

Chapter 3

Nanjing as Observed by Artists and Photographers

.....Chinese soldiers who were left behind later attacked Japanese troops.
Also, Chinese soldiers who escaped from Nanjing by crossing the Yangtze battled against Japanese troops during the Zuzhou Operation in April. Under such a circumstance, Japanese soldiers needed to clear out Chinese soldiers. That was war. Otherwise, Japanese soldiers would be killed. Without knowing the entire picture, one would never know the reality by taking in a single segment. This holds for the so-called Nanjing Massacre as well. (Statement by Mr. Sumitani Iwane (住谷磐根), Artist and Naval Correspondent.)



Out on the streets, Chinese civilians sold vegetables they grew in their own gardens.
(December 15, 1937)

33) Interview with Mr. Sumiya Iwane (住谷磐根), Artist and Naval Correspondent

I interviewed artist Sumiya Iwane about the Nanjing Attack at a museum in Ueno. It was spring of 1986, and the 25th anniversary exhibition of Daichowa-ten, initiated by Mushanokoji Saneatsu, was held at the Ueno-no-mori Museum. Mr. Sumiya was a member of the Japanese Paintings Section for the exhibition and he also exhibited his own work. When I asked him for interview he offered to speak to me about Nanjing within the environment of paintings that he appreciated.

Mr. Sumiya was born in 1902, won an award from the Nikaten, a well-known Japanese artists organization, at the age of 22. Despite receiving an award from the Nikaten, he started a movement against the Nikaten. In 1937, with the outbreak of the China Incident, he heard from someone that the Navy wanted combat artists. Mr. Sumiya jumped at the chance to go to China and paint, and applied for the position. His application, however, was quickly turned down. His family in Gunma prefecture was rich but his eldest brother Sumiya Etsuji (住谷悦治), a professor of Doshisha University then, later the Dean of the University, was regarded as an unfavorable person who had “dangerous thoughts”. Mr. Sumiya sent a letter directly to the Minister of the Navy Yonai Mitsumasa. On September 8, three combat artists, Kobayakawa Atsushiro (小早川篤四郎), Yoshihara Yoshihiko (吉原義彦), and Iwakura Tomokata (岩倉具方) left for Shanghai as the first combat artists-correspondents. The letter to the Minister didn't work, so Mr. Sumiya went to Colonel Mori Tokuji (森徳治), the head of the fourth department of military affairs, and made an appeal in person, He was finally accepted. Mr. Sumiya was the 8th combat artist. He was 35 years old then.

In November 1937, Mr. Sumiya arrived in Shanghai, at the Naval Officers' office. The 10th Army had already landed at Hangzhou Bay, and the situation around Shanghai changed rapidly. Mr. Sumiya used the Press Bureau of the Military Officers office of the Navy as his base and visited the Landing Forces and warships. In the beginning of December, when he was on the warship *Izumo*, which was anchored near the Japanese Consulate, he heard news that the capture of Nanjing was only a matter of time. So he boarded the gunboat *Toka* (楯), which was about to leave for Nanjing.

– When did you arrive in Nanjing?

The *Toka*, on which I was on board, was under the 11th Squadron and its departure from Shanghai was delayed for some reason. It took 2 to 3 days after leaving the Huangpu River in Shanghai to arrive in Nanjing.

As we reaching Nanjing—from far away we saw that Nanjing was in flames—and as we neared, within 1,500 or 2,000 meters, I saw Chinese soldiers on boats trying to escape toward Pukou. The *Toka* shelled them, and the Chinese soldiers who held onto planks or something that floated, here and there, were shot at by rifles. The distance was short, 4 to 5 meter from the deck to the water surface, no one missed a shot. It was winter, so if they were not shot, they would have died soon enough anyway. I saw a soldier look at us and pray.

When we arrived in Nanjing, it was night and in upstream of Xiaguan Wharf, where we arrived, I found the gunboat *Atami*. I stayed overnight on the gunboat *Atami* and the next morning, I transferred to the *Atago* (愛宕), the flagship of the 11th Squadron.

– When did you land in Nanjing?

I think it was the day when I moved over to the *Atago*. I went to Nanjing and was surprised to see a number of ropes hanging over the rampart, which looked like a curtain. I thought that the Chinese soldiers used those ropes to escape.

– How many ropes were hanging?

