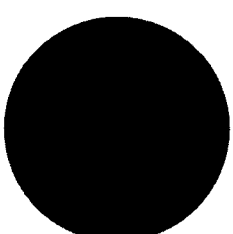


THE
RAPE
OF
NANKING



THE FORGOTTEN HOLOCAUST OF WORLD WAR II

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(redone)

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INTRODUCTION

THE CHRONICLE of humankind's cruelty to fellow humans is a long and sorry tale. But if it is true that even in such horror tales there are degrees of ruthlessness, then few atrocities in world history compare in intensity and scale to the Rape of Nanking during World War II.

Americans think of World War II as beginning on December 7, 1941, when Japanese carrier-based airplanes attacked Pearl Harbor. Europeans date it from September 1, 1939, and the blitzkrieg assault on Poland by Hitler's Luftwaffe and Panzer divisions. Africans see an even earlier beginning, the invasion of Abyssinia by Mussolini in 1935. Yet Asians must trace the war's beginnings all the way back to Japan's first steps toward the military domination of East Asia—the occupation of Manchuria in 1931.

Just as Hitler's Germany would do half a decade later, Japan used a highly developed military machine and a master-race mentality

to set about establishing its right to rule its neighbors. Manchuria fell quickly to the Japanese, who established their government of Manchukuo, ostensibly under their puppet, the deposed emperor of China, but in fact run by the Japanese military. Four years later, in 1935, parts of Chahar and Hopeh were occupied; in 1937 Peking, Tientsin, Shanghai, and finally Nanking fell. The decade of the thirties was a hard one for China; indeed, the last Japanese would not be routed from Chinese soil until the end of World War II in 1945.

No doubt, those fourteen years of domination by the Japanese military were marked by countless incidents of almost indescribable ruthlessness. We will never know everything that happened in the many cities and small villages that found themselves prostrate beneath the boot of this conquering force. Ironically, we do know the story of Nanking because the some foreigners witnessed the horror and sent word to the outside world at the time, and some Chinese survived as eyewitnesses. If one event can be held up as an example of the unmitigated evil lying just below the surface of unbridled military adventurism, that moment is the Rape of Nanking. This book is its story.

The broad details of the Rape are, except among the Japanese, not in dispute. In November 1937, after their successful invasion of Shanghai, the Japanese launched a massive attack on the newly established capital of the Republic of China. When the city fell on December 13, 1937, Japanese soldiers began an orgy of cruelty seldom if ever matched in world history. Tens of thousands of young men were rounded up and herded to the outer areas of the city, where they were mowed down by machine guns, used for bayonet practice, or soaked with gasoline and burned alive. For months the streets of the city were heaped with corpses and reeked with the stench of rotting human flesh. Years later experts at the International Military Tribunal of the Far East (IMTFE) estimated that more than 260,000 noncombatants died at the hands of Japanese soldiers at Nanking in late 1937 and early 1938, though some experts have placed the figure at well over 350,000.

This book provides only the barest summary of the cruel

and barbaric acts committed by the Japanese in the city, for its aim is not to establish a quantitative record to qualify the event as one of the great evil deeds of history, but to understand the event so that lessons can be learned and warnings sounded. Differences in degree, however, often reflect differences in kind, and so a few statistics must be used to give the reader an idea of the scale of the massacre that took place sixty years ago in a city named Nanking.

One historian has estimated that if the dead from Nanking were to link hands, they would stretch from Nanking to the city of Hangchow, spanning a distance of some two hundred miles. Their blood would weigh twelve hundred tons, and their bodies would fill twenty-five hundred railroad cars. Stacked on top of each other, these bodies would reach the height of a seventy-four-story building.

Using numbers killed alone, the Rape of Nanking surpasses much of the worst barbarism of the ages. The Japanese outdid the Romans at Carthage (only 150,000 died in that slaughter), the Christian armies during the Spanish Inquisition, and even some of the monstrosities of Timur Lenk, who killed 100,000 prisoners at Delhi in 1398 and built two towers of skulls in Syria in 1400 and 1401.

It is certainly true that in this century, when the tools of mass murder were fully refined, Hitler killed about 6 million Jews, and Stalin more than 40 million Russians, but these deaths were brought about over some few years. In the Rape of Nanking the killing was concentrated within a few weeks.

Indeed, even by the standards of history's most destructive war, the Rape of Nanking represents one of the worst instances of mass extermination. To imagine its comparative size, we must brace ourselves for a few more statistics. The death toll of Nanking—one Chinese city alone—exceeds the number of civilian casualties of some European countries for the entire war. (Great Britain lost a total of 61,000 civilians, France lost 108,000, Belgium 101,000, and the Netherlands 242,000.) Air bombing is considered by those who reflect on these things one of the most awesome instruments of mass destruction. Yet even the worst air attacks of the war did not exceed the ravages

of Nanking. It is likely that more people died in Nanking than in the British raids on Dresden and the fire storm that followed. (The figure 225,000 was accepted internationally at the time, but more objective accounts now place the number of Dresden casualties at 60,000 dead and at least 30,000 injured.) Indeed, whether we use the most conservative number—260,000—or the highest—350,000—it is shocking to contemplate that the deaths at Nanking far exceeded the deaths from the American raids on Tokyo (an estimated 80,000–120,000 deaths) and even the combined death toll of the two atomic blasts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the end of 1945 (estimated at 140,000 and 70,000, respectively).

The Rape of Nanking should be remembered not only for the number of people slaughtered but for the cruel manner in which many met their deaths. Chinese men were used for bayonet practice and in decapitation contests. An estimated 20,000–80,000 Chinese women were raped. Many soldiers went beyond rape to disembowel women, slice off their breasts, nail them alive to walls. Fathers were forced to rape their daughters, and sons their mothers, as other family members watched. Not only did live burials, castration, the carving of organs, and the roasting of people become routine, but more diabolical tortures were practiced, such as hanging people by their tongues on iron hooks or burying people to their waists and watching them get torn apart by German shepherds. So sickening was the spectacle that even the Nazis in the city were horrified, one proclaiming the massacre to be the work of “bestial machinery.”

Yet the Rape of Nanking remains an obscure incident. Unlike the atomic explosions in Japan or the Jewish holocaust in Europe, the horrors of the massacre at Nanking remain virtually unknown to people outside Asia. The massacre remains neglected in most of the historical literature published in the United States. A thorough examination of secondary-school history textbooks in the United States revealed that only a few even mention the Rape of Nanking. And almost none of the comprehensive, or “definitive,” histories of World War II read by the American public discusses the Nanking massacre in

great detail. For instance, no photograph on the event, not even one word, appears in *The American Heritage Picture History of World War II* (1966), which for many years was the best-selling single-volume pictorial history of the war ever published. Nor can a word of the massacre be found in Winston Churchill's famous *Memoirs of the Second World War* (1959) (1,065 pages) or in Henri Michel's classic *Second World War* (1975) (947 pages). The Rape of Nanking is mentioned only twice in Gerhard Weinberg's massive *A World at Arms* (1974) (1,178 pages). Only in Robert Leckie's *Delivered from Evil: The Saga of World War II* (1987) (998 pages) did I find a single paragraph about the massacre: “Nothing the Nazis under Hitler would do to disgrace their own victories could rival the atrocities of Japanese soldiers under Gen. Iwane Matsui.”

I first learned about the Rape of Nanking when I was a little girl. The stories came from my parents, who had survived years of war and revolution before finding a serene home as professors in a midwestern American college town. They had grown up in China in the midst of World War II and after the war fled with their families, first to Taiwan and finally to the United States to study at Harvard and pursue academic careers in science. For three decades they lived peacefully in the academic community of Champaign-Urbana, Illinois, conducting research in physics and microbiology.

But they never forgot the horrors of the Sino-Japanese War, nor did they want me to forget. They particularly did not want

Throughout the book I use either pinyin or Wade-Giles for Chinese names, depending on the preference of the individual (as specified by business cards or correspondence) or the popularity of one name's transliteration over the other (for instance, “Chiang Kai-shek” instead of “Jiang Jieshi”). For Chinese and Japanese names of people, I use the traditional system of listing the surname before the given name. For cities and landmarks, I typically (but not always) use the form of romanization most commonly employed by Westerners during the era of the narrative, such as “Nanking” instead of the present-day name “Nanjing.”

me to forget the Rape of Nanking. Neither of my parents witnessed it, but as young children they had heard the stories, and these were passed down to me. The Japanese, I learned, sliced babies not just in half but in thirds and fourths, they said; the Yangtze River ran red with blood for days. Their voices quivering with outrage, my parents characterized the Great Nanking Massacre, or *Nanjing Datsusha*, as the single most diabolical incident committed by the Japanese in a war that killed more than 10 million Chinese people.

Throughout my childhood *Nanjing Datsusha* remained buried in the back of my mind as a metaphor for unspeakable evil. But the event lacked human details and human dimensions. It was also difficult to find the line between myth and history. While still in grade school I searched the local public libraries to see what I could learn about the massacre, but nothing turned up. That struck me as odd. If the Rape of Nanking was truly so gory, one of the worst episodes of human barbarism in world history, as my parents insisted, then why hadn't someone written a book about it? It did not occur to me, as a child, to pursue my research using the mammoth University of Illinois library system, and my curiosity about the matter soon slipped away.

Almost two decades elapsed before the Rape of Nanking intruded upon my life again. By this time I was married and living a quiet life as a professional author in Santa Barbara, California, when I heard from a filmmaker friend that a couple of producers on the East Coast had recently completed a documentary on the Rape of Nanking but faced trouble getting funds to distribute the film properly.

His story rekindled my interest. Soon I was on the phone talking to not just one but two producers of documentaries on the subject. The first was Shao Tzuping, a Chinese-American activist who had worked for the United Nations in New York, served as a past president of the Alliance in Memory of Victims of the Nanjing Massacre, and helped produce the videotape *Magee's Testament*. Another was Nancy Tong, an independent filmmaker who had produced and codirected with Christine Choy the documentary *In the Name of the Emperor*. Shao Tzuping and Nancy

Tong helped plug me into a network of activists, many of them first-generation Chinese Americans and Chinese Canadians who, like me, felt the need to bear witness to the event, to document and publicize it, and even to seek restitution for the atrocities of Nanking before all the surviving victims passed away. Others wanted to pass their wartime memories down to their children and grandchildren, fearful that their assimilation into North American culture might cause them to forget this important part of their historical heritage.

What strengthened much of this newly emerging activism was the Tiananmen Square massacre of 1989, which prodded Chinese communities all over the world to form networks to protest the actions of the People's Republic of China. The pro-democracy movement left behind vast, intricate webs of Internet relationships; out of this network a grassroots movement emerged to promote the truth about Nanking. In urban centers with high concentrations of Chinese—such as the San Francisco Bay Area, New York City, Los Angeles, Toronto, and Vancouver—Chinese activists organized conferences and educational campaigns to disseminate information about Japanese crimes during World War II. They exhibited films, videos, and photographs of the Nanking massacre in museums and schools, posted facts and photographs on the Internet, and even placed full-page advertisements on the subject in newspapers like the *New York Times*. Some of the activist groups were so technologically sophisticated that they could at the push of a button send messages to more than a quarter-million readers worldwide.

