



From the sculpture garden:

Family Ruined,
its accompanying poem reads:

*"Never returns the son killed
Never returns the husband buried alive
Sorrow drowns the wife raped Heavens..."*

FEATURE

Reflections: Why Did the Massacre Happen?

THE MEMORIAL HALL OF THE VICTIMS IN NANJING MASSACRE BY JAPANESE INVADERS

By Ruby Tsao

In April, 2014, I made a visit to the Museum of Nanjing Massacre. It is constructed on the site of the Massacre which happened in 1937-38. I hope to describe the details to Americans who do not have a chance to visit the place. It happened that Gary Locke, former US ambassador to China, had a private visit to the Museum a few days later. Recently, there are a flurry of diplomatic and publicity efforts by Japanese government officials as well as in the internet to portray China as a threat in Asia, while Japan is a force for peace. I inquired into reference materials and publicity efforts to tell China's side of the story. There are some books, but digital materials are not available for internet distribution. The website: nj1937.org does not provide much content or lead to detailed information or photographs to document the atrocities. The museum is beautifully designed with many sculptures. However, sculptures do not provide authenticity as actual photographs or films that can be transmitted electronically to publicize the images for the world to see the truth.

From the book *THE MEMORIAL HALL OF THE VICTIMS IN NANJING MASSACRE BY JAPANESE INVADERS*, a brief statement of historical background reads:

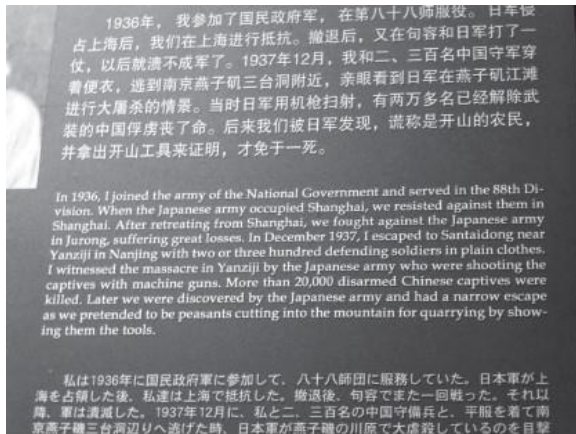
“The Nanjing Massacre refers to an exceedingly horrible massacre of civilians by the Japanese army during a six-week period from December 1937 to January 1938 after its occupation of Nanjing, then the capital of the Republic of China. In flagrant violation of international conventions and fundamental moral codes, the Japanese invaders stopped at nothing in



committing atrocities in the form of slaughter, rape, plunder, arson and destruction. After the surrender of Japan, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East and the Nanjing War Crimes Tribunal investigated the Nanjing Massacre as a separate case. The investigation by the Nanjing War Crimes Tribunal revealed that Japanese troops had committed 28 mass slaughters taking a toll of 190,000 persons, and 858 sporadic killings claiming the lives of over 150,000 Chinese, in total over 300,000 Chinese lost their lives.

Inaugurated on 15 August 1985, the Memorial Hall is located in the Southwest corner of Nanjing, the site of the massacre and the site of the “Mass Grave of Ten Thousand Corpses”, expanded from 1994 to 1995 and again from 2005 to 2007. Two master architects in China, Qi Kang and He Jingtang, designed the expanded Memorial Hall. It was reopened to the

public on 13 December 2007 marking the 70th anniversary of the Massacre. The Museum covers an area of 74,000 square meters, with a floor area of 25,000 square meters and exhibition area of 12,000 square meters. Some highlights:



The Memorial Square: “The gray stone wall is inscribed with the words” Victims 300000— in Chinese, English and Japanese. The name of the Memorial Hall carved on the wall is in Deng Xiaoping’s calligraphy.

Hall of Testimony: “A Human Holocaust” is a regular exhibition with 150,000 articles of cultural relics, valuable archives, photos, videos, weapons, ammunitions, etc. A series of reports on the “Contest to kill 100 Chinese using a sword between Noda Tsuyoshi and Mukai Toshiaki” with photos carried in the Tokyo Nichi Nichi Shimbun (Tokyo Daily News) showed Japanese soldiers amusing themselves by slaughtering civilians.

Graveyard Square: “The Mass Grave of Ten Thousand Corpses”:



The remains of victims were unearthed at the mass grave during 1983-84 excavation and more remains were found between 1998 and 1999. In 2006, a new mass grave was identified. Outside of the building displaying

the remains, there are pebble stones representing the remains and broken walls symbolizing the destruction of Nanjing, and three sets of large reliefs inlaid in the wall depicting “Calamity, Massacre and Memorial” and 17 monuments to the victims.

Sculptures: about 30 sculptures scatter on the Sculpture Square and throughout the Museum, including a statue of Iris Chang with her book *The Rape of Nanking* in her hand.



The Sacrificial Square: has an eternal flame burning in memory of the victims.

The Meditation Hall: houses a shallow pool and flickering candle lights.

The Peace Park: is composed of green lawn, shrubs, tall trees and a 160 meter long pond.

Footprints of Historical Witnesses: is a walkway cast in bronze of footprints of 222 survivors and members of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East.

Wall bearing 10,000 names of the victims: a small fraction of the over 300,000 victims, is made of granite, 43 meters long and 3.5 meters high.

Goddess of Peace: the visit ends at the white marble sculpture completed in September 2008 of a mother with a dove of peace in one hand and a child in one arm, with the word “PEACE” in Chinese and English inscribed on the pedestal with a reflecting pool in front.

About 5 million people a year come to visit the Museum. Exhibitions on Nanjing Massacre have been held in 20 cities in China and 10 countries abroad.