One to two hundred at least. There was the Lion Rock (獅子山) in Nanjing. I entered Nanjing through Xing Zhong Gate (興中門), which was closest to the Lion Rock. Around the gate, I found a number of steel helmets and bodies of Chinese soldiers and I almost slipped on the blood.

– How many bodies did you see?

Dozens of them. I assumed a battle occurred there, too.

– What was the situation inside of Nanjing?

A day or two afterward, I found a bicycle in Nanjing near the Xing Zhong Gate and I cycled around Nanjing with the bicycle and made sketches. There were fields and hills in Nanjing; it was quiet, I saw no Chinese, and there were also very few Japanese soldiers.

I entered the municipal administration hall and the military officers' headquarters and was surprised to find that the second floor and third floor were used as stables. If they had left their horses outside, Japanese airplanes would have found them so they kept horses inside. Just then, I came across Shimizu Toshi (清水登之) who was sketching. It seemed he came to Nanjing after I did. He had no bicycle, but I had one so I could go here and there--even outside Nanjing Castle I make sketches.

In those days, I wore knickerbockers and fur, and carried a shoulder bag; I have looked suspicious. Suddenly, someone far away shouted "*Oo-i*" to me, so hurriedly I grabbed a rising sun flag and waved it. As I went closer, I found three Japanese soldiers who said that they thought I was Chinese soldier and were about to shoot me. They told me that the Chinese soldiers would shoot at them from anywhere – they were very scared of Chinese soldiers. Also, I saw several dogs fighting each other over the body of a Chinese soldier.

That day, after I made sketches in many places, I was on my way back, 5 to 6 dogs – I was not sure if they were from same group that I saw in the afternoon – tried to follow me. I fled for my life by pedaling the bicycle but the pedals were only the stems, it was really hard work. I shook off the dogs at last, then I found myself at a different gate, not the one I saw in the morning, so I had to make a U-turn to head for Xing Zhong Gate. While I was cycling, I was singing a part of popular song, "For His Majesty the Emperor," which was very popular then, in a loud voice because I worried that Japanese soldiers might mistake me for a Chinese soldier. As expected, when I came close to Xing Zhong Gate, the soldier on sentry duty told me he was about to shoot me as he thought I was a Chinese soldier. The song saved me.

– It is said there were many prisoners in Nanjing.

That day when I came back in dark, I saw dark shadows ahead of me as I came to close

Xing Zhong Gate. The road would have looked white, had there been no shadows from the buildings. So I wondered what was going on. I passed over the shadow at the Xing Zhong Gate, and found that the shadow was a group of Chinese soldiers walking slowly.

When I went back the *Ataka*, the staff officers had just finished their meals and were chatting. They told me that they were worried that I might have been mistaken for a Chinese soldier and killed. Then I went to the staff officers' room and heard the radio operator: Chinese stragglers were caught in Nanjing, that had already been reported to the Third Fleet. Responding to the report the radio operator asked what happened to the stragglers. It seemed that said stragglers were the Chinese soldiers I saw hours ago.

Then, a Junior Grade Lieutenant stood up with his military sword, saying he was going to test his sword, and I followed him. On the top of the wharf, an iron fence stood, beyond it was a breakwater with concrete, where Japanese soldiers lined up 4 to 5 Chinese soldiers, stabbed them in the back and pushed them down to the concrete below. There were 20 or so Japanese soldiers and there were just under about 1,000 Chinese soldiers. Seeing that, the Junior Grade Lieutenant lost the energy to test his sword. I turned a flashlight on to see, then the Japanese soldiers warned me I would get splashed by blood if I stood there, and I went back.

Next morning, I got up early and went to see the bodies. On the concrete were a number of bodies--I counted 800 or so. Among them, some moved their hands or were rustling; not yet quite dead. They had been stabbed in the back with swords and some of the wounds were not fatal. I believe that was what was later called the so-called Nanjing Massacre.

– Were there any rules regarding captured stragglers?

I don't want to say this, but the Japanese soldiers lost their comrades, their war brothers; so in their mind, they were after revenge.

– Was there any other option?

The Japanese Army moved to Nanjing very quickly, therefore, on the way to Nanjing they overtook a significant number of Chinese soldiers. Chinese soldiers who were left behind

later attacked Japanese troops.