That the Nanking massacre of my childhood memories was not merely folk myth but accurate oral history hit me in December 1994, when I attended a conference sponsored by the Global Alliance for Preserving the History of World War II in Asia, which commemorated the victims of the Nanking atrocities. The conference was held in Cupertino, California, a San Jose suburb in the heart of Silicon Valley. In the conference hall the organizers had prepared poster-sized photographs of the Rape of Nanking—some of the most gruesome photographs I had ever seen in my life. Though I had heard so much about

the Nanking massacre as a child, nothing prepared me for these pictures—stark black-and-white images of decapitated heads, bellies ripped open, and nude women forced by their rapists into various pornographic poses, their faces contorted into unforgettable expressions of agony and shame.

In a single blinding moment I recognized the fragility of not just life but the human experience itself. We all learn about death while young. We know that any one of us could be struck by the proverbial truck or bus and be deprived of life in an instant. And unless we have certain religious beliefs, we see such a death as a senseless and unfair deprivation of life. But we also know of the respect for life and the dying process that most humans share. If you are struck by a bus, someone may steal your purse or wallet while you lie injured, but many more will come to your aid, trying to save your precious life. One person will call 911, and another will race down the street to alert a police officer on his or her beat. Someone else will take off his coat, fold it, and place it under your head, so that if these are indeed your last moments of life you will die in the small but real comfort of knowing that someone cared about you. The pictures up on that wall in Cupertino illustrated that not just one person but hundreds of thousands could have their lives extinguished, die at the whim of others, and the next day their deaths would be meaningless. But even more telling was that those who had brought about these deaths (the most terror-filled, even if inevitable, tragedy of the human experience) could also degrade the victims and force them to expire in maximum pain and humiliation. I was suddenly in a panic that this terrifying disrespect for death and dying, this reversal in human social evolution, would be reduced to a footnote of history, treated like a harmless glitch in a computer program that might or might not again cause a problem, unless someone forced the world to remember it.

During the conference I learned that two novels about the Nanking massacre were already in the works (*Thee of Heaven* and *Tent of Orange Mist*, both published in 1995), as well as a pictorial book about the massacre (*The Rape of Nanking: An Undeniable History in Photographs*, published in 1996). But at

the time no one had yet written a full-length, narrative nonfiction book on the Rape of Nanking in English. Delving deeper into the history of the massacre, I learned that the raw source material for such a book had always existed and was available in the United States. American missionaries, journalists, and military officers had all recorded for posterity in diaries, films, and photographs their own views of the event. Why had no other American author or scholar exploited this rich lode of primary source material to write a nonfiction book or even a dissertation exclusively devoted to the massacre?

I soon had at least part of an answer to the strange riddle of why the massacre had remained relatively untreated in world history. The Rape of Nanking did not penetrate the world consciousness in the same manner as the Holocaust or Hiroshima because the victims themselves had remained silent.

But every answer suggests a new question, and I now wondered why the victims of this crime had not screamed out for justice. Or if they had indeed cried out, why had their anguish not been recognized? It soon became clear to me that the custodian of the curtain of silence was politics. The People's Republic of China, the Republic of China, and even the United States had all contributed to the historical neglect of this event for reasons deeply rooted in the cold war. After the 1949 Communist revolution in China, neither the People's Republic of China nor the Republic of China demanded wartime reparations from Japan (as Israel had from Germany) because the two governments were competing for Japanese trade and political recognition. And even the United States, faced with the threat of communism in the Soviet Union and mainland China, sought to ensure the friendship and loyalty of its former enemy, Japan. In this manner, cold war tensions permitted Japan to escape much of the intense critical examination that its wartime ally was forced to undergo.

Moreover, an atmosphere of intimidation in Japan stifled open and scholarly discussion of the Rape of Nanking, further suppressing knowledge of the event. In Japan, to express one's

true opinions about the Sino-Japanese War could be—and continues to be—career-threatening, and even life-threatening. (In 1990 a gunman shot Motoshima Hitoshi, mayor of Nagasaki, in the chest for saying that Emperor Hirohito bore some responsibility for World War II.) This pervasive sense of danger has discouraged many serious scholars from visiting Japanese archives to conduct their research on the subject; indeed, I was told in Nanking that the People's Republic of China rarely permits its scholars to journey to Japan for fear of jeopardizing their physical safety. Under such circumstances, gaining access to Japanese archival source materials about the Rape of Nanking has been exceedingly difficult for people outside the island nation. In addition, most Japanese veterans who participated in the Rape of Nanking are for the most part unwilling to give interviews about their experiences, although in recent years a few have braved ostracism and even death threats to go public with their stories.

What baffled and saddened me during the writing of this book was the persistent Japanese refusal to come to terms with its own past. It is not just that Japan has doled out less than 1 percent of the amount that Germany has paid in war reparations to its victims. It is not just that, unlike most Nazis, who, if not incarcerated for their crimes were at least forced from public life, many Japanese war criminals continued to occupy powerful positions in industry and government after the war. And it is not just the fact that while Germans have made repeated apologies to their Holocaust victims, the Japanese have enshrined their war criminals in Tokyo—an act that one American wartime victim of the Japanese has labeled politically equivalent to “erecting a cathedral for Hitler in the middle of Berlin.”

Strongly motivating me throughout this long and difficult labor was the stubborn refusal of many prominent Japanese politicians, academics, and industrial leaders to admit, despite overwhelming evidence, that the Nanking massacre had even happened. In contrast to Germany, where it is illegal for teachers to delete the Holocaust from their history curricula, the Japanese have for decades systematically purged references to

the Nanking massacre from their textbooks. They have removed photographs of the Nanking massacre from museums, tampered with original source material, and excised from popular culture any mention of the massacre. Even respected history professors in Japan have joined right-wing forces to do what they perceive to be their national duty: discredit reports of a Nanking massacre. In the documentary *In the Name of the Emperor*, one Japanese historian dismisses the entire Rape of Nanking with these words: “Even if twenty or thirty people had been killed, it would have been a great shock to Japan. Until that time, the Japanese troops had been exemplary.” It is this deliberate attempt by certain Japanese to distort history that most strongly confirmed in me the need for this book.

As powerful as this one factor has been, however, the book is also a response to something quite different. In recent years sincere attempts to have Japan face up to the consequences of its actions have been labeled “Japan bashing.” It is important to establish that I will not be arguing that Japan was the sole imperialist force in the world, or even in Asia, during the first third of this century. China itself tried to extend its influence over its neighbors and even entered into an agreement with Japan to delineate areas of influence on the Korean peninsula, much as the European powers divided up the commercial rights to China in the last century.

Even more important, it does a disservice not only to the men, women, and children whose lives were taken at Nanking but to the Japanese people as well to say that any criticism of Japanese behavior at a certain time and place is criticism of the Japanese as people. This book is not intended as a commentary on the Japanese character or on the genetic makeup of a people who would commit such acts. It is about the power of cultural forces either to make devils of us all, to strip away that thin veneer of social restraint that makes humans humane, or to reinforce it. Germany is today a better place because Jews have not allowed that country to forget what it did nearly sixty years ago. The American South is a better place for its acknowledgment of the evil of slavery and the one hundred years of Jim Crowism that followed emancipation. Japanese culture

will not move forward until it too admits not only to the world but to itself how improper were its actions of just half a century ago. Indeed, I was surprised and pleased by the number of overseas Japanese who attend conferences on the Rape of Nanking. As one suggested, "We want to know as much as you do."

This book describes two related but discrete atrocities. One is the Rape of Nanking itself, the story of how the Japanese wiped out hundreds of thousands of innocent civilians in its enemy's capital.

Another is the cover-up, the story of how the Japanese, emboldened by the silence of the Chinese and Americans, tried to erase the entire massacre from public consciousness, thereby depriving its victims of their proper place in history.

The structure of the first part of my book—the history of the massacre—is largely influenced by *Rashomon*, a famous movie based on a short story ("Yabunonaka," or "In the Grove") by the Japanese novelist Akutagawa Ryunosuke about a rape-and-murder case in tenth-century Kyoto. On the surface, the story appears simple: a bandit waylays a traveling samurai and his wife; the wife is raped and the samurai is found dead. But the story grows more complex when it is told from the perspective of each of the characters. The bandit, the wife, the dead samurai, and an eyewitness of the crime provide different versions of what happened. It is for the reader to pull all the recollections together, to credit or discredit parts or all of each account, and through this process to create out of subjective and often self-serving perceptions a more objective picture of what might have occurred. This story should be included in the curriculum of any course treating criminal justice. Its point goes to the heart of history.

The Rape of Nanking is told from three different perspectives. The first is the Japanese perspective. It is the story of a planned invasion—what the Japanese military was told to do, how to do it, and why. The second perspective is that of the Chinese, the victims; this is the story of the fate of a city when

the government is no longer capable of protecting its citizens against outside invaders. This section includes individual stories from the Chinese themselves, stories of defeat, despair, betrayal, and survival. The third is the American and European perspective. These outsiders were, for one moment at least in Chinese history, heroes. The handful of Westerners on the scene risked their lives to help Chinese civilians during the massacre and to warn the rest of the world about the atrocities being carried out before their very eyes. It is only in the next part of the book, treating the postwar period, that we deal with the convenient indifference of Americans and Europeans to what their own nationals on the scene told them.

The last part of my book examines the forces that conspired to keep the Rape of Nanking out of public consciousness for more than half a century. I also treat the recent efforts to ensure that this distortion of history does not go unchallenged.

Any attempt to set the record straight must shed light on how the Japanese, as a people, manage, nurture, and sustain their collective amnesia—even denial—when confronted with the record of their behavior through this period. Their response has been more than a matter of leaving blank spaces in the history books where the record would have been too painful. The ugliest aspects of Japanese military behavior during the Sino-Japanese War have indeed been left out of the education of Japanese schoolchildren. But they have also camouflaged the nation's role in initiating the war within the carefully cultivated myth that the Japanese were the victims, not the instigators, of World War II. The horror visited on the Japanese people during the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki helped this myth replace history.

When it comes to expressing remorse for its own wartime actions before the bar of world opinion, Japan remains to this day a renegade nation. Even in the period directly after the war, and despite the war crimes trials that found a few of its leaders guilty, the Japanese managed to avoid the moral judgment of the civilized world that the Germans were made to accept for their actions in this nightmare time. In continuing to avoid judgment, the Japanese have become the ringleaders of an-

other criminal act. As the Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel warned years ago, to forget a holocaust is to kill twice.

My greatest hope is that this book will inspire other authors and historians to investigate the stories of the Nanking survivors before the last of the voices from the past, dwindling in number every year, are extinguished forever. Possibly even more important, I hope it will stir the conscience of Japan to accept responsibility for this incident.

This book was written with George Santayana's immortal warning in mind: *Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.*



PART I

I

THE PATH TO NANKING



IN TRYING to understand the actions of the Japanese, the questions that call out loudest for answers are the most obvious ones. What broke down on the scene to allow the behavior of Japanese soldiers to escape so totally the restraints that govern most human conduct? Why did the Japanese officers permit and even encourage such a breakdown? What was the complicity of the Japanese government? At the very least, what was its reaction to the reports it was getting through its own channels and to what it was hearing from foreign sources on the scene?

