

Introduction to the International Safety Zone in Nanking

On the eve of the Japanese breakthrough in the Battle of Shanghai, the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone was formed on November 22, 1937. Following the example of Jesuit Father Robert Jacquinet de Besange in Shanghai, these westerners in Nanking finally created a demilitarized zone inside the city, the Nanking Safety Zone, to shelter Chinese refugees whose lives had been threatened and homes destroyed by the invading Japanese Imperial Army.

The International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone managed the zone. The chairman of the International Committee was John Rabe, a German businessman and Nazi party member. The existence of the Safety Zone, the courageous and selfless acts of the few westerners who remained behind in Nanking, together with the brave acts of many Chinese volunteers in the zone were responsible for saving the lives of tens of thousands of Chinese civilians during the Nanking Massacre.

The Nanking Safety Zone was bordered by roads on all four sides, with an area of approximately 3.86 sq. km. This is approximately the same size as Central Park in New York (3.4 sq. km). Within the zone were located the American, Japanese, Danish and Italian embassies, the University of Nanking and its hospital [Kulou Hospital], Ginling College, the Supreme Court and a number of foreign institutions. Using Red Cross flags for identification, refugee camps were established in the zone at locations like Ginling College, the University of Nanking, school buildings, government buildings like the Old Ministry of Communications Building, the German Club etc. Houses of some westerners like John Rabe's were also offered as shelters to refugees.

The International Committee managed to persuade the Chinese government to move all their troops out of the Safety Zone. According to the public notice issued by the International Committee on 8 December, 1937 that urged refugees to take refuge in the zone, it described the Japanese position on the Safety Zone as: "The Japanese authorities has not formally recognized the Zone, but has said that it is natural that they have no intention to attack an area which is not militarized and not occupied by Chinese troops." The Japanese army did not subject the Safety Zone to concentrated air bombardment or shelling.

The Chinese government of Nanking affirmed the existence of the Nanking Safety Zone, sent cash and food, and staffed security personnel in the zone. Before the Mayor of Nanking fled the city on December 7, he had already authorized the International Committee to take over the administration of the city once he and his staff were evacuated. It is estimated that when Nanking fell on December 13, 1937, the Safety Zone housed around 250,000 refugees. During the massacre the committee members found ways to provide these refugees with the basic needs of food, shelter, and medical care.

In late January 1938, the Japanese army ordered all refugees in the Safety Zone had to return home by February 4. On 18 February, 1938 the International Committee was forced by the Japanese to change its name to [Nanking] International Relief Committee and concentrated more on relief works. Out of the 25 refugee camps, 6 were closed in February or early March, and 13 more in March and April. Although by end May 1938, all refugee camps managed by the International Committee were closed but relief work continued well into 1939.

The International Red Cross Committee of Nanking was also established at the last moment before Nanking fell when the westerners were requested to set up the Red Cross Hospital to help care

the wounded soldiers and to coordinate the humanitarian aid efforts. It was chaired by Rev. John Magee and many of its members also served on the International Committee for Nanking Safety Zone.

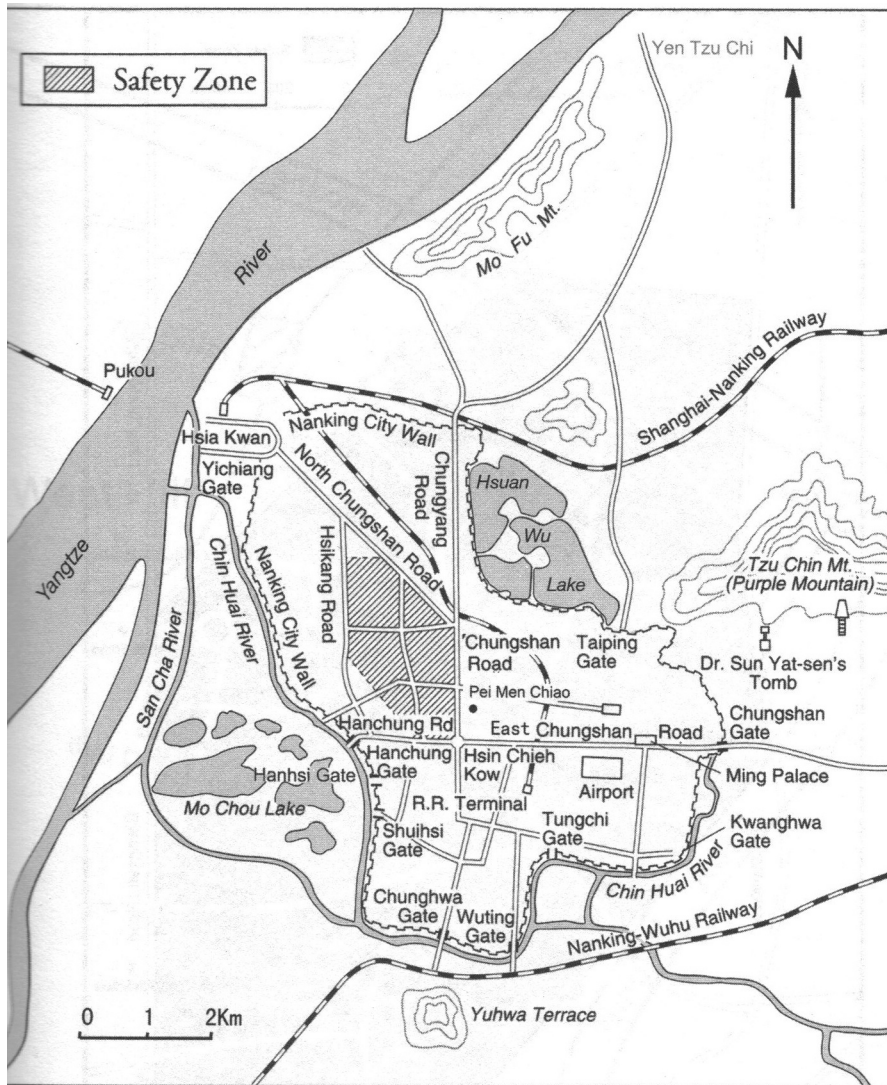
Sources:

