanese rationale of raping the Chinese was the fact that the Japanese believed that Chinese people should be integrated into Japanese culture and society. In the Chinese newspaper *Sin Shun Pao*<sup>41</sup> that was taken over by the Japanese, the Japanese stated that there were many orphans in the city and that young girls were among these orphans. These young girls, they stated, needed “good-hearted men” to cultivate them so they too may be useful and learn the correct way of being a woman.<sup>42</sup> Regarding the Japanese and Chinese mixed children, the Japanese would allow them to live, as part of the desired future of Asia was to integrate the Chinese and the Japanese cultures to make a more powerful nation of Japan. One way was to work on creating a new, ethnic identity so that the Han Chinese ethnicity would eventually disappear.

All the atrocities, from the rapes to the mutilations to the executions, may have been individually motivated by prejudices and racism towards the Chinese people. However, the orders and cover-ups from the very top of command may have been driven by the fact that the General Chiang Kai-Shek was adamant in his mission and refused to surrender the city to the Japanese soldiers even after their invasion. As such, the commanders of the Japanese army may have allowed such atrocities to occur due to the possibility of Chiang worrying about the welfare of his people and surrendering Nanking sooner in order to save them and prevent other such atrocities from occurring.

---

<sup>41</sup> Published in Shanghai

<sup>42</sup> “Nanking Nan Ming Chu, ORDER RECOVERED, All Shops Opened for Business.” The *Sin Shun Pao*, *Carlowitz and Co. Nanking*, 28 Dec. 1937. <http://divinity-adhoc.library.yale.edu/Nanking/Images/NMP0176.pdf>

## Conclusion

The scale of both rape and slaughter that occurred at Nanking in World War II was no accident; however, there is no proof of a direct command for it to occur as well. No commander or officer ordered their soldiers to kill innocent civilians or rape countless women, according to the evidence accessible. The combination between the harsh and stoic punishments of Japanese leadership, in addition to the still-undisciplined commoners that made up the basic ranks, would further the tensions leading up to the chaos at Nanking. The philosophy of the Japanese army had also been long ingrained into them through *bushido* and Shintoism, as well as their cultural upbringing regarding the outlook of the Chinese people. Shintoism, being a part of the Japanese cultural upbringing as well as being the state religion, was not only likely enforced within the home, but also at schools and workplaces for the Japanese. Commanders such as Iwane Matsui and Prince Asaka were also swayed by not only their fear of hidden Chinese military officers but the fear of their own Japanese soldiers becoming more and more undisciplined. These two fears lead to the killing of numerous people, undercover Chinese military and civilians alike. The undisciplined nature of the troops, dangerous to both Japanese commanders as well as Chinese civilians, had remedial attempts which involved comfort women. Other times, the Japanese officers would allow for soldiers forcing themselves upon women as they believed it would solve the problem of their undisciplined nature through using women as outlets.

## Works Cited

- 独立行政法人国立公文書館 | National Archives Of Japan . “陸軍給与令中改正加除・御署名原本・明治三十六年・勅令第百八十六号.” 国立公文書館 デジタルアーカイブ. Accessed January 11, 2020.  
<https://www.digital.archives.go.jp/das/image/F0000000000000019776>.
- “A naval radio transmission from Shanghai, recorded at Nanking.” 1937.  
<http://divinity-adhoc.library.yale.edu/Nanking/Images/NMP0129.pdf>
- Ara, Ken'ichi. *南京事件」日本人48人の証言 (Nankin Jiken Nihonjin 48 nin No shōgen)* 2002.
- Brownlee, John. *Political Thought in Japanese Historical Writing: From Kojiki (712) to Tokushi Yoron (1712)*. Toronto: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1991.
- Chang, Iris. *The Rape of Nanking: the Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*. Penguin Books, 1998.
- Eiji, Oguma. *Return from Siberia: A Japanese Life in War and Peace, 1925-2015*. International House of Japan, 2018.
- Hardacre, Helen. *Shinto and the State, 1868-1988*. Princeton University Press, 1991.
- Hashimoto, Kingorō and Ryusaku Tsunoda. “The Need for Emigration and Expansion.” New York: Columbia University Press, 1958.
- Hicks, George L. *The Comfort Women: Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War*. W.W. Norton, 2011.
- Ienaga, Saburō. *The Pacific War: World War II and the Japanese, 1931-1945*. Pantheon Books, 1978.
- “JAPANESE ATROCITIES MARKED FALL OF NANKING AFTER CHINESE COMMAND