To answer these questions we must begin with a little history.

The twentieth-century Japanese identity was forged in a thousand-year-old system in which social hierarchy was established and sustained through martial competition. For as far back as anyone could remember, the islands' powerful feudal lords employed private armies to wage incessant battle with each

other; by the medieval times these armies had evolved into the distinctively Japanese samurai warrior class, whose code of conduct was called *bushido* (the "Way of the Warrior"). To die in the service of one's lord was the greatest honor a samurai warrior could achieve in his lifetime.

Such codes of honor were certainly not invented by Japanese culture. The Roman poet Horace first defined the debt owed by the young men of each generation to their rulers—*Dulce et decorum est pro patria mori*. But the samurai philosophy went a giant step beyond defining military service as fitting and proper. So harsh was its code that its most notable characteristic was the moral imperative that adherents commit suicide if ever they failed to meet honorably the obligations of military service—often with the highly ceremonial and extremely painful ritual of *hara-iri*, in which the warrior met death by unflinchingly disemboweling himself in front of witnesses.

By the twelfth century the head of the reigning (and thereby most powerful) family, now called the Shogun, offered the emperor, who was worshiped as the direct descendant of the Sun Goddess, military protection of his samurai in exchange for divine sanction of the entire ruling class. A deal was struck. In time the code of the samurai, initially followed by only a small percentage of the population, penetrated deep into the Japanese culture and became the model of honorable behavior among all young men.

Time did not erode the strength of the *bushido* ethic, which first emerged in the eighteenth century and was practiced to extremes in the modern age. During World War II the infamous kamikaze suicide missions, in which Japanese pilots ceremoniously trained to fly their planes directly into American aircraft, dramatically impressed upon the West how ready the young men of Japan were to sacrifice their lives for the emperor. But it was more than a small elite group that held to the view of death over surrender. It is striking to note that while the Allied forces surrendered at the rate of 1 prisoner for every 3 dead at Saipan and Iwo Jima, the Japanese surrendered at the rate of only 1 per 120 dead.

Another force that gave Japan its peculiar character was its

isolation, both physical and self-imposed. By the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries Japan was ruled by the Tokugawa family, who sealed off the island nation from foreign influence. This seclusion, intended to provide security from the wider world, instead insulated Japanese society from the new technology of the industrial revolution taking place in Europe and left it less secure. For 250 years Japanese military technology failed to advance beyond the bow and sword.

By the nineteenth century events beyond Japan's control would knock the country out of its cocoon, leaving it in a state of insecurity and xenophobic desperation. In 1852, U.S. President Millard Fillmore, frustrated by Japan's refusal to open its ports to commerce and taking the "white man's burden" attitude toward other societies commonly espoused at the time to rationalize European expansionism, decided to end Japan's isolation by dispatching Commander Matthew Perry to the island. Perry studied Japanese history carefully and decided to shock the Japanese into submission with a massive display of American military force. In July 1853, he sent two ships belching black smoke into Tokyo Bay—giving the people of Japan their first glimpse of metal-clad, steam-powered ships. Surrounding himself with some sixty to seventy aggressive-looking men armed with swords and pistols, Perry strode through the capital of the Shogun and demanded meetings with the highest-ranking officials in Japan.

To say that the Japanese were stunned by Perry's arrival would be a gross understatement. "A parallel situation," the historian Samuel Eliot Morison wrote of the incident, "would be an announcement by astronauts that weird-looking aircraft from outer space were on their way to earth." The terrified Tokugawa aristocracy prepared for battle, hid their valuables, and held panicked meetings among themselves. But in the end, they had no choice but to acknowledge the superiority of American military technology and to accept the mission. With this single visit, Perry not only forced the Tokugawa to sign treaties with the United States but broke down the doors of Japanese trade for other countries, such as Britain, Russia, Germany, and France.

The humiliation of this proud people left a residue of fierce resentment. Secretly some members of the Japanese power elite advocated immediate war with the Western powers, but others counseled prudence, arguing that war would weaken only Japan, not the foreigners. Those taking the latter position urged that the leadership placate the intruders, learn from them, and quietly plan their retaliation:

As we are not the equals of foreigners in the mechanical arts, let us have intercourse with foreign countries, learn their drill and tactics, and when we have made the [Japanese] nations as united as one family, we shall be able to go abroad and give lands in foreign countries to those who have distinguished themselves in battle; the soldiers will vie with one another in displaying their intrepidity, and it will not be too late then to declare war.

Although that view did not prevail, the words would prove prophetic, for they described not only the strategy the Japanese would follow but the long-term horizons of those who think of life in terms of the state and not of individuals.

With no clear course open to them, the Tokugawa decided to watch and wait—a decision that signed the death warrant of their reign. The Shogun's policy of appeasement, so different from what it required of its loyal adherents, disgusted many and supplied ammunition for its hawkish opponents, who saw the prudent response of the Shogun as nothing more than kowtowing servility before foreign barbarians. Convinced that the Shogun had lost his mandate to rule, rebel clans forged alliances to overthrow the regime and restore the emperor to power.

In 1868 the rebels achieved victory in the name of the Meiji emperor and ignited a revolution to transform a patchwork of warring fiefdoms into a modern, powerful Japan. They elevated the sun cult of Shinto to a state religion and used the emperor as a national symbol to sweep away tribalism and unite the islands. Determined to achieve eventual victory over the West, the new imperial government adopted the samurai ethic

of *bushido* as the moral code for all citizens. The foreign threat acted as a further catharsis for the islands. In an era later known as the Meiji Restoration, Japan resounded with nationalistic slogans, such as "Revere the Emperor! Expel the Barbarians!" and "Rich country, strong army!"

With astonishing rapidity, the Japanese hurled themselves into the modern age—scientifically, economically, and militarily. The government sent the best students abroad to study science and technology at Western universities, seized control of its own industry to create factories for military production, and replaced the locally controlled feudal armies with a national conscript army. It also meticulously analyzed the defense cultures of the United States and Europe, favoring above all the German military system. But the knowledge of Western technology and defense strategies brought back by its foreign-educated students shattered the country's old confidence in Japanese military superiority, leaving it deeply uneasy about the inevitability of victory in its future showdown with the West.

By the late nineteenth century Japan was ready to flex its muscles, testing its new strength on Asian neighbors. In 1876 the Meiji government dispatched to Korea a naval force of two gunboats and three transports and forced the Korean government to sign a treaty of commerce—a move hauntingly reminiscent of what Perry had forced on Japan.

Then it clashed with China over Korea. An 1885 treaty had established Korea as a coprotectorate of both China and Japan, but hostilities broke out within a decade when the Chinese tried to quell a Korean rebellion backed by Japanese ultranationalists. In September 1894, only six weeks after war was declared, the Japanese not only captured Pyongyang but crushed the Chinese northern fleet at sea. The Qing government was forced to sign the humiliating Treaty of Shimonoseki, under which the Chinese were made to pay the Japanese 200 million taels in war indemnities and to cede to Japan Taiwan, the Pescadores, the Liaodong region of Manchuria,

and four more treaty ports. This was later called the first Sino-Japanese war.

For Japan the triumph would have been complete had it not been later marred by the intrusion of Western powers. After the war the Japanese won the greatest prize of the war—the Liaodong Peninsula—but were forced to surrender the last by the tripartite intervention of Russia, France, and Germany. This further illustration of the power of faraway European governments to dictate Japanese conduct only stiffened Japan's resolve to gain military supremacy over its Western tormentors. By 1904 the nation had doubled the size of its army and gained self-sufficiency in the production of armaments.

That strategy soon paid off. Japan was able to boast of defeating not only China in battle but Russia as well. In the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, the Japanese recapture of Port Arthur in the Liaodong Peninsula and naval victory at Tsushima gained half of the Sakhalin Islands and commercial supremacy in Manchuria. This was heady stuff for a proud country that had been chafing for fifty years under the humiliation dealt it by the Western nations. Ciddy with triumph, a Japanese professor summed up the sentiments of his country when he declared that Japan was "destined to expand and govern other nations."

Largely because of these successes, the early part of the twentieth century was a euphoric time for Japan. Modernization had earned for the country not only military prestige but unprecedented economic prosperity. The First World War created a huge demand for Japanese steel and iron production as well as for Japanese textiles and foreign trade. Stock prices skyrocketed, and moguls sprang up from obscurity, dazzling the country with their extravagance. Even Japanese women—traditionally cloistered away in this male-dominated society—were seen gambling away fortunes at casinos and racetracks.

Perhaps if the prosperity had lasted, a solid middle class might have emerged in Japan to provide the people with the strength to check imperial military influence. But it did not. Instead, Japan would soon be faced with the single most disastrous economic crisis in its modern history—a crisis that

would wipe out its previous gains, push it to the brink of starvation, and propel it down the path of war.

The 1920s drew down the curtain on Japan's golden era of prosperity. When the end of World War I halted the previously insatiable demand for military products, Japanese munitions factories were shut down and thousands of laborers were thrown out of work. The 1929 stock market crash in the United States, and the depression that followed it, also reduced American purchases of luxuries, crippling the Japanese silk export trade.

As important, many international businessmen and consumers went out of their way to shun Japanese products in the postwar decade, even though Japan had been on the Allied side in the First World War. Although both the European nations and the Japanese expanded their overseas empires with the spoils of the First World War, Japanese expansion was not looked on in the same way. Repulsed by aggressive Japanese actions toward China through the first decades of the new century, and even more so by Japan's attempts at Western-style colonialism in the former German colonies it now controlled as a consequence of the war settlements, Western financiers began to invest more heavily in the Chinese. In turn, China, enraged by the Versailles decision to grant Japan the German rights and concessions in the Shantung Peninsula, organized widespread boycotts of Japanese goods. These developments hurt the Japanese economy still further and gave rise to the popular belief that Japan had once again become the victim of an international conspiracy.

The downturn in the economy devastated the average Japanese community. Businesses shut down, and unemployment soared. Destitute farmers and fishermen sold their daughters into prostitution. Soaring inflation, labor strikes, and a tremendous earthquake in September 1923 only exacerbated the dismal conditions.

An increasingly popular argument during the depression was that Japan needed to conquer new territory to ward off

mass starvation. The population had swollen from some 30 million at the time of the Meiji Restoration to almost 65 million in 1930, making it increasingly difficult for Japan to feed its people. With great effort, Japanese farmers had pushed up the yield per acre until it would increase no more, and by the 1920s agricultural production had leveled off. The continually expanding population forced Japan to rely heavily on imported foodstuffs every year, and between the 1910s and the end of the 1920s rice imports tripled. They had once been paid for by Japan's textile exports, but the latter were now subject to reduced foreign demand, intense competition, and often discriminatory tariffs.

By the 1920s young radicals in the Japanese army were arguing that military expansion was crucial to the country's survival. In his book *Addresses to Young Men*, Lieutenant Colonel Hashimoto Kingoro wrote:

There are only three ways left to Japan to escape from the pressures of surplus population . . . emigration, advance into world markets, and expansion of territory. The first door, emigration, has been barred to us by the anti-Japanese immigration policies of other countries. The second door . . . is being pushed shut by tariff barriers and the abrogation of commercial treaties. What should Japan do when two of the three doors have been closed against her?

