

The Nanking Hoax: A Historian Analyzes the Events of 1937

— Summary —

According to charges brought at the Tokyo Trials, after having occupied Nanking in December 1937, Japanese soldiers laid waste to the city, hunting down women and raping them, and killing all civilians who crossed their paths. In the brief span of one month, they committed 200,000 murders and 20,000 rapes.

However, the author felt a strong doubt about this story. At that time conscription was universal. A soldier on active duty might have been — indeed, *was* — the boy next door. The soldiers of 1937 belonged to his father's generation. He certainly felt an affinity with them, and he found the notion that they committed *any* such crimes, much less many of them, unimaginable.

In 1982, 45 years after the violence had allegedly occurred, he decided to discover what really happened in Nanking. Although nearly a half-century had elapsed, quite a few of the survivors of the conflict were alive and well, and in their seventies. So, he was able to interview many of them about their experiences in Nanking. These interviews turned into a five-year project that took him all over Japan; he conducted over 100 of them in the Tohoku, Kanto, Kansai and Kyushu regions, covering about half the nation's territory.

He failed miserably, however, in his attempt to verify any of the accusations made at the Tokyo Trials. None of the former soldiers he interviewed mentioned any event even remotely resembling them. The accusations made by the prosecution at the Tokyo Trials described crimes so horrific that no soldier could forget them, no matter how long ago they had occurred. So, he concluded that the charges brought at the tribunal had been invented.

He compiled this huge interview results into a book titled *Interview with Witness to Nanking Incident*. After his initial inquiry into the Nanking Incident, he vigorously sought what really happened in Nanking in 1937 from various aspects. These include reexaminations of the Tokyo Trials, collections and analyzation of press reports at that time including English language media world-wide, analysis of the Nanking Safety Zone documents and other primary historical documents concerned Christian missionaries anti-Japanese activities and Chinese Nationalist's propaganda activities.

Through his thorough research for nearly 30 years he saw a parade of characters marching through history: those who made the accusations, those who publicized them, those who used them to their advantage, those who were manipulated by them — Chinese, Americans, Japanese. So many people have participated in this drama in so many ways. During those seven decades, the events that actually did take place have become virtually indiscernible. Why were such accusations made? How were they disseminated throughout the world? Why were they given credence at the Tokyo Trials? How did the Japanese react to them? When did the Republic of China first make those allegations?

He realized that to answer these questions, he needed to breathe life once again into the characters and events that shaped this drama at each important stage. This book is the result of that realization.