Nanjing Massacre Unit Plan Project Source List

The Nanjing Massacre


*The Nanjing Massacre in History and Historiography* is a collection of three essays, compiled in order to better understand the context of the Nanjing Massacre and place it within the context of Chinese and Japanese history and historiography. Fogel points out that in the past few decades Nanjing has garnered considerable attention, particularly in the popular sphere, but he wishes to create a more nuanced and complicated understanding of the event. The two overarching goals of the text are to describe the current debate around Nanjing, with an emphasis on how groups, ideology and nationality frame the debate, and to confront the issues of memory and history, such as how national identities interact with the history of events.


*The Nanking Atrocity, 1937-38: Complicating the Picture* is a sixteen chapter book which is grouped into three distinct sections: “War Crimes and Doubts,” “Aggressors and Collaborators,” and “Another Denied Holocaust?.” The overall theme of the work is that special interests have prevented scholars from creating a truly objective history on the Nanjing Massacre. The individual essays deal with many issues of historiographical importance, including place (was it an isolated incident or part of larger atrocities) and time (when did the event begin and how long did it last). Overall, the text provides a look at how many different scholars have interpreted the Nanjing massacre and how more research is needed to create an objective history of events.


This article is focused around the alleged contest between two Japanese swordsmen in which they looked to see who could kill 100 Chinese first outside the city of Nanjing. Wakabayashi concludes that although this contest was made up for nationalistic propaganda purposes that the debate centered on its occurrence provided Japanese citizens with a chance for people to become educated about the Nanjing atrocity even in the face of efforts by conservatives to paint these events in a far different light or deny them outright. Following a similar outline from his other works, Wakabayashi begins by sketching out how the debate began, grew and festered among differing groups then how this debate ultimately allows for a more objective look into the history of the events, this time for the ordinary Japanese citizen.

This article traces the development of understandings about the Nanjing massacre from a once forgotten event to an icon of global atrocity and suffering. Popular renderings, such as those presented in Iris Chang’s flawed book, provided an impetus for greater research and better historical understanding. Historical issues, such as victor’s justice, and contemporary issues, such as trading wars between Japan and the United States, at first hindered then allowed information on the atrocity to come back into international consciousness. Yan is hopeful that a better understanding of historical wrongs can led toward a better future but only if those involved take the time to reflect and take responsibilities for their past wrongs.

**Life in Japan During the Second Sino-Japanese War**


This article investigates the Japanese efforts to maintain a gendered division of labor, particularly between the home and workplace, in the time period between 1931 and 1945. Matsumura addresses the topic through a lens of “anxieties about the war’s impact on female morality” (79). In the period discussed, the Japanese government looked to expand the sphere of women to include activities that involved public organizations but they generally looked to keep these activities within the range of acceptable gender roles, particularly championing roles that placed the woman as an instrument of emotional support or care. Some individuals worried that new opportunities would allow women to succumb to the physical urges or create a lifestyle outside of the traditional sphere. The article touches on the overall themes of gender morality and control as well as how governments mobilized women in order to achieve their current war goals, as evidenced by female soldier mobilization by the end of the war.


This chapter provides insights into the lifestyle changes brought forth by Japanese mobilization and warfare. Although the period leading up to and during World War II placed many hardships on the lives of the Japanese citizenry, the mobilization of Japanese males allowed for women to experience new levels of independence within their personal lives. This independence came from new financial prospects and the reliance on
women to perform community activities that supported and helped the mobilization of Imperial Japan. Therefore, although war mobilization greatly intruded into the lives of Japanese citizens, it also provided new spaces for female independence and provided a launching point for future growth and development.

Life in China During the Second-Sino Japanese War


This article discusses the lasting socio-psychological effects that the Nanjing Massacre had on the survivors and inhabitants of Nanjing. The article broadens the timeline of the incident from December 13 when the city fell to include the initial air raids that began in August of that same year. The constant sound of air raid sirens led many citizens, particularly wealthy ones, to pick up and leave. The bombings began a campaign of fear which continued and even expanded once the Japanese took the city. Interviews with survivors, gathered by the author, show the deep impact that the violence had on these individuals and their way of life. The article ends with a discussion of responsibility, calling on the Japanese to reflect on what happened and to look to reconcile and resolve the issue.

Tokyo War Tribunal Sources


This article examines the rulings of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East (IMTFE) in order to uncover how “the tribunal chose to interpret the Rape of Nanking as part of its strategy to determine Japan’s war criminality” (673). Of particular interest was Brook’s discussion and focus on Radhabinod Pal’s dissenting opinion, which argued that the victors of a war had no right to judge the atrocities Japan committed in China. Brook feels that his opinion deserves greater attention and by better understand both extremes of the Tribunal rulings, a better understanding of war time justice can be understood. The article closes with a discussion of how different groups viewed the majority and dissenting opinions and how these groups accepted or rejected the decisions and on what grounds.


This article examines and delineates the creation of Nanking narratives at the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. Sedgwick argues that using courts for
post-war justice is short-sighted and ineffective in that the produced narratives are often conflicted and contested and thus do not provide a great opportunity for memory to be objectively shaped. The insistence on a master narrative, as created by the legal proceedings, exemplified the inadequacy of trial-based post-conflict reconciliation. The article ends with a discussion of how the lessons of the IMTFE should be used in order to create effective post war tribunals or systems in light of the failures of the previous ones.