Other Japanese writers pointed to the spacious territories of other countries, complaining about the injustice of it all, especially since these other countries were not making the most of their land by achieving the high per-acre yields that Japanese farmers had obtained. They looked enviously upon not only China's vast land resources but those of Western countries. Why, the military propagandist Sadao Araki asked, should Japan remain content with 142,270 square miles, much of it barren, to feed 60 million mouths, while countries like Australia and Canada had more than 3 million square miles to feed 6.5 million people each? These discrepancies were unfair. To the ultranationalists, the United States enjoyed some of the greatest advantages of all: Sadao Araki pointed out that the

United States possessed not only 3 million square miles of home territory but 700,000 square miles of colonies.

If expansion westward to the Pacific Ocean was the manifest destiny of the nineteenth-century United States, then China was twentieth-century Japan's manifest destiny. It was almost inevitable that this homogenous people of high personal esteem would see the socially fragmented and loosely governed expanse of China as having been put there for their use and exploitation. Nor were Japan's covetous intentions limited only to Asia. In 1925, just a short three years after Japan entered into a capital ship limitation treaty with the United States, Great Britain, France, and Italy that afforded it a distinctive role as the world's third largest naval power, Okawa Shumei, a member of the army general staff, wrote a book that insisted not only on Japan's destiny to "free" Asia but also on the inevitability of world war between Japan and the United States. In the concluding chapter of his book, he was more prophetic than he realized when he predicted a divine—almost apocalyptic—struggle between the two powers: "*Before a new world appears, there must be a deadly fight between the powers of the West and the East. This theory is realized in the American challenge to Japan. The strongest country in Asia is Japan and the strongest country that represents Europe is America. . . . These two countries are destined to fight. Only God knows when it will be.*"

By the 1930s the Japanese government found itself mired in intrigue as those who favored using Japan's newly acquired technological skills to build a better society competed for influence with those who wanted to use the nation's military superiority over its neighbors to embark on a program of foreign conquest. Expansionist ideologies gained fervent support from right-wing ultranationalists, who called for a military dictatorship that would limit personal wealth, nationalize property, and dominate Asia. These ideas fueled the ambitions of junior military officers, whose rural backgrounds and youth made them naturally distrustful of Tokyo politicians as well as impatient for immediate access to power. Though the officers feuded

among themselves, they shared a similar mission: to overhaul society and eliminate all bureaucratic, economic, and political obstacles to what they believed to be Japan's divine mission to avenge itself against the Europeans and dominate Asia.

Step by step, the interventionists forced a series of compromises from the moderate elements in government. But disappointed by the pace of change, they began to conspire among themselves to topple the government. In 1931 a coup was planned but abandoned. In 1932 a group of naval officers launched a terrorist attack in Tokyo that killed Prime Minister Inukai Tsuyoshi but failed to secure martial law.

On February 26, 1936, a clique of young officers launched a bold coup d'état that took the lives of several statesmen. Though the coup paralyzed downtown Tokyo for more than three days, it ultimately failed and the ringleaders were jailed or executed. Power shifted from the extremists to a more cautious faction within the government, though it is important to point out that even this faction shared many of the young officers' fanatical views when it came to Japan's right to a dominant role in Asia.

It soon became apparent to some Japanese ultranationalists that if they wanted to control China they would have to move fast. For there were signs that China, forced to submit to Japanese demands in 1895, was trying to strengthen itself as a nation—signs that gave the Japanese expansionists a sense of urgency in their mission.

China had indeed used the past two decades to transform itself from a disintegrating empire into a struggling national republic. In 1911 rebel armies defeated the Qing imperial forces and ended more than two centuries of Manchu rule. During the 1920s the Nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek successfully fought the warlords of northern China to unify the country. They also announced as a goal the elimination of unfair treaty agreements foisted upon the Qing dynasty by foreign powers. As Chiang's movement gained momentum, it threatened Japanese interests in Manchuria and Mongolia. Something had

to be done, and quickly, before China grew too powerful to be conquered.

With the approval of the Japanese government, the military began to intervene more aggressively in Chinese affairs. In 1928 they engineered the assassination of Chang Tsolin, the warlord ruler of Manchuria, when he failed to give them his full cooperation. The murder only served to infuriate the Chinese people, who organized more boycotts against Japanese goods.

By the 1930s Japan had launched an undeclared war with China. On September 18, 1931, the Japanese army blew up the tracks of a Japanese-owned railway in southern Manchuria, hoping to incite an incident. When the blasts failed to derail an express train, the Japanese killed the Chinese guards instead and fabricated a story for the world press about Chinese saboteurs. This incident gave the Japanese an excuse to seize Manchuria, which was renamed Manchukuo and where the Japanese installed Pu Yi, the last emperor of China and heir of the Manchu dynasty, as puppet ruler. The seizure of Manchuria, however, generated anti-Japanese sentiment in China, which was whipped up by Nationalist activists. Feelings ran high on both sides and erupted in bloodshed in 1932 when a Shanghai mob attacked five Japanese Buddhist priests, leaving one of them dead. Japan immediately retaliated by bombing the city, killing tens of thousands of civilians. When the slaughter at Shanghai aroused worldwide criticism, Japan responded by isolating itself from the international community and withdrawing, in 1933, from the League of Nations.

To prepare for the inevitable war with China, Japan had spent decades training its men for combat. The molding of young men to serve in the Japanese military began early in life, and in the 1930s the martial influence seeped into every aspect of Japanese boyhood. Toy shops became virtual shrines to war, selling arsenals of toy soldiers, tanks, helmets, uniforms, rifles, antiaircraft guns, bugles, and howitzers. Memoirs from that time describe preadolescent boys waging mock battles in the

streets, using bamboo poles as imaginary rifles. Some even tied logs of wood on their backs and fantasized about dying as "human bomb" heroes in suicide missions.

Japanese schools operated like miniature military units. Indeed, some of the teachers were military officers, who lectured students on their duty to help Japan fulfill its divine destiny of conquering Asia and being able to stand up to the world's nations as a people second to none. They taught young boys how to handle wooden models of guns, and older boys how to handle real ones. Textbooks became vehicles for military propaganda; one geography book even used the shape of Japan as justification for expansion: "We appear to be standing in the vanguard of Asia, advancing bravely into the Pacific. At the same time we appear ready to defend the Asian continent from outside attack." Teachers also instilled in boys hatred and contempt for the Chinese people, preparing them psychologically for a future invasion of the Chinese mainland. One historian tells the story of a squeamish Japanese schoolboy in the 1930s who burst into tears when told to dissect a frog. His teacher slammed his knuckles against the boy's head and yelled, "Why are you crying about one lousy frog? When you grow up you'll have to kill one hundred, two hundred chinks!"

(And yet with all this psychological programming the story is much more complicated. "There was a deep ambivalence in Japanese society about China," Oxford historian Rana Mitter observes. "It was not all racist contempt, as it was for the Koreans: on the one hand, they recognized China as a source of culture that they had drawn on heavily; on the other, they were exasperated by the mess that China was in by the early twentieth century. Ishiwara Kanji, architect of the Manchurian Incident of 1931, was a big fan of the 1911 Revolution. Many Chinese, including Sun Yatsen and Yuan Shikai, drew on Japanese help and training in the years before and after the 1911 Revolution. The Japanese also sponsored Boxer Indemnity Scholarships and Dojinkai hospitals for the Chinese, and scholars like Tokio Hashimoto genuinely appreciated Chinese culture. Japan's Foreign Office and army experts on China were often very well trained and knowledgeable about the country.")

This knowledge and tempering, however, would rarely pass down to the ordinary soldier.)

The historical roots of militarism in Japanese schools stretched back to the Meiji Restoration. In the late nineteenth century the Japanese minister of education declared that schools were run not for the benefit of the students but for the good of the country. Elementary school teachers were trained like military recruits, with student-teachers housed in barracks and subjected to harsh discipline and indoctrination. In 1890 the Imperial Rescript on Education emerged; it laid down a code of ethics to govern not only students and teachers but every Japanese citizen. The Rescript was the civilian equivalent of Japanese military codes, which valued above all obedience to authority and unconditional loyalty to the emperor. In every Japanese school a copy of the Rescript was enshrined with a portrait of the emperor and taken out each morning to be read. It was reputed that more than one teacher who accidentally stumbled over the words committed suicide to atone for the insult to the sacred document.

By the 1930s the Japanese educational system had become regimented and robotic. A visitor to one of its elementary schools expressed pleasant surprise at seeing thousands of children waving flags and marching in unison in perfect lines; quite clearly the visitor had seen the discipline and order but not the abuse required to establish and maintain it. It was commonplace for teachers to behave like sadistic drill sergeants, slapping children across the cheeks, hitting them with their fists, or bludgeoning them with bamboo or wooden swords. Students were forced to hold heavy objects, sit on their knees, stand barefoot in the snow, or run around the playground until they collapsed from exhaustion. There were certainly few visits to the schools by indignant or even concerned parents.

The pressure to conform to authority intensified if the schoolboy decided to become a soldier. Vicious hazing and a relentless pecking order usually squelched any residual spirit of individualism in him. Obedience was touted as a supreme virtue, and a sense of individual self-worth was replaced by a sense of value as a small cog in the larger scheme of things. To

establish this sublimation of individuality to the common good, superior officers or older soldiers slapped recruits for almost no reason at all or beat them severely with heavy wooden rods. According to the author Iritani Toshio, officers often justified unauthorized punishment by saying, "I do not beat you because I hate you. I beat you because I care for you. Do you think I perform these acts with hands swollen and bloody in a state of madness?" Some youths died under such brutal physical conditions; others committed suicide; the majority became tempered vessels into which the military could pour a new set of life goals.

Training was no less grueling a process for aspiring officers. In the 1920s all cadets had to pass through the Military Academy at Ichigaya. With its overcrowded barracks, unheated study rooms, and inadequate food, the place bore a greater resemblance to a prison than a school. The intensity of the training in Japan surpassed that of most Western military academies: in England an officer was commissioned after some 1,372 hours of classwork and 245 hours of private study, but in Japan the standards were 3,382 hours of classwork and 2,765 hours of private study. The cadets endured a punishing daily regimen of physical exercise and classes in history, geography, foreign languages, mathematics, science, logic, drawing, and penmanship. Everything in the curriculum was bent toward the goal of perfection and triumph. Above all the Japanese cadets were to adopt "a will which knows no defeat." So terrified were the cadets of any hint of failure that examination results were kept secret, to minimize the risk of suicide.

The academy was like an island to itself, sealed off from the rest of the world. The Japanese cadet enjoyed neither privacy nor any opportunity to exercise individual leadership skills. His reading material was carefully censored, and leisure time was nonexistent. History and science were distorted to project an image of the Japanese as a superrace. "During these impressionable years they have been walled off from all outside pleasures, interests or influences," one Western writer observed of the Japanese officers. "The atmosphere of the narrow groove along which they have moved has been saturated with a special

national and a special military propaganda. Already from a race psychologically far removed from us, they have been removed still further."

