

Testimonial record of survivors (4)
(2) My Escape from Tongzhou(Tungchow) (通州) , the City of Death
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Toshio Ando was a reporter for North Branch of the Domei Communication Company who entered Tongzhou on 7/27th who was involved in activities related to interviewing 殷汝耕 Yin Rugeng who is the leader of 冀東 Jidong Government. He witnessed the uprising which began before the daybreak of 29th from his lodge 近水楼 Kinsuiro. He tried to hide in the attic but was discovered and dragged out to the execution grounds of the Japanese. But, with a quick judgment untied himself from the ropes, escapes and miraculously survives. He has written about this experience in several magazines, out of which one article titled "Escape from Death in Tongzhou", published in September 1937 publication "Evaluation Japan" pp. 256-265, will be included in the application.

The Tongzhou Massacre was an unprecedented holocaust of Japanese civilians, incomparable with even the Nikolayevsk (尼港) Massacre. Hardly 10 days have yet passed since the large-scale slaughter of Japanese residents that occurred on the 29th of last month in Tongzhou, the seat of the East Hebei Autonomous Government, which ironically professed itself to be enthusiastically pro-Japanese and was commonly regarded as governing a pro-Manchukuo and pro-Japanese area.

After receiving news of the outbreak of the incident, the Imperial Army launched a swift counterattack and brought to bear its full vengeance upon the fiendish Chinese soldiers. Now, the Japanese military has fully restored law and order to Tongzhou, but the relatives and friends of the Japanese victims of the calamity are searching for their loved ones even at this moment. Some can rejoice to reunite with a survivor, while others are frantically looking for the corpse of a person who died a violent death. This is a terrible tragedy.

I, the author, remained in Tongzhou on the day of the incident among the many victims, surviving several life-or-death crises and fighting off starvation and thirst. Thanks to the will of heaven and the kindness of humanity, I (Note: Mr. Ando Toshio) narrowly escaped to Beijing (北京) (Beiping (北平) at that time) after roaming for four days and three nights through the fields and mountains. Therefore, as a correspondent, I can

report to the whole world on the many bloodcurdling and horrible things which I saw with my own eyes, heard with my own ears, and experienced firsthand.

Now in peace and quiet, when I try to recapture those scenes of dire disaster, the vivid memories fill me with fear and horror like a waking nightmare. While offering a wholehearted prayer for the souls of our fellow people who tragically died in this disaster, I dedicate my escape story to them.

It was on the 27th that I entered into Tongzhou City together with the unit which advanced toward Tongzhou. On that day, we had conducted a mopping-up operation against the enemy 29th Army which was camped outside the south gate of Tongzhou City. Therefore, on the evening of the 28th, soon after the sulfurous smoke cleared up, a funeral ceremony was held on the Tongzhou field for Lieutenant Tamura, Second-Lieutenant Uchida and 11 other soldiers while artillery was still booming from the direction of Beijing.

I had an interview with Commander Yin Rugeng (殷汝耕) at the office of the East Hebei government for about 30 minutes at 4:00 p.m. on the 28th, that is, the day before the incident. We exchanged words about various current affairs and he kindly expressed his intention to issue a situation statement from the East Hebei Autonomous Government as soon as the mopping-up operation against the Chinese 29th Army was finished.

I continued staying with the government until half past twelve, that is, two or three hours before the incident broke out, to listen to the general war situation in the Beijing area from a Tokyo radio station. What may have been the inducing factors of the incident, now that I think back on it, were as follows.

The Tianjin(天津)-Tongzhou road was destroyed in 50 places on this day, and also, on the same evening, a broadcast from Nanjing announced: "Notification was issued that bombing of Beijing and Tianjin by 200 airplanes will be started if the Japanese forces in Beijing do not withdraw in 24 hours." "Beijing, Tianjin, and Fengtai (豐台) have been surrounded by Chinese armies, and Langfang has been already recaptured." "Chiang Kai-shek (蔣介石) is now in Zhengzhou (鄭州) and commanding the entire army." Like above, the broadcasts frequently reported the victories of the Chinese armies and fanned anti-Japanese sentiment aggressively.

