

# **The Rape of Nanking Study Guide**

## **The Rape of Nanking by Iris Chang**

(c)2015 BookRags, Inc. All rights reserved.



# Contents

<a href="#">The Rape of Nanking Study Guide.....</a>	<a href="#">1</a>
<a href="#">Contents.....</a>	<a href="#">2</a>
<a href="#">Plot Summary.....</a>	<a href="#">3</a>
<a href="#">Forward.....</a>	<a href="#">4</a>
<a href="#">Introduction.....</a>	<a href="#">5</a>
<a href="#">The Path to Nanking.....</a>	<a href="#">7</a>
<a href="#">Six Weeks of Terror.....</a>	<a href="#">9</a>
<a href="#">The Fall of Nanking.....</a>	<a href="#">12</a>
<a href="#">Six Weeks of Horror.....</a>	<a href="#">14</a>
<a href="#">The Nanking Safety Zone.....</a>	<a href="#">17</a>
<a href="#">What the World Knew.....</a>	<a href="#">19</a>
<a href="#">The Occupation of Nanking.....</a>	<a href="#">20</a>
<a href="#">Judgment Day.....</a>	<a href="#">21</a>
<a href="#">The Fate of the Survivors.....</a>	<a href="#">23</a>
<a href="#">The Forgotten Holocaust: A Second Rape.....</a>	<a href="#">24</a>
<a href="#">Epilogue.....</a>	<a href="#">26</a>
<a href="#">Acknowledgments.....</a>	<a href="#">27</a>
<a href="#">Characters.....</a>	<a href="#">28</a>
<a href="#">Objects/Places.....</a>	<a href="#">33</a>
<a href="#">Themes.....</a>	<a href="#">36</a>
<a href="#">Style.....</a>	<a href="#">39</a>
<a href="#">Quotes.....</a>	<a href="#">41</a>
<a href="#">Topics for Discussion.....</a>	<a href="#">44</a>



## Plot Summary

The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II by Iris Chang follows the progression of Japanese soldiers from Shanghai to Nanking during World War II and gives account of the horrible atrocities committed by the Japanese military at Nanking. The book begins with a vast number of statistics that serve to show the true massacre of the Chinese people at the hands of the Japanese. It continues by analyzing the path the Japanese took on their way to Nanking, and uses true eyewitness accounts to paint a horrifying picture of destruction. As they reached Nanking, the Japanese military kidnapped women for sex slaves, raped thousands, and murdered tens of thousands. As Nanking fell, thousands more soldiers and citizens alike were systematically slaughtered, mutilated, and tortured, while the women were gang raped to death, beaten, and kidnapped. For six weeks, the citizens of Nanking endured constant fear, anguish, pain, and suffering at the hands of the Japanese.

However, Chang also tells the story of a small band of foreigners within Nanking who fought with their lives to create a safe zone for the Chinese citizens of the city, those of the International Committee, who created the Nanking safe zone. Chang tells specifically of three individuals who risked their lives to save the people. John Rabe, a businessman, Robert Wilson, a surgeon, and Wilhelmina Vautrin, an educator, worked day and night to fight off the Chinese and to feed hundreds of thousand of refugees with no assistance. Their heroism undoubtedly save the lives of over two hundred thousand Chinese refugees. In addition, the actions of news correspondents and filmmakers stuck in the area allowed the story of Nanking to reach the rest of the world.

However, as Japan surrendered following the war, Chang discusses the war trials in depth, and discusses how the immunity of the Emperor of Japan as a condition of surrender led to the cover-up of the Nanking incident. She also follows up on the survivors of the Nanking massacre, including the horrible lives of those in the International Committee who fought so bravely to save the people, only to fall to poverty, disease, exhaustion, persecution, and death. Further, Chang discusses the reasons for the cover-up of the incident, and warns of the dangers of an unchecked government, power, greed, human nature, and ignoring genocide.

This novel is perhaps one of the most complete works on the topic of the Nanking invasion, and is told primarily through the diaries and other correspondence of those who lived within the city at the time of the crisis. The story is harrowing, moving, horrifying, and at times, disgusting as specific acts are described in detail. And yet, between these incidents, lies a strong message of power in individuals, and the overwhelming ability of humankind both to rise above and help others, and well as to fight through unthinkable adversity. This book serves well as a warning to the world of the danger of unchecked government, as well as of the plight of the victims of the Rape of Nanking.

# Forward

## Forward Summary and Analysis

The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II by Iris Chang follows the progression of Japanese soldiers from Shanghai to Nanking during World War II and gives account of the horrible atrocities committed by the Japanese military at Nanking. The book begins with a vast number of statistics that serve to show the true massacre of the Chinese people at the hands of the Japanese, and continues by analyzing the path the Japanese took on their path to Nanking, using true eyewitness accounts to paint a horrifying picture of destruction. The story is harrowing, moving, horrifying, and at times, disgusting as specific acts are described in detail. And yet, between these incidents, lies a strong message of power in individuals, and the overwhelming ability of humankind both to rise above and help others, and well as to fight through unthinkable adversity. This book serves well as a warning to the world of the danger of unchecked government, as well as of the plight of the victims of the Rape of Nanking.

The brief forward, written by Professor William Kirby of Harvard University, begins by discussing the events that create the storyline of the book, that of the fall of Nanking, the capital city of China in 1937, at the hands of the Japanese military. He mentions that the fall of the city was supposed to be a turning point for the Japanese in their attempts to invade and take over China, but was instead a call of determination for the Chinese government to oust Japan from its borders. Kirby notes that while Japan held Nanking for eight years, they never saw China surrender. Kirby tells of the "rape of Nanking", as the incident came to be called, and explains that the Japanese led a horrifyingly brutal attack on the city. Tens of thousands of Chinese citizens were raped, tortured, and killed in full view of international observers over a seven week period. Kirby sets up the structure of the book by noting that the author, Iris Chang, has used a variety of source material, including the testimony of third-party observers, missionaries, businessmen and women, as well as the diary of a German nationalist who attempted to help the effort to save the Chinese people. He also notes that Chang includes the story of those Japanese who sought to end the extermination. In closing, Kirby notes that although Japan and Germany were not allies until the end of the war, they were, in fact, moral co-conspirators, violent aggressors, and perpetrators of crimes against humanity. While the introduction is short, Kirby makes clear his horror at the atrocities of the rape of Nanking, and his support of Chang's story, as well as her source material.



# Introduction

## Introduction Summary and Analysis

The author begins by noting there are few atrocities that have occurred that match the scale of the rape of Nanking. She notes that while much of the world sees the beginnings of the war from different dates, only Asians see the war as beginning with the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931. While many horrors certainly happened during the next fourteen years of domination by Japan, only those at Nanking have been documented and it is this documentation that forms the information provided in the novel. No one disputes the details of the attack on Nanking other than the Japanese, whom Chang states have never admitted their crimes nor paid restitution.

According to the International Tribunal of the Far East (IMTFE), over 260,000 noncombatants perished at the hands of the Japanese army by way of torture, rape, mass murder, and other horrors. Some have estimated the number at higher than 350,000. Chang notes a number of statistics that help to show the magnitude of the situation, including the fact that the blood of the dead would weight twelve hundred tons, and if piled, the bodies would tower over seventy-four stories. She also notes the number killed outweighs those killed during the Spanish Inquisition, those killed in many countries during the entire world war, and even those killed during the nuclear bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as during the British raids on Dresden. She describes Chinese men being used for bayonet practice, being castrated, roasted alive, forced to rape their wives and children, beheaded, hung by their tongues, and buried to the waist to be eaten by dogs. However, Chang also mentions that no US textbook and very few other books even mention the horrors of Nanking, and declares her feelings that these individuals have perished in anguish in vain.

Chang recalls hearing about the Great Nanking massacre, also called Nanjing Datusha, from her parents, and recalls an early fascination in the subject, but remembers not being able to locate reliable sources. Decades later, she learns of a filmmaker attempting to make a documentary on the topic, and finds herself speaking with several individuals who have high concern. When the massacre of Tienanmen Square occurs, Chinese communities all over the world begin to form a campaign to disseminate information about Nanking. Pictures of the atrocities begin to emerge, conferences are held, and Chang finds herself realizing she wants to write a book about the massacre in English, to expose it to the world. She discovers through her research that the atrocities had, in the past, been kept silent due to political forces, cold war tension, and threats of communism. Further, intimidation in Japan prevented children from learning about the attack, and any journalist seeking information was in danger in Japan. Chang notes that many in Japan not only do not believe the attack occurred, take no responsibility for the incident, and have removed all references from any books or learning materials. However, Chang also notes her purpose is not to blame the Japanese people, nor to point fingers at the Japanese, but simply to tell the story of the massacre so that the atrocities that occurred are not allowed to fade into history.



