

No American witnessed the Nanjing “massacre”

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(Summary)

Mr. Toshio Matsumura points out that current books that claim to support the Nanjing “massacre” thesis, that Japanese soldiers slaughtered hundreds of thousands of Chinese civilians after the fall of the Chinese capital in December 13, 1937, have much to be desired in terms of accuracy. Instead, those seeking to know the truth, particularly English speakers, should look elsewhere for confirmation on the Nanjing “massacre”. There were a number of Americans living in Nanjing at the time and the book, *Eyewitnesses to Massacre: American Missionaries Bear Witness to Japanese Atrocities in Nanjing*, edited by Zhang Kaiyuan, is a compilation of personal letters written by these Americans to relatives. Thus, rather than messages for public consumption, the letters show the writers’ private thoughts and sentiments.

According to the letters, none of the Americans personally witnessed the Japanese murdering, raping or looting. As Mr. Matsumura points out, the book is unfortunately and misleadingly titled. The Americans lived within the same building or within a few miles from each other within Nanjing. Thus, if someone saw atrocities being committed, then others would have mentioned it in their letters. However, such is absolutely not the case. For example, Professor Miner Searle Bates reported numerous bodies that were either shot or bayoneted were found within the area designated as a “safety zone,” an area set up by foreign residents for the purpose of sheltering Chinese civilians. However, others wrote that December 13 was in fact peaceful and not swarming with murderous Japanese soldiers as Bates insinuated. In fact, Chinese civilians were out in the streets curiously observing the Japanese soldiers, even setting up small roadside businesses. Indeed, the same writers of the letters in *Eyewitnesses to Massacre* were freely traveling within Nanjing without being harassed by Japanese soldiers. Writers acknowledged seeing a few bodies of civilians surrounded by crowds of Chinese onlookers, but these casualties were due to stray artillery fire during the fighting prior to the fall of the city and not by Japanese troops using civilians for bayonet practice. During no time did Japanese soldiers raid a women’s college to rape the occupants—such was absolutely not observed either immediately after the entry of Japanese troops in Nanjing or for the two month period thereafter. What looting there was, in fact, as the letters pointed out, were by poor Chinese refugees, not Japanese soldiers, scrounging for anything of value.

If there was no Nanjing “massacre,” then how did this falsehood take root? Mr. Matsumura points out that two of the Americans cited in the book, Miner Searle Bates and George A. Fitch, continued to sow atrocity accusations and anti-Japanese propaganda long after the fall of Nanjing in China and abroad. Nowhere in the book is it pointed out that Bates was an advisor to the Nationalist Government and that Fitch formed anti-Japanese, pro-China groups in the U.S. after leaving Nanjing in 1938. Mr. Matsumura goes on to point out that the purpose of these activities was to influence U.S. policy in the favor of the Nationalist Government and to increase hostility against Japan. Allied prosecutors for the “Tokyo Trials” were not even able to secure reliable witnesses to the Nanjing “massacre”. Even though the allegations are not at all based in fact, as the letters written by Americans demonstrate, the Japanese were nonetheless prosecuted for it. The propaganda campaign started by the Nationalists has now found new life as an effective propaganda tool of Chinese Communist Party.