These broadcasts provided a powerful foundation to the mistaken assessments of the situation made by all the anti-Japanese forces in North China, particularly the East Hebei Peace Preservation Corps. I suspect that this was the direct factor that instigated the rebellion.



The incident happened at around 2:30 a.m. In the night, the Japanese police and other related people had found the Peace Preservation Corps behaving somewhat suspiciously and thus issued warnings via telephone, but soon after, at around half past two, telephone wires were completely cut off, which disabled our communication with the outer world.

According to an aide of Yin Rugeng, the head of the East Hebei (冀東) government, it was around that time that Yīn was attacked by rebellious troops.

On that day, I was staying at a Japanese-style hotel called Jin Shui Lou, which was located only three hundred meters away from the office of the East Hebei government. Jin Shui Lou (近水楼) was surrounded by a lotus pond and connected to the outer world by only three narrow lanes. On that night, there were nineteen Japanese at this place, including customers and housekeepers.

It was several minutes before 4 a.m. when I heard the first sound of a gunshot. Mysterious bullets whistled above the pond and the top of the city wall, shattering the tranquility of dawn. Gradually the sound of machine guns and bursts of heavy guns were added. These gunshots were concentrated near the South Gate and the West Gate. Gunshots sometimes roared from the direction of the government building within the city walls. Japanese people at Jin Shui Lou had their last breakfast at 6:30 a.m. in the hall on the first floor. Because of the gunfire, it was too dangerous for any of them, including myself, to contact the outer world. Standing at the gate and trying to find out what was going on was the best I could do.

At about 7 a.m., two rows of black and white smoke rose far in the distance beyond the houses of the town. We heard more and more gunshots, and the situation grew more serious. At this moment, however, we did not have the slightest idea that it was a military disturbance by the Peace Preservation Corps. At 7:30 a.m., the first report was brought in by a hotel boy named Wang (王), who was staying outside of the town the

previous night. Wang rushed into the entrance and said in chattering teeth, “Terrible news! A great number of Japanese have been killed on the main street in front of Beijing guan(北京館) and Zhaori guan (朝日館) . The Peace Preservation Corps is everywhere in the town. It’s disastrous!” He then quickly vanished.

I realized that the Peace Preservation Corps had revolted, the thing that I had feared the most. My intuition told me that this would turn into a big riot and prove fateful to the East Hebei government. I tried to think about why the Japanese were being killed, what the nature of the incident was, and how events might progress, but with no detailed information it was impossible for me to make a clear judgment. At about 8 a.m., Wang appeared again and said, “Major Kai (adjutant to the Special Service Agency) also says that Japanese people should all escape to a safer place.”

The situation became clearer to us. I wrote a letter requesting that cars managed by the Government be brought to Jin Shui Lou, handed the letter to Wang, and ordered him to take it to the secretary’s office of the East Hebei government. However, my efforts were in vain because Wang never returned.

The Japanese at Jin Shui Lou were all full of growing fear in the face of this looming crisis. At 9:00 a.m., a dirty-looking man appeared in front of the kitchen and begged for food, but one of the hotel guests who had a pistol in his hand chased him away, and said, “That’s a plain-clothes soldier! Shoot him!” Just then, the sound of gunshots started to roar from the southern area adjacent to Jin Shui Lou where Chinese houses were densely built up, and that sound was gradually getting nearer to us. The gunfire, which we had initially heard from twenty to thirty meters away, was becoming fiercer.

One after another, Chinese houses near Jin Shui Lou were attacked, and at last, at around 9:30 a.m., gunfire roared just nearby, below an awning at Jin Shui Lou. We were flabbergasted and rushed upstairs together in unison. We looked out of the window, but the second gunshot did not come immediately. So, in the meantime, we raised tatami mats off the floor and propped them upright in front of the window to make a bulwark. We also carried an electric fan, an iron, a screen, and a chair out of the room and put them in the corridor just above the ladder staircase so that we could drop them if violent soldiers tried to come up. Thus, we made speedy preparations for the upcoming fight, but we were still virtually powerless because more than ten out of nineteen of us were female, and only one had a pistol. Someone said, “Let’s hide rather than fight!” No one disagreed. In silence, we started to move upstairs to the attic.