Chang explains that the structure of the book is based on a documentary that uses a variety of perspectives to tell a story. In her book, she explains, she uses three perspectives, those of the Japanese, the Chinese, and the Westerners that were in the area at the time, who were vital to the story, as they attempted to tell others of the extermination. Additionally, she explains that the ending of the book discusses the forces behind the cover-up of the incidents. She notes again the failure of the Japanese to admit their horrifying acts, and their refusal to pay retribution to victims. She hopes the book will spur the world into action. The author clearly is appalled, both by the monstrosity of the situation at Nanking as well as at the refusal of the world to recognize the atrocities and hold Japan responsible. While she mentions her clear desire to avoid placing blame on the people of Japan, it is clear Chang holds politicians, military, and, at least in part, China itself responsible for the lack of information on the topic.



# The Path to Nanking

## The Path to Nanking Summary and Analysis

The author begins by explaining the history of the Japanese identity. According to Chang, the identity of the people stems from ancient warriors known as samurai, who believed that to die for their lord was to die with honor. She believes the kamikaze missions of World War II, where soldiers committed suicide by crashing planes into enemy targets, is proof of this. Chang also points out that the isolation of the country as a whole, beginning with the rule of the Tokugawa clan in the late fifteenth century, also helped shape the nation. For 250 years, the Japanese military failed to advance, and were therefore stunned by the power of the American military in 1852 as Commodore Matthew Perry and his fleet of ships arrived, demanding meetings. From that point forward, Japan vowed to seek revenge for what they believed was a public embarrassment. When Tokugawa rulers sought to wait for the right time, rebels overthrew the government, placing the country under the rule of the Meiji emperor, who reinstated the samurai code of honor. The people of Japan threw themselves into the modern age, and learned all they could of Western military force.

In 1876, Japan sought to test its new power, and sent a naval force to Korea to force a commerce agreement. When the Chinese naval fleet clashed with Japan over Korea, the Japanese showed their force, and crushed the Chinese fleet. The Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed, which forced the Chinese to pay the Japanese for war indemnities and to give Taiwan, the Pescadores, the Liaodong region of Manchuria, and four other ports to Japan. However, the tripartite of Germany, Russia, and France forced the Japan to surrender the Liaodong Peninsula, furthering the Japanese hatred of European powers. By 1905, the Japanese had also defeated the Russian military in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905. However, by the 1920s, Japan was facing a devastating economy as the end to World War I halted the need for Japanese military products, as well as for luxury items. Japanese rulers began to push the idea that conquering new territory would ward off starvation for the people, as well as the concept that the Japanese people had a right to these lands, due to their high achievements in farming, agriculture, and other areas.

Through the beginning of the 1930s, several coups were launched to overthrow the slow paced empire and speed up the pace to dominate Asia. This effort was in part due to Chinese efforts to strengthen itself as a nation. China had been unified during the 1920s by the nationalists under Chiang Kai-shek, threatening Japanese interests in Manchuria and Mongolia. Tensions between China and Japan increased with the Japanese assassination of Chang Tsolin, ruler of Manchuria, and with the boycott of Japanese goods by the Chinese. In 1931, the Japanese feigned an attack on a Japanese railroad in Manchuria, giving them an excuse to seize Manchuria. The incident erupted into bloodshed when a Shanghai mob attacked and killed five Japanese priests, and Japan responded by bombing the city, and withdrawing from the League of Nations.



The author points out that the education of Japanese men for decades had been streamlined for battle. Toy shops sold military items, and the education system was run like miniature military camps. Boys were taught to handle weapons at an early age, lectured extensively on nationalism, forced to read textbooks filled with justifications for expansion, and psychologically prepared to hate the Chinese. Teachers behaved as drill sergeants and often hit, slapped, or beat students into submission. Students were forced to carry immensely heavy objects, stand in the snow for hours barefoot, and run until they collapsed. If the student decided to join the military, the training became more brutal, forcing individualism out while fostering nationalism.

By 1937, Japan succeeded in provoking a full scale war with China. During a military exercise at the Marco Polo bridge, several shots were fired at Japanese soldiers. Japanese soldiers retaliated by advancing on the Chinese fort of Wanping and invading Shanghai. The Chinese military proved tough to battle, and for months the battle continued until the city finally fell in November of 1937. The Japanese troops then marched toward Nanking.





# Six Weeks of Terror

## Six Weeks of Terror Summary and Analysis

The author notes that the plan to take the city of Nanking was helped immensely by the fact that Nanking was blocked by water in two directions. To the north and east lay the Yangtze River, which meant the Japanese forces needed only to attack in a semicircle from the southeast. The attack was led by three primary forces. The first attacked from the west, assisted by the Japanese Air Force which destroyed key bridges and railway systems. This force was led by Nakajima Kesago, an ex-secret police officer of the emperor. The author notes Nakajima has been described by authors around the world as a devil, a copy of Himmler, a specialist in thought control and torture, a sadist, a beast, and a violent man. Chang backs these negative concepts by noting that Nakajima packed special oil for burning bodies as he left for Nanking. To the south of Nakajima's troops, another force, led by General Matsui Iwana, sought to attack from the west. Matsui, in contrast to Nakajima, was a devout Buddhist, and the commander in chief for the Japanese imperial army for the Shanghai-Nanking region. Finally, further south, there was a third force, led by Lieutenant General Yanagawa Heisuke. Yanagawa was a man of mystery, and the author notes a surprising lack of any information about his achievements or duties during the war.

As the armies marched to Nanking, every city along the path was raided, with inhabitants shot, bayoneted, clubbed, and tortured. Chang gives the example of the city of Suzhou, which was prized for its silk and its history. The city was looted for days, and nearly everyone within the city walls was killed. Chang points to records that show the population of the city fell from over 350,000 to less than five hundred. Women were taken for sexual slavery, while men and small boys were murdered. A British correspondent noted that at Pine River, no buildings were left standing, and out of a population of one hundred thousand, he saw only five men left alive. Chang notes that the worst was not yet over. Matsui was stricken with illness and was replaced by a member of the royal family, Asaka Yasuhiko. Asaka not only had full power over the military of the Nanking region, but also knew Nakajima and Yanagawa personally.

Chang explains that what truly happened behind the scenes of the Japanese military at the time of the Nanking invasion is up for debate, as the only details have been given by Japanese military leaders and unreliable sources. However, Chang believes Matsui ordered his troops to take Nanking "morally". Simultaneously, Chang believes, Asaka met with Yanagawa, who informed him that three hundred thousand Chinese troops near Nanking were willing to surrender. Shortly thereafter, orders from the camp of Asaka were issued to kill all captives. Some believe the order was given by Asaka's aide to avoid food shortages, but Chang clearly points out her belief that even if this is true, Asaka is still to blame, since he could have recalled the order.

When the Japanese entered the city, they found half a million civilians and ninety thousand troops. The Japanese military, to avoid an uprising of the surrendering



prisoners, led them by groups to the outskirts after promising fair treatment. The Chinese troops, tired, hungry, and without weapons, did not rise up, but instead cooperated fully. A Japanese soldier, Azuma, later wrote he felt sorry for the troops, but was ashamed at ever fearing the Chinese. Chang explains that once the prisoners were taken to the outskirts, they were lined up and shot. In one instance, over fifty thousand civilians and soldiers were executed on the bank of the Yangtze River. The bodies were either buried, burned, or thrown into the river.

After the slaughter of the Chinese soldiers, the Japanese overtook the city and occupied most of the governmental buildings. The soldiers began to fire at civilians randomly, often in the back, regardless of age, sex, or statute. House to house searches for Chinese soldiers often resulted in the mass execution of anyone in the home. Stores were looted and burned, and Chang references reports that the bodies were piled outside of the city in huge mountains. Japanese journalists following the troops were horrified, and as their stories began to reach international news, the truth, according to Chang, became clear. Women were seized by the thousands, and allocated ten to fifteen soldiers with whom they were forced to have sex. The soldiers made amulets of young girl's pubic hair, believing them to be good luck charms. Furthermore, the women were often killed following gang rape, since the Japanese army had officially outlawed the rape of prisoners. When Matsui returned to the city, he attempted to stop the mayhem, but was powerless to do so. He admitted to several correspondents that the Japanese army had clearly committed horrifying and inexcusable acts of evil.

The Japanese government, in response to worldwide criticism about the rape of the women of Nanking, created an underground system of "comfort houses", or brothels. The women used were kidnapped, purchased, or lured into service, and totaled nearly two hundred thousand in total. Chang points out that the Japanese military still denies any part of the creation of wartime brothels, but also points to records in the Japanese Defense archives which outline the entire plan. The brothels were disgustingly dirty, and many women committed suicide, died of sexually transmitted disease, infection, or were unable to bear children.

Chang closes the chapter by examining the motives behind the Japanese rape of Nanking. She believes the core issue lies with the national identity of the Japanese people. She points to several authors and scholars who note that the renowned good manners of the Japanese go hand in hand with the brutality of Nanking, in that the soldiers believed they had been wronged, shamed, and humiliated by the entire Chinese population. She also points to several authors who note that because of the isolation of Japan, the local values and beliefs were easily swayed once away from the homeland. Chang also notes that some believe the cause to be the non-Christian nature of the Shintoist belief, in that only the emperor and his family are created in God's image, which leads to a tribal belief system. However, Chang firmly warns against such theories, since throughout history, the Christian faith has a root cause of many wars and wartime atrocities. Chang herself supports the idea that the brutality is a blend of these issues, as well as an overall educational system that taught the Japanese soldiers to kill all Chinese equally, to render them lower than animals, and desensitized them to violence, rape, and brutality. This is proven, according to Chang, by the countless

interviews of Japanese veterans who report little or no remorse at their actions. One veteran, Nagatomi, recalls impaling babies on bayonets, tossing them still alive into boiling water, gang raping women aged twelve to eighty and then killing them, and beheading, burning, and burying people alive or dead. While he is now a changed man, and is remorseful, he cannot explain why his and the other soldiers actions occurred.



