

Testimony of XU Jiaxie

(XU Jiaxie: victim of the WWII Japan's germ warfare in Quzhou, Zhejiang, China)

The Japanese imperialists' invasion of my country led to the death of 35 million of my countrymen, causing property losses of US\$600 billion. The Japanese devils committed all sorts of evil deeds in Mainland China, including murder, arson, rape and looting. At the end of June 1944, in a small village call Shitangbei in Qu County, I saw with my own eyes, the killing of 73 innocent people by the Japanese devils. In 1942, I also witnessed the raping of four girls, aged 11 to 12 years old, by 4 Japanese soldiers. In addition, a girl who was one year older than me was gang raped by more than 10 Japanese soldiers. In my hometown of about a thousand households, 60 percent of them were burned down. The vicious Japanese soldiers even defecated and urinated into the cooked food of Chinese people.

I would like to quote from Mr Qiu Mingxuan's book, "Evidences of Crime": "At 9 o'clock on October 4th, 1940, a plane from the invading Japanese army dropped down fleas carrying plague and cholera pathogens, small paper packages containing wheat grains, soy beans and maize as well as propaganda material and other foods along the west side of Quzhou city. After that, Quzhou experienced an unprecedented outbreak of epidemic. According to statistics of epidemic control agencies of the time, between October 1940 and August 1945, the Japanese army repeatedly planted disease-causing bacteria in various parts of Quzhou, causing widespread epidemic. By the end of 1948, 300,000 people fell ill, and 50,000 people died." My family and I are among these 300,000 victims.

Now let me tell you the experience of my family and me. It was 61 years ago, in the summer of 1942; I was only 14 years old and had just graduated from elementary school. My home is located at a town called Zhangtan, a terminal on the Qu River. My family ran a small shop selling cigarettes and alcoholic beverages. When the Japanese devils came, because we were not rich we could only escape on a raft, braving strong currents of the river, to hide in a village called Chinzongyuen, about 4 kilometers from my home. Chinzongyuen was one of a six villages on a sandbar of the river. The adults naively thought that the place was difficult to access for the Japanese devils and we were safer there. The Japanese devils occupied Quzhou on June 6th, 1942. About ten days later, the Japanese devils also arrived at the sandbar. It was in the afternoon when suddenly we heard the noise of gunshots in the next village. The Japanese devils were looting, killing, burning and raping women. There was chaos in the village. After that attack, the Japanese devils came back to the sandbar many times, committing numerous atrocities and even had some of their soldiers stationed in one of the villages. I was seized by them twice. One time I was suffering from a high fever, and was ordered to gather together with a lot of other children and old women of the village at the ancestral temple. I was lying on the floor with my grandma sitting beside me. My grandma was begging for my release and told them that I was sick. But the Japanese devil raised a club wanting to hit her. Because I had just witnessed the beating of grandmas of four 11 or 12 years old girls who were being dragged away by 4 Japanese devils and raped, I reluctantly decided to go with them. After several torturous experiences like that, we started fleeing and hiding every time the Japanese devils came to the sandbar. During the daytime, my family members scattered out. Sometimes we would lay low in the rice field while a platoon of Japanese devils passed by on the road. Sometimes we hid in dried up ditches, sometimes in the peach orchards, sometimes hiding inside the bran piles at the water mills. During the night, five of us (my brother, my baby sister, my parents and I) would stay near a graveyard, sharing and wrapping ourselves with a quilt and had to sleep outdoors. This occurred two or three times. At that time, I felt itchy all over but I did not pay too much attention because we were too busy fleeing for our lives.

Towards end of August 1942, the Japanese devils retreated to the Jinlan area, so we could finally return home to Zhangtan. In September, four members of my family fell ill. Grandfather who had stayed behind at home and my mother suffered from festering boils, their whole bodies were swollen up. My three-year-old baby sister had two egg-sized festering holes on both sides of her forehead. I was suffering from malaria, scabies, and festering legs. Due to the invasion by the Japanese devils, my family and thousands of other households were devastated financially. We only had enough money to seek doctor's help for my mother and my sister. But my sister's fragile body could not stand the torture caused by the germ warfare of the Japanese devils. This bright

and lovely girl finally passed away at the end of October. She was only 20 months old. Several days later, my grandfather also died.

As for me, starting from September 1942, my whole body was covered with scabies and I had to fight malaria. Several days later, I felt a strong itchiness on my right ankle. A small red patch gradually developed into a blister. When the blister broke open, it turned into a rotting hole. The rotting flesh oozed out smelly liquid and was attracting flies; even chickens came to peck at it when I sat down. At one time, a peasant hawker accidentally bumped my right leg when he was putting down loaded baskets from his shoulder. It caused the wound to bleed profusely and it hurt so much that I cried for half a day. A few days later, my left leg also started to fester, causing me even more trouble.