In March of the following year, 1938, when I was in Wu-xi, I heard that Japanese troops at Taihu Lake were surrounded by 10,000 Chinese soldiers and the Toyohashi troop rushed over to help them. Also, Chinese soldiers who escaped from Nanjing by crossing the Yangtze battled against Japanese troops during the Zuzhou Operation in April. Under such a circumstance, Japanese soldiers needed to clear out Chinese soldiers. That was war. Otherwise, Japanese soldiers would be killed. Without knowing the entire picture, one would never know the reality by taking in a single segment. This holds for the so-called Nanjing Massacre as well.

The Chinese soldiers who fought to the end at Nanjing Castle were best soldiers and most of them were killed in the battle. The remaining soldiers were mob as written in the book *The Good Earth* by Pearl Buck. I witnessed several times such things myself.

Commander Hasegawa Kiyoshi, Vice Admiral, demanded that the valuable historical ruins along the Yangtze be preserved. However, when we went Jiujiang (九江), Wuhan San Zhen, and so on, we found that Chinese soldiers always fled into the ruins without concern for their historical value; those were Chinese soldiers.

Besides, in those times, we did not have enough food so there was no other choice. In the staff officers' room on the *Ataka*, a staff officer offered me *yokan*, a traditional Japanese sweet if I liked sweets or whiskey if I liked alcohol. I declined his offer because I had just finished my meal, but he insisted, "Please take them," so I did. The next day, I gave the food to people at Air Corps Nango, Shiota and Wada, the airfield in Nanjing. They were very pleased because the Air Corps did not have a lot of food either. Only on naval warships did you find any food.

– Did you see any other executions?

The only execution I saw was at the wharf.

– It was said that civilians were gathered in one place in Nanjing.

Yes. At first, I didn't see any Chinese at all, but a couple of days later, I found a sign, "Refugee Zone," which was written in large letters so that it could be seen from far away.

I went in and found many civilians. The people there were Chinese who could not escape from Nanjing. They knew the Japanese army would attack Nanjing and they thought that they would be killed. Still, they remained in Nanjing because they were helpless.

Access to this area was strictly limited and even other Chinese couldn't come in. The civilians who remained in Nanjing stayed in the Refugee Zone. Chinese soldiers escaped and hardly any remained. Therefore, a so-called massacre could not have occurred in Nanjing. Later, I went to many places by bicycle and made a lot of sketches but never saw anything like a “massacre” at all.

– Did you see the entrance ceremony?

Yes. I attended both the entrance ceremony and the memorial service.

– Until when did you stay in Nanjing?

While the 11th Squadron was in Xiaguan, I visited each warship and got the signatures of the commanders and vice commanders on my *shikishi*, hard poetry card. The *shikishi* were donated to the Togo Shrine after the War.

The next year, 1938, on January 8, the train between Shanghai and Nanjing started running so I took the train to go back to Shanghai. We closed all windows as a precaution against any remaining enemies, but Matsui Suisei (松井翠声), a comic-chat artiste, who visited to consol us, entertained us along the way. The next day, the 9th, I visited the gunboat *Izumo* to salute Commander Hasegawa. After I came back to Shanghai, I visited Taihu Lake on the Artillery Boat Unit of the Navy, and returned Japan in April. So I was in Central China for 6 months in total.

After that, artist Sumiya went to China again and continued drawing in China until the outbreak of the Greater East Asian War. After the outbreak of the Greater East Asian War, Mr. Sumiya became non-regular staff, treated the same as a captain, and went to the Southern area.

The interview with Mr. Sumiya at the Museum in Ueno lasted four and half hours. For his age, 84, Mr. Sumiya showed no fatigue and his story was not yet over. I also wanted to

hear more but Mr. Sumiya said he had to prepare supper so we made a promise to talk again at the next opportunity.

Mr. Sumiya's long discussion was done for caution--in order to avoid misunderstanding. He was afraid that if discussion focused solely on Nanjing, then the so-called Nanjing Incident could not be understood. So he started with the Navy in those times – we needed to know about the battle before anything else. His four-and-a-half hour talk was mainly dedicated to the understanding of the battlefield and he emphasized that the battle of Nanjing was an extension of the battle of Shanghai.