# The Fall of Nanking

## The Fall of Nanking Summary and Analysis

Chang begins this chapter by noting Nanking has been invaded three times over the course of its history, first by barbarians in the sixth century, then by Taiping rebels in the 1860s. At the time of the Rape, the city was a peaceful blend of modern ideas and ancient culture. Chang describes the experiences of those in the city at the time, including an account by Chang Siao-sung. Chang Siao-sung at first ignored air raid sirens, as the Chinese government had been executing air raid drills since the fall of Shanghai. However, she soon heard machine gun fire and airplanes, and realized the Japanese were approaching. The author also tells the tale of her own grandparents, who narrowly escaped the city during the invasion.

However, not all were so lucky, and many were trapped in the city. Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of China, appointed Tang Sheng-chih to lead the defense of the city, while simultaneously moving the government of Nanking, the capitol of China, to other areas. Tang and Chiang were allies, but often were at odds and, according to the author, did not trust one another. Many believe Tang's appointment was simply to make it appear the government of China was defending the capitol, when in fact, Chiang had already been determined to lose the city. Chiang ordered ninety thousand troops into Nanking to defend, and the troops transformed the city into a military base with trenches, barbed wire, and fortified walls, as well as massive quantities of weapons and ammunition.

Chang notes that many have questioned how the city fell in only four days with so many Chinese soldiers dispatched. Earlier scholars suspected a loss of nerve by the soldiers, but newer information paints a different picture, according to the author. Whereas the battle for Shanghai included massive Chinese air support, Tang was denied any air support at all. Furthermore, when the government evacuated Nanking, they took with them all communication equipment. Additionally, many of the soldiers did not speak the same dialect, further hindering communications, and few had ever even held a gun, and were not trained. Those who had previously fought were tired and diseased from their time fighting in Shanghai. Finally, the Chinese army reported a lack of cohesiveness with other troops, which often left small bands of soldiers to fight the Japanese forces singlehandedly, allowing them to be overrun.

In addition, leaflets were dropped by plane on Nanking before the invasion, promising relief and kindness for those who surrendered and death to those who did not. Tang publicly pushed for the Chinese army to hold the line, and threatened them with severe punishment if they were found using military craft to try and escape. In private, however, he attempted to negotiate a truce along with several American and European citizens still in Nanking. These individuals created the International Safety Zone, a two and a half square mile area understood to be a safe zone for anyone, Chinese or Japanese or American or European. They, along with Tang, proposed to Chiang Kai-shek that the



Japanese be allowed to march into Nanking during a three day cease fire while the Chinese military was moved out. Chiang rejected the truce.

When the Chinese failed to surrender, the Japanese bombarded the city for three days. As Tang sent countless telegrams to Chiang, he received in response only the order to abandon his army and retreat. Tang argued to remain and hold the city, but Chiang was insistent and, under pressure and duress, Tang abandoned his forces. On December 12th, Tang told his commanders his orders, but discovered that their main escape route was blocked by the Japanese army. Tang asked the International Safety Zone member, Eduard Sperling, to again attempt a truce, but Matsui of the Japanese army refused the truce. Tang again ordered retreat, this time to all five divisions, and told them to attempt to cross the Yangtze River and meet in a village on the other side. The result was a catastrophe. While some commanders ordered their troops to run, others ordered their soldiers to shoot those running as deserters. Chinese tanks rolled over other soldiers in an attempt to escape, and many soldiers attacked citizens to obtain non-military clothing.

The only escape route was through a seventy-foot long tunnel on the northern harbor. However, as thousands of soldiers attempted to flee, the area become congested and impassable. Weapons discarded at the entrance created even more of a barrier. As Tang reached the docks several hours later, he found more chaos as soldiers argued over which armaments to ferry across the river, boats were overloaded and capsized, and violence broke out as men tried to find room for themselves on the remaining crafts. In the tunnel, fire broke out, lighting the ammunition and causing panicked soldiers to shove others into the flames. Desperate, many tried to climb the high fortified walls around the tunnel, only to fall to their death. Soldiers who missed the boats attempted to swim or float across and perished. Tang later noted to friends he had been in many battles, but had never seen anything as dark as the fall of Nanking.



# Six Weeks of Horror

## Six Weeks of Horror Summary and Analysis

By the time the Japanese invaded the city of Nanking, all who could had fled, leaving the population at less than half a million. Many left behind were the elderly, children, or the physically weak, and those who convinced themselves the Japanese would treat them well. Some even ran to welcome the soldiers, and were immediately shot down. Following entry to the city, the soldiers shot thousands in the streets at random. Chang notes that wartime transcripts report the same scenario countless times. The Japanese would take any males prisoner and starve them for days. Weak and dehydrated, they would then take them to the outskirts and kill them either by gunfire or sword. While there were stories of heroism and a strong will to live, the majority of the Chinese citizens were too weak to fight. Those who could, lived only by clawing their way out of graves, surviving icy waters and gunfire, and escaping through burning buildings. These individuals later testified at war crimes trials that the mass killings appeared to be for pleasure. One survivor, Tang Shunsan, tells of his own survival of a killing contest. Tang was taken with a group of hundreds of Chinese to the outskirts of town, bound, and forced to stand over a mass grave. He witnessed Japanese dogs feeding on the corpses nearby. The soldiers then began beheading the prisoners one by one in teams, competing to see who could kill the fastest. One woman, clearly pregnant, began to fight, only to have her intestines and fetus ripped from her body. Tang survived only because the team appointed to his section began slitting throats instead, and did not notice when the victim ahead of him fell backwards, pushing Tang into the grave unharmed. Soldiers later came to stab randomly into the pit to ensure all were dead, and Tang sustained five bayonet injuries. He survived only because his friends sneaked to the pit later that night to retrieve his body, only to find him alive. Tang was the only survivor.

The war crimes reports also tell tales of extreme torture. Individuals were buried alive, sometimes only to their chest so they could be run over by tanks, or shredded by swords. The Japanese disemboweled, decapitated, and dismembered civilians, as well as crucified them, gouged out their eyes, cut off their ears, noses, and tongues, set them on fire, stabbed them with zhuizi, or needles with handles, froze them to death, and ordered military dogs to chew off penises and other body parts. They also bathed victims in acid, impaled babies with bayonets, hung them by their tongues, and ate their hearts and their genitals. The genitals were also removed and sold in Japan.

Even more horrifying, according to Chang, is the scale and nature of the raping of women in Nanking. It is estimated that between twenty and eighty thousand women and children were raped at the hands of the Japanese soldiers. Many were impregnated, and chose suicide over giving birth to the half-Japanese children. The subject of impregnated Chinese women during the Rape is so sensitive that no woman has ever admitted her child was conceived due to the Rape. Many of the children were drowned at birth. The victims of the soldiers came from all classes and ages, including nuns,



professors, farm women, and the blue collar. The Japanese soldiers went house to house, raping and killing any woman found. The soldiers used traps such as promises of food or freedom to recruit victims, only to kill them shortly after violent gang rapes. The rapes occurred in broad daylight, often in front of crowds of soldiers. Nunneries, bible schools, and churches were attacked, as well. Great-grandmothers were gang raped to death, and those who refused sex often had sticks and other foreign objects shoved into the vagina and through the body, killing the women. Young girls were raped repeatedly and were unable to walk again, were slashed open and raped as they died, and some had their vaginas slashed open to allow for further penetration. The Japanese soldiers raped pregnant women and ripped not only their intestines from their body afterward, but also their fetuses. In some cases, women in labor were raped, killing both mother and fetus.

Often, the rape of a woman also involved the slaughter of the entire family. In one reported slaughter, thirty soldiers entered a home and killed the landlord, his wife, and a male tenant. The tenant's wife was stripped, raped, and bayoneted. The soldiers shoved a perfume bottle into her vagina, as well as bayoneting her one-year-old child to death. In the next room, they found the grandparents and killed them, as well as two teenage daughters. The sixteen-year-old was raped repeatedly by three men, and killed her by shoving a bamboo cane into her vagina. The fourteen-year-old was also raped repeatedly, and bayoneted. Another sister, aged eight, was bayoneted while hiding under a blanket with her four-year-old sister. The girl lived, and the two survived on rice crusts for fourteen days until a member of the International Committee saved them. The four-year-old suffered permanent brain damage. In another case, a fifteen-year-old was kidnapped after witnessing the slaughter of her brother, his wife, her older sister, and her parents. She was stripped, tied to a table, and forced to have sex three or four times a day. After months of rape, she was diseased enough for the soldiers to leave her alone. A kind Japanese officer released her, drove her to the town border, and sent her to Ginling College, where she was treated. Other women were tied to chairs, beds, or poles, used as permanent rape fixtures. Recreational rape and torture became commonplace. The impalement of vaginas was common, as dead women lay splayed open in the streets with wooden rods, twigs, golf clubs, bottles, and weeds shoved into their orifices. In other cases, fireworks were inserted and ignited.

