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# A HISTORY OF THE NANJING MASSACRE

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Zhang Lianhong & Wang Weixing

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Nanjing University Press

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Nanjing University Press  
2015 Nanjing



图书在版编目(CIP)数据

南京大屠杀史 = A History of the Nanjing Massacre:  
英文 / 张宪文主编; (美) 李玫玲, (美) 梁侃译. — 南京:  
南京大学出版社, 2015.11

ISBN 978-7-305-15850-6

I. ① 南… II. ① 张… ② 李… ③ 梁…  
III. ① 南京大屠杀—史料—英文 IV. ① K265.606

中国版本图书馆CIP数据核字(2015)第208791号

Copyright © 2015 by Nanjing University Press

Original Chinese Language edition published by Nanjing University Press 2014.

First English language edition published by Nanjing University Press 2015.

No. 22, Hankou Road, Nanjing, China, 210093

www.njupco.com

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*Chinese Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

The CIP data for this title is on the file with the Chinese Library

A History of the Nanjing Massacre/edited by Zhang Xianwen, translated by  
Michelle LeSourd & Kan Liang

ISBN13: 978-7-305-15850-6 (hbk)

1. Nanjing-History-20th Century. 2. WWII in China 3. China-Japan-History  
I. Zhang, Xianwen. II. LeSourd, Michelle. III. Liang, Kan

*Printed in the People's Republic of China*

# Preface to English Edition

The Nanjing Massacre is known as one of the darkest pages in twentieth-century world history. For various reasons, however, this historical tragedy remained relatively unknown to the general public in the West until the 1997 publication of Iris Chang's popular book, *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*. Since then, the topic has drawn more attention.<sup>1</sup> At the same time, continuing denial of the massacre by right-wing Japanese scholars and politicians makes this topic no longer merely a historical event, but also part of the ongoing political discourse, particularly in East Asian countries. The publication of this translation, we believe, will provide the Western audience with a more comprehensive understanding of this atrocity and its repercussions.

This volume, *A History of the Nanjing Massacre*, is an important work deserving our attention. It is the first comprehensive narration of the massacre written by a group of Chinese scholars from Nanjing. From the fall of the city, to the atrocities themselves, to the international community's efforts to save refugees, and finally to the trials of the war criminals, the book offers a complete story of the massacre from the Chinese, Japanese, and Western perspectives. In addition, the text is based substantially upon a newly published source collection. Beginning in the year 2000, Professor Zhang Xianwen of Nanjing University, working with scholars in 20 universities and research institutions in China and abroad, led a team to collect all historical sources on the Nanjing Massacre worldwide, including archived government documents, newspaper reports, personal recollections of survivors and participants, and many other relevant sources. This massive effort resulted in the publication of 72 volumes of history—nearly 40 million Chinese characters—which is now the most comprehensive collection on the topic.<sup>2</sup> The collection greatly contributes to the study of the Nanjing Massacre in particular but also offers further understanding of war atrocities and genocide in general. This book, as the reader will see, is a

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the scholarly works mentioned in the Introduction and footnotes throughout this book, see Joshua A. Fogel, *The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) and Yoshida Takashi, *The Making of the "Rape of Nanking": History and Memory in China, Japan, and the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). A number of journal articles as well as television and film productions also address the topic.

<sup>2</sup> Zhang Xianwen, ed., *Nanjing Da Tusha shiliaoji* [Nanjing Massacre historical collection] (Nanjing: Jiangsu People's Publishing, Ltd., 2005–2010).

direct product of this source collection.<sup>3</sup>

About a year ago, Professor Zhang approached Kan Liang, his former student, to seek possible translators for the book. Kan immediately recommended Michelle LeSourd, his former classmate at the Hopkins-Nanjing Center for Chinese and American Studies and a graduate of Pomona College in Chinese language and literature. As a professional Chinese-English translator since 2002, she has translated or edited a variety of academic journal articles and monographs. Kan Liang earned his doctorate at Yale University and is currently associate professor of history and associate dean at Seattle University. Michelle was responsible for translating the text and performing English citation research, while Kan acted as editor and proofreader.

