

## FEATURE

Nanjing Massacre Anniversary 2017

# Xi attends but forgoes speech at Nanjing Massacre ceremony

Move seen as sign Beijing honors past but serious about warmer ties with Japan

By ATARU KODAKA

December 13, 2017 4:52 pm JST

<https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics-Economy/International-Relations/Xi-attends-but-forgoes-speech-at-Nanjing-Massacre-ceremony>

**N**ANJING, China — In an apparent sign of improving Japan-China relations, Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday decided to forgo an opportunity to speak about the two countries' bitter past at the state memorial ceremony held in Nanjing to mark the 80th anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre.

Xi attended the annual ceremony for the first time in three years. His speech would have been seen as a test of Beijing's seriousness about improving diplomatic relations with Japan.

This year's ceremony was the fourth since it was promoted to a state-level event in 2014.

The address by Yu Zhengsheng, chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, who spoke in Xi's place, was restrained in its criticism of Japan.

He said the war instigated by Japanese militarism brought enormous damage to the Chinese people, as well as to the Japanese.

His speech also touched on this year's 45th anniversary of the normalization of

diplomatic relations between the two countries, as well as the 40th anniversary in 2018 of their Treaty of Peace and Friendship.

About 10,000 people, including Nanjing residents and Chinese government officials, attended the ceremony, which began at 10 a.m. at the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders.



*People attend a memorial ceremony to mark the 80th anniversary of the 1937 Nanjing Massacre on the national memorial day in Nanjing, Jiangsu province, on Dec.13. © Reuters*

Beijing designated Dec. 13 as National Memorial Day for Nanjing Massacre Victims in 2014 and has since hosted the memorial ceremony, taking over the role from the local government.