Due to the economic difficulties we were facing, my family had no money to send me to school. In February 1943 I started working as an apprentice at a Chinese medicine shop in the mountain area. At that time I received advice from a kind person, who told me that applying the Blood Scorpion medication available in the shop would be good for my rotten legs. Behind my employer's back, I started applying the medication on my legs. After a year, my left leg and my scabies were healed. My right leg was still festering, and blackened by the disease. In August or September of 1945, the war of resistance against invasion was won and the Japanese devils finally surrendered; and I was begging, in tears, for a chance to go to school.

I started my junior high school at the age of 17. In school, I was called the "rotten legs devil". In the dormitory, I could only sleep by the corner. My schoolmates were afraid of getting close to me. Physical education class was a drag. My feet hurt, I could not run, I could not jump and I could not play any ball games. The only thing I could do was to hide myself in the classroom. I failed the physical education examination. When I wanted to apply for university after my graduation from high school, I could not pass the physical examination. Not until 1981-1983, did I get the chance to study part-time at the Open University.

It was the tradition for a man to get married in his twenties, but no woman showed any interest in me once they saw my rotten legs. I did not have the chance to date until I was 28 years old. She was 8 years younger than me, pretty, innocent, kind and hard working. She has spent 40 years of hardship with me. She is not only my life long companion, but also my home-stay nurse and doctor.

The Japanese military's germs were extremely toxic, they have infiltrated deep into my body and have been attacking my body repeatedly in the last few decades. It is difficult to cure the chronic disease. Higher dosage of medication such as penicillin would cause an allergic reaction, sometimes it was even life threatening.

My legs are good for neither standing nor sitting. When sitting for too long, the festering places begin to hurt a lot and I can hardly rise up from my sitting position. When standing too long, my legs turn numb and swollen and can hardly move. My legs are good for neither hot weather nor cold weather. In the summer I cannot wear shorts. People just pinch their nose when they see my legs. Bathing is also difficult because when soaked in water for too long, the festering will spread. In winter, the lower part of my legs turns black, and it is unbearably itchy. When sleeping at night, I feel numb from my right hip down to the toes. It hurts so much that sometimes it is difficult to sleep.

In 1988, I spent half a year in a Hengzhou hospital. My wife applied for an early retirement to spend more time caring me. She washed my legs and changed my dressings, playing a role that could not be replaced by nurses or doctors. After 1988, my feet turned much better, the hole shrunk from the size of an egg to that of a soybean.

I have retired for 14 years now. During this period, there were two pretty serious incidents. In 1993 - 94, I found 11 festering holes on my right leg. The larger ones were as big as an egg. The smaller ones were as big as the thumb. Yellow liquid oozed from the rotting holes. I could not walk. I recovered gradually after half a year of laser and medical treatment, but for those rotting holes that have chronic, they still would not heal over.

The second incident happened on April 1998. There were two festering holes on my right leg and I could not get out of bed. They rushed me to the Municipal People's Hospital overnight for an operation. Until now, there is still a thumb size hole on my right leg. The muscles of my legs are more or less dead, with little blood circulation. The skin is black. My two legs are deformed. The right leg is thinner and longer than the left leg. I walk with a limp. It is a life long handicap.

Last year, American experts Sheldon Harris, Michael Franzblau and Martin Furmanski conducted an investigation in Quzhou. They were of the opinion that the rotten legs disease found around Quzhou was caused by anthrax, the direct result of germ warfare of the Japanese imperialists. Many of my countrymen in Quzhou and Jinhua area were the victims of this tragic event. Before I came, the parent of a former student heard that I am attending this conference. He took the time to visit me, telling me of his 61 years of suffering. His name is Sangyu Zhu, a carpenter. He suffered from rotten legs since September 1942. He seeks help from many hospitals in Beijing, Shanghai and Hengzhou. Twice he received skin grafts, but the festering continues. He was hospitalized again two months ago. He asked me to expose the crime of germ warfare by the Japanese military.

We demand strongly that the Japanese Government reveal the truth about anthrax and provide treatment to our rotten legs as well as economic compensation. The Japanese militarists' war of aggression and the inhuman germ warfare in Asia and China cannot be denied. The people of Quzhou were victimized by the Japan's germ warfare. We will never forget this tragic chapter of history. We will also stand firm in our opposition to any germ warfare and firmly uphold peace for the world.

Our generation are all seniors now, in their 70s. I am 75 years old. Nobody can avoid the cycle of birth and death, but we have to tell our next generation this chapter of history that was written in blood and death, so that they will not forget. We must seek justice from Japan. We must face the future with lessons learnt from history and pass the lessons onto our children.

It is also our hope that the people of Japan, especially the younger generations, would treasure this chapter of history, and maintain the Sino-Japanese friendship, generation after generation. From the media we learnt that the Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi visited the Yasukuni Shrine again on Jan 14th. At this, we express our great anger. He has hurt our feelings profoundly. I register my strongest protest here.