In the summer of 1937 Japan finally succeeded in provoking a full-scale war with China. In July a Japanese regiment, garrisoned by treaty in the Chinese city of Tientsin, had been conducting night maneuvers near the ancient Marco Polo Bridge. During a break several shots were fired at the Japanese in the darkness, and a Japanese soldier failed to appear during roll call. Using this incident as an excuse to exercise its power in the region, Japanese troops advanced upon the Chinese fort of Wanping near the bridge and demanded that its gates be opened so that they could search for the soldier. When the Chinese commander refused, the Japanese shelled the fort.

By the end of July, Japan had tightened its grasp on the entire Tientsin-Peking region and by August the Japanese had invaded Shanghai. The second Sino-Japanese War was no longer reversible.

But conquering China proved to be a more difficult task than the Japanese anticipated. In Shanghai alone Chinese forces outnumbered the Japanese marines ten to one, and Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Nationalist government, had reserved his best troops for the battle. That August, while attempting to land thirty-five thousand fresh troops on the docks of Shanghai, the Japanese encountered their first setback. A hidden Chinese artillery emplacement opened fire and killed several hundred men, including a cousin of the Empress Nagako. For months the Chinese defended the metropolis with extraordinary valor. To the chagrin of the Japanese, the battle of Shanghai proceeded slowly, street by street, barricade by barricade.

In the 1930s, Japanese military leaders had boasted—and seriously believed—that Japan could conquer all of mainland China within three months. But when a battle in a single Chinese city alone dragged from summer to fall, and then from fall to winter, it shattered Japanese fantasies of an easy victory. Here,

this primitive people, illiterate in military science and poorly trained, had managed to fight the superior Japanese to a standstill. When Shanghai finally fell in November, the mood of the imperial troops had turned ugly, and many, it was said, lusted for revenge as they marched toward Nanking.

2

SIX WEEKS OF TERROR

THE RACE TO NANKING

THE JAPANESE strategy for Nanking was simple. The imperial army exploited the fact that the city was blocked by water in two directions. The ancient capital lay south of a bend in the Yangtze River that first coursed northward and then turned to flow east. By converging upon Nanking in a semi-circular front from the southeast, the Japanese could use the natural barrier of the river to complete the encirclement of the capital and cut off all escape.

In late November, three parallel Japanese troops rushed toward Nanking. One force traveled west under the southern bank of the Yangtze River. Its troops poured into the Yangtze Delta, through the Paimou Inlet northwest of Shanghai, and along the Nanking-Shanghai railway, where the Japanese air force had already blasted away most of the bridges. These troops were led by Nakajima Kesago, who had worked as a member

10

THE FORGOTTEN HOLOCAUST: A SECOND RAPE

IS THERE a child today in any part of the United States, and perhaps in many other parts of the world, who has not seen the gruesome pictures of the gas chambers at Auschwitz or read at least part of the haunting tale of the young Anne Frank? Indeed, at least in the United States, most schoolchildren are also taught about the devastating effects of the atomic bombs the United States dropped over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But ask most Americans—children and adults alike, including highly educated adults—about the Rape of Nanking, and you will learn that most have never been told what happened in Nanking sixty years ago. A prominent government historian admitted to me that the subject had never once come up in all her years of gradu-

ate school. A Princeton-educated lawyer told me sheepishly that she was not even aware that China and Japan had been at war, her knowledge of the Pacific conflict of World War II had been limited to Pearl Harbor and Hiroshima. The ignorance extends even to Asian Americans in this country. One of them revealed her woeful grasp of geography and history when she asked me, "Nanking? What was that, a dynasty?"

An event that sixty years ago made front-page news in American newspapers appears to have vanished, almost without a trace. Hollywood has not produced a mainstream movie about the massacre—even though the story contains dramatic elements similar to those of *Schindler's List*. And until recently most American novelists and historians have also chosen not to write about it.

After hearing such remarks, I became terrified that the history of three hundred thousand murdered Chinese might disappear just as they themselves had disappeared under Japanese occupation and that the world might actually one day believe the Japanese politicians who have insisted that the Rape of Nanking was a hoax and a fabrication—that the massacre never happened at all. By writing this book, I forced myself to delve into not only history but historiography—to examine the forces of history and the process by which history is made. What keeps certain events in history and assigns the rest to oblivion? Exactly how does an event like the Rape of Nanking vanish from Japan's (and even the world's) collective memory?

One reason information about the Rape of Nanking has not been widely disseminated clearly lies in the postwar differences in how Germany and Japan handled their wartime crimes. Perhaps more than any other nation in history, the Germans have incorporated into their postwar political identity the concession that the wartime government itself, not just individual Nazis, was guilty of war crimes. The Japanese government, however, has never forced itself or Japanese society to do the same. As a result, although some bravely fight to force Japanese society to face the painful truth, many in Japan continue to treat the war crimes as the isolated acts of individual soldiers or even as events that simply did not occur.

In Japan competing stories of what happened during World War II continue to appear. According to a currently popular revisionist view, the country bears no responsibility for the wholesale murder of civilians anywhere during the war. The Japanese fought the war to ensure its own survival and to free Asia from the grip of Western imperialism. Indeed, in return for its noble efforts, Japan itself ended up as the ultimate victim at Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

This soothing perception of history still finds its way into Japanese history textbooks, which have either ignored the massacre at Nanking altogether or put a decidedly Japanese spin on the actions of the military. At the far end of the political spectrum, Japanese ultranationalists have threatened everything from lawsuits to death, even assassination, to silence opponents who suggest that these textbooks are not telling the next generation the real story.

But it is not just fanatical fringe groups that are trying to rewrite history. In 1990 Ishihara Shintaro, a leading member of Japan's conservative Liberal Democratic Party and the author of best-selling books such as *The Japan That Can Say No*, told a *Playboy* interviewer: "People say that the Japanese made a holocaust there [in Nanking], but that is not true. It is a story made up by the Chinese. It has tarnished the image of Japan, but it is a lie."

Naturally, this statement enraged scholars and journalists around the world. One proclaimed that "Japan's denial of the rape of Nanjing would be politically the same as German denial of the Holocaust." But the denunciations failed to silence Ishihara, who responded with a furious stream of counterattacks. In his rebuttals, Ishihara, in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary, asserted that the world never learned about the Nanking massacre until the International Military Tribunal of the Far East put people on trial for their role in it; that neither Japanese war correspondents nor Western reporters wrote about the massacre as it was occurring; that the *New York Times* correspondent Frank Tillman Durdin failed to witness any massacre; and that the Episcopalian minister John Magee saw only one person killed.

By the 1990s John Magee was, of course, no longer alive to defend himself, but his son, David Magee, made an effort to disprove Ishihara's statements. He gave interviews to the media and attended conferences on the Nanking massacre at which he read from his father's papers and displayed the actual camera his father used to film Japanese atrocities. Frank Tillman Durdin was alive, and he took direct action. Stepping out of retirement in San Diego to hold a press conference to refute Ishihara's remarks, Durdin explained to reporters that he had indeed written an article in 1937 that described the countryside from Shanghai to Nanking as peaceful, but that this article was written two months before the Japanese started their advance on Nanking.

Ishihara's other statements are readily refutable. Contemporaneous reports of the Rape appeared in dozens of Western newspapers, and even Japanese newspapers ran detailed stories about the massacre. As for Durdin, his articles were not only contemporaneous but published on the front pages of the *New York Times*. John Magee's letters contained descriptions like, "The raping of the women has been beyond description or imagination," and, "There were dead bodies in every street and alley in the city, so far as I could tell, and I went around quite extensively including Hsiakwan."

Not to be stopped, however, Ishihara went on to suggest that the Chinese claims of a massacre at Nanking helped influence the U.S. decision to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As each refutation of his earlier claims made it impossible for Ishihara to repeat them, he shifted his position slightly, but on one point he remained inflexible: even if the Germans had apologized for killing the Jews, that did not mean that the Japanese should do the same; under no circumstances should the Japanese ever admit they were guilty of any wrongdoing.

Ishihara's career remained intact despite the *Playboy* interview, but eventually others were not so lucky.

—One man who was sucked into the vortex of controversy was General Nagano Shigeto. In the spring of 1994, within days of his appointment to the cabinet-level position of justice minister, he gave an interview to the *Mainichi Shinbun* newspa-

per that turned out to be political suicide. "I think the Nanking Massacre and the rest was a fabrication," he told the newspaper. "I was in Nanking immediately afterwards." He went on to call the Korean comfort women "licensed prostitutes," not sex slaves, and to argue that Japan had no choice but to go to war because it was "in danger of being crushed." The violent reaction to his statements across Asia forced Nagano to resign in disgrace.

—In September 1986, Fujio Masayuki, the Japanese minister of education, sabotaged his career when he declared that the Rape of Nanking was "just a part of war." In an interview with *Bungei Shunju* magazine, Fujio defended the actions of the Japanese during the Nanking massacre and claimed that the number of dead had been exaggerated. He also said that Korea was partly to blame for its annexation by Japan in 1910, that Korea willingly accepted colonization, and that the Tokyo War Crimes Trial was "racial revenge" meant to "rob Japan of her power." Though Fujio made these comments only "to restore the Japanese spirit through history and tradition," they cost him his job. That month Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone dismissed him from his post.

—Okuno Seisuki, who had been the prefectural director of the notorious *Kempeitai* (the secret Japanese military police) during the war, rose after the war to become the Japanese minister of justice and even the minister of education. By 1988 Okuno had become the Japanese land agency chief and the third most senior member of the cabinet. But Okuno's undoing came that spring when he visited the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo (where Japanese class A war criminals are enshrined and worshiped) and revealed his true attitudes about World War II. "There was no intention of aggression," Okuno told reporters. "The white race made Asia into a colony, but only Japan has been blamed. Who was the aggressor country? It was the white race. I don't see why Japanese are called militarists and aggressors." His statements provoked an uproar across Asia, prompting Okuno to adjust his wording: "I didn't say Japan wasn't an aggressor. I said it wasn't the only aggressor." By May, Okuno had been forced to resign, but he remained unrepentant to the

end. He had stepped down, Okuno said, only under pressure from the government, not because he wished to retract his statements.

—In August 1994, Sakurai Shin, the director general of the Japanese environmental agency, remarked that Japan did not go to war with the intent to commit aggression. In response to China's angry protests (a PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman announced that "the Chinese government regrets that, once again, a Japanese cabinet minister has brazenly made remarks which distort historical facts"), Murayama Tomiichi ended up apologizing for Sakurai's remarks. He also rebuked Sakurai by calling the remarks "inappropriate" and forced the director general to hold a midnight press conference to retract his statement.

—In 1995 Hashimoto Ryutaro, the minister for international trade and industry and a powerful man in the Liberal Democratic Party (he would later become the prime minister of Japan), announced that it was Japan's intention only to fight the United States, Britain, and "others" during World War II. While Japan was aggressive toward China, he said, it really had no intention of invading other Asian countries.

The official denials continued even as this book was going to press. Kaijiyama Seiroku, the Japanese chief cabinet secretary, outraged several Asian countries when he stated that the sex slaves and rape victims of the Japanese imperial army during World War II were not slaves at all but willingly engaged in prostitution. In January 1997, he proclaimed that the comfort women of the Japanese army "went for the money" and were no different from the Japanese prostitutes who were working legally in Japan at the time. Amazingly, these comments came on the eve of weekend summit talks between Japanese Prime Minister Hashimoto Ryutaro and South Korean President Kim Young-sam, both of whom expressed deep anger over Kaijiyama's remarks.

