

Lesson Two

NANKING MASSACRE AND OTHER ATROCITIES

Approximate Time

60 minutes

Materials

- *Handout 2.1* (Timeline of Origins and Events of the Asia-Pacific War)
- *Handout 2.2* (Rape of Nanking and Other Atrocities)

Overview

Students investigate war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Japanese Imperial Army to identify which international agreements were breached. Students express personal views about crimes committed during times of war.

Teaching/Learning Strategies

We strongly recommend that the teacher give students the following information before having them read the articles in *Handout 2.1* (Rape of Nanking and Other Atrocities)

“The articles you will be reading contain some graphic details about rape, murder and other acts of brutality. If you feel uncomfortable reading this material, please feel free to talk to me or even leave the room if necessary.”

1. Students read about war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Japanese Imperial army to identify which international agreements were breached.
 - Provide students with *Handout 2.1* (Timeline of Origins and Events of the Asia-Pacific War) to use as a reference in this and the other lessons in this resource.
 - Provide students with *Handout 2.2* (Rape of Nanking and Other Atrocities). Have students read the articles and make a list of the crimes committed by the Japanese Imperial Army (e.g., biological warfare, mistreatment of POWs, sexual enslavement, forced labour, murder).
 - Then ask students to identify for each case which international agreements were breached.
2. Students express personal views about crimes committed during times of war.
 - Organize students into discussion groups.

- Work with students to decide on the criteria they should demonstrate in their discussions. For example:
 - communicates effectively and respects opinions of others
 - clearly identifies and defines problems and issues of atrocities
 - refers to material presented to support personal views
 - shows willingness to reassess a position as necessary if presented with new information
 - identifies human rights violations and their implications both in a historical sense and using contemporary standards of behaviour
- Present the groups with questions such as the following to encourage them to express their personal views about atrocities committed during times of war.
 - What concerned you the most about the atrocities described in the articles? Explain your reasons.
 - How did those who set up the International Safety Zone try to help the people of Nanking? What possible risks did the members of the Safety Zone face? How do you think you would react in this situation?
 - Think about all of the atrocities described. What would allow such atrocities to happen?
 - What lessons can be learned from the study of these historical events?

TIMELINE OF ORIGINS AND EVENTS OF THE ASIA-PACIFIC WAR

HANDOUT 2.1

- 1894** The first Sino-Japanese War begins.
- 1895** Shimonoseki Treaty. After defeat in the Sino-Japanese War, China unwillingly cedes Taiwan to Japan and pays a financial indemnity.
- 1902** The Anglo-Japanese Alliance is signed. Japan and Great Britain agree to assist one another in safeguarding their respective interests in Asia. The Alliance is renewed in 1905 and 1911.
- 1905** Upon Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, the US mediates the Treaty of Portsmouth. The treaty forces Russia to give up its concession in southern Manchuria to Japan and recognizes Japan as the dominant power in Korea.
- China unwillingly signs another treaty with Japan, recognizing Japan's imperialistic rights in southern Manchuria.
- After the Treaty of Portsmouth, the Taft-Katsura memorandum is signed between Japan and the US. This agreement recognizes Japan's rights in Korea, and in return, Japan recognizes US control of the Philippines.
- 1907** Some major conventions on the laws of war are made in the **Hague Conference of 1907**, including the Hague IV - Laws and Customs of War on Land.
- 1910** Japan's "official" annexation of Korea.
- 1914** World War I starts.
- Japan as one of the Allied countries against Germany occupies Shantung Peninsula of China, and assumes the imperial rights of Germany in that region.
- 1926** Hirohito becomes Emperor of Japan.
- 1929** The Geneva Convention Relating to Prisoners of War is made.
- 1931** The Japanese army launches a full-scale attack on Manchuria.
- 1932** The Japanese army seizes Manchuria and establishes the puppet state of Manchukuo.
- Japan establishes biological warfare units in Japan and China.