34) Interview with Mr. Watanabe Yoshio (渡辺義雄), Photographer, Information Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

At the beginning of the Showa era (1926 –1989), new photographers were created, one after another. The word “press photos” was first created in those times and Natori Yonosuke (名取洋之助), who studied in Germany, started an English language graphic magazine, “*NIPPON*”, in 1934. In 1936, the photo-magazine *Life* started in the US, which gained tremendous popularity. After the outbreak of the China Incident, photography attracted attention as an important medium for journalism--cameras were very popular among the soldiers, too.

Mr. Watanabe Yoshio was 30 years old then, and he was already well-known as a rising renowned photographer, as were Natori Yonosuke and Kimura Ihei (木村伊兵衛).

In those days, China made efforts to make world opinion favorable to China by using various means of propaganda. As soon as the China Incident broke out, China provoked anti-Japan sentiment and spread photos to win the world's sympathy--this was completely successful. Therefore, the Information Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs needed to give foreign countries the real story behind the China Incident and for that purpose they organized a film crew team to take photographs and make news films, and took film of Shanghai and Nanjing. Mr. Watanabe Yoshio and Mr. Kimura Ihei were selected as the photographers of the film crew team.

On December 12, 1937 the film crew team left Nagasaki, took film of Shanghai and

Nanjing and returned to Nagasaki the next year, on January 14, 1938. They took a one-month journey for filming. During that time, Mr. Watanabe visited Nanjing twice to take films.

Mr. Watanabe was born in 1907. In 1933, he held a private exhibition at the age of 26 years old, and in 1934, together with Mr. Kimura Ihei, established the International Press Photographs Society. The photo “Bunraku” was a representative work before the War. After the War, while teaching at Nihon University, he took many photos of buildings including “Katsura Rikyu” and “Ise Jingu”, for which he received the Mainichi Art Award. In 1958, he was appointed to Chair the Japan Photographers Society and served until 1981. He has a round face, round body and “round” personality.

Currently, Mr. Watanabe serves as the Honorary Chairperson of the Japan Photographers Society, a giant in the photography industry, yet he is still active as a photographer. He said he talks a lot about photography but rarely talks about Nanjing. Putting his finger on his forehead, he tried to remember Nanjing and started to talk.

– What was the purpose of the film trip?

As soon as the out break of the China Incident, a photo in which a Chinese baby was crying at a Shanghai train station was published in US newspapers and became a topic of discussion. Japan was terrible, they did wrong even to such a young child. This kind of public opinion arose in the US and the US increasingly sympathized with China against Japan.

However, this photo was not the original photo, and in the original, there was an adult, who looked like the father, standing nearby, who was trying to hold the child or adjust him, but the father was brushed out and the photo, of the child crying alone, was created. The retouched photo was sent to the US through an unknown route and became a sensation. In those times, a shocking picture like this was not common, so it was tremendously effective in the beginning of the war. After the War, a photo-magazine in the US published the original photo, with the father. Retouching techniques were well-known as early as the Taisho era (1912-1926), they could have known about this if they had checked carefully. I was teaching photojournalism at Nihon University after the War, and this revelation of the real photos was very impressive.

At the time, China often used these kinds of strategies. So the Ministry of Foreign Affairs decided to take photos and films, and deliver them worldwide in order to show the real Japanese Army. They wanted to show the actual state of our holy war, especially to the US. One of activities in the holy war was to help the refugees, which was performed by the Pacification Unit and my job was to take film of their work.

Headed by the first secretary, Ogawa Noboru, who had earlier served as the chargé d'affaires ad interim in Czechoslovakia, and that time worked at the Information Bureau, our team went to Shanghai and Nanjing. Mr. Ogawa was a very talented person—he could even perform *Joruri*, which made our trip quite fun. Members were: Mr. Goto Kotaro (後藤光太郎), who was in charge of office work in the Information Bureau and handling photos as well as taking care of us, plus two photographers and two cinematographers, so there were a total of six of us.



In 1937, a photo of a crying baby, who appeared to be abandoned in rubble resulting from Japanese bombing, appeared in the American magazine *Life* (left).

However, in the original photo, you can see a father-like adult beside the baby, who seems to be watching the baby (right). From *History of the 20th Century – vol. 5, World War II – Scenes of Battle Fire*, edited by J. Campbell, Heibon-sha)

– In some reports at the time, they stated that the group had 12 members.