Kaijiyama later made a gesture to apologize, though he infuriated critics because the apology seemed insulting and insincere. The cabinet secretary regretted that his comments "caused some unpleasantness at the Japan-South Korean summit, and

misunderstanding among the South Korean people," but he refused to retract his original comments. This was not the first time Kaijiyama's mouth had landed him in trouble. In 1990 he was forced to resign from his position as Japanese justice minister after comparing African Americans to prostitutes who come in and ruin a neighborhood.

THE TEXTBOOK CONTROVERSY

Perhaps one of the most sinister aspects of the malaise in Japanese education is the deliberate obstruction of important historical information about World War II through textbook censorship.

Almost from birth, Japanese children fight for footholds in the slippery pyramid of education, striving to reach the tip, which is admission to Todai, or Tokyo University. There are cram elementary schools to get into the right high school, where kids study from 9:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m.; cram preparatory kindergartens to ensure admission into the right elementary school; even exclusive maternity wards that guarantee babies a ticket into the right nursery school.

But despite the "examination hell" for which the Japanese are famous, what do their schoolchildren learn about World War II?

Very little, as it turns out. The entire Japanese education system suffers from selective amnesia, for not until 1994 were Japanese schoolchildren taught that Hirohito's army was responsible for the deaths of at least 20 million Allied soldiers and Asian civilians during World War II. In the early 1990s a newspaper article quoted a Japanese high school teacher who claimed that his students were surprised to learn that Japan had been at war with the United States. The first thing they wanted to know was who won.

How does this happen? All textbooks used in Japan's elementary and secondary schools must first be approved by the Japanese Ministry of Education. Critics in Japan note that social studies textbooks come under the heaviest scrutiny. For ex-

ample, in 1977 the Ministry of Education reduced a section on World War II within a standard history book of several hundred pages to only six pages, which consisted mainly of pictures of the American firebombing of Tokyo, a picture of the ruins of Hiroshima, and a tally of Japan's war dead. The text neglected to mention the casualties on the other side, Japanese war atrocities, or the forced evacuations of Chinese and Korean prisoners to labor camps in Japan.

Much of this censorship might have gone unchallenged had it not been for the efforts of one brave crusader. In 1965 the Japanese historian Ienaga Saburo sued the Japanese government. This lawsuit was the beginning of a legal battle that would span three decades and gain the backing of thousands of sympathetic Japanese followers.

Those who have met Ienaga are struck by his frailty. The bald octogenarian historian trembles when he walks and his voice is hardly louder than a whisper. But underneath a powerful will is at work.

The Ministry interfered with Ienaga's attempts to document the Nanking massacre for schoolchildren. For example, in his textbook manuscript Ienaga wrote: "Immediately after the occupation of Nanking, the Japanese Army killed numerous Chinese soldiers and citizens. This incident came to be known as the Nanking Massacre." The examiner commented: "Readers might interpret this description as meaning that the Japanese Army unilaterally massacred Chinese immediately after the occupation. This passage should be revised so that it is not interpreted in such a way."

Finally, over Ienaga's protests, the passage was changed to: "While battling the fierce resistance of the Chinese armed forces, the Japanese Army occupied Nanking and killed numerous Chinese soldiers and civilians. This incident came to be known as the Nanking Massacre." That statement may have satisfied textbook censors as a compromise between Ienaga's argument and the ministry's position on the massacre. Unfortunately, the statement is simply not true, because it implies that the massacre occurred in the heat of battle.

The examiner demanded that Ienaga delete his description

of the Rape itself, claiming that "the violation of women is something that has happened on every battlefield in every era of human history. This is not an issue that needs to be taken up with respect to the Japanese Army in particular."

Even the word *aggression* was deemed taboo. "Aggression," the censors wrote, "is a term that contains negative ethical connotations." The Ministry of Education also bristled at Ienaga's efforts to condemn Japanese wartime behavior. It took offense at the following passage: "The war was glorified as a 'holy war' and the Japanese Army's defeat and their brutal acts on the battlefield were completely concealed. As a result, the majority of the Japanese people were not able to learn the truth and they were placed in a position where they had no choice but to cooperate enthusiastically in this reckless war." The Ministry of Education deleted this passage on the grounds that the expressions "the Japanese Army's brutal acts" and "this reckless war" were "unilateral criticism of Japan's position and actions" during World War II.

In 1970, when he actually won his case (Sugimoto Ryokichi, the judge for the Tokyo district court, ruled that the screening of textbooks should not go beyond correction of factual and typographical errors), extremists fired off death threats to the defense attorneys, the judge, and Ienaga himself, while thugs kept the scholar awake by banging pots and pans outside his home and screaming slogans. The police had to escort Ienaga and his counsel in and out of court through a secret door.

With the exception of an award that Ienaga received in 1948 (when, he admits, he was "politically tone deaf"), he has been consistently ignored by the official committees that dole out national prizes in history. The historian has won, nevertheless, a place in history itself. The tremendous publicity that Ienaga receives for his efforts arouses foreign protests that force change upon the highly conservative Ministry of Education. By the 1980s years of lawsuits and political activism were beginning to pay off. In 1982 the distortion of the history of the Rape of Nanking in Japanese high school history textbooks had become such a hot issue in Japan that it created an international diplomatic crisis. All four of Japan's major national

newspapers carried headlines on the subject. Chinese and Korean officials also filed formal protests, accusing the Japanese of trying to obliterate from memory the history of their aggression to lay the basis for reviving militarism in the younger generation. The Japanese textbook examination council, however, tried to defend itself by telling reporters: "It was not fair to describe the Nanking atrocity in three to five lines while mentioning Soviet or American atrocities against the Japanese in only one line or two."

In the end, the publicity from the textbook controversy accomplished two things. One was the dismissal of Japan's education minister, Fujio Masayuki, who had rigorously defended the ministry's policy of whitewashing World War II history. The second was a heightened awareness inside the ministry that the Nanking massacre was something they could no longer ignore. Before Fujio's dismissal, the National Conference for the Defense of Japan had prepared a right-wing history textbook that summed up the Nanking massacre in this manner: "The battle of Nanking was extremely severe. China has asked Japan to reflect regarding casualties on the part of the Chinese army and civilians." But after Fujio's dismissal, the Ministry of Education rewrote the passage to read: "The battle in Nanking was extremely severe. After Nanking fell, it was reported that the Japanese army killed and wounded many Chinese soldiers and civilians, thus drawing international criticism."

Of course, the issue of textbook censorship is far from over. Rather than denying the massacre outright, some officials in Japan now focus on minimizing its scale. In 1991 screeners at the ministry ordered textbook authors to eliminate all reference to the numbers of Chinese killed during the Rape of Nanking because authorities believed there was insufficient evidence to verify those numbers. Three years later the ministry even forced a textbook author to reduce the number of killings by Japanese soldiers during one day of the Nanking massacre from twenty-five thousand to fifteen thousand people. The original version of the textbook cited a diary account that twenty-five thousand captives were "put away" in a single day. But under pressure from the ministry, the textbook publisher

backed down and shortened a quotation from the diary so that it read: "The Sasaki unit disposed of 15,000 people."

THE ACADEMIC COVER-UP

With few exceptions, the academic community in Japan has shied away from studying the Rape of Nanking. Some have argued that not enough time has gone by to render the subject worthy of historical study, or for historians to judge Japanese wrongdoing. Some even react indignantly to criticism of Japanese wartime misdeeds. ("How long must we apologize for the mistakes we have made?" one said heatedly.)

Others act as apologists for Japan and have even allied themselves with conservative Japanese ultranationalists to minimize the significance of the massacre and its death toll. One prominent revisionist who has launched his own crusade to distort the history of the Rape of Nanking and other aspects of World War II history is Nobukatsu Fujioka, a professor of education at Tokyo University. Among his incendiary statements are the assertions that far fewer people were killed in the Rape of Nanking than the Chinese claim; that most of the victims of Nanking were guerrilla soldiers, not civilians; and that the Asian sex slaves, or "comfort women," of the Japanese military were ordinary prostitutes. Fujioka equated the women's receipt of financial compensation with "hitting the lottery" and demanded that the Japanese government not only retract the apologies it has offered to these women but strike information about them from Japanese history textbooks.

In Japan serious research on the Rape of Nanking has largely been left up to the efforts of those operating outside of traditional academic communities, such as freelance authors and journalists. Ono Kenji, a factory worker, is a prime example. In 1988 he started to interview farmers in his area who had served in the Aizu Wakamatsu Battalion during the Rape of Nanking. The bachelor Ono had time to devote himself to the subject because he enjoyed thirty-six-hour breaks between long factory shifts and had no family responsibilities. Six years later

it was reported that Ono Kenji had visited some six hundred homes, interviewed two hundred people, photocopied twenty out of some thirty diaries, and videotaped interviews with seven people. Some of his findings appeared in the weekly magazine *Shukan Kinjōbi* and were hailed as the first work on the Nanking massacre to be based solely on Japanese sources. Eventually he will probably produce an important book on the subject of the Nanking massacre, but meanwhile he lives under the constant shadow of possible Japanese retaliation, refusing even to be photographed for fear of falling prey to right-wing fanatics.

SELF-IMPOSED CENSORSHIP

In Japan censorship is practiced not only by the government when it tampers with textbooks but by the media, which police themselves. In many ways private-sector self-censorship can be more insidious than government censorship because it is subtler and harder to pinpoint.

What distributors did to a scene of the Rape of Nanking in the film *The Last Emperor* is a revealing illustration of Japanese self-censorship at work. In 1988 the Shochiku Fuji Distribution Company removed from Bernardo Bertolucci's film biography of Pu Yi a thirty-second scene depicting the Rape of Nanking. Bertolucci was furious, of course, when he found out. "Not only did the Japanese distributor cut the whole sequence of the 'Rape of Nanking' without my authorization and against my will, without even informing me, but they also declared to the press that myself and the producer, Jeremy Thomas, had made the original proposition to mutilate the movie," he announced. "This is absolutely false and revolting."

Bertolucci's outcry forced the distributors to restore the excised scene immediately. They offered a variety of excuses for their behavior. Kubotani Motoyuki, director of Shochiku Fuji, apologized for the "confusion and misunderstanding," explaining that his company thought the Nanking scene was simply "too sensational" to be shown in Japan. "Cutting the

film was our voluntary decision. We had no idea that it would become such a big issue," he said. Saito Mitsuhiro, another spokesman for Shochiku Fuji, told reporters that the scene was removed "out of respect for Japanese audiences." Takehiko Nakane, a Japanese film critic, speculated that the decision to cut the scene arose from both the distributors' pusillanimity and the threat of ultranationalist violence. "I believe the film's distributors and many theatre owners were afraid these right-wing groups might cause trouble outside the theaters," the critic told reporters. "Some of these people still believe that Japan's actions in China and during the war were part of some sacred crusade."