- 1933** The League of Nations declares that Manchukuo is not a legitimate state and calls for the withdrawal of Japanese troops.
- Japan withdraws from the League in protest.
- Expanding from Manchuria, the Japanese army gains control of much of North China.
- 1937** “Marco Polo Bridge Incident”. Japan’s full-scale invasion of China begins.
- Peking (now Beijing) and Shanghai are captured.
- When Nanking (now Nanjing), the capital falls, the Japanese military commits the Nanking Massacre.
- The military sexual slavery system for the Japanese military expands rapidly after the Nanking Massacre.
- 1939** World War II starts in Europe.
- 1940** Japan moves into northern Indo-China (now Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia).
- Japan joins the Axis Alliance with Germany and Italy.
- 1941** Tojo Hideki becomes Prime Minister of Japan.
- Japan raids Pearl Harbor on December 7. British Malaya and Hong Kong are simultaneously attacked. The Pacific phase of World War II begins
- Hong Kong falls on December 25. Of the 1,975 Canadian soldiers sent to defend Hong Kong, 290 are killed in action and 1,685 are captured and interned by the Japanese military. 267 die in internment.
- 1942** Forced relocation and internment of Japanese Americans in the United States and Japanese Canadians in Canada begin.
- By May 1942, Japan has gained control over wide territories including Hong Kong, Philippines, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Burma (now Myanmar), Malaya (now Singapore and Malaysia), Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia), and many other Pacific islands.

- 1945** The first atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima on 6 August.
- The Soviet Union declares war on Japan on 8 August.
- The second atomic bomb is dropped on Nagasaki on 9 August.
- Japan surrenders on 15 August. World War II ends.
- 1946** The Charter of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East is formulated and the Tribunal is set up to prosecute instigators of the War.
- 1951** The San Francisco Peace Treaty is signed between Japan and 48 other nations. Some states are not parties to the Treaty, including Burma, China, India, Korea and the Soviet Union.

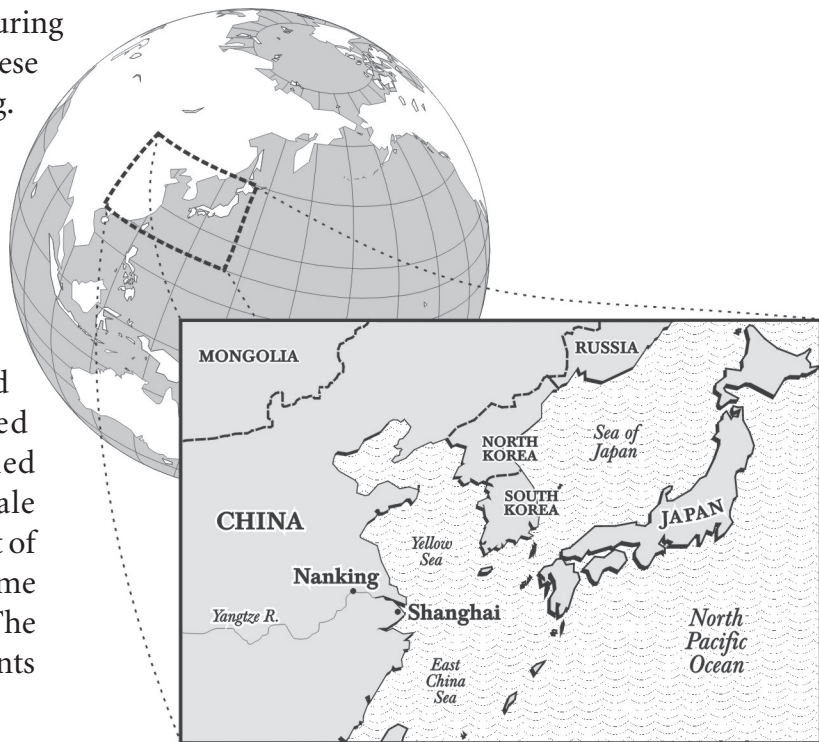


Japanese military aggression against China and other Asian countries before and during the Second World War is remembered for the cruelty and brutality of Japan's imperial forces. Besides soldiers in the armies that fought Japan, the victims included an untold number of civilians of China, Korea, the Philippines, Japan, other southeast Asian countries, as well as civilians from North America and Europe located in Asia when war was declared. Millions died and millions more were held under brutal military rule. Civilians and prisoners of war faced some of the worst atrocities, including the sexual slavery suffered by "comfort women," slave labour, live human medical experiments, and the use of chemical and biological weapons.

The Rape of Nanking

In 1928, the Chinese government moved the capital of China to Nanking. The city normally held about 250,000 people, but by the mid-1930s its population had swollen to more than one million. Many of them were refugees, fleeing from the Japanese armies that had invaded China in 1931.