From the gable window at the top of the wall, we climbed up to the attic by stepping on a pile of tables. This was our last hiding spot. There were somehow only eleven people out of nineteen in the attic. It seemed that the rest hid somewhere else, probably in closets on the 1st and 2nd floors. Those in the attic laid out futon (Japanese blankets) on the floor and sat there motionless in a circle, trying not to make any sound. Although the eleven of us would share the same destiny, we barely knew each other's names. The only persons I knew were Mr. Miyawaki, advisor of the East Hebei government, and Mr. Mishima from the Bank of Korea. Soon after we hid ourselves in the attic, it became noisy downstairs, and the sound of gunfire started to roar inside the building. We could hear the echoes of wild and gruff human voices.

Taking care not to be found out, I stood up silently and peeked out of a glass window, which was two feet long by one foot wide, trying to see the strange situation unfolding outside. It seemed that a number of violent soldiers and citizens had burst into the premises of Jin Shui Lou from the main entrance on the west side and the back entrance on the east. Surprisingly, they were a group of thirty to forty students. They all had dark-colored, salt-and-pepper clothes and school caps on. Marching to the whistle blown in triple time, they came from the back street that crossed the lotus pond. I saw several of them carrying pistols. Soon they reached the back yard of Jin Shui Lou. Scared of being found out, I tried not to make eye contact with them. We were only twenty meters away from each other, but they did not seem to see us because we were in a dark place while it was bright outside. A troop of students finally thrust into the building. The noise of tumult, including gunfire, was becoming louder and louder. Along with screams, I heard something being ripped off. I even heard someone tapping just below us. We held our breath.

For the first time in my life I witnessed pillage. They robbed and carried away any furniture or utensils through the back street, as well as futon mattresses, cushions, suitcases, bags, chairs, tables, and the things that we had lined up on the corridor such as an electric fan and an iron. On the north side of the garden of Jin Shui Lou there was a spot where assistant police officers gathered. In the beginning, five or six of them fought against the violent soldiers while hiding behind the wall. "Don't shoot! Stop, stop!", shouted someone, and continued, "All the Japanese have gone! There's no one left! Go back!" For the sake of neighborhood relations, those police officers tried to save Jin Shui Lou from the attack. However, after the troop of students finished their robbery and disappeared from view, something astonishing happened. Quite

surprisingly, they began looting themselves! I saw them carry futons and Chinese-style bags from within the house to their police substation. Those plunderers went back and forth in turns between our building and their substation, and we could but stand motionless, overwhelmed by that terrible sight.

At around 11:30 a.m., the riot just nearby became even fiercer. Until then I was jotting down what was happening on a rough sheet of paper, but I felt my life was in severe danger. I started to write farewell notes to my mother, who I had not met for five years, and other friends and the persons to whom I owed my life. The violent soldiers still had not come up to the attic when I finished writing notes, so I started to jot down my current situation again. However, by about 12:30 p.m., the commotion downstairs had left me too shaken to continue writing. Peeping out of the window, I was astonished to see a troop of government guards coming to us from the government building through the lane crossing the pond. They were familiar-looking men, dressed up in military gear and holding guns on their shoulders. A bullet hit the roof of the building, and pieces of dirt whirled in the attic. I held my head down. In less than five or six minutes, we heard someone's loud voice and tramping, and our final refuge was discovered.

I looked at my watch. It was half past twelve. When a window that connected the second floor to the attic was jerked open, I felt a chill of fear as if struck by a bolt of lightning. When a guard in military gear poked his head through the window, we thought everything was over. Someone, probably one of the assistant police officers, must have told them our hiding place. "They're birds of a feather, after all," I thought.

