



The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II

By Iris Chang

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In December 1937, one of the most brutal massacres in the long annals of wartime barbarity occurred in the capital of China. The Japanese army swept into Nanking and not only looted and burned the defenseless city but systematically raped, tortured, and murdered half of the city's remaining population, some 300,000 Chinese civilians. Amazingly, the account of this atrocity was denied by the Japanese government. The Rape of Nanking tells the story from three perspectives: that of the Japanese soldiers who performed it, that of the Chinese civilians who endured it, and finally, that of a group of Europeans and Americans who refused to abandon the city and were able to create a safety zone that saved almost 300,000 Chinese. Among these was John Rabe, the tireless German leader of the rescue effort, whom Iris Chang called the "Oskar Schindler of China."

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

China has endured much hardship in its history, as Iris Chang shows in her ably researched *The Rape of Nanking*, a book that recounts the horrible events in that eastern Chinese city under Japanese occupation in the late 1930s. Nanking, she writes, served as a kind of laboratory in which Japanese soldiers were taught to slaughter unarmed, unresisting civilians, as they would later do throughout Asia. Likening their victims to insects and animals, the Japanese commanders orchestrated a campaign in which several hundred thousand--no one is sure just how many--Chinese soldiers and noncombatants alike were killed. Chang turns up an unlikely hero in German businessman John Rabe, a devoted member of the Nazi party who importuned Adolf Hitler to intervene and stop the slaughter, and who personally saved the lives of countless residents of Nanking. She also suggests that the Japanese government pay reparations and apologize for its army's horrific acts of 60 years ago.

From School Library Journal

YA?The events in this book are horribly off-putting, which, paradoxically, is why they must be remembered. Chang tells of the Sino-Japanese War atrocities perpetrated by the invading Japanese army in Nanking in December 1937, in which roughly 350,000 soldiers and civilians were slaughtered in an eight-week period, many of them having been raped and/or tortured first. Not only are readers given many of the gory details?with pictures?but they are also told of the heroism of some members of a small foreign contingent, particularly of a Nazi businessman who resided in China for 30 years. The story of his bravery lends the ironic touch of someone with evil credentials doing good. Once the author finishes with the atrocities, she proceeds with the equally absorbing and much easier-to-take story of what happened to the Nazi businessman when he returned to Germany and the war ended. This by itself is material for a movie. The author tells why the Japanese government not only allowed the atrocities to occur but also refused, and continues to refuse, to acknowledge that they happened. She is quite evenhanded in reminding readers that every culture has some episode like this in its history; what makes this one important is the number of people killed and tortured, the sadism, and the ongoing Japanese denial of responsibility. Mature readers will look beyond the sensational acts of cruelty to ponder the horror of man's inhumanity to man and the examples of heroism in the midst of savagery.?Judy McAloon, Potomac Library, Prince William County, VA
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From Library Journal

Even though the Japanese government still refuses to acknowledge the massacre of at least 250,000 Chinese civilians by invading Japanese troops in 1937, freelance writer Chang (the Chicago Tribune, the New York Times, the Associated Press) has exposed in detail the full, terrible account of what happened to the war-torn capital of Nanking. Chang, whose grandparents survived the brutality, first establishes Japan's social hierarchy by martial competition, then shows how the city of Nanking fell, the six weeks of horror following, and the Nanking safety zone created by Americans and Europeans. The book goes on to depict the city's occupation, the judgment day for Japanese war criminals, the cover-up perpetrated by Japanese textbooks, and Japan's self-imposed censorship. The unseen illustrations will certainly complement the vivid description of one of the most horrible massacres of all. This unique, deeply researched book, with its firsthand account, is an excellent choice for larger public libraries and the East Asia collections of academic libraries.?Steven Lin, American Samoa Community Coll. Lib.
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Users Review

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