No, I think it was only 6 members. The photographers were Mr. Kimura and me, the cinematographers were Mr. Nakayama, who came from a movie studio, and one other (and Mr. Ogawa and Mr. Goto). I can say this because I have a photo from the time and everyone is in it.

– Did you go to Nanjing at once?

To my memory, we stayed at an inn in Shanghai the night we arrived, and the next day we headed for Nanjing. We went up the Yangtze on a minesweeper. In the minesweeper, I found Saijo Yaso (西條八十), a poet, and other war novelists and combat artists.

– When did you arrive at Nanjing?

We stayed overnight in the minesweeper and we arrived at Nanjing next day. I don't remember well but it was a couple of days before the entrance ceremony.

– Did you arrive at Xiaguan Wharf?

Yes. As we arrived at Xiaguan, a soldier told us that they were doing decapitations at a place 300 meters or 500 meters ahead, cutting the heads along the shore and dropped them into the river. “Soon the River will become red,” he continued, then added, “Why don't you come and see?” Mr. Kimura hated to see even ordinary dead bodies and he said “NO.”

– Did the soldier say the river would turn red?

Yes. Actually the river did not turn red, but he said so.

– Did you not dare to take a look?

Like Mr. Kimura, I didn't like such things, so if Mr. Kimura didn't go, then I didn't go; I did not want to go alone. Mr. Ogawa, too, didn't say he would go.

Thinking about this now, I should have gone and seen it as a journalist, even if I didn't take photos. Things that you saw and things that you heard about are quite different.

Some photographers tried to take photos of crimes for the purpose of making accusations or for exposure, but I didn't have such a thought, so even if I went to see, I wouldn't have taken photos.

– Was the beheading done openly?

The soldier asked me, “Why don't you watch? Why don't you take photos?” – he never tried to hide. Those soldiers were filled with anger because their comrades, or war brothers, had just been killed so they were out for revenge. They said, “Serves you right! Revenge taken! Feels good!”

– Did you think that they didn't think that they themselves had done something cruel?

I think they didn't feel that way then. Revenge taken—that was all in their minds. Words such as cruel and massacre were used starting after the War.

– What did you feel when you heard that they were cutting heads off?

On the previous day, I saw the result of a furious battle in Dachang Town, Shanghai, so when I heard what those soldiers said, I somehow agreed with them. It was cruel yet understandable. At the time, I thought killing by sword was reasonable punishment for Chinese soldiers.

– Were the Chinese who were cut to death prisoners?

A couple of days later, I met two Japanese soldiers, an officer and petty officer, and asked them about the prisoners. They said they caught the prisoners and kept in a prison in Nanjing, but there were too many of them to be kept at the prison. Besides, they didn't have food for the prisoners, so they had no choice but to kill them. The two soldiers snapped at me – “How would you manage feeding them?” Hearing that, I agreed with

them; there was no other choice.

– How many prisoners were caught?

I heard around 10,000 including prisoners and criminals. Some of them were killed, but I don't know whether they killed only criminals or not and if prisoners were included, I didn't know how many.

– Did you see something else the day you arrived in Nanjing?

All the doors of the street shops were opened and the showcases were empty. I believe that the Chinese stole the goods. The rich Chinese had already escaped and the poor remained, who ransacked the shops.

– Was this not done by Japanese soldiers?

I don't think so. The houses in the streets were empty so Japanese soldiers used them for their lodgings. And I found something then – Chinese people used special paper money for funerals. They put them in the coffin with the body. You could not use this paper money as if it was real. This money was spread all over the streets. Some Japanese soldiers didn't know that and collected them as if they were valuables.

That night, we went to the embassy, which was managed by three Chinese and stayed the night there. However, there was no food in the embassy so we went to a commanding officer, with whom Mr. Ogawa was acquainted, and got food. We believed that we could get food in Nanjing. But, as a matter of fact, the Japanese soldiers entered Nanjing without food or water. Had we known this beforehand, we could have brought food from Shanghai; we regretted this. I remember, that night, we slept on the floor on blankets in a spacious room of the embassy.

– Was there any consulate staff from Shanghai?

I don't think so. Only our group. There were only the three Chinese who were hired.

On the morning of the next day, a woman from the Refugee Zone came to the Embassy and complained that a Japanese soldier took a woman away. We stayed two nights at the Embassy, both days we got the same complains. The soldiers came here without enough food or water, so maybe the head of the unit was ignoring this – I had mixed feelings on hearing this.