This book, written by a Japanese historian, focuses on the historiography of the Tokyo War Crimes Trial in Japan and abroad, first pointing out that the dominant view about the trial is that of victor’s justice and that she wanted to go beyond that in order to understand the trials meaning for the international community. Totani claimed that the inclusion of victim nations, such as the Philippines, allowed for a certain level of victim justice and not solely victors and that the trial represented an combination of many different claims against Japan, not just those that furthered Western aims. Thus, The Tokyo War Crimes Trial provides a clearer and more nuanced depiction of the war trial in an attempt to uncover the extent and reality of victor’s justice.

**Nanjing Memory Sources**


This article focuses on how the Nanking Massacre is perceived in Japan through an examination of different textbooks used within Japanese high schools. Barnard launches his research from a similar study which examined American history textbooks in the United States and conclusion that certain language is used to create meaning and that these meanings help develop how students view or interpret history and their country. In Japanese textbooks, Barnard found an absence of perpetrators, lack of criticism for those who committed the atrocities and an undertone that these atrocities were constructed by anti-Japanese individuals after the fact. Overall it seems that the textbook looked to dissociate the atrocities away from Japan and the Japanese people. Bernard contends that the lack of knowledge about the subject leaves children without a lens for critically examining the events and those who deny they occurred.


This article examines Japanese wartime atrocities, calling attention to the necessity of going beyond Nanjing and gaining a better understanding of atrocities throughout
Southeast Asia. Gunn discusses the term “sook ching” which typically means to purge or wipe out and how these events were carried out in various localities across China and other parts of Asia. Although these events were recognized as part of the military tribunal, Gunn contends that they are unknown to the Japanese public and unlike Nanjing have not been a barrier to Sino-Japanese relations. Gunn finds that remembrance of the sook chings in various countries has been largely controlled by the state, mostly in the interest of good relations and business links with Japan. By illuminating these events, Gunn hopes the historiography will consider atrocities across the region and offer deeper understandings of memory and apology.


This article focuses on the Nanjing massacre and subsequent occupation from the viewpoint of Tao Baojin, president of the Nanjing Self-Rule Committee. By engaging the narrative of Tao, Jiang illuminates the nature of individual memory, an aspect that is largely unexplored when compared to the issues of public memory and the Nanjing massacre. Jiang contends that Chinese researchers are ultimately afraid to grapple with issues of occupation, primarily how should they view the issues of resistance and cooperation with the enemy. Tao cooperated and thus was punished after the war but deeper inquiries into his narrative show that he also saves thousands of refugees from the potential violence brought about by occupation. Ultimately his narrative illuminates some of the issues with memory, how do you develop a collective memory without trampling issues of the individual?


_Nanking 1937: Memory and Healing_ consists of eleven essays by many different scholars that all look to discuss memory reconstruction, war responsibility, the role of governments and how history should be conveyed and passed down between generations. The first part of the book places the debates around Nanjing in a global context with the different scholars arguing that how politicization of the event and how international obstacles have hindered efforts to uncover and address what really happened. The second part looks to decipher Japanese aggression and imperialism, with some arguing that the trend began during the Meiji era and then continued into the World War II period. Part three deals specifically with the contested memories of the events and how the war tribunal looked to and sometimes hindered progress toward reconciliation. Overall, the book provides a nuanced and variety of viewpoints which reflect the many differences in opinion associated with the understanding of atrocities.

This article challenges the characterization of the Nanking Massacre and other wartime atrocities as forgotten acts of genocide and instead challenges that since the 1960s, such crimes have been part of the public consciousness, particularly in literature. History textbooks, manga, newspaper series and myriad of other sources have provided children with exposure to the incidents that occurred between 1937 and 1945, although Penney points out that similar to the differing of opinion about these events, the literature has also varied in content and depiction but that most of them paint the war as the impetus for future peace now and forever. Penney argues that narratives of massacre have been used in Japan in order to help mobilize and strengthen an anti-war philosophy.


This article shifts the focus away from what events or atrocities were committed by Japanese from 1937 to 1945 and instead looks to uncover who were affect by these events and how are they collectively remembered. Furthermore, Seo connects these issues with contemporary problems in order to illustrate that memory is not necessarily created by the unearthing of new evidence but can be addressed through the examination of contemporary political struggles. For example, a real effort to understand the plight of comfort women was not truly undertaken until the 1990s in Korea because of a long standing culture of patriarchy (among other factors) coupled with the rise of a feminine voice in Korea allowed these women to come forward and narrate their own stories. Likewise, the Nanjing massacre was held in silence until Chinese society was allowed to speak out and look to understand what happened. The emergence of new identities can allow for new spaces to understand and remember the atrocities of the past.


This article examines the Nanjing Massacre and how its memory has been used and changed over time due to the contemporary needs of those who were invoking, or ignoring, its memory. Although the atrocity was well documented at the time of its occurrence and the war tribunal shed even more light on the event, events since 1945 have drastically altered the memory of this event. For example, China’s movement toward class struggle and not national struggle impacted how the incident was viewed in the post war era. Yang contends that beneath the arguments of what happened and how bad was it, are greater divisions, particularly in Japan, about the meaning and significance of the entire imperialistic campaign. The article ends with a discussion of how the
massacre is seen in both countries today, a level of unanimity in China and varying levels of disagreements and maybe even a polarization among Japanese society.