Chinese men were also raped and tortured. The men were forced into having sex with their deceased wives, sodomy, and anal sex, as well as castrated. Fathers were forced to rape their daughters, brothers their sisters, sons their mothers, and other combinations. Many families opted immediately for death in the face of such agony. While there were women who escaped rape through a variety of methods, most did not. In the case of Li Xouying, rape and death were narrowly averted. As a pregnant woman facing rape, she chose suicide by beating her head on a wall. When she awoke, she was attacked by soldiers. She fought bravely, and killed one, but was severely wounded, and left for dead. She was nearly buried, but family members saw her breathing, and fled to a nearby hospital, where she was saved, but miscarried.

The total death toll of the Rape of Nanking is controversial. The IMTFE estimates over 260,000 were killed, the Chinese military claims 430,000, and still others claim only





three thousand were killed. A thorough study by Sun Zhaiwei, who studied census reports, burial records, and confessions of Japanese war criminals, estimates the total at nearly 377,400. Further proof of a higher number is given by the Japanese themselves. On January 17th, 1938, Foreign Minister Hirota Koki in Tokyo messaged to Washington DC that the Japanese military, based on eyewitness reports, had slaughtered over three hundred thousand Chinese in Nanking.

Chang notes that although it is tempting to believe the slaughter would have been less intense had Chiang Kai-shek pulled his army sooner, the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of citizens on farmlands suggests otherwise. She also points out that had Chiang Kai-shek allowed his soldiers to defend Nanking, it may still have fallen, but the fight may have lasted long enough to decentralize the Japanese army, and may have resulted in fewer casualties, rapes, and mutilations.





# The Nanking Safety Zone

## The Nanking Safety Zone Summary and Analysis

Chang notes that although the Rape of Nanking is filled with horror, it was this horror that allowed some individuals to shine. The International Committee was made up of a small band of American and Europeans in Nanking, and were responsible for the creation of the Nanking Safety Zone. The idea began with Presbyterian missionary W. Plummer Mills, and was set up to the west of the center of Nanking. The point of the zone was to offer protection from the Japanese for non-combatants, as was allowed by war time law. While the Japanese refused initially to honor the zone, they eventually at least recognized it, although the zone did not stop invasions of Japanese troops. As the original camp filled quickly with those who had lost their homes, new camps were added. The twenty-two men and women of the Committee documented their experiences, and Chang presents the story of three individuals. She believes that the actions of these and the other members of the Committee saved hundreds of thousands of lives.

German businessman John Rabe is perhaps the most surprising savior of Nanking, as he was a German national as well as the leader of the Nazi Party in Nanking. As a wealthy man, Rabe had come to Nanking as a salesman to the government. His faith in Nazi beliefs stemmed more from socialism than antisemitism, as Chang points out. He did not leave at the time of the Rape because he felt responsible for his employees. Rabe helped to create the Zone, and forced the Chinese soldiers from the area in an effort to truly create a neutral zone. When the Japanese continued to bomb the area, Rabe wrote to Adolf Hitler for assistance, and noticed an immediate halting of the air raids on the Zone. Within a short time, the Zone, only two and a half square miles in size, soared to a population of over 250,000. Rabe was responsible for improving sanitation within the Zone after threatening to tell the press about the Japanese, as well as for sneaking away to deliver food and to gather the food left outside the Zone. He and colleague Christian Kroger were shocked at the Japanese brutality. Rabe himself often chased away Japanese soldiers, pulled them from the women they were raping, and stopped them from killing the innocents within the Zone. The Japanese appeared to fear the Nazi Party, which Rabe proudly displayed his loyalty to by wearing a swastika. In one case, Rabe elected to allow soldiers into the Zone, and begged for their mercy. The Japanese promised their lives would be spared, but Rabe soon learned this was a lie as the Chinese men were led away and killed. Rabe's letters to the Japanese authorities became less polite and more violent, and he began to roam the streets to personally save everyone he could. He would drive around Nanking to find refugees, stop rapes in progress, stop looting, and stop Japanese soldiers from killing non-combatants. He continued to show no signs of weakness, and always, according to reports, showed high morale. He became a legend to the Chinese, and a savior of the people. Even those within the Committee respected him, in spite of his affiliations.



Robert Wilson was another Committee member who held his ground during the Rape. Born in the city, Wilson was a doctor, practicing at the University of Nanking hospital. He and other Westerners took residence in a Nanking home during the Rape, but Wilson spent most of his time at the hospital. His letters home to his wife tell many of his horrifying stories. The Japanese continued to bomb the hospital, but Wilson went to work each day, seeing it as his duty. He saw thousands upon thousands of people each day, treating them for wounds, infections, and a thousand other ailments. Simultaneously, the staff of the hospital diminished, creating even more of a workload. Only three doctors remained, Wilson, C.S. Trimmer, and a Chinese physician. As soldiers began to loot the hospital, Wilson fought back, kicking them and fighting them off. In his letters, it is clear Wilson was horrified at the murder, rape "by the thousands of cases", starvation, and destruction done at the hands of the Japanese. While he could not stop the mass executions he witnessed, he was able to treat the thousands of rape victims whose stomachs had been torn open, the thousands of men left alive when the Japanese set them on fire, and the rest of the population. However, his letters home were also filled with admiration for the willpower of his patients, and for their courage. Wilson rarely slept, rarely ate, and simply treated patients day in and day out for months. Even when the Rape began to slow, and other doctors began to vacation on weekends, Wilson stayed, always protecting and caring for the people of Nanking.

Wilhelmina Vautrin was the head of the Education Department and dean of studies at Ginling Woman's Arts and Science College in Nanking at the time of the Rape. Vautrin kept a diary through her entire ordeal that told harrowing tales of rape, murder, and violence. When many of the faculty fled the school, Vautrin became the acting head of the institution, and for days spread the word that the area would be a haven for Chinese women. Thousands responded, to the point where there were women on the lawns and shoulder to shoulder in the rooms. The Japanese troops repeatedly attacked the campus, using trickery to lure Vautrin away so they could kidnap young women for prostitutes. Servants were removed and killed, and Vautrin heard many stories of rape of women as young as seven and as old as sixty. Vautrin spent much of her time attempting to secure food, redirecting men to other Safety Zones, and chasing away Japanese soldiers. At one point, Vautrin allowed soldiers to remove twenty women as prostitutes, hoping to spare the young virgins of the camp, only to find the Japanese returning for more. When the Japanese demanded that all citizens come out for registration and attempted to force evacuation of the college, Vautrin refused. Although she was exhausted, both mentally and physically, she found the strength to comfort others, and give them hope that Japan would fail.

These three individuals, along with the other members of the Committee, provided free food to the refugees in the Zone as well as hiding residents in the city, threw themselves in the line of fire to save the Chinese, were abused, harmed, and injured as they fought to protect the refugees, and eventually housed, fed, and cared for over 250,000 refugees. It was, according to Chang, these individuals who saved the people of Nanking.

# What the World Knew

## What the World Knew Summary and Analysis

Chang points out that the world knew more of what was occurring in Nanking than in most conflicts, thanks to the heroic efforts of news reporters, filmmakers, and the International Committee. While the Japanese were at first celebratory of their actions in Nanking, their tone turned down enormously when international criticism began. Three American correspondents, Frank Tillman Durdin, Archibald Steele, and C. Yates McDaniel, were primarily responsible for information to the west. While they left shortly after the massacre began, their reports of rape, murder, and violence were splashed across the newspapers of the world. Further, these individuals found themselves helping the International Committee to save the Chinese as they helped the wounded, sheltered the Chinese, and reported every movement. On their way out of the city, they reported several feet of bodies, the witnessing of the execution of over a thousand Chinese soldiers, and the apparent lack of remorse within the Japanese soldiers. In addition, newsreel men Norman Alley and Eric Mayell filmed the bombing of the Panay, a US ship evacuating US citizens. When the footage was revealed to the world, president Roosevelt demanded compensation from Emperor Hirohito. In response to these reports, the Japanese began an attempt at damage control. They first blocked all reporters from the city, and then all foreign diplomats. However, the US government had cracked the code of Japanese transmissions, and knew of the situation in Nanking.

The Japanese intensified their efforts to control the reports. While the Japanese media was reporting all was well, the military was leading carefully controlled groups of tourists through cleared areas of the city. The images taken of these trips shows Japanese giving candy to small Chinese children, and other peaceful images. Japanese newsmen staged images of Japanese doctors working on the Chinese wounded, and of the Chinese carrying Japanese flags. In the diaries of the International Committee, such events are clearly distastefully outlined. Within Nanking, the Japanese military hung posters promising rice and care for those refugees who returned to their homes. The International Committee diaries show these refugees were soon killed.