– Have you seen with your own eyes any acts of cruelty by Japanese soldiers?

I didn't see any real moments of cruelty done by Japanese soldiers.

As far as bodies were concerned, I saw bodies thrown into the bushes, which were planted in the center of a rotary at a crossing of two wide streets – one was of a Chinese soldier with a cut in the middle of his forehead, and a couple of bodies with their heads cut from the back. The blood stopped running but their faces were dark with blood, it was terrible. I was scared to even look.

– Anything else?

The only bodies that I saw with my own eyes were at that rotary.

– What places did you visit in Nanjing?

I went to the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum. I strolled around the city, but without a car, my range was limited to walking distance.

– What kind of photos did you take?

I went to the Refugee Zone and took pictures of the Japanese soldiers who were giving the refugees food. The Japanese army had the idea of helping the refugees as soon as they captured the city, so in the Refugee Zone in Nanjing, too, soldiers distributed to the refugees a portion of rice or handed out comfort bags, one by one. I took pictures of that.

– As you mentioned earlier, it was claimed that women in the Refugee Zone were being kidnapped. Was the Refugee Zone in order?

Nothing happened during the daytime. I saw Japanese soldiers in charge and refugees in the Refugee Zone chatted and I took pictures of them. Photographers were allowed to enter the Refugee Zone but ordinary soldiers were not. So perhaps some soldiers sneaked into the Refugee Zone at night and did such things.

– Did you take pictures of the entrance ceremony?

I took photos of General Matsui entering Nanjing. I took the picture at the Zhongshan East Road, and Mr. Kimura took pictures of the place of the ceremony, the Nationalist Government's former headquarters. At that time, I met a photographer from the *Asahi Shimbun*, Kojima Tadao (小島忠郎).

– How long did you stay in Nanjing?

To my memory, I took pictures of the entrance ceremony and then the next day, went back to Shanghai. After I returned to Shanghai, I stayed at a hotel close to Garden Bridge, where reporters from the *Mainichi Shimbun* stayed were as well..

Once, in Shanghai, I was invited by a Chinese who was acquainted with Mr. Ogawa. He was a broad-minded man, and had no hostile feeling toward the Japanese. This Chinese man said that he regarded this war as a war between the Japanese Army and Chiang Kai-shek's Army. Not just him, but other Chinese people living in the International Settlement behaved as if they had nothing to do with the war. Shanghai was lively and bustling and Mr. Kimura and I often went out for enjoyment.

I visited Nanjing in the new year, 1938, again. At that time, the Head of the Information Bureau, Kawai Tatsuo (河相達夫), arrived in Shanghai and he wanted to go to Nanjing, so we went to Nanjing by a Navy flying boat from Yangshupu. At that time, Mr. Kimura remained in Shanghai, so three from my group, Mr. Ogawa, Mr. Goto and I, went to Nanjing. I remember we felt terribly chilly in the flying boat.

– Did you take any pictures of Nanjing again?

I did, but I didn't go there to take anything in particular.

– What was the situation in Nanjing then?

Most of troops left Nanjing so no soldiers were left for a photo opportunity.

The refugees were still in the Refugee Zone. I heard gunshots occasionally from the direction of the Sun Yat-sen Mausoleum, but there did not seem to be enemies there.

– What did you do with the photos you took?

Those photos were exhibited at the Mitsukoshi Department Store in March, titled, “Nanjing – Shanghai Press Photo Exhibition,” and that it was very successful, so I was told.

I sent my photos to foreign countries, their ministries of foreign affairs, as well as the magazine *Life* but nothing was published – so I heard later. In those times, the US's anti-Japan feeling was quite obvious and they knew that the photos were taken by the Japanese so rejection was just a matter of course.

All the photos that I took were burned during the US air raid on March 9, 1945.

35) An Interview with Mr. Koyanagi Jiichi (小柳次一), Member of the Army Press Team

In March 1937, Mr. Koyanagi Jiichi, who was active as freelance photographer, was introduced to Natori Yonosuke by Wada Hidekichi (和田日出吉), who was a manager of the *Chugai Shogyo Shinpo* (currently the *Nihon Keizai Shimbun*), and Mr. Koyanagi decided to join Nihon Kobo. At the time, Natori Yonosuke had returned from Germany where he realized the importance of press photos, and established Nihon Kobo to launch the magazine *NIPPON* in order to introduce Japan overseas. At first, Domon Ken (土門拳) was the only staffer, shortly thereafter, Fujimoto Shihachi (藤本四八) joined.