DEBATES ON THE NANKING MASSACRE

Japanese who find the courage to write books about the Rape of Nanking often face unrelenting attacks. Take the example of Hora Tomio and Honda Katsuichi. Hora, a professor of Japanese history at Waseda University, visited China in 1966 to investigate Japanese atrocities in China; he later published his research on the Nanking massacre in several books. Honda Katsuichi was a prize-winning journalist at the *Asahi Shinbun* who broke the taboo against discussing the Nanking massacre in the Japanese press by going to mainland China in the 1970s and 1980s to interview survivors. His findings, serialized first in the *Asahi Shinbun* and other journals, were later expanded into full-length books. Both Hora and Honda reached the conclusion that Japanese soldiers had killed some three hundred thousand people in Nanking between 1937 and 1938.

Both also faced a vicious backlash in Japan. One vociferous critic of Hora and Honda was the ultraconservative author Suzuki Akira, who challenged their findings in an article entitled "The Illusion of the Nanjing Massacre." Suzuki charged that some of Honda's and Hora's stories were fabricated, that insufficient primary source material existed to substantiate the massacre, and that the Rape of Nanking was an "illusion." The book that resulted from his articles won the *Bungei Shunju*

Prize in nonfiction and received eulogies from literary critics as "admirable" and "courageous." When Hora published a series of rebuttals to Suzuki, several famous Japanese writers immediately sprang to Suzuki's defense.

Another critic was Tanaka Masaaki, a man who claimed to be Matsui Iwane's protégé. In 1984 he published an anti-Honda book called *The Fabrication of the "Nanking Massacre,"* using material from Matsui's wartime diary. Accusing Honda of spreading "enemy propaganda," Tanaka argued that, unlike in Europe or China, "you won't find one instance of planned, systematic murder in the entire history of Japan." This is because, he wrote, the Japanese have "a different sense of values" from Westerners and the Chinese. Revisionists rallied behind Tanaka and joined his attacks on Honda and Hora. The right-wing author Watanabe Shoichi, who wrote a foreword to Tanaka's book, also blasted Honda for heaping guilt "not only on the Japanese officers and men of the time, but on all Japanese, indeed on our children yet to be born."

A debate soon raged between the two camps. There was the liberal "massacre faction," which consisted of Hora, Honda, and their supporters, and the conservative "illusion faction" led by Suzuki and Tanaka. The liberal camp published its findings in the *Asahi Shinbun* and other journals, while the conservatives contributed to right-wing publications like *Bungei Shunjū*, *Shokun!*, and *Seiron*. The liberals demanded that the Japanese government apologize for its crimes in China, while the conservatives considered such an apology an insult to veterans and a foreign interference in Japanese internal affairs.

Ironically, attempts to disprove the Nanking massacre backfired when the revisionists themselves began to probe into the subject for ammunition against the "massacre faction." For instance, in the 1980s *Kaikoshū*, a fraternity of army cadet school graduates, asked its eighteen thousand members to come forward with eyewitness accounts to discredit the Nanking massacre. To the dismay of the "illusion faction," many *Kaikoshū* members confirmed the details of the Rape of Nanking and described atrocities that horrified even hard-core Japanese conservatives. A former officer under Matsui estimated that some

120,000 captives were killed under the orders of a staff officer, although later, no doubt under pressure, he changed the figure to "no less than tens of thousands." But his testimony scuttled the entire purpose of the survey, and moved even an editor of *Kaikoshū's* journal to write in the concluding part of the series that "there was no excuse for such massive illegal executions. As someone related to the old Japanese Army, I have to apologize deeply to the Chinese people."

But the most embarrassing incident was yet to come. In 1985 a popular history journal, *Rekishi to jinbutsu*, discovered as many as nine hundred errors in the newly published Matsui wartime diary. Most of them were intentional attempts to falsify primary documents, a revelation that scandalized historians across Japan. Still more disturbing, the author of these alterations was none other than Tanaka Masaaki, who had proclaimed himself a staunch critic of historical distortion.

INTIMIDATION

What happened to Azuma Shiro, the first Japanese veteran to admit openly his crimes in Nanking, is a spectacular example of the system of Japanese intimidation at its worst. In 1987 he created a sensation when he became the first former Japanese soldier to apologize in public for his role in the Nanking massacre. On the eve of his departure to Nanking to participate in a fifty-year memorial ceremony of the great Rape, he gave interviews to newspaper and television reporters at a press conference in Kyoto. The result was an avalanche of criticism and death threats. To protect himself, Azuma retired from his company and moved with his wife into a house in a tiny village outside Kyoto, where he kept an arsenal of weapons, such as truncheons, clubs, pepper sprays, chains, and knuckle dusters.

The troubles for Motoshima Hitoshi, the mayor of Nagasaki, began when he was asked by a Communist Party member in the city assembly what he thought of the emperor's wartime guilt. It was December 7, 1988, the forty-seventh anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor. Emperor Hirohito was

slowly dying of cancer, and the nation was mourning the passing of the Showa era by muting the holiday festivities. Moto-shima responded that, having read accounts of the war from abroad and served as a soldier himself, he believed that the emperor bore responsibility for the war. The response to his statement was immediate. The next day enraged city legislators and the local branch of the Liberal Democratic Party demanded that the mayor retract his words. But Motoshima refused, announcing that he could not "betray his own heart."

His opponents then embarked on a violent campaign of harassment and intimidation calculated to bring the mayor to his knees. The Liberal Democrats not only dismissed him as the counsel to their organization but succeeded in convincing the prefectural governor to refuse to cooperate politically with the mayor. Right-wing groups even called for Motoshima's death. On December 19, 1988, twenty-four ultranationalist groups drove through Nagasaki on thirty loudspeaker trucks, blasting their demands for "divine retribution" through Moto-shima's death. Two days later the number of groups demonstrating in Nagasaki had grown to sixty-two, and the number of loudspeaker trucks to eighty-two. Representatives from numerous conservative organizations, including the office for Shinto shrines, called for his impeachment. Less than two weeks after Hirohito's death on January 7, 1989, a right-wing fanatic shot Motoshima in the back. The bullet punctured his lungs, but miraculously, the mayor survived. The assassination attempt thrilled extremists across the nation, many of whom proclaimed the deed as nothing less than "divine punishment."

ÉPILOGUE

THE RAPE OF NANKING was only one incident in a long saga of Japanese barbarism during nine years of war. Before the great massacre, Japan had already earned notoriety as the first nation to break the taboo and use airpower not only as a battlefield weapon but as a means of terrorizing civilian populations. Then it launched its armed forces on a campaign of slaughter that started in Shanghai, moved through Nanking, and proceeded inland.

While there was no Japanese equivalent of a "final solution" for the Chinese people, the imperial government endorsed policies that would wipe out everyone in certain regions in China. One of the deadliest was the "Three-all" policy ("Loot all, kill all, burn all") in northern China, where Communist Chinese guerrillas had fought the Japanese furiously and effectively. In his diary, a frustrated Japanese colonel reveals the cruel simplicity of this policy: "I have received orders

from my superior officer that every person in this place must be killed."

The result was a massive terrorist campaign in 1941 designed to exterminate everyone in the northern Chinese countryside. It reduced the population there from 44 million to 25 million people. At least one author on China, Jules Archer, believes that the Japanese killed most of the 19 million people who disappeared from the region, though other scholars speculate that millions must have fled to safer ground. R. J. Rummel, author of *China's Bloody Century*, points out that even if only 5 percent of the population loss consisted of murder victims, that would still amount to nearly 1 million Chinese.

The Japanese also waged ruthless experiments in biological warfare against the Chinese. Some of it was retaliatory and directed against Chinese villages suspected of helping American fliers during the April 1942 Doolittle raid of Tokyo. In areas that may have served as landing zones for the bombers, the Japanese massacred a quarter-million civilians and plowed up every Chinese airfield within an area of twenty thousand square miles. Here as well as elsewhere during the war, entire cities and regions were targeted for disease. We now know that Japanese aviators sprayed fleas carrying plague germs over metropolitan areas like Shanghai, Ningpo, and Changteh, and that flasks of disease-causing microbes—cholera, dysentery, typhoid, plague, anthrax, paratyphoid—were tossed into rivers, wells, reservoirs, and houses. The Japanese also mixed food with deadly germs to infect the Chinese civilian and military population. Cakes laced with typhoid were scattered around bivouac sites to entice hungry peasants; rolls syringed with typhoid and paratyphoid were given to thousands of Chinese prisoners of war before they were freed.

The final death count was almost incredible, between 1,578,000 and 6,325,000 people. R. J. Rummel gives a prudent estimate of 3,949,000 killed, of which all but 400,000 were civilians. But he points out that millions more perished from starvation and disease caused in large part by Japanese looting, bombing, and medical experimentation. If those deaths are added to the final count, then one can say that the Japanese

killed more than 19 million Chinese people in its war against China.

It is impossible for most people to imagine exactly what went through the minds of Japanese soldiers and officers as they committed the atrocities. But many historians, eyewitnesses, survivors, and the perpetrators themselves have theorized about what drove the naked brutality of the Japanese imperial army.

Some Japanese scholars believe that the horrors of the Rape of Nanking and other outrages of the Sino-Japanese War were caused by a phenomenon called "the transfer of oppression." According to Tanaka Yuki, author of *Hidden Horrors: Japanese War Crimes in World War II*, the modern Japanese army had great potential for brutality from the moment of its creation for two reasons: the arbitrary and cruel treatment that the military inflicted on its own officers and soldiers, and the hierarchical nature of Japanese society, in which status was dictated by proximity to the emperor. Before the invasion of Nanking, the Japanese military had subjected its own soldiers to endless humiliation. Japanese soldiers were forced to wash the underwear of officers or stand meekly while superiors slapped them until they streamed with blood. Using Orwellian language, the routine striking of Japanese soldiers, or *bentatsu*, was termed an "act of love" by the officers, and the violent discipline of the Japanese navy through *tekken seisai*, or "the iron fist," was often called *ai-no-muchi*, or "whip of love."

It has often been suggested that those with the least power are often the most sadistic if given the power of life and death over people even lower on the pecking order, and the rage engendered by this rigid pecking order was suddenly given an outlet when Japanese soldiers went abroad. In foreign lands or colonized territories, the Japanese soldiers—representatives of the emperor—enjoyed tremendous power among the subjects. In China even the lowliest Japanese private was considered superior to the most powerful and distinguished native, and it is easy to see how years of suppressed anger, hatred, and fear of

authority could have erupted in uncontrollable violence at Nanking. The Japanese soldier had endured in silence whatever his superiors had chosen to deal out to him, and now the Chinese had to take whatever he chose to deal out to them.

A second factor in the atrocities, scholars believe, is the virulent contempt that many in the Japanese military reserved for Chinese people—a contempt cultivated by decades of propaganda, education, and social indoctrination. Though the Japanese and the Chinese share similar if not identical racial features (which in a distorted way may have threatened the Japanese vision of themselves as unique), there were those in the imperial army who saw the Chinese as subhuman beings whose murder would carry no greater moral weight than squashing a bug or butchering a hog. In fact, both before and during the war members of the Japanese military at all levels frequently compared the Chinese to pigs. For example, a Japanese general told a correspondent: "To be frank, your view of Chinese is totally different from mine. You regard the Chinese as human beings while I regard the Chinese as pigs." A Japanese officer in Nanking who bound Chinese captives together in groups of ten, pushed each group into a pit, and burned them excused his actions by explaining that his feelings when committing these murders were identical to those he had when he slaughtered pigs. In 1938 the Japanese soldier Azuma Shiro confided in his diary at Nanking that "a pig is more valuable now than the life of a [Chinese] human being. That's because a pig is edible."