The head of the guards brandished his pistol against us and shouted, "Give me your money, and we'll take you under our protection!" Each of us, starting with the person sitting next to the window, stood up and handed their money to him. Another guard came up. I was at the far end in the east side, but being discovered, I nervously approached him and gave him five-yuan bills, one by one. Five or six other violent soldiers, who were under the window, also requested us to hold out money. Five-yuan bills and ten-yuan bills were thrown into the open window, and the soldiers underneath grabbed them quickly into their pockets.

The guards helped us go downstairs onto the second floor. We knew they would be kind only until they robbed us of all our money and belongings. When we reached the second floor, we discovered that everything had been ransacked; even shoji screens had been all removed. Standing amidst the destruction, we underwent a thorough body

search for any weapons. During the check, they took away anything we had in our pockets: money, cameras, watches, fountain pens, and mechanical pencils. In addition, women were deprived of their rings, sash clips, hair ornaments, and even handkerchiefs. My manuscripts and farewell notes were also taken away. I begged them to spare my glasses, but they did not listen, of course.

In the end, they took everything off me except my clothes and my watch. I was lucky enough to keep my watch because it was covered with my sleeve and thus slipped past their examination. Six men, including myself, were tied in a row with hemp rope. "Why do they tie us up? Aren't they going to protect us?" I wanted to protest against this situation but was too afraid to do so.

The eleven Japanese were hauled off by those men. When we came halfway through the ladder staircase, we were astonished by the view on the first floor, which was too horrible to look at. We realized that a brutal assault had taken place. On the corridor near the entrance, there were five or six Japanese men laid down in a pile. Women's hair was loose and disheveled, and their teeth were firmly grit and blood was coming from their mouths. Some were bleeding through their clothes around their stomachs, and some were bleeding in their faces. They all had met violent ends with their arms and legs flung in every direction. Women's wicker trunks lay scattered around them. I had no idea when this disaster happened.

The violent soldiers urged us to proceed, raising their hands as if they were holding guns. No time was given for us to investigate the disastrous situation. We wanted to know who died, but they did not let us stop there. I wondered who else died on the first and second floors, but I had no means of knowing it. Praying silently for those who died, we were forced through the front entrance and were hauled to the back yard.

Everyone thought the same thing. "And these are the men who said that they would take us under their protection! What could they be gaining by brutally killing innocent women and children? They are demons! Beasts!"

However, my means of resistance were limited because I was tied up and my only weapon was karate. Feeling an unbearable anguish that I too would lose my life at the hands of such beasts, I began desperately to think of a way to escape.

When I arrived at the back yard, I saw two of the surviving women, who were maids at

the inn, surrounded by 2 or 3 security militia men. As I wondered what the meaning of this was, the two maids were immediately added to our group. Then we were all told to sit down. No one opened their mouth to say a word, and everyone's heads drooped downwardly with virtually no sense of life in their expressions. "We could all be gunned down at this moment!" A fearful shiver ran through my body like a vicious cold blizzard. One woman with some strength stood up! After asking for permission to enter the house, she came back out with a bucket full of water. This was to be our final drink. Everyone put their mouths to the bucket and then passed it to the next person. "Everyone! Let's accept our fate," she said. "Let's accept our fate," everyone responded reflexively but weakly.

Then an old man with a gunshot wound on his leg was brought to the group by the security guards. He could not walk. But soon afterwards, according to the words of a man who took him from the second floor to the attic, the old man was shot three times in front of the entrance and killed.

Come to think of it, I did indeed hear gunshots nearby at that exact time. Various militia from the government had been moving to our direction, and every time suspiciously hiding their guns. I asked a direct question to the man who seemed to be the officer of the militia! "Are you here to rescue us or not?" To which he responded, in a cold voice, "Fang Xin Tai!" . These words could mean "Don't worry", but his words were not to be trusted. Still, for the moment we seemed to have avoided execution by gun fire, and after this the 13 of us were taken away by 10 guards to a building with a sign that read, "Finance Ministry". The building was occupied by the militia and full of people. There were about 80 local Koreans sitting on the floor in a group.