Soon the China Incident occurred. At the time, Natori Yonosuke, who had seen how Japan was negatively regarded in the western media, insisted that Japan must report news

from the Japanese perspective. He went to Army Central Authorities but they didn't listen to Natori's idea. Then Natori Yonosuke went to Shanghai and repeatedly explained his idea. At last, he was able to successfully persuade Major Kaneko Toshiharu (金子俊治), who was in charge of publicity of the Headquarters of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army. Thus, Nihon Kobo was assigned the job of taking films, and Mr. Natori Yonosuke and Mr. Koyanagi went to Shanghai. Mr. Koyanagi was 30 years old then.

– What was your position then?

At first, when Natori went to the Army as well as the Navy to talk about the importance of press pictures, they didn't want to listen at all. So Natori went to Major Kaneko, who was in charge of propaganda operations towards China in the Army's Special Service Agency in Shanghai, and successfully convinced Major Kaneko the importance of publicity and media. Some Army heads even stated that war correspondents were useless. Under such circumstances, if we officially belonged to the Army, then we would be strictly bounded by their orders, so we asked Major Kaneko that our position be non-paying and that we'd be non-regular staff in order to retain freedom to take photos. The position was supposedly non-paying but actually I got an allowance from the Army's secret service fund. The conditions were all negotiated by Natori. So my position in those days was as a member of the Press Team in the Special Service Agency as well as an employee of Nihon Kobo.

Mr. Natori was a photographer who was well-known abroad, and we sent and sold our photos under Natori's name to photo-magazines, newspapers, and publishers all over the world.

Shortly, it was decided to publish photos under the name of the photographer who actually took the photo, and in March 1938, the photo of the executing of a spy in Nanjing appeared in *Life* under my name.

– When did you go to Nanjing?

As soon as Natori concluded negotiating our status, Natori and I left Japan at the end of December 1937 and we arrived in Shanghai in 1938. I knew nothing about military service--everything was new to me.

Nanjing had just been captured so we decided to go to Nanjing. We left Shanghai on January 2, stopped at Suzhou, and arrived in Nanjing, to my memory, on the evening of the 4th. We arrived at Nanjing Station.

– What was the situation in Nanjing?

The first sight of Nanjing was a number of ropes hanging over the rampart. We entered Nanjing through the Yi Jiang Gate. On the right side we found a big wooden memorial monument standing upright. I found no bodies there then, but I heard that at the time of the capture, bodies were piled up around the gate. Japanese warships used all available ammo, simply because they engaged the enemy and shot at them. The number of bodies was said to be enormous.

The night we arrived, a fire occurred. They said that plain-clothed soldiers set the fire.

The next day, I started taking photos. The Chinese people were used to war and everyone lived calmly. In those days, 20,000 to 30,000 people lived in the Refugee Zone and no young girls were walking the streets. In Jin Ling Women's College, which was situated in the Refugee Zone, I found young girls. I tried to take pictures of them but a Japanese guard who was standing by the gate did not allow me to do so, saying that no one was allowed to enter.

In addition, I saw Japanese merchants, who came from Shanghai, were keen to do business.

– Didn't you see any acts of cruelty done by Japanese soldiers?

Nanjing was quiet, I never saw such thing.

– How about a rumor?

I never heard of such a thing as a “massacre”. I heard that 300 or so were killed down by the Yangtze and bodies were thrown into the river. Those kinds of stories were often said on the battlefield but I never heard such thing as a “massacre”—mention of that started

after the War.

Later, I was fully involved on the battlefield and went to the frontlines at Xuzhou and Hankou to take photos. Aside from the story of Nanjing, I don't deny some criminal assaults occurred but the soldiers who did such things were one and the same and rare.

– Were you with Mr. Natori in Nanjing?

Natori moved to and fro between Shanghai and Nanjing. He visited Nanjing with a fleet vehicle. Natori was surprised to find how news of Japan was incorrectly reported in the west and decided that we had to do something. In the west, public relations and propaganda prevailed, and make-believe had been perpetuated as well. Based on his own experience, he was convinced of the importance of media.