When the leaders of the Safety Zone realized they would be the only reporters of the Nanking massacre, they all began to carefully document the atrocities. As the letters and words of these individuals were smuggled out of Nanking, their words were spread in major newspapers, magazines, and other forms of media across the globe. John Magee, another foreign of the Committee, was an amateur filmmaker whose images showed the horribly disfigured, charred, and beaten men and women of Nanking, as well as the young and old rape victims. This film was smuggled from Nanking, developed, and sent to the Nazi Party and the United States. These individuals again not only saved thousands of Chinese, but risked their lives to tell the story of the massacre to the rest of the world.



# The Occupation of Nanking

## The Occupation of Nanking Summary and Analysis

By the spring of 1938, the worst of the massacre was over, but as Chang points out, the occupation was horrible in and of itself. Trash and human filth had piled up in the city, and total property damage, much of which had occurred as a result of the arson of Japanese soldiers, totaled over \$900 million. Further destruction occurred as soldiers looted every building available to them. By January of 1938, there were only two stores operating in Nanking, those of the military store and the International Committee's rice shop. Electricity, telephone, and water services had been stopped. Slowly, the economy began to recover as vendors began selling their goods, services were reestablished, restaurants opened, and the Nanking Self-Government Committee was established with puppet Chinese government officials. City buses began to run, and the railway was reopened.

Chang notes, however, that these facts do not reveal the true face of the occupation. Merchants were forced to pay huge taxes and high rents, military shops drained the city of gold and replaced it with useless military money, valuables were confiscated, and opium appeared as a form of currency. The opium addiction levels soared as employees were paid by the military in drugs, furthering the already high crime rate. Chinese laborers were treated as slaves, abused, and often killed. Even further, medical experiments were conducted on the Chinese people in a secret lab Unit Ei 1644, where zaimoku, or "lumber", the Chinese people, were studied. These individuals were injected with poisons, germs, and lethal gases, including acetone, arsenic, cyanide, and snake poisons. For the people in the city, the intimidation by the Japanese was equally detrimental as the baojia system, in which individuals had to be given passes by local leaders, was established.

Surprisingly, however, the city recovered well. Famine was avoided, disease was quickly cured, and as men came back to the city, reconstruction began. In the summer of 1945, the US bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki put an end to the war, as well as of the occupation. The Japanese surrendered, left the city, and went home, where war trials awaited some.



# Judgment Day

## Judgment Day Summary and Analysis

Even before the end of the war, Chang notes, the Allied forces were beginning to organize war tribunals to bring the Japanese to justice. In March of 1944, the United Nations created the Investigations of War Crimes Committee. By August of 1946, the trials of class B and C war criminals began in Nanking. The trials lasted until February of 1947, and more than one thousand people testified in more than 460 counts of rape, murder, arson, and looting. During the trials, evidence such as photos that had been painstakingly hidden for years by the Chinese at their own risk surfaced, as did articles describing the horrors. Noda Takeshi and Mukai Toshiaki, both of whom participated in the killing contests, were found guilty and executed. Tani Hisao, the General under which the 6th Division of the Japanese army committed many of their horrifying acts, was also found guilty, and shot. The people of Nanking poured out to view these executions, some cheering loudly as guilty sentences were read.

In the capitol of Japan, the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, or the IMTFE, also known as the Tokyo War Crimes Trial, began in May of 1946. Over two hundred thousand spectators and 419 witnesses came to the trials, which spawned over 49,000 pages of transcripts. Twenty-eight military officials were tried. The trials showed clearly the Rape of Nanking was just one atrocity committed by the Japanese during the war. The Japanese were found to have conducted experiments on captives, marched the ill and starved until they dropped dead, created a Death Railway, conducted Japanese "water treatment" in which refugees were filled with water through tubes until their bowels exploded, ripped refugee limbs from their bodies, forced them to kneel on sharp objects, extracted nails from fingers, conducted electroshock torture, beat and flogged war prisoners, and even ate their victims. The court concluded the brunt of the atrocities fell to Matsui Iwane as commander of Japan's Central China Expeditionary Force. However, Chang believes Matsui was a scapegoat, since he was not even in Nanking when it fell, and clearly attempted to stop the atrocities of his replacement in the field, Asaka. Matsui clearly felt sorrow for the war crimes, as he erected several monuments in Japan. Chang notes that during the trial, though, Matsui took responsibility for failing to properly guide Asaka and the emperor. He was found guilty, and executed, as were seven other class A war criminals.

Chang reminds readers that, unfortunately, those truly responsible for the massacre were not brought to trial. Kesago died shortly after the surrender of Japan from cirrhosis of the liver, while Heisuke died of a heart attack. As a condition of surrender, the US promised Emperor Hirohito immunity to him as well as his entire family, thereby also granting immunity to Asaka himself. These decisions, Chang believes, furthered the belief in Japan that the Rape of Nanking never occurred, because their emperor and Asaka were never held responsible. Due to a lack of records, it is difficult to judge the role of Hirohito in the war. There is further debate as to whether there was ever an agenda of the Japanese rule of Asia, since the only document found to report such a

goal, the Tanaka Memorial, is now believed to be a forgery by the Russian government. At the same time, since the Rape of Nanking was broadcast over worldwide news, it is impossible, Chang says, for Hirohito not to have known about the incident. Asaka retired to a life of luxury with his uncle, Hirohito, and neither were ever convicted of any wrongdoing.



# The Fate of the Survivors

## The Fate of the Survivors Summary and Analysis

Chang admits she is horrified at the fate of the many persons involved in the Rape of Nanking. Chang believes the reason there has been no retribution is because as the Cold War took over following the war trials, the US saw Japan as a strategic point, and therefore neglected to push the government to pay its victims. When Chang traveled to Nanking to interview the survivors, she found many living in extreme poverty, and many who were permanently disabled as a result of their injuries at the hands of the Japanese. Many believed their own government, the PRC, or People's Republic of China, had betrayed them, since they had openly announced they forgave the Japanese for their war crimes.

In addition, Chang found during the writing of the book that many of the International Committee also suffered following Nanking. Miner Searle Bates and Lewis Smythe resided in China after the war. However, as the PRC altered historical reports to accuse the International Committee of assisting the Japanese to limit trust in western government, the men were forced to leave for the United States. Reverend John Magee died an early death, while George Fitch found himself often amnesic about events during the Rape. Robert Wilson began to experience violent seizures and mental collapse shortly after the Rape. Minnie Vautrin fought for years with mental anguish over what she saw, and eventually committed suicide. John Rabe was persecuted by German authorities, and after the war, by British and American authorities. Thrown into poverty and unable to work due to his status as a Nazi, Rabe lived in absolutely poverty, eating nettles and water for food, and barely feeding his family. The German government took all his money as part of the de-nazification process, and the entries in his diary show a downward spiral of poverty and extreme depression. However, in 1948, word reached Nanking of Rabe's plight, and the population immediately raised over \$2,000 for him. In March, the mayor of Nanking purchased milk powder, sausages, tea, coffee, beets, butter, and jam to be delivered to Rabe and his family. Following Rabe's repeated heartfelt letters of thanks, the people of Nanking continued to send food and money each month. Rabe passed away in 1950, and left behind a massive volume of over two thousand pages of memoirs about the Rape. After years of hiding the documents, his granddaughter finally brought them to light with the help of Chang. The value of the work, written by a German Nazi, is unquestioned worldwide by even Japanese historians, who see the work as one of the few unbiased works on the Rape.





# The Forgotten Holocaust: A Second Rape

## The Forgotten Holocaust: A Second Rape Summary and Analysis

Chang believes the largest crime of the Rape of Nanking is the disappearance of the event in the educational systems of the world. She admits that the writing of the book was done to help ensure that the plight of over three hundred thousand murdered Chinese men and women would not be lost. She blames the lack of information on the topic to a number of factors. First, she explains that while the German government publicly admitted their crimes in the murder of the Jews, thereby opening discussions of the issue, the Japanese government to this date refuses to accept any responsibility. Additionally, she notes that textbooks ignore the Rape, primarily due to the threat of Japanese violence. Leading member of the Liberal Democratic Party, Ishihara Shintaro, said in 1990 that the holocaust of Nanking never occurred. While the world criticized him, he still refused to retract his statements and even went further, claiming the foreign reports during the war were fabricated. When the reporters themselves came forward to dissent his view, he changed his story slightly, accusing the US of perpetrating the violence to justify the bombing of Hiroshima.

However, some Japanese officials were not so lucky as to keep their posts following their denial of the Rape. Nagano Shigeto, Justice Minister in 1994, lost his position by claiming the Rape was a fabrication. Fujio Masayuki, the minister of education in 1986, lost his position for claiming Korea was the cause of the war, that only two thousand Chinese were killed, and that the War Crime Trials were an act of racial revenge. Okuno Seisuke, the director of the military police, lost his position when he blamed the white man for the aggressive acts on Nanking. Sakurai Shin, director of the Japanese environmental agency in 1994, lost his post when he claimed Japan did not go to war with aggressive intentions. Hashimoto Ryutaro, minister for international trade in 1995, lost his post when he stated the Japanese only meant to go to war with the US.