The Museum gives physical evidence of Nanjing Massacre in spite of the denial of the



Japanese right wing government of its existence. The atrocities shocked the foreigners living in Nanjing at the time. John Rabe, an employee of German company Siemens, and a dozen other foreigners formed a safety zone for protection of Chinese refugees. The American missionary John

Magee shot scenes of the Nanjing Massacre on site with his 16-mm movie camera. American professor Minnie Vautrin stayed in Nanjing to provide protection of 10,000 women and children. Witnessing such horrors caused her to become severely depressed and she committed suicide a year after she returned to the US for treatment. Their bronze statues are in the displays. In 1997, Chinese American writer Iris Chang published her book "The Rape of Nanking - The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II". It was a best seller that shocked the Western world with the forgotten details of the Massacre Japan committed in Nanjing during WWII. She made a great contribution to tell the history of Nanjing Massacre to the people in the West. She also committed suicide from depression in 2004 at the age of 36. Her statue by Wang Hongzhi stands outside facing visitors, opposite the sculptures of the possible to forgive when Japanese, like the Germans, show remorse for the crimes committed to assure that this will never happen again.

To summarize the history - Japanese militarism led to a series of aggression against China: the invasion of Taiwan; the annexation of Ryukyu Islands; the Naval War of 1894-95 to invade Korea and China; participation in the Eight Power Allied Forces, attacks on China and staging of the Mukden Incident as a pretext to invade Manchuria in northeast China. The Nationalist Government demonstrated its determination to resist the Japanese military that it took 3 months and the lives of 40,000 Japanese soldiers at the Battle of Shanghai and again sustained heavy losses to take the capital of Nationalist government Nanjing. On December 9, 1937, the Japanese military announced the full horrors of war on Nanjing and gave orders to kill all, regardless of age or gender.

Why did the Nanjing Massacre happen? Japanese people appear to be such courteous, law-abiding and peaceful people. Indeed, majority of them are peace-loving, except they are ignorant of historical facts deliberately covered up by the right wing government. The

soldiers who committed such horrible crimes were also normal people before the atrocities. What caused normal Japanese to turn into slaughtering beasts committing crimes of murder, rape, plunder and arson? This has to do with Japan's SAMURAI culture.

Japan's Samurai culture was established early in history and flourished in 15th and 16th centuries during the period of the Warring States, dozens of states fighting among themselves, independent from the central government. Wealthy landowners built private armies for their own protection. They employed homeless and jobless wanderers — who pledged absolute loyalty and would fight to death for the masters. They would do anything their masters asked, even killing innocent children. If a Samurai warrior could not accomplish the mission or was defeated in a battle, the shame would cause him to commit suicide (Harakiri) by plunging a dagger to disembowel himself. Anyone who would perform such a brutal act on himself, certainly would not hesitate to be brutal to victims he was ordered to kill.

Japan's Emperor Meiji (1852-1912) modernized the Imperial army, but many officers were recruited from Samurai warriors who pledged absolute loyalty to the Emperor to carry out his ambition to conquer Asia. The Emperor was worshipped by all Japanese to reach to a status of god. This was the culture behind Japanese aggressions and atrocities. Even though Japan is now supposedly a democracy, power is controlled in the hands of a few families. They convince the people to be loyal to the government in the quest to regain past glory. It's a case of the wolf leading the sheep. To this day, they do not admit their war crimes. Most Japanese people do not know about the war history. History textbooks were changed to whitewash their war activities. Japan portrays itself as a victim of WWII, being the only country to suffer from atomic bombing, rather than the perpetrator of war crimes. Right-wingers tried to justify the practice of "sex slaves" in WWII and to declare that there were no war crimes.



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Many Japanese were surprised to learn of the War history when they traveled abroad. They are fair-minded people who would never condone war crimes if they knew the truth. In fact, many soldiers of Japanese descent fought in the War on the US side. We have Japanese American friends who were wrongfully locked up in internment camps during the War. They were also victims of Japan's aggressions.

Samurai culture is rearing its ugly head in Japan today. The Japanese claim to be the most superior race deserving to rule the world. They had a detailed plan to accomplish this. The first step was to conquer China which resulted in numerous invasions in China since the 19th Century. We must be alert on Japan's ambition to dominate in Asia again.

Americans should not forget Pearl Harbor. This attack showed us the ambition of a small country to dare to attack the most powerful United States the same time Japan was staging several fronts of attack in Asia. Japan was also involved in Europe with their alliance with the Nazis in WWII. The Japanese do not forget their suffering from atomic bombs the US dropped on

Japan. Memorial service is conducted every year to mourn the victims. But they forget all about the killings and suffering Japan inflicted on millions of people, not only in China, but also in most other nations in Asia. Japan does not want to abide by the surrender conditions after WWII and give up islands gained from invasions. For this reason, they have continuous island disputes with China, Korea and Russia.

For the US government to give aid to Japan is to rekindle this Samurai spirit and to sow the seeds of another war. This is after WWI, WWII, Korean War, Vietnam War, Iraq War, Afghanistan War...with more to come. Haven't we had enough wars depleting our treasury? Just imagine if these wars were fought on American soil. Can we be so oblivious to human suffering of war just because we don't see it? If we do not learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it. American people by nature are honorable, generous, altruistic and peace-loving. Americans believe in "justice for all". For the government to be on the side of injustice is to go against the spirit of the American people. The US has lost its moral high ground because the truth of history cannot be denied. Do we also have a case of the wolf leading the sheep? We hope we are awakening by the facts displayed at the Museum of Nanjing Massacre.

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