FLED; Nanking Invaders Executed 20000, Mass Killings by the Japanese Embraced Civilians – Total of Chinese Dead Was 33000.” *New York Times*, 9 Jan. 1938.

Kawahara, Naokazu. *Plan for Improving Discipline*. 1955.

Kita, Ikki and Ryusaku Tsunoda. *Nihon kaizo hoan taiko (An Outline Plan for the Reorganization of Japan)*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1958

Lary, Diana. *China's Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007.

Li, Peter. *Japanese War Crimes: the Search for Justice*. Transaction Publishers, 2006.

Matsui, Iwane and Torsten Weber. “Dai Ajiashugi” (Greater Asianism). Kingu, May Issue Supplement “Jikyoku Mondai: Hijōji Kokumin Taikai” (The Problems concerning the Current Situation: A People’s Rally in Times of Emergency), 2–9. 1993.

“Minutes of Fourth Meeting of the Executive Committee.” The International Military Tribunal for the Far East, U.Va., 29 Sept. 2014, [imtfe.law.virginia.edu/collections/morgan/1/3/minutes-fourth-meeting-executive-committee](http://imtfe.law.virginia.edu/collections/morgan/1/3/minutes-fourth-meeting-executive-committee).

“The Nanjing Atrocities: Crimes of War.” Brookline, MA: Facing History and Ourselves, 2014.

“NANKING PREPARES TO RESIST ATTACK; Defenses Reinforced, Trench Network Built — City Scared by Munitions Dump Blast.” *New York Times*, 1 Dec. 1937

“Nanking Nan Ming Chu, ORDER RECOVERED, All Shops Opened for Business.” *The Sin Shun Pao*, Carlowitz and Co. Nanking. 28 Dec. 1937.

<http://divinity-adhoc.library.yale.edu/Nanking/Images/NMP0176.pdf>

Nitobe, Inazo. *Bushido: the Soul of Japan*. Kodansha International, 2008.

Ōno, Kenichi. *Tojōkoku Nippon No Ayumi: Edo Kara Heisei Made No Keizai Hatten (The Path*

*Traveled by Japan as a Developing Country: Economic Growth from Edo to Heisei).*

Tōkyō: Yūhikaku, 2005.

Ō Yasumaro and Gustav Heldt. *The Kojiki: An Account of Ancient Matters*. New York:

Columbia Univ. Press, 2014.

Pritchard, John. *International Military Tribunal for the Far East; The Tokyo Major War Crimes*

*Trial: The Transcripts of the Court Proceedings of the International Military Tribunal  
for*

*the Far East*. Edwin Mellen Press, 1946.

Rabe, John and Erwin Wickert, *The Good Man of Nanking: The Diaries of John Rabe*. New

York: A.A. Knopf, 1998.

Reinforcements sent to Japanese Expeditionary Army, 11 September 1937. Japanese Army

Studies, Central China Area Operations Record, 1937-1941, Prepared for Military

History Section, HQ, Army Forces Far East.

“Science: Japanese Twins.” *Time Inc.*, November 9, 1936.

<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,770452,00.html>.

Tanaka, Toshiyuki and John W. Dower. *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War*

*II*.

Rowman & Littlefield, 2018.

Yamamoto, Tsunetomo and Alexander Bennett. *Hagakure: The Secret Wisdom of the Samurai*.

Tuttle Publishing, 2014.