Throughout the text, we chose to use Hanyu Pinyin to transliterate Chinese personal and place names, unless universally known by another spelling, and Hepburn romanization for Japanese names. Chinese and Japanese names are presented surname first, unless in an Anglicized form. To facilitate the Western reader's understanding, some background explanations are added in the text and footnotes.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the following individuals. First, we thank Professor Zhang Xianwen, who entrusted us with this meaningful project. Lisa Maynard provided meticulous copyediting for the entire English manuscript, and Erika Kinno offered crucial assistance with the many Japanese names and publication titles. We also thank Lü Jing of Nanjing University, who oversaw day-to-day communications and logistics for the translation and answered many questions arising in the process. At Nanjing University Press, editor Zhang Shuwen diligently and quickly caught errors in the manuscript, while editor Li Hongmin performed significant preparatory work for the publication.

Michelle LeSourd  
Kan Liang

Seattle, Washington  
September 2015

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<sup>3</sup> In 2012, the three-volume *Nanjing Da Tusha shiliaoji* [A History of the Nanjing Massacre], edited by Zhang Xianwen, et al. was published. A condensed single volume was published in 2014 partly in preparation for the English and Japanese translations.

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# Introduction



# Part I. The Nanjing Massacre: Atrocities Committed by Japanese Army

Long after the First Sino-Japanese War in 1894–1895, the imperialist Japanese government continued to make plans to invade China. In 1927, Japanese prime minister Tanaka Giichi convened the famous Eastern Conference in Tokyo. The conference established a new China policy, making the occupation of China, the invasion of Asia, and world domination the strategic direction for Japan's outward expansion. Subsequently, the Japanese Kwantung Army in northeast China caused a series of incidents in order to provoke a war. On the evening of September 18, 1931, the Japanese bombed a section of track of the South Manchuria Railway near the suburb of Liutiao Lake north of the city of Shenyang (then known as Mukden), falsely accusing the Chinese army of the action. The Japanese then attacked the Chinese garrison at Beidaying in Shenyang, creating the prelude for a new war of aggression against China.

Within about six months after the Mukden Incident, the Japanese had quickly occupied the entire territory of northeast China. Following this, they pointed the spearhead of their invasion toward north China. During the evening of July 7, 1937, the Japanese army garrisoned in the Fengtai District of Beijing (known then as Peking or Beiping) held northern regional military exercises in Wanping County. Using a missing Japanese soldier as an excuse, they shelled the Wanping county seat, which became known worldwide as the Marco Polo Bridge Incident. The Chinese People's War of Resistance against Japan (also known as the Second Sino-Japanese War) had been a local phenomenon, but at that point broke out on a national scale.

After the Japanese army occupied the Beijing-Tianjin region, they moved south along the Tianjin-Pukou and Beijing-Hankou railways in order to expand their captured territory. Meanwhile, to accelerate the destruction of China, in August of 1937 the army created constant provocations in Shanghai to create an excuse to expand the war. On August 13, the Japanese attacked the city's Zhabei District, setting off the Battle of Shanghai, the largest battle to date in China's eastern coastal region since the outbreak of the War of Resistance. Japan established the Shanghai Expeditionary Army and then the Central China Area Army,<sup>1</sup> and made General Matsui Iwane commander of the latter, which

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<sup>1</sup> The Japanese Central China Area Army was created in November 1937 by combining the Shanghai Expeditionary Army and the Tenth Army.—Trans.



gave him unified command over combat in Shanghai and other areas. The Japanese continually increased their forces, sending in their 3rd, 11th, 9th, 13th, 16th, 101st, 6th, 18th, and 114th Divisions, as well as additional regiments. In response, the Chinese Nationalist Government's Military Affairs Commission adjusted its military deployment, mobilizing numerous elite troops and placing them in the Yangtze River Delta region to defend Shanghai, China's largest industrial and commercial city. The Chinese troops fought hard and bloody battles, dealing major blows to the Japanese and causing heavy casualties. The Chinese army held out in Shanghai for three months, shattering Japan's dream of using a blitzkrieg strategy to destroy China in three months, and arousing the Chinese people's determination to resist. The army's effort strengthened Chinese confidence in winning the war and also gained precious time for industrial enterprises and cultural and educational institutions in the coastal areas to move inland.