The Rape of Nanking: An Undeniable History in Photographs by Shi Young & James Yin (1996), P.218–240, 318

Chinese and Western Rescuers of the International Safety Zone Nanking, 1937-1938 published by The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey, Sara and Sam Schoffer Holocaust Resource Center (2011), P.47-61

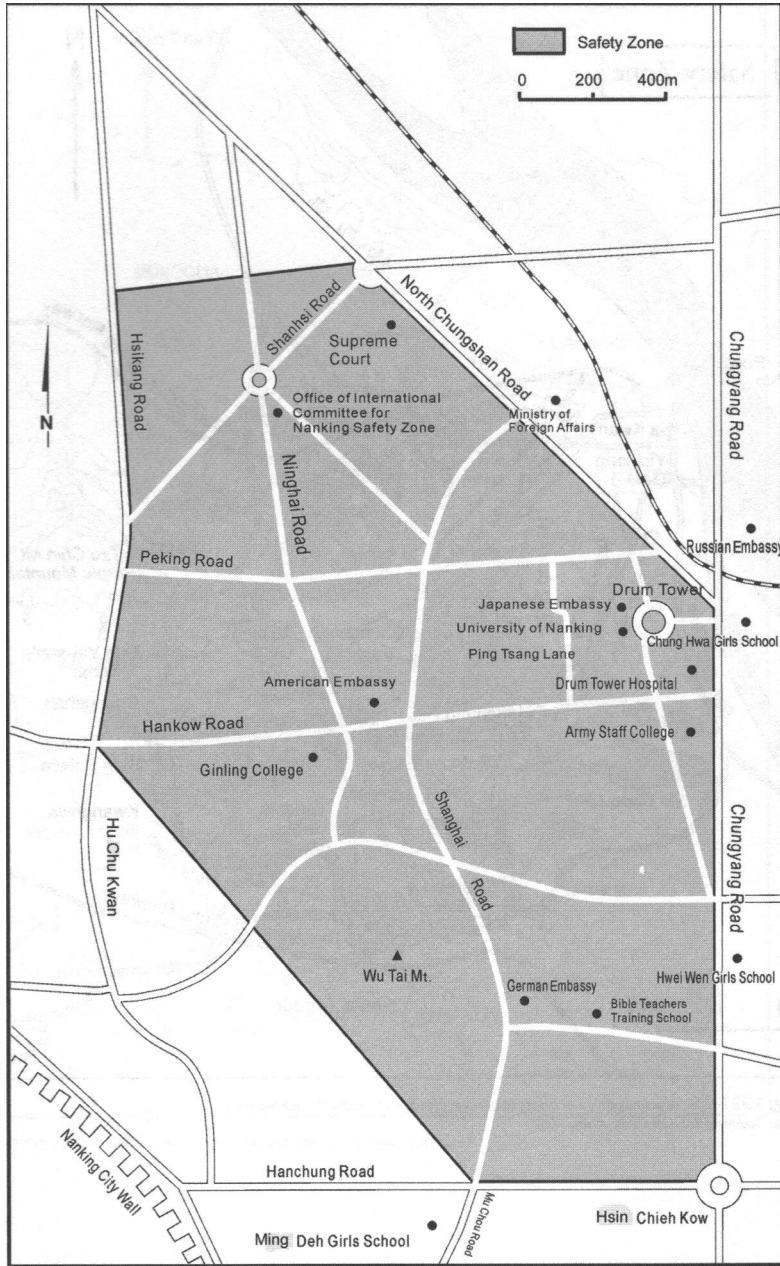
They Were in Nanjing: The Nanjing Massacre Witnessed by American and British Nationals by Suping Lu published by Hong Kong University Press, P.43-57

Appendix I: Location of the International Safety Zone in Nanking



Nanking, 1937-38. Reproduced from *American Goddess at the Rape of Nanking*, by Hua-ling Hu (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000).