In addition, Chang points to the censorship of textbooks as a cause for the loss of information of the Rape. Until 1994, textbooks were censored in Japan, and all information about the Rape was removed. It was only following the lawsuits of textbook writer and historian Ienaga Saburo that textbooks were no longer censored. However, the censors are still allowed to censor based on fact, and often change the number killed to the lowest estimates possible, thereby minimizing the scale.

Chang also blames the academic community, which has shied away from writing about the massacre for fear of retribution. Only those outside of academia, such as freelance writers, have breeched the topic. Ono Kenji, one such writer, has researched the issue extensively by interviewing hundreds of people, but lives in fear of Japanese retaliation. The media, self censored in Japan, also ignores or alters the truth, according to Chang.





When the film "The Last Emperor" was shown in Japan, all references to the Rape were removed, causing international anger. On the other side of the coin, writers such as Tanaka Masaaki have written books in support of Japan's actions in the war. However, Azuma Shiro, the first Japanese veteran to apologize for the Rape, was forced into hiding after his statement due to death threats. Motoshima Hitoshi, mayor of Nagasaki in 1988, made a statement that he believed the emperor was responsible for the war. He was harassed, abused, and threatened for weeks. Finally, after Hirohito's death in 1989, Hitoshi was shot and killed.



# Epilogue

## Epilogue Summary and Analysis

Chang notes that the Rape was not the only crime committed by the Japanese. She points to the mass extermination in Northern China, where one million individuals were slaughtered. The use of biological weapons was vital to the Japanese plan, and included the spraying of fleas infected with plague over metropolitan areas, the dumping of flasks containing cholera, dysentery, typhoid, plague, anthrax, and paratyphoid into rivers and streams, and the mixing of food with typhoid. The final death count in China over the course of the war at the hands of the Japanese is more than nineteen million people.

Chang offers several reasons for the actions of the Japanese during the war. First, she explains, the theory of "the transfer of oppression" can be applied. This theory relies on the idea that in a civilization such as Japan, where brutality is taught from birth and where the entire society is hierarchical, the soldiers are naturally bitter. When given power over a group of individuals deemed even lower than themselves, the soldiers react with extreme misplaced violence. Secondly, Chang points to the contempt of the Chinese as taught through Japanese education. Third, Chang blames religion. In the Shintoist faith, the Emperor is the ruler of all, and the Japanese are therefore racially superior. It was their belief that they were not only protecting themselves, but actually helping the Chinese by bringing them under the power of the Emperor.

Chang realizes in her epilogue that the book began about the atrocities of Nanking, but also has led her to conclusions about the dark side of human nature. She now believes civilization is tissue-thin, and that the Rape could only occur in a situation where the government was dangerous, the culture vulnerable, and the people easily encouraged to allow their youths to be trained as killers. She also now believes genocide is a powerful tool of the concentration of power within a government. Without restraint on government, that government will act on the darker whims of the human imagination without restriction. Finally, Chang points out that the world needs to react more strongly to genocide that occurs in other lands, such as that which occurred in Nanking, Rwanda, Darfur, and other areas.

Chang believes the tide is turning in terms of the continued victimization of the Chinese survivors. The US, China, and even some in Japan are beginning to pressure for reparations through a flood of media on the topic of the Rape, bills to force payment, the denial of suspected war criminals into the country, and constant pressure. Chang closes by noting her firm belief that Japan owes it to China, as well as to themselves, to admit their wrongdoings and pay for their crimes.

# Acknowledgments

## Acknowledgments Summary and Analysis

Chang ends the novel by thanking a variety of individuals vital to the content of the novel. These include her parents, her editor, the Global Alliance for Preserving the History of World War II in Asia, translators, historians, and friends. She also thanks the Pacific Cultural Foundation, which funded her trip to Asia. In addition, she sends gratitude to the Institute of Modern History, the Memorial Hall of the Victims of the Nanking Massacre by Japanese Invaders, the China Times reporter Caroline Lin, and the survivors of the massacre who were brave enough to tell their stories and their families, as well as several institutes within the US and abroad which gave their time and energy. She closes by thanking her husband, who helped her through the gruesome stories to find the truth about the Rape of Nanking.



# Characters

## Victims of the Rape of Nanking

The focus of the novel is on the Chinese refugees who suffered immensely at the hands of the Japanese military in the city of Nanking. Over three hundred thousand men, women, and children were systematically slaughtered within a six week period in the city and the outskirts. The Japanese military not only killed all suspected Chinese soldiers, but also most of the men in town, and many of the women. Women were raped brutally, sometimes for days at a time, regardless of age or stature. Chinese men were used for bayonet practice, castrated, roasted alive, forced to rape their wives and children, beheaded, hung by their tongues, and buried to the waist to be eaten by dogs. The Japanese were later found to have conducted experiments on captives, marched the ill and starved them until they dropped dead, created a Death Railway, conducted Japanese "water treatment" in which refugees were filled with water through tubes until their bowels exploded, ripped refugee limbs from their bodies, forced them to kneel on sharp objects, extracted nails from fingers, conducted electroshock torture, beat and flogged war prisoners, and even ate their victims. These individuals were never paid retribution for their suffering, and have been ignored by the world in general. Chang not only focuses the novel on the experiences of these poor souls, but also on informing the world of their plight to try and ensure they will eventually be vindicated.

## Robert Wilson

Robert Wilson was another International Committee member who held his ground during the Rape. Born in the city of Nanking, Wilson was trained as a doctor abroad, but came home to practice at the University of Nanking hospital. He and other Westerners took residence in a Nanking home during the Rape, but Wilson spent most of his time at the hospital. His letters home to his wife tell many of his horrifying stories. The Japanese continued to bomb the hospital, but Wilson went to work each day, seeing it as his duty to his people. He saw thousands upon thousands of people each day, treating them for wounds, infections, and a thousand other ailments. Simultaneously, the staff of the hospital diminished, creating even more of a workload. Only three doctors remained, Wilson, C.S. Trimmer, and a Chinese physician. As soldiers began to loot the hospital, Wilson fought back, kicking them and fighting them off. In his letters, it is clear Wilson was horrified at the murder, rape "by the thousands of cases", starvation, and destruction done at the hands of the Japanese. While he could not stop the mass executions he witnessed, he was able to treat the thousands of rape victims whose stomachs had been torn open, the thousands of men left alive when the Japanese set them on fire, and the rest of the population. However, his letters home were also filled with admiration for the willpower of his patients, and for their courage. Wilson rarely slept, rarely ate, and simply treated patients day in and day out for months. Even when the Rape began to slow, and other doctors began to vacation on weekends, Wilson stayed, always protecting and caring for the people of Nanking. Unfortunately, this



dedication took its toll. Shortly after the war, Robert Wilson began to experience violent seizures and mental collapse. His family is convinced it was his endless hours of work in Nanking that resulted in his condition later in life. However, he is seen in Nanking as a savior of the people, and was one of the true heroes at the time of the war.

## Wilhelmina Vautrin

Wilhelmina Vautrin was the head of the Education Department and dean of studies at Ginling Woman's Arts and Science College in Nanking at the time of the Rape. Vautrin kept a diary through her entire ordeal that told harrowing tales of rape, murder, and violence. When many of the faculty fled the school, Vautrin became the acting head of the institution and for days spread the word that the area would be a haven for Chinese women. Thousands responded to the point where there were women on the lawns, and shoulder to shoulder in the rooms. The Japanese troops repeatedly attacked the campus, using trickery to lure Vautrin away so they could kidnap young women for prostitutes. Servants were removed and killed, and Vautrin heard many stories of rape of women as young as seven and as old as sixty. Vautrin spent much of her time attempting to secure food, redirecting men to other Safety Zones, and chasing away Japanese soldiers. At one point, Vautrin allowed soldiers to remove twenty women as prostitutes, hoping to spare the young virgins of the camp, only to find the Japanese returning for more. When the Japanese demanded that all citizens come out for registration, and attempted to force evacuation of the college, Vautrin refused. Although she was exhausted, both mentally and physically, she found the strength to comfort others, and give them hope that Japan would fail. Minnie Vautrin fought for years after the war with mental anguish over what she saw, and eventually committed suicide.

## John Rabe

German businessman John Rabe is perhaps the most surprising character in the novel as a savior of Nanking, as he was also a German national as well as the leader of the Nazi Party in Nanking. As a wealthy man, Rabe had come to Nanking as a salesman to the government. His faith in Nazi beliefs stemmed more from socialism than antisemitism, and his beliefs did not stretch to agree with the extermination of the Jews. Rabe helped to create the Nanking Safety Zone, an area of safe harbor for Chinese refugees, and forced the Chinese soldiers from the area in an effort to truly create a neutral zone. When the Japanese continued to bomb the area, Rabe wrote to Adolf Hitler for assistance, and noticed an immediate halting of the air raids on the Zone. Within a short time, the Zone, only two and a half square miles in size, soared to a population of over two hundred fifty thousand. Rabe was responsible for improving sanitation within the Zone after threatening to tell the press about the Japanese, as well as for sneaking away to deliver food and to gather the food left outside the Zone. Rabe himself often chased away Japanese soldiers, pulled them from the women they were raping, and stopped them from killing the innocents within the Zone. He became a legend to the Chinese, and a savior of the people. Even those within the Committee respected him, in spite of his affiliations.