On November 11, 1937, after securing control of Shanghai, the Japanese army advanced towards Nanking. In December 1937, Japanese troops invaded the city of Nanking. Much of the city was destroyed by bombing raids. The Japanese imperial forces marched thousands of Chinese civilians into the countryside and murdered them; they raped women, and looted and burned people's homes. The large-scale massacre and gross mistreatment of Chinese people at Nanking became known as the Rape of Nanking. The following timeline highlights events related to the massacre.

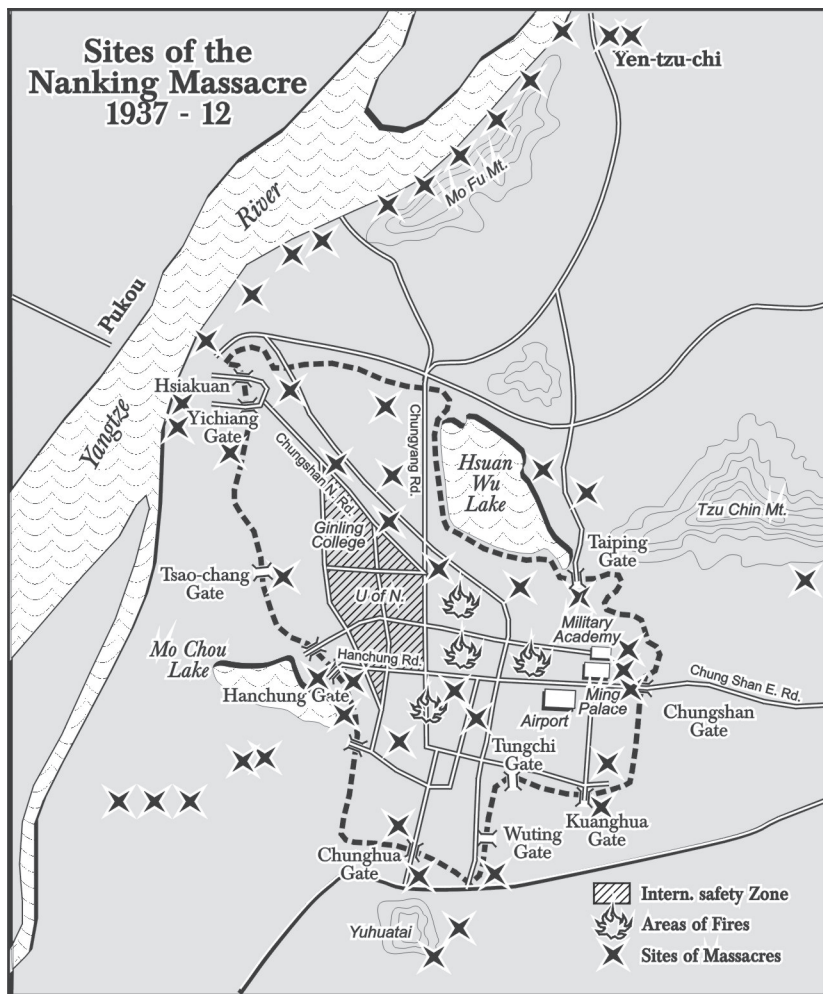


12 November 1937 Japanese troops capture Shanghai after 3 months of fierce fighting. The march towards Nanking (now Nanjing) begins and the "Three-all" policy ("Loot all, kill all, burn all") is used to terrorize civilians along the advancing route.

- 22 November 1937** The International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone is organized by a group of foreigners to shelter Chinese refugees.
- 12 December 1937** Chinese soldiers are ordered to withdraw from Nanking.
- 13 December 1937** Japanese troops capture Nanking.
- 14 December 1937** The International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone lodges the first protest letter against Japanese atrocities with the Japanese Embassy.
- 19 February 1938** The last of the 69 protest letters against Japanese atrocities is sent by the Safety Zone Committee to the Japanese Embassy and the Committee is renamed as the Nanking International Relief Committee.

Many eyewitness accounts of the Nanking Massacre were provided by Chinese civilian survivors and western nationals living in Nanking at the time. The number of Chinese killed in the massacre has been subject to much debate. The Encyclopedia Britannica (1999-2000 Britannica.com) states that estimates of the number of Chinese killed ranges from 100,000 to more than 300,000.

Several accounts of the Nanking Massacre come from the group of 25 foreigners (mostly American, but also some German, Danish, and Russian people) who had established a neutral area called the International Safety Zone to shelter the Chinese refugees whose lives had been threatened and homes destroyed by the invading Japanese soldiers. When Nanking fell, the Zone housed over 250,000 refugees. The committee members of the Zone found ways to provide these refugees with the basic needs of food, shelter, and medical care.