Shanghai fell on November 12. The Japanese decided to attack China's capital of Nanjing (known then as Nanking) to maximize pressure on China, force its government to surrender, and end the war.

Japan's Central China Area Army split up and advanced toward Nanjing in a formation to fully surround the city. One force consisted of the 11th, 13th, and 16th Divisions, which moved along both sides of the Nanjing-Shanghai Railway to attack the cities and towns of Wuxi, Changzhou, Danyang, Zhenjiang, and Jurong. A second force, composed of the advance force of the 3rd Division, along with the 9th Division, entered Suzhou, Wuxi, and Jintan in their advance toward Nanjing. As part of a third force, troops under the Tenth Army occupied Jiaxing and Wuxing and passed through Yixing, Liyang, and Lishui to move directly toward Nanjing, while the 18th Division took Guangde and Ningguo (Xuancheng) and attacked Wuhu. Meanwhile, the Kunisaki Detachment moved into Pukou just north of the Yangtze River, cutting off retreat for the Chinese army defending Nanjing. Under the Japanese onslaught, southern Jiangsu Province and southeastern Anhui Province fell in succession. The Japanese army approached the outskirts of Nanjing on December 6.

The Chinese Nationalist Government decided to move its capital inland to the city of Chongqing, and shifted some of its military and government authorities to the cities of Wuhan and Changsha to accommodate the needs of the war. Meanwhile, Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek convened a conference in Nanjing to discuss military deployments for the city's defense. The urban district of Nanjing lay south of the Yangtze with its back to the river. The terrain was easy to attack and hard to defend. Nanjing was the capital of China; if the Chinese government did not deploy a defense of the city, it would be condemned by the entire nation and have an adverse effect on relations with the international

community. While some generals, such as Chen Cheng, did not advocate trying to hold Nanjing,<sup>2</sup> Chiang Kai-shek decided to establish the Nanjing Garrison Command. He named Tang Shengzhi (Tang Sheng-chih ) as commander in chief and Luo Zhuoying and Liu Xing as deputy commanders in chief. Under this command were more than 100,000 soldiers available for the defense of Nanjing, including the 66th Corps commanded by Ye Zhao, the 71st Corps (Wang Jingjiu), the 72nd Corps (Sun Yuanliang), the 74th Corps (Yu Jishi), the 78th Corps (Song Xilian), the 83rd Corps (Deng Longguang), and the 2nd Army (Xu Yuanquan), as well as training corps and military police regiments. To express his determination to “live or die with Nanjing,” Tang Shengzhi evacuated all vessels sailing from Xiaguan (Hsiakwan), on the south bank of the Yangtze, to Pukou on the north bank. He forbade any troops to cross the river to evacuate to the north.

In early December, the Japanese army occupied the eastern suburb of Tangshan, the southern suburbs of Hushu, Chunhua, and Molingguan, and the southwestern suburbs of Banqiao and Dashengguan. The two sides battled heatedly until the night of December 12, when the Japanese broke through points around the city: Zhongshan Gate, Yuhua Gate, Zhonghua Gate, Guanghua Gate, Shuixi Gate, Tongji Gate, and the heights of Purple (Zijin) Mountain to the east. Nanjing fell on December 13. The defending Chinese forces suffered very heavy casualties, except for a portion who retreated through Taiping Gate or other places and moved to northern Jiangsu, or the border areas between Zhejiang and Anhui Provinces. Some soldiers, whose retreat was cut off, lay down their arms and took off their uniforms, and some were able to enter the Nanjing Safety Zone established by foreign residents.