– The photo of the baby in Shanghai, which caused a sensation.

Yes. The photo appeared full page in the magazine *Life*, which became famous, well-known throughout the world.

After the War, during the Korean War, press photographers gathered in Seoul from all over the world. I found a photographer in the UN photographers group who took the baby's photo. I talked him about that. His name was Wong, a Chinese photographer, who was senior to me.

– The press-photos were not always as is?

Of course, they should report facts in photos, but photographer took pictures with their country's position in mind and many make-believe photos were found everywhere.

After the War, shortly before the US Army came to Japan, an American photographer asked me, “Koyanagi, you have taken pictures of war, what do you think about the photo of the Spanish soldier taken by Capa?”

– Was it the famous photo by Robert Capa?

Yes. Among American photographers, there was doubt whether the photo was taken on a battlefield or not. That's why he asked me. I told him, I also had doubt – this photo could not have been taken in a battlefield, based on my experience. “You think so, too?” He looked satisfied with my answer. Americans were good for taking pictures of, posing for photos just the way the photographer wanted. So the issue of set-up was a subject of discussion.

– So Capra's photo from the war was doubted then?

I think so.

– The Nanjing Incident is still controversial today.

There were bodies because it was a battlefield. They talked about those battlefield bodies. From my experience, being in Nanjing for long time, I can say this.

It may be meaningless to talk about battlefields today--I don't think Japanese soldiers were especially cruel. For example, Chinese soldiers stabbed Japanese soldiers so that they looked like a beehive. It might have had a purpose for demonstration—but it was not a Japanese characteristic. The US Army, too, during the attack on The Philippines, we reporters heard stories from an American prisoner, who was caught in Bataan, who said that they ran over the corpses of Japanese soldiers. Hearing that, we got upset, “Goddamn you,” we said. I thought back to those times when Japanese soldiers captured Chinese cities, they often gave Chinese people Japanese goods. After the War, US soldiers, too, came to Japan and gave us chocolates and so on. The difference was that Japanese soldiers gave things to Chinese people with affection and often they became fond of us, on the other hand, the US soldiers just threw them from a high place--no Japanese were fond of them.

Reporter Honda Katsuichi of the *Asahi Shimbun* said the Japan had done wrong in Nanjing, but such things often happened in war, he just pick-up one of them. If you don't know anything about war, you can easily say anything about it. Reporter Honda wrote another book, *The Road to Nanjing*¹, recently. I cannot read books due to my deteriorated

¹ *The Road to Nanjing [Nankin heno Michi]* by Honda Katsuichi, Asahi Shimbun Sha, Tokyo, 1990.

eyesight, but I cannot ignore this book, so I slowly started to read his book. *The Road to Nanjing* was the same route novelist Hino Ashihei (火野葦平) walked during his military service. If Hino Ashihei was alive today, he could debate and make things interesting. I was with Hino in Hangzhou when Kobayashi Hideo (小林秀雄), the critic, brought the Akutagawa Prize to Hino in Hangzhou.

Facts are twisted by ideology and twisted facts are accepted today.

Soon, the Army realized the importance of media and, with the help of Lieutenant Colonel Mabuchi Itsuo (馬淵逸雄) in the Central China Expeditionary Army, the Press Bureau was established. Nihon Kobo established the company Press Union Photo Service and began supplying photos abroad. Mr. Koyanagi continued working in China. After the Great Eastern Asia War, they had no need for overseas appeal and their focus shifted from news photos to documentary photos.

Mr. Koyanagi worked actively as a photographer after the War. In the first postcard that I received from Mr. Koyanagi, he said “I wrote this postcard with a groping hand because my eyesight is almost gone now.” I almost canceled his interview but then I asked him again, then he said “OK”.

Mr. Koyanagi lives in Kawaminami, Miyazaki. He had been living in Tokyo and Kamakura for more than 50 years, however about 10 years ago his friend living in Miyazaki recommended that he move to Kawaminami—and so he moved. One reason is that as the War was about to end he took pictures of the *Tokkotai*, the kamikaze, in Kyushu. He wanted to console their souls--those who departed from an airfield in Miyazaki and died young. Mr. Koyanagi is now 79 years old. He visits Tokyo once a year to meet his old friends.