Miner Searle Bates

Dr. Miner Searle Bates was a missionary and professor of history at the University of Nanking. He was also an organizing member of the Nanking International Safety Zone Committee.

Only two days after the fall of Nanking, Bates lodged his first protest letter to the Japanese Embassy and continued to do so throughout the massacre at Nanking. Following is the letter he wrote 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]....

Last night between eleven and twelve o'clock, a motor car 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.

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.

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

...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.

The life of the whole people is filled with suffering and fear — all caused by soldiers. Your officers have promised them protection, but the soldiers every day injure hundreds of persons most seriously. A few policemen help certain places, and we are grateful for them. But that does not bring peace and order. Often it merely shifts the bad acts of the soldiers to nearby buildings where there are no policemen....

While I have been writing this letter, a soldier has forcibly taken a woman from one of our teachers' houses, and with his revolver refused to let an American enter. Is this order?

Many people now want to return to their homes, but they dare not because of rape, robbery, and seizure of men continuing every day and night. Only serious efforts to

enforce orders, using many police and real punishments will be of any use. In several places the situation is a little better, but it is still disgraceful after two weeks of army terrorism. More than promises is now needed.

With respectful distress and anxiety,

(Published in *American Missionary Eyewitnesses to the Nanking Massacre, 1937-38*, Edited by Martha Lund Smalley, Yale Divinity School Library, Occasional Publication No. 9, 1997, pp. 31-32.)

John Rabe

John Rabe was a German businessman and leader of the Nazi Party in Nanking. He saved so many lives during the Nanking Massacre that some refer to him as the “Oskar Schindler of China.” When Rabe returned to Germany, he wrote to Adolf Hitler, telling him what he had witnessed in Nanking, and hoped that Hitler could prevent further atrocities by the Japanese military. Two days later, the Gestapo arrested him. Fortunately, he was released, but he was warned never to talk publicly or publish anything about the events taking place in Nanking. Following is an excerpt from the diary of John Rabe.

December 16, 1937

All the shelling and bombing we have thus far experienced are nothing in comparison to the terror that we are going through now. There is not a single shop outside our Zone that has not been looted, and now pillaging, rape, murder, and mayhem are occurring inside the Zone as well. There is not a vacant house, whether with or without a foreign flag, that has not been broken into and looted ...

No Chinese even dares set foot outside his house! When the gates to my garden are opened to let my car leave the grounds — where I have already taken in over a hundred of the poorest refugees — women and children on the street outside kneel and bang their heads against the ground, pleading to be allowed to camp on my garden grounds. You simply cannot conceive of the misery.

I’ve just heard that hundreds more disarmed Chinese soldiers have been led out of our Zone to be shot, including 50 of our police who are to be executed for letting soldiers in.

The road to Hsiakwan is nothing but a field of corpses strewn with the remains of military equipment. . . There are piles of corpses outside the gate . . . It may be that the disarmed Chinese will be forced to do the job before they’re killed. We Europeans are all paralyzed with horror. There are executions everywhere, some are being carried out with machine guns outside the barracks of the War Ministry.

(Published in *The Good Man of Nanking: The Diaries of John Rabe*, Edited by Erwin Wickert, Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1998, p. 98-102.)

Sexual Slavery

An estimated 200,000 women from Korea, the Philippines, China, Burma, Indonesia and other Japanese occupied territories were forced by the Japanese military forces to work in brothels. The Japanese soldiers referred to them as “comfort women”. Only about 30% of the women survived the war. Following is the story of a former “comfort woman” who is now living in North Korea.

Testimony of Kim Young-shil

“I am Kim Young-shil. I was born on October 23, 1923 and was raised in Yang-gang-do, Bocheon County.

It was 1941. One day I encountered a well-dressed man in western clothes. He asked me if I wanted to have a good job. Thinking that any job would be better than working as a maid, I accepted his offer and followed him to where there were already eight other girls ahead of me. They were all about 14 or 15 years old.

So we all got on a truck, and after about 30 minutes’ ride, we arrived at a place where there were many Japanese soldiers. From there we were taken north near the border of China and Russia. There was a huge military camp, and many girls had already arrived before us. A soldier came up to me and put a name tag on my chest. It had a Japanese name “Eiko” written on it. He then told me, “From now on, you must not speak Korean. If you do, we will kill you. Now, your name is Eiko.”