After the Japanese occupied Nanjing, they believed that these Chinese soldiers out of uniform were their greatest threat. There were “probably still lurking in the city many surviving enemy intending to resist,” and they therefore “planned to

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<sup>2</sup> Chen Cheng said, “The Generalissimo called me to the capital to inquire about a defensive strategy for Nanjing. First, I asked, do you want me to defend the city? The Generalissimo said, ‘No’.” Chen stated that, “Our army must quickly leave the battlefield and withdraw to southern Anhui, using Nanjing as an advance position so that we may engage in a long-term War of Resistance.” He also said, “Tang Shengzhi saw Nanjing as the location of the national capital, and that it was not to be given up easily; he asked for more elite troops to defend it to the death.” Chen indicated that, “Our defenders of the city faced the enemy on three sides, and with the great river to the north there was no way to withdraw; it was the most brutal sacrifice seen during the eight years of the War of Resistance.” See Chen Cheng, *Chen Cheng xiansheng huiyilu: Kangri Zhanzheng (shang)* [The memoirs of Mr. Chen Cheng: The War of Resistance against Japan (Vol. 1)] (Taipei: Academia Historica, 2004), 60.

implement thorough mop-up operations within and outside the city of Nanjing.”<sup>3</sup> A Japanese document stated, “There are indications that most of the escaping enemy are dressed in civilian clothes. All suspicious persons are to be arrested and imprisoned in an appropriate location.”<sup>4</sup> Because they were unable to distinguish between soldiers and ordinary people, the Japanese decided “to treat all young and adult men as remnants of the defeated army or soldiers in civilian clothing, and arrest and imprison them.”<sup>5</sup> The American missionary John G. Magee, who had remained in Nanjing, used a camera to covertly film scenes of the Japanese army rounding up Chinese soldiers and slaughtering Chinese citizens on the city streets. On December 13, 1937, the first day of the occupation of Nanjing, 16th Division commander Lieutenant General Nakajima Kesago wrote in his diary, “We are essentially not implementing a prisoner of war policy. We have decided to undertake a policy of complete elimination...Sasaki’s troops alone disposed of about 15,000 persons, and a company commander garrisoned at Taiping Gate disposed of about 1,300 persons.” Nakajima bluntly stated, “Because it was never envisaged that these measures would be taken, the general staff really have their hands full.”<sup>6</sup> Iinuma Mamoru, at the time the chief of staff of the Shanghai Expeditionary Army, wrote in his diary on December 21, “When Yamada’s detachment bayoneted well over ten thousand prisoners in groups, a considerable number of people were escorted to the same place within a few days, and the prisoners rioted. Finally our army used machine-gun fire, resulting in a number of our army officers and soldiers also being killed. A considerable number of prisoners also took the opportunity to escape.”<sup>7</sup> Senior Japanese generals also treated Chinese prisoners of war very cruelly, taking the lives of the prisoners as a trifling matter. On December 13, Lieutenant General Nakajima wrote in his diary, “Today at noon Swordsman Takayama came to visit, and there happened to be seven prisoners, so I told him to try to behead them. I also ordered

<sup>3</sup> “Bubing Di-sanshiba Liandui zhandou xiangbao di 12 hao” (Zhaohe 12 nian 12 yue 14 ri) [38th Infantry Regiment detailed battle report no. 12 (December 14, 1937)], in *Nanjing Da Tusha shiliaoji, di 11 ce: Riben junfang wenjian* [Nanjing Massacre historical collection, Vol. 11: Japanese military documents], ed. Zhang Xianwen, Wang Weixing, and Lei Guoshan (Nanjing: Jiangsu People’s Publishing, Ltd., 2006), 70.

