



## **Miner Searle Bates**

**1897-1978**

**USA**

Miner Searle Bates was born May 28, 1897 in Newark, Ohio. His father was a minister who became president of Hiram College. Bates received his B.A. from Hiram College in Hiram, Ohio 1916 and won a Rhodes scholarship to study at Oxford University in England. With the United States entering World War I, he joined YMCA and served in Mesopotamia until end of the war. He returned to Oxford to finish his B.A. and did some graduate work in 1920. In the summer of that year, he was commissioned as a missionary to teach at the University of Nanking by the United Christian Missionary Society. In 1923, he married Lilliath Robbins, a Canadian teaching at Ginling College. In 1934-35, Bates was a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow studying Japanese and Russian at Harvard University. He received a Ph.D. in Chinese history from Yale University in 1935.

When the Nanking Massacre occurred, Dr. Bates was alone in Nanking, as his wife and two children were staying in Japan. He plunged himself into the work of the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone, protecting Chinese civilians from being murdered and raped by the Japanese army, and saving thousands of them from starvation. To enhance his influence in dealing with the Japanese, the directors of the University of Nanking appointed him Vice President of the University on January 13, 1938. Only two days after the fall of Nanking, Bates lodged his first protest against Japanese atrocities with the Japanese Embassy and continued to do so throughout the Nanking Massacre.

Except for seven brief trips to Japan and one to Spain to attend conferences, Bates remained in Nanking from 1937 to 1941, fearlessly challenging the activities of the Japanese authorities, especially narcotics trafficking. On behalf of the Nanking International Relief Committee, he wrote two pamphlets: one titled "Crop Investigation in Nanking Area" and the other "The Nanking Population," both of which are crucial to our understanding of the Nanking Massacre. After the war, he was summoned as a witness at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East and subsequent trials for Japanese war criminals in China.

**Excerpt from Miner Searle Bates' Letter to the Japanese Embassy  
December 15, 1937**

In our new Library Building, where we are taking care of 1500 common people, four women were raped on the property; two were carried off and released after being raped; three were carried off and not returned; one was carried off but released by your Military Police near the Embassy. These acts of soldiers have brought great pain and fear to these families, to their neighbours and to all Chinese in this part of the city. More than a hundred similar cases in other parts of the Safety Zone have been reported to me this morning. They are not my business now, but I mention them to show that this University problem next door to you is only a sample of the great misery of robbery and rape carried on by soldiers among the people.

**Excerpt from Miner Searle Bates' Letter to the Japanese Embassy  
December 27, 1937**

Beginning more than a week ago, we were promised by you that within a few days order would be restored by replacement of troops, resumption of regular discipline, increase of military police, and so forth. Yet shameful disorder continues, and we see no serious effort to stop it. Let me give a few examples from University property [the University of Nanking was within the Zone] [...]

(2) Last night between eleven and twelve o'clock, a motorcar with three Japanese military men came to the main University gate, claiming that they were sent by headquarters to inspect. They forcibly prevented our watchman from giving an alarm, and kept him with them while they found and raped three girls, one of whom is only eleven years old. One of the girls they took away with them.

(3) Stray soldiers continue to seize men to work for them, causing much fear and unnecessary inconvenience. For example, a soldier insisted on taking a worker from the Hospital yesterday; and several of our own servants and watchmen have been taken.

(4) Several of our residences are entered daily by soldiers looking for women, food, and other articles. Two houses within one hour this morning.

(5) [...] Yesterday seven different times there came groups of three or four soldiers, taking clothes, food and money from those who have some left after previous lootings of the same type. They raped seven women, including a girl of twelve. In the night larger groups of twelve or fourteen soldiers came four times and raped twenty women [...]

*Source: American Missionary Eyewitnesses to the Nanking Massacre, 1937-1938. Yale Divinity School Library Occasional Publication No. 9, 1997.*