There were about 10 local Japanese. We were told to join this group and wait for a while. All sorts of stories were being told here. If they were intending to kill us they could have done so a long time ago. Maybe we would really be saved. Some hopeful words were being exchanged. Some made statements like, "I had about 1,000 Yen stolen by them. I lost a big amount in this incident", presuming that they would survive.

However, by stealthily listening to the conversations of the militia men who were supposedly there for the security of the people, I could tell that they had no intention to keep us alive. "He is continuing to smoke cigarettes." "No matter how much I speak to him he is useless!" I could understand the words they were quickly whispering to one

another, and knew that I was doomed to death. I concluded that it would only be a matter of time.

The conversations of the militia were small talk. One said, "These are Commander Yin's boots", and showed them to one of his fellow guards. "I see, he wears Chinese boots of fine satin." Another militia guard said, "That woman is the typist employed by Commander Yin for the monthly wage of 110 yen!" That's all too typical of guards attending to the government! This explains why they knew so much. An officer of the guards looking at Advisor Nishiwaki, who was amongst our group, asked, "You were an Advisor to the Government, were you not?" This could have been interpreted as telling him, "If you are a government employee, you will be spared", but it was just small talk. After about an hour, an officer who seemed like the commander of the group stood before us and yelled out. He declared, "We will now take you to the area inside of North Gate."

That meant that we would be taken to the shooting area to be executed by gun fire. Most of the Japanese did not even seem surprised, perhaps because they did not understand what they had said in the Chinese language. However, some of the Koreans started to weep and cry. I had assumed from the beginning that they would take us away to be killed, and my thoughts were confirmed. "I see right through what you fiends are plotting", I thought to myself without raising my voice.

"Get up and start walking!" We were told to stand up. I stood at the head of this group of sheep being led to the slaughter. Our right arms were still tied together by a coarse rope and I looked for ways I could set myself free. Fortunately the thin strand of hemp rope binding my right arm was tied in a tight knot just 45 centimeters down the line to a thick hemp rope! "Yes! This is it!", I thought. I walked forward while pretending to hold the large hard knot in the thick hemp rope with both hands, but I was actually making a desperate attempt to untie it without being detected. This hemp knot saved my life. Only 15 minutes away from the execution grounds, I poured all my strength into my fingertips and finally untied this knot. I kept walking while holding this untied knot inside of my palm.

The execution grounds were at the end of a winding road near the fortress walls. The inner side of the walls were crumbled, creating an incline of about 50%, and in the middle of this incline was an area large enough to fit about 100 people. In front of the incline, there was a ditch about 7-8 meters in width, and next to the ditch was the place

where the shooters were to stand. For some reason, there were grotesque looking holes in all directions, creating a ghastly sight resembling Hell itself. Many of our group began to walk one by one across the thin path above the sewerage moat. Since I was in front, I arrived first at the top of this incline. We were only about 5 feet from the top of the wall. We were walking gingerly like cows, but we had to keep going as they goaded us with their bayonets. There appeared to be about 100 people standing at the top of the execution grounds.

2:30pm! The smell of impending death loomed in the air. The tension was unbearable! A woman's voice screamed out, "Let's all escape!" That was the last voice I heard. At this moment I jumped reflexively onto the fortress wall and attempted to make my escape. Those who then began to respond to the situation were showered with bursts of gunfire. Bang, bang, bang! However, I hurled myself to the top of the fortress and then put my hands on the other side of the fortress wall and slid directly down it. When I landed at the bottom of the 2.5 meter wall not a single bullet had hit me, either because I had been faster than them or because their aim had been poor. The sound of the gunfire intensified in the background. A feeling of great remorse suddenly ran through my mind. "I am sorry, so sorry for the people I am leaving behind!" However, my body and mind had been liberated from that dreadful tension and now I was fleeing from the execution grounds as fast as my legs could carry me.

I only had to cross another 20 meters of reeds to reach a river! I ran and with the same momentum thrust myself into the river. I swam while hiding my body below the surface.