<sup>4</sup> “Nanjing chengnei saodang yaoling” [Overview of mop-up operations within the city of Nanjing], in Zhang, Wang, and Lei, *Historical Collection*, Vol. 11, 110.

<sup>5</sup> “Youguan shishi saodang de zhuyi shixiang (Zhaohe 12 nian 12 yue 13 ri)” [Notes on the implementation of mop-up operations (December 13, 1937)], in Zhang, Wang, and Lei, *Historical Collection*, Vol. 11, 111.

<sup>6</sup> Nakajima Kesago, “Zhongdao Jinchawu riji” [Diary of Nakajima Kesago], in *Nanjing Da Tusha shiliaoji, di 8 ce: Rijun guanbing riji* [Nanjing Massacre historical collection, Vol. 8: Diaries of Japanese officers and soldiers], ed. Zhang Xianwen and Wang Weixing (Nanjing: Jiangsu People’s Publishing, Ltd., 2005), 280.

<sup>7</sup> Iinuma Mamoru, “Fanzhao Shou riji” [Diary of Iinuma Mamoru], in Zhang and Wang, *Historical Collection*, Vol. 8, 212–213.

him to try to behead them with my saber, and he actually cut off two heads extremely well.”<sup>8</sup> General Okamura Yasuji, who later became the supreme commander of the invading Japanese army, also documented in his diary on July 13, 1938, the arbitrary killings of Chinese prisoners of war by the Japanese army. He wrote, “After arriving at the Shina<sup>9</sup> battlefield, I learned from listening to the reports of expeditionary staff officer Miyazaki, Central China Expeditionary Army special services chief Major General Harada, and Lieutenant Colonel Hagiwara, head of the Hangzhou office that, using the difficulties of sending military supplies to front-line troops as an excuse, the Expeditionary Army has put a large number of prisoners to death, and it has become a bad habit. As many as forty or fifty thousand persons were massacred during the Battle of Nanjing, and a great number of city residents were also looted and raped.”<sup>10</sup> Killing large numbers of prisoners who have laid down their arms after the occupation of an enemy country is a serious breach of international law. It is an indisputable fact that Japanese troops killed large numbers of Chinese prisoners of war before and after they captured Nanjing. The Japanese also aimed their butcher’s knives at the many peaceful residents of Nanjing. They committed many large-scale massacres in Nanjing’s urban district and nearby suburbs, in the form of both collective and dispersed killings. Some of the most tragic and concentrated killings occurred at Mufu Mountain, Yanziji, Meitangang, Yuleiying, Baota Bridge, and Zhongshan Dock in the vicinity of Xiaguan along the Yangtze River; Shuixi Gate, Hanzhong Gate, and Jiangdongmen west of the city; Yuhuatai and Huashen Temple to the south; and several neighborhoods within the city limits. In each of these massacres, between several hundred and tens of thousands of people were killed. The targets of the massacres were not limited to young and adult men; not even the elderly, children, or women were spared. The methods of slaughter included shooting, beheading, stabbing, burying alive, burning, drowning, and even killing for sport, with extreme brutality.

After they occupied Nanjing, the Japanese army also committed appalling sexual violence against a great number of Chinese women. These heinous acts were committed on a large scale and using cruel methods. The February 1946 *Report on the Investigation on Enemy Crimes Ordered by the Capital District Prosecutors Office* stated, “There were many victims, generally from young women to elderly women in their sixties and seventies. Some were raped, some gang-raped, some who resisted rape were killed, and in some cases a father was ordered to rape his daughter, a brother to rape his sister, or a father-in-law to

<sup>8</sup> Nakajima, “Diary of Nakajima Kesago,” 278.

<sup>9</sup> A derogatory Japanese term for China.—Trans.

<sup>10</sup> Okamura Yasuji, “Gangcun Ningci zhenzhong ganxiang lu” [Record of the thoughts of Okamura Yasuji during battle], in Zhang and Wang, *Historical Collection*, Vol. 8, 6.