However, following the war, Rabe led a meager existence in Germany, where he was persecuted by German authorities, and by British and American authorities. Unable to work due to his status as a Nazi, Rabe lived in absolutely poverty, eating nettles and water for food, and barely feeding his family. However, in 1948, word reached Nanking of Rabe's plight, and the population immediately raised over \$2,000 for him, sent food for him, and continued to do so for many months following. Rabe passed away in 1950, and left behind a massive volume of over two thousand pages of memoirs about the Rape, the value of which is unquestioned worldwide, by even Japanese historians, who see the work as one of the few unbiased works on the Rape.

## **Nakajima Kesago**

As one of the leaders of the Japanese invasion, Nakajima's troop first attacked Nanking from the west, assisted by the Japanese Air Force who destroyed key bridges and railway systems. Nakajima was an ex-secret police officer of the emperor, and one the cruelest men in the war. Nakajima has been described by authors around the world as a devil, a copy of Himmler, a specialist in thought control and torture, a sadist, a beast, and a violent man. These negative concepts are backed by the fact that Nakajima packed special oil for burning bodies as he left for Nanking. Unfortunately, Nakajima was never tried for his war crimes, as he passed away from liver cirrhosis shortly after the end of the war.

## **Matsui Iwana**

Matsui Iwana was another leader of Japanese military troops in the invasion of Nanking. Matsui, in contrast to Nakajima, was a devout Buddhist, and the commander in chief for the Japanese imperial army for the Shanghai-Nanking region. When Matsui was stricken with illness, he was replaced by a member of the royal family, Asaka Yasuhiko. Asaka not only had full power over the military of the Nanking region, but also knew Nakajima and Yanagawa personally. When Matsui later recovered and entered Nanking, he was astonished at the atrocities committed, and attempted several times to alert military leaders that actions should be taken to stop the soldiers.

During the war trials, the court concluded that the brunt of the atrocities fell to Matsui Iwane as commander of Japan's Central China Expeditionary Force. However, Matsui is often seen as a scapegoat, since he was not even in Nanking when it fell, and clearly attempted to stop the atrocities of his replacement in the field, Asaka. Matsui clearly felt sorrow for the war crimes, as he erected several monuments in Japan. During the trial, though, Matsui took responsibility for failing to properly guide Asaka and the empower. He was found guilty, and executed, as were seven other class A war criminals.

## **Yangawa Heisuke**

As one of the leaders of the Japanese invasion, Yangawa Heisuke's life is shrouded in mystery. Yanagawa was a man of mystery, and there is a surprising lack of any



information about his achievements or duties during the war. His photograph is missing from most wartime photos, and there appears to be no further record of his direction of troops. After the war, he died of a heart attack, thereby avoiding any fallout from his crimes during the war.

## Asaka Yasuhiko

As one of the leaders of the Japanese invasion, as well as the relative of the emperor of Japan, Asaka held great power during the war. When Matsui was stricken with illness, he was replaced by Asaka, who not only had full power over the military of the Nanking region, but also knew Nakajima and Yanagawa, the other two leaders in the region, personally. Asaka met with Yanagawa, who informed him that three hundred thousand Chinese troops near Nanking were willing to surrender. Shortly thereafter, orders from the camp of Asaka were issued to kill all captives. Some believe the order was given by Asaka's aid to avoid food shortages, but others believe Asaka was simply out for blood. As a condition of surrender, the US promised Emperor Hirohito immunity to him, as well as his entire family, thereby also granting immunity to Asaka himself. Asaka retired to a life of luxury with his uncle, Hirohito, and neither were ever convicted of any wrongdoing.

## Tang Shunsan

Tang Shunsan was a survivor who tells his story of a killing contest. Tang was taken with a group of hundreds of Chinese to the outskirts of town, bound, and forced to stand over a mass grave. He witnessed Japanese dogs feeding on the corpses nearby. The soldiers then began beheading the prisoners one by one in teams, competing to see who could kill the fastest. One woman, clearly pregnant, began to fight, only to have her intestines and fetus ripped from her body. Tang survived only because the team appointed to his section began slitting throats instead, and did not notice when the victim ahead of him fell backwards, pushing Tang into the grave unharmed. Soldiers later came to stab randomly into the pit to ensure all were dead, and Tang sustained five bayonet injuries. He survived only because his friends sneaked to the pit later that night to retrieve his body, only to find him alive. Tang was the only survivor.

## Chiang Kai-shek

Chiang Kai-shek, the leader of China, is believed by some to be responsible for the fall of Nanking. Chiang appointed Tang Sheng-chih to lead the defense of the city, while simultaneously moving the government of Nanking, the capitol of China, to other areas. Many believe Tang's appointment was simply to make it appear the government of China was defending the capitol, when in fact, Chiang had already been determined to lose the city. Chiang ordered ninety thousand troops into Nanking to defend, and the troops transformed the city into a military base with trenches, barbed wire, and fortified walls, as well as massive quantities of weapons and ammunition. However, whereas the





battle for Shanghai included massive Chinese air support, Tang was denied any air support at all from Chiang. Furthermore, when the government evacuated Nanking, they took with them all communication equipment, leaving Tang without a way to communicate to forces. Finally, when Tang and the International Committee proposed to Chiang that the Japanese be allowed to march into Nanking during a three day cease fire while the Chinese military was moved out, Chiang rejected the truce. In the end, Chiang ordered Tang to abandon the city.

## Tang Sheng-chih

As the Chinese military leader left in charge of Nanking, Tang was woefully unprepared. Many believe Tang's appointment was simply to make it appear the government of China was defending the capitol, but he still fought with honor. Left without communications, air support, or the support of his government, Tang fought a brave battle to keep the city. When the Chinese failed to surrender, the Japanese bombarded the city for three days. As Tang sent countless telegrams to Chiang, he received in response only the order to abandon his army and retreat. Tang argued to remain and hold the city, but Chiang was insistent and, under pressure and duress, Tang abandoned his forces. On December 12th, Tang told his commanders his orders, but discovered that their main escape route was blocked by the Japanese army. Tang asked the International Safety Zone member, Eduard Sperling, to again attempt a truce, but Matsui of the Japanese army refused the truce. Tang again ordered retreat, this time to all five divisions, and told them to attempt to cross the Yangtze River and meet in a village on the other side. The only escape route was through a seventy-foot long tunnel on the northern harbor. However, as thousands of soldiers attempted to flee, the area become congested and impassable. Weapons discarded at the entrance created even more of a barrier. As Tang reached the docks several hours later, he found more chaos as soldiers argued over which armaments to ferry across the river, boats were overloaded and capsized, and violence broke out as men tried to find room for themselves on the remaining crafts. In the tunnel, fire broke out, lighting the ammunition and causing panicked soldiers to shove others into the flames. Desperate, many tried to climb the high fortified walls around the tunnel, only to fall to their death. Soldiers who missed the boats attempted to swim or float across, and perished. Tang later noted to friends he had been in many battles, but had never seen anything as dark as the fall of Nanking. After the war, he was promoted through the ranks of the military, and became a well established leader of China.





# Objects/Places

## Nanking

Nanking, a city in China, was the site of a massive killing spree and rape of Chinese citizens at the hands of the Japanese during World War II.

## Yangtze River

The Yangtze River, which surrounding Nanking, was the site of many mass executions, resulting in a river of bodies outside of the city.

## Shintoism

Shintoism, the faith of many Japanese people, is the belief that the Emperor is the only true ruler of the world. Many believe this religious faith lent to the mindset of the Japanese soldiers in their attempt to completely destroy the population of Nanking.

## Samurai

The samurai is an ancient fighter for the emperor. The Samurai code, that of the willing death of the soldier for the life of the Emperor, is believed to be another cause of the Rape of Nanking.

## Suzhou

The city of Suzhou, which was prized for its silk and history, was another site of Japanese atrocity. The city was looted for days, and nearly everyone within the city walls was killed. Chang points to records that show the population of the city fell from over 350,000 to less than five hundred. Women were taken for sexual slavery, while men and small boys were murdered.

## Comfort Houses

Comfort houses were the Japanese solution to the mass rape occurring within Nanking. The concept was that brothels would allow the soldiers to have sexual relations without the need for rape. However, many of the women employed were kidnapped by Japanese soldiers and forced into the brothels.



## **International Committee**

The International Committee was a small group of twenty-two foreign residents of Nanking who sought to create a safe zone for hundreds of thousands of Chinese refugees.

## **Killing Contests**

The killing contests were competitions among Japanese soldiers to determine who could behead the most victims in the shortest amount of time.

## **Nanking Safety Zone**

The Nanking Safety Zone was an area of two and a half miles within the city that housed and protected hundreds of thousands of Chinese refugees.