The officer who took us to the camp wore a good-looking uniform with a three-star insignia. He came into my room that night. Scared, I jumped up. He sat down, laid his sword on the floor, and proceeded to take off his clothes. Why was he doing this? Where is my job? I started to cry. He shouted, “You obey my orders. I will kill you if you don’t.” He then held me down and raped me. I was a virgin until that moment.

From the following day on, I was forced to service sex to ten to 20 soldiers every day, and 40 to 50 on Sundays. We were exhausted, weakened, and some of us could not even eat meals. We were in the state of “half-dead.” Some girls became really sick and could not recover from the ordeal. The soldiers took them away. We did not know what happened to them but we never saw them again. A new batch of girls arrived to replace the missing ones, like we did.

There was a girl next to my cubicle. She was younger than I, and her Japanese name was Tokiko. One day an officer overheard her speaking to me and accused her of speaking Korean. He dragged her out to a field and ordered all of us to come out there. We all obeyed. He said, “This girl spoke Korean. So she must die. You will be killed if you do too. Now, watch how she dies.” He drew his sword. Horrified, I closed my eyes and turned my face away. When I opened my eyes, I saw her severed head on the ground.

On Sundays we were made especially busy. Soldiers stood in line in front of our cubicles. ...

I was totally exhausted. I could keep neither my sense of humiliation nor my dignity. I felt like a living corpse. When soldiers came to my room and did it to me one after another, it was done to a lifeless body. Again. And again. And again....”

(Excerpted from *Comfort Women Speak* edited by Sangmie Choi Schellstede, published by Holmes and Meier, pp. 48 –51)

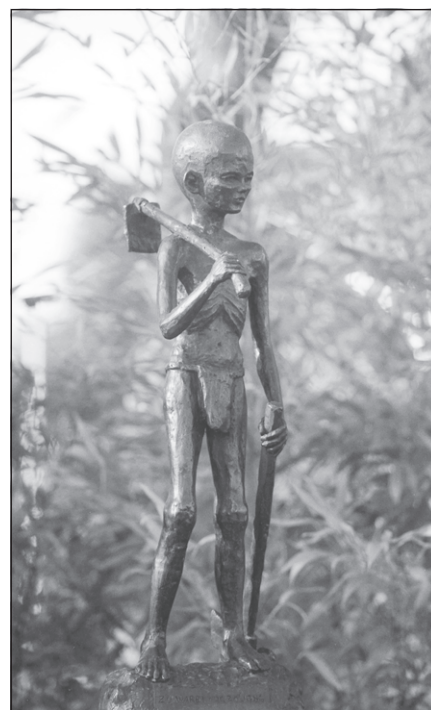
Other Atrocities

Japan’s government sponsored experiments into biological and chemical warfare. Under the leadership of Ishii Shiro, Unit 731 and other similar units performed tests on living humans. For example they injected victims with germs to see the effects and to test the effectiveness of vaccinations. They performed operations on living humans without the use of anaesthetic. To keep their activities secret, the victims of medical experiments were then killed. These units killed thousands of POWs and civilians, mainly from China. Germ-filled bombs produced by these units were dropped on Chinese cities. Chemical weapons were mass-produced in Japan and used widely. It is estimated that even today between 600,000 and 2,000,000 shells filled with poisonous chemicals remain buried in China.

Over 61,000 Allied POWs and 250,000 Asian civilians (mainly Chinese, Malay, Tamil and Burmese) were used as slave labourers to build the 415 kilometre-long Burma-Thailand Railway, the infamous “Death Railway.” It is estimated that half of the Asian labourers, and one-fifth of the Allied POWs, perished on the railroad.

Japanese private corporations also relied on slave labourers during the War. An example is Kajima Corporation, a well-known Japanese company. In 1944, a group of 986 Chinese were taken to Japan and forced to work in Kajima’s mining and construction site at Hanaoka in northeast Honshu. More than 400 of them died from torture, starvation, and the horrifying conditions of Kajima’s slave camp.

After Japanese Imperial Forces captured Indonesia (the Dutch East Indies) in March 1942, over 40,000 Dutch soldiers and 100,000 Dutch civilians, including women and children, were interned. As many as 14,000 Dutch civilians died in captivity.



In Indonesia in 1944, all boys between the ages of 10 and 14 were imprisoned with their mothers by the Japanese military. The children were forced to do hard labor. This statue represents one of the imprisoned children.