Appendix II: Map of the International Safety Zone



Nanking Safety Zone, 1937-38. Redrawn by the Center for Studies on the Nanjing Massacre from *American Goddess at the Rape of Nanking*.

Appendix III:

Members of the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone

| Name | Nationality Occupation | Organization |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Miner Searle Bates | American, professor | University of Nanking |
| George Ashmore Fitch*, Administration Director | American, administrator | Nanking YMCA |
| <i>J.M. Hansen</i> | Danish, businessman | Texas Oil Co. |
| <i>J. Lean</i> | American, businessman | Asiatic Petroleum Co. |
| <i>Iver Mackay</i> | British, businessman | Butterfield and Swire |
| Rev. John Gillespie Magee | American, clergyman | American Church Mission |
| Rev. Wilson Plumer Mills | American, clergyman | Northern Presbyterian Mission |
| <i>P. H. Munro-Faure</i> | British, businessman | Asiatic Petroleum Co. |
| <i>J.V. Pickering</i> | American, businessman | Standard-Vacuum Co. |
| John Rabe, Chairman | German, businessman | Siemens Co. |
| Charles Riggs | American, professor | University of Nanking |
| <i>P.R. Shields</i> | British, businessman | International Export Co. |
| <i>G. Schultze-Pantin</i> | German, businessman | Shingming Trading Co. |
| Lewis Strong Casey Smythe, Secretary | American, professor | University of Nanking |
| Eduard Sperling | German, businessman | Shanghai Insurance Co. |
| Clifford Sharp Trimmer | American, doctor | Kulou [Drum Tower, University of Nanking] Hospital |
| Xu Chuan-yin [Hsu Chuan-ying]* | Chinese | Vice-President, Nanking Branch of the Red Swastika Society** |

* not original members of the International Committee

** a Chinese philanthropic society similar to the Red Cross

Names in *italics* left Nanking in early December 1937 before the fall of the city.

Source: P11-18, *They Were in Nanjing: The Nanjing Massacre Witnessed by American and British Nationals* by Suping Lu published by Hong Kong University Press

P xiii *Terror in Minnie Vautrin's Nanjing: Diaries and Correspondence, 1937-38* edited by Suping Lu, published by University of Illinois Press (2008)

Appendix IV:

Members of The International Red Cross Committee of Nanking

| Name | Nationality Occupation | Organization |
|---|-------------------------------|---|
| Miner Searle Bates | American, professor | University of Nanking |
| Rev. Ernest Herman Forster, Secretary | American, clergyman | American Church Mission |
| Christian Kröger, Treasurer | German, businessman | Carlowitz of Nanking |
| Li Chuin-nan [Li Chun-nan], Vice- Chairman | Chinese | Chinese Red Cross Society of Nanking |
| Lowe, Walter, Vice-Chairman | Chinese | |
| Rev. John Gillespie Magee, Chairman | American, clergyman | American Church Mission |
| Rev. Wilson Plumer Mills | American, clergyman | American Church Mission |
| Rev. James Henry McCallum | American, clergyman | United Christian Missionary Society |
| <i>P. H. Munro-Faure</i> | British, businessman | Asiatic Petroleum Co. |
| Nicolai [Cola] Podshivloff | White Russian, businessman | Sandgren's Electrical Shop |
| John Rabe | German businessman | Siemens Co. |
| Rev. Shen Yu-shu | Chinese, clergyman | |
| Lewis Strong Casey Smythe | American, professor | University of Nanking |
| Clifford Sharp Trimmer | American, doctor | Kulou [Drum Tower, University of Nanking] Hospital |
| Mary Twinem [Mary Dorothy Fine] | American-Chinese, teacher | University of Nanking |
| Minnie Vautrin | American, administrator | Ginling College |
| Robert Ory Wilson | American, doctor | Kulou Hospital |

Names in *italics* left Nanking in early December 1937 before the fall of the city.

Source: P11-18, *They Were in Nanjing: The Nanjing Massacre Witnessed by American and British Nationals* by Suping Lu published by Hong Kong University Press