## **Nazi Party**

The Nazi Party, often believed to be negative in connotation, was partially responsible for the saving of the people of Nanking through their local representative, John Rabe.

## **Ginling Woman's Arts and Science College**

A second area of safety within Nanking for women, the college was protected by Wilhelmina Vautrin, a woman dedicated to saving the lives of thousands.

## **University of Nanking Hospital**

Yet another safety zone within Nanking, the hospital was protected by Robert Wilson, a surgeon who worked day and night to help tend to the injured, sick, and homeless.

## **Propoganda**

A technique employed by the Japanese to lure the citizens of Nanking from their hiding places, as well as to try and convince the world the holocaust at Nanking did not occur.

## **Unit Ei 1644**

Unit Ei 1644 was a secret military hospital in Nanking used by the Japanese to perform biological testing on Chinese subjects.



## **International Military Tribunal for the Far East**

The IMTFE was the primary group responsible for bringing the Japanese military leaders to justice following the war.

## **Biological Weapons**

These were weapons used by the Japanese in an attempt to exterminate the Chinese population. Their methods included the spraying of fleas infected with plague over metropolitan areas, the dumping of flasks containing cholera, dysentery, typhoid, plague, anthrax, and paratyphoid into rivers and streams, and the mixing of food with typhoid. The final death count in China over the course of the war at the hands of the Japanese is more than nineteen million people.



# Themes

## Nationalism/Japanese identity

Throughout the novel, Chang places at least some of the blame for the events at Nanking on the development of nationalist and the Japanese identity, making it one of the primary themes of the novel. According to Chang, the identity of the people stems from ancient warriors known as samurai, who believed that to die for their lord was to die with honor. Additionally, the isolation of the country as a whole, beginning with the rule of the Tokugawa clan in the late fifteenth century, also helped shape the nation. For 250 years, the Japanese military failed to advance and were stunned by the power of the American military in 1852 as Commodore Matthew Perry and his fleet of ships arrived, demanding meetings. From that point forward, Japan vowed to seek revenge for what they believed was a public embarrassment. By the 1920s, Japan was facing a devastating economy as an end to World War I halted the need for Japanese military products. Japanese rulers began to push the idea that conquering new territory would ward off starvation for the people, as well as the concept that the Japanese people had a right to these lands, due to their high achievements in farming, agriculture, and other areas.

The author also points out that the education of Japanese men for decades had been streamlined for battle. Toy shops sold military items, and the education system was run like miniature military camps. Boys were taught to handle weapons at an early age, lectured extensively on nationalism, forced to read textbooks filled with justifications for expansion, and psychologically prepared to hate the Chinese. Teachers behaved as drill sergeants, and often hit, slapped, or beat students into submission. Students were forced to carry immensely heavy object, stand in the snow for hours barefoot, and run until they collapsed. If the student decided to join the military, the training became more brutal, forcing individualism out while fostering nationalism. Further, the identity of the Japanese is firmly rooted in the hierarchy of government. First the theory of "the transfer of oppression" can be applied. This theory relies on the idea that in a civilization such as Japan, where brutality is taught from birth and where the entire society is hierarchical, the soldiers are naturally bitter. When given power over a group of individuals deemed even lower than themselves, the soldiers react with extreme misplaced violence. Additionally, religion plays a large role in Japanese identity. In the Shintoist faith, the Emperor is the ruler of all, and Japanese are therefore racially superior. It was their belief that they were not only protecting themselves, but actually helping the Chinese by bringing them under the power of the Emperor. When combined, these aspects of Japanese culture and nationalism at least in part led to the horrifying acts of Nanking.

## Atrocities of War

One of the main themes within the story is the absolutely horrific atrocities of war that can occur when military actions continue without a check and balance system. In the



case of the Japanese invasion of China, entire areas were slaughtered at will, without any care for the treatment of other human beings. Villages were burned to the ground, families were murdered, hundreds of thousands raped and mutilated, and yet the Japanese soldiers appeared to have no remorse for their actions. The crimes of the Japanese included extreme torture. Individuals were buried alive, sometimes only to their chest so they could be run over by tanks or shredded by swords. The Japanese disemboweled, decapitated, and dismembered civilians, as well as crucified them, gouged out their eyes, cut off their ears, noses, and tongues, set them on fire, stabbed them with zhuizi, or needles with handles, froze them to death, and ordered military dogs to chew off penises and other body parts. They also bathed victims in acid, impaled babies with bayonets, and hung them by their tongues. The Japanese were found to have conducted experiments on captives, marched the ill and starved until they dropped dead, created a Death Railway, conducted Japanese "water treatment" in which refugees were filled with water through tubes until their bowels exploded, ripped refugee limbs from their bodies, forced them to kneel on sharp objects, extracted nails from fingers, conducted electroshock torture, beat and flogged war prisoners, and even ate their victims. Further, it is estimated that between twenty and eighty thousand women and children were raped at the hands of the Japanese soldiers. The victims of the soldiers came from all classes and ages, including nuns, professors, farm women, and the blue collar. The Japanese soldiers went house to house, raping and killing any woman found. The soldiers used traps such as promises of food or freedom to recruit victims, only to kill them shortly after violent gang rapes. The rapes occurred in broad daylight, often in front of crowds of soldiers. Great-grandmothers were gang raped to death, and those who refused sex often had sticks and other foreign objects shoved into the vagina and through the body, killing the women. Young girls were raped repeatedly and were unable to walk again, were slashed open and raped as they died, and some had their vagina slashed open to allow for further penetration. The Japanese soldiers raped pregnant women and ripped not only their intestines from their body afterward, but also their fetuses. The impalement of vaginas was common, as dead women lay splayed open in the streets with wooden rods, twigs, golf clubs, bottles, and weeds shoved into their orifices. In other cases, fireworks were inserted and ignited. Chinese men were also raped and tortured. The men were forced into having sex with their deceased wives, sodomy, and anal sex, as well as castrated. Fathers were forced to rape their daughters, brothers their sisters, sons their mothers, and other combinations. The use of biological weapons was another atrocity of the war, and included the spraying of fleas infected with plague over metropolitan areas, the dumping of flasks containing cholera, dysentery, typhoid, plague, anthrax, and paratyphoid into rivers and streams, and the mixing of food with typhoid.

The final death count in China over the course of the war at the hands of the Japanese is more than nineteen million people. It is unbelievable to realize the extent of the damage done by the Japanese to the Chinese people, but it does show clearly the vast psychological, emotional, physical, structural, and intellectual damage war can wage on any civilization. The Rape of Nanking and other areas of China serves as a warning about placing violent, oppressed soldiers in power positions over those they believe to be less than human.



## Courage

Another primary theme throughout the novel is that of courage. Several stories of survivors include stories of extreme courage in the face of certain death, and the tenacity of the human spirit. Tang Shunsan, the man taken who survived the killing contests, survived only because of wit, luck, and the help of friends. Many girls showed extreme courage as they fought their way across China in hiding to avoid rape and murder, or fought to save their children. In the case of Li Xouying, rape and death were narrowly averted. As a pregnant woman facing rape, she chose suicide by beating her head on a wall. When she awoke, she was attacked by soldiers. She fought bravely, and killed one, but was severely wounded, and left for dead. She was nearly buried, but family members saw her breathing, and fled to a nearby hospital, where she was saved.

Aside from the stories of courage among the victims of the war, the members of the International Committee showed courage beyond that of most human beings. John Rabe chased away Japanese soldiers, pulled them from the women they were raping, and stopped them from killing the innocents within the Zone. He would drive around Nanking to find refugees, stop rapes in progress, stop looting, and stop Japanese soldiers from killing non-combatants. He continued to show no signs of weakness, and always, according to reports, showed high morale. Robert Wilson was another Committee member who held his ground during the Rape. His letters home to his wife tell many of his horrifying stories, and yet he was able to treat the thousands of rape victims whose stomachs had been torn open, the thousands of men left alive when the Japanese set them on fire, and the rest of the population. Wilhelmina Vautrin spent much of her time attempting to secure food, redirecting men to other Safety Zones, and chasing away Japanese soldiers. Although she was exhausted, both mentally and physically, she found the strength to comfort others, and give them hope that Japan would fail. These three individuals along with the other members of the Committee provided free food to the refugees in the Zone as well as to hiding residents in the city, threw themselves in the line of fire to save the Chinese, were abused, harmed, and injured as they fought to protect the refugees, and eventually housed, fed, and cared for over 250,000 refugees. It is these stories that show the true courage of humankind.



# Style

## Perspective

Through the novel, Chang uses a variety of perspectives to tell the story of the massacre at Nanking. Her opinions are clearly injected throughout the book, but are backed through the use of first-hand narrative of those within the city at the time of the invasion. Her background as both a Chinese descendant as well as the child of parents who survived the horrors of World War II in China give Chang a clear bias in her beliefs. However, her intensive research into the topic of Nanking allows her to use this bias to explain the reasoning of the Japanese, and to relate vital Japanese identity characteristics with the events at Nanking. In addition, her use of firsthand documents, historical statements, and governmental papers provide a very solid bases for her discussions of the massacre, as well as give the readers a firsthand, sometime horrifyingly detailed account