A third factor was religion. Imbuing violence with holy meaning, the Japanese imperial army made violence a cultural imperative every bit as powerful as that which propelled Europeans during the Crusades and the Spanish Inquisition. "Every single bullet must be charged with the Imperial Way, and the end of every bayonet must have the National Virtue burnt into it," one Japanese general declared in a speech in 1933.

Few Japanese doubted the righteousness of their mission in China. Nagatomi Hakudo, a former Japanese soldier who participated in the Rape of Nanking, said he had been reared to believe that the emperor was the natural ruler of the world,

that Japanese were racially superior to the rest of the world, and that it was the destiny of Japan to control Asia. When a local Christian priest asked him, "Who is greater, God or the emperor of Japan?", he had no doubt that "the emperor" was the correct answer.

With an entity higher than God on its side, it was not difficult for the Japanese military to take the next step—adopting the belief that the war, even the violence that came with it, would ultimately benefit not only Japan but its victims as well. Some perceived atrocity as a necessary tool to achieve a Japanese victory that would serve all and help create a better China under Japan's "Greater East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere." This attitude echoes that of the Japanese teachers and officers who beat their students and soldiers senseless while insisting, between blows, that it was all done for their own good.

Perhaps it was General Matsui Iwane who summed up the prevailing mentality of self-delusion best when he attempted to justify Japanese oppression of China. Before he left for Shanghai in 1937, he told his supporters: "I am going to the front not to fight an enemy but in the state of mind of one who sets out to pacify his brother." Later he would say of the invasion of China:

The struggle between Japan and China was always a fight between brothers within the "Asian Family." . . . It had been my belief during all these days that we must regard this struggle as a method of making the Chinese undergo self reflection. We do not do this because we hate them, but on the contrary *we love them too much*. It is just the same as in a family when an elder brother has taken all that he can stand from his ill-behaved younger brother and has to chastise him in order to make him behave properly.

Whatever the course of postwar history, the Rape of Nanking will stand as a blemish upon the honor of human beings. But what makes the blemish particularly repugnant is that history has never written a proper end for the story. Sixty years later

the Japanese as a nation are still trying to bury the victims of Nanking—not under the soil, as in 1937, but into historical oblivion. In a disgraceful compounding of the offense, the story of the Nanking massacre is barely known in the West because so few people have tried to document and narrate it systematically to the public.

This book started out as an attempt to rescue those victims from more degradation by Japanese revisionists and to provide my own epitaph for the hundreds upon thousands of unmarked graves in Nanking. It ended as a personal exploration into the shadow side of human nature. There are several important lessons to be learned from Nanking, and one is that civilization itself is tissue-thin. There are those who believe that the Japanese are uniquely sinister—a dangerous race of people who will never change. But after reading several file cabinets' worth of documents on Japanese war crimes as well as accounts of ancient atrocities from the pantheon of world history, I would have to conclude that Japan's behavior during World War II was less a product of dangerous people than of a dangerous government, in a vulnerable culture, in dangerous times, able to sell dangerous rationalizations to those whose human instincts told them otherwise. The Rape of Nanking should be perceived as a cautionary tale—an illustration of how easily human beings can be encouraged to allow their teenagers to be molded into efficient killing machines able to suppress their better natures.

Another lesson to be gleaned from Nanking is the role of power in genocide. Those who have studied the patterns of large-scale killings throughout history have noted that the sheer concentration of power in government is lethal—that only a sense of absolute unchecked power can make atrocities like the Rape of Nanking possible. In the 1990s R. J. Rummel, perhaps the world's greatest authority on *democide* (a term he coined to include both genocide and government mass murder), completed a systematic and quantitative study of atrocities in both this century and ancient times, an impressive body of research that he summed up with a play on the famous Lord Acton line: "Power kills, and absolute power kills absolutely."

The less restraint on power within a government, Rummel found, the more likely that government will act on the whims or psychologically generated darker impulses of its leaders to wage war on foreign governments. Japan was no exception, and atrocities such as the Rape of Nanking can be seen as a predictable if not inevitable outgrowth of ceding to an authoritarian regime, dominated by a military and imperial elite, the unchallenged power to commit an entire people to realizing the sick goals of the few with the unbridled power to set them.

And there is yet a third lesson to be learned, one that is perhaps the most distressing of all. It lies in the frightening ease with which the mind can accept genocide, turning us all into passive spectators to the unthinkable. The Rape of Nanking was front-page news across the world, and yet most of the world stood by and did nothing while an entire city was butchered. The international response to the Nanking atrocities was eerily akin to the more recent response to the atrocities in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda: while thousands have died almost unbelievably cruel deaths, the entire world has watched CNN and wrung its hands. One could argue that the United States and other countries failed to intervene earlier to prevent the Nazis from carrying out their "final solution" because the genocide was carried out in wartime secrecy and with such cold efficiency that until Allied soldiers liberated the camps and saw with their own eyes the extent of the horror, most people could not accept the reports they had been getting as literally true. But for the Rape of Nanking, or for the murders in the former Yugoslavia, there can be no such excuse. The Nanking atrocities were splashed prominently across the pages of newspapers like the *New York Times*, while the Bosnia outrages were played out daily on television in virtually every living room. Apparently some quirk in human nature allows even the most unspeakable acts of evil to become banal within minutes, provided only that they occur far enough away to pose no personal threat.

Sad to say, the world is still acting as a passive spectator to the second Japanese rape—the refusal of the Japanese to apologize for or even acknowledge their crimes at Nanking, and the

attempts by Japanese extremists to erase the event from world history. To get a better handle on the magnitude of the injustice, one only has to compare the postwar restitution that the governments of Japan and Germany have made to their wartime victims. While it is certainly true that money alone cannot give back to murder victims their lost lives or erase from memory the tortures the survivors endured, it can at least convey that what was done to the victims represented the evil of others.

The German government has paid at least DM 88 billion in compensation and reparations and will pay another DM 20 billion by the year 2005. If one factors in all the money the Germans have paid in compensation to individual victims, restitution for lost property, compensatory pensions, payments based on state regulations, final restitution in special cases, and money for global agreements with Israel and sixteen other nations for war damages, the total comes to almost DM 124 billion, or almost \$60 billion. The Japanese have paid close to nothing for their wartime crimes. In an era when even the Swiss have pledged billions of dollars to create a fund to replace what was stolen from Jewish bank accounts, many leading officials in Japan continue to believe (or pretend to believe) that their country did nothing that requires compensation, or even apologies, and contend that many of the worst misdeeds their government has been accused of perpetrating never happened and that evidence that they did happen was fabricated by the Chinese and other Japan bashers.

Today the Japanese government takes the position that all wartime reparations issues were resolved by the 1952 San Francisco Peace Treaty. A close reading of the treaty, however, reveals that the issue was merely postponed until Japan was in a better financial situation. "It is recognized that Japan should pay reparations to the Allied Powers," the treaty states in chapter 5, article 14. "Nevertheless it is also recognized that the resources of Japan are not presently sufficient, if it is to maintain a viable economy, to make complete reparations for all such damage and suffering and at the same time meet its other obligations."

One of the greatest ironies of the cold war is that Japan not only eluded its responsibility to pay reparations but received billions of dollars in aid from the United States, which helped build its former enemy into an economic powerhouse and competitor. Now there is considerable concern in Asia about the prospect of renewed militarism among the Japanese people. During the Reagan administration the United States pushed Japan to beef up its military power—something that alarmed many who had suffered years of Japanese wartime aggression. "Those who ignore history tend to become its victims," warned Carlos Romulo, the Philippine foreign minister and Pulitzer Prize winner who served as General Douglas MacArthur's aide-de-camp during World War II and understood the competitive national spirit engendered by the Japanese culture. "The Japanese are a very determined people; they have brains. At the end of World War II, no one thought that Japan would become the foremost economic power in the world—but they are. If you give them the chance to become a military power—they will become a military power."

But the cold war has ended, China is fast emerging from the chrysalis of communism, and other Asian nations that were bullied by Japan during the war may challenge it as they grow ascendant in the international economic arena. The next few years may well witness giant strides in activism regarding Japanese wartime crimes. The American public is growing demographically more Asian. And unlike their parents, whose careers were heavily concentrated in scientific fields, the younger generations of Chinese Americans and Chinese Canadians are fast gaining influence in law, politics, and journalism—professions historically underrepresented by Asians in North America.

Public awareness of the Nanking massacre increased substantially between the time I first started to research this book and the time I finished it. The 1990s saw a proliferation of novels, historical books, and newspaper articles about the Rape of Nanking, the comfort women, Japanese medical experimentation on wartime victims, and other Japanese World War II atrocities. The San Francisco school district plans to include the history of the Rape of Nanking in its curriculum, and blue-

prints have even been drawn up among Chinese real estate developers to build a Chinese holocaust museum.

As this book neared completion, the U.S. government was starting to respond to activist demands to pressure the Japanese to confront their wartime past. On December 3, 1996, the Department of Justice established a watch list of Japanese war criminals in order to bar them from entering the country. In April 1997, former U.S. Ambassador Walter Mondale told the press that Japan needs to face history honestly and directly and expressed his wish that Japan make a full apology for its war crimes. The Rape of Nanking even made its way into a bill that will soon be introduced into the U.S. House of Representatives. Through the spring of 1997, legislators worked with human rights activists to draft a bill that will condemn Japan for the maltreatment of U.S. and other prisoners during World War II and demand an official apology and compensation for its wartime victims.

The movement to force the Japanese government to face the full truth about the legacy of its wartime government is gaining support even in Japan, where official denials of wartime atrocities have aroused considerable shame and embarrassment among those citizens who see themselves as more than simply and solely Japanese. A vocal minority is convinced that their government must acknowledge its past if it expects to command trust from its neighbors in the future. In 1997 the Japanese Fellowship of Reconciliation released the following statement:

In the past war, Japan was arrogant and pompous, behaved as aggressors in other Asian countries and brought misery to a great number of people, especially in China. For fifteen years around the 1930s, Japan continued to make war against the Chinese. War actions continued and victimized tens of millions of people. Here, we sincerely would like to apologize for Japan's past mistakes and beg your forgiveness.

The present generation in Japan faces a critical choice. They can continue to delude themselves that the war of Japanese aggression was a holy and just war that Japan happened to lose

solely because of American economic power, or they can make a clean break from their nation's legacy of horror by acknowledging the truth: that the world is a better place because Japan lost the war and was not able to impose its harsh "love" on more people than it did. If modern Japanese do nothing to protect the truth, they run the risk that history will leave them as tarnished as their wartime ancestors.

Japan carries not only the legal burden but the moral obligation to acknowledge the evil it perpetrated at Nanking. At a minimum, the Japanese government needs to issue an official apology to the victims, pay reparations to the people whose lives were destroyed in the rampage, and, most important, educate future generations of Japanese citizens about the true facts of the massacre. These long-overdue steps are crucial for Japan if it expects to deserve respect from the international community—and to achieve closure on a dark chapter that stained its history.