After about 10 meters I came up for air, then submerged again and kept on swimming. After repeating that three times, I landed on the opposite shore and hid in the nearby kaoliang fields. After running in a straight line for about an hour, there was another river. Mid-way, I ran aground on a shoal. It was dangerous here because I was exposed to gunfire, but while I was swimming across the first river, it had occurred to me that it would be important to drink water to hydrate my body so that I could continue to run under the burning sun. For this reason, I drank as much muddy water as I could.

In order to keep the maximum distance between the enemy and me, it was best to run straight ahead. I did not know when my pursuers would come over the wall after me. Going left and right would not help. My only chance, I thought, would be to run

straight.

I crossed a creek, then passed over a mountain road. After about 40-50 minutes my legs began to stiffen like rods and I was getting cramps. I felt only the sensation of danger. My clothes were wet and heavy. I stopped running momentarily in order to take my pants off, and when I looked back I could see black smoke rising ominously from the direction of Tongzhou.

The fortress had fallen, but I was determined to survive. What had been the fate of my compatriots! Once again a surge of unspeakable melancholy overwhelmed me, but there was no time to dwell on it. My pursuers might have been right behind me. I feared that the automobile patrol units were already ahead of me on the roads and paths that I intended to take. Thus, I had to move forward quickly. Holding my pants at my side, I rolled up my shirt sleeves and ran. I later realized that I had lost my socks at some point and was running barefoot.

Eventually I arrived at a village. I jumped over a fence of a house and ran under the mud wall alongside it. The villagers greeted my sudden intrusion with curious looks. This was the escape of a fugitive who had not committed a crime! From the central road that runs across the village a farmer about 40 years old and a boy about 15-16 years old started to yell and began to chase me. If I were captured by them, I would inevitably be sent to the execution shooting range.

When I took a short glance backwards, they were yelling "Sensei! Sensei!" (Mister!, Mister!) while hitting their forearms. That was a hand signal implying that they wanted the wrist watch on my left arm. I would regret losing my watch to them, but it would be nothing compared to what would happen if they captured me. "Okay", I thought to myself, "I'll give them the watch." While running, I removed my watch and raised it high above my head with my right hand. I stood looking back and placed the watch on the ground. Then I pointed at it with my finger and continued running.

After a few moments, I looked back and I could see the two fighting over the watch. Great! For now the pursuit of the villagers had been checked.

Though exhausted, I made it to the next village to face another set of determined opponents. Like the last time, I waded and waded my pants and threw them aside. Thus, I was able to hold off another pursuit. One by one my belongings were diminishing. I

had to throw off my jacket too, and finally my neck tie.

I was almost completely naked except my shirt and my underpants held up by a rubber band. While running I could hear the roaring sound of 2 Japanese military planes above my head. How I had missed that sound! But, for now, they offered me no help. I ran through the fields and mountains for about 4 hours and came across a large swamp with reeds. It must have been close to some village, as I could hear the sounds of copper gongs and the voices of the villagers. I went knee deep into the swamp and desperately searched for an exit but the reeds grew so thickly that I could see no way out. Finally, the sun began to set. The red sky reflected on the swamp. The first day was over.



I became keenly aware of just how blessed a life I had lived up to then. I did not want to die there. Eventually, I arrived in Beijing. Above all else, I thought to myself, I must stay alive. For the next 2 nights I slept in the field, struggling with extreme hunger and thirst, and on the 3rd day was captured in a village by about 300 East Hebei militia. I was twice sentenced to be executed, and I was deluged with bullets, but by grace of the heavens I was not hit by a single one and escaped. After 4 days and 3 nights wandering along the brink of death, I made it to Zhaoyang (朝陽) Gate of Beijing and was able to report my survival.

Journalists, military police, local police, and residents warmly welcomed me and helped to pull me up the walls of Zhaoyang Gate with rope. By some miracle, I had escaped from the very jaws of death.

On both of my arms, even now, I have dark scars from being tied up with a coarse rope during my second escape. Whenever I reflect back on the extreme hardships I endured, I feel grateful for the precious life I still have.

As I close this account of my ordeal, I offer my deepest prayers, again and again, to my many compatriots who met untimely deaths at the hands of the ruthless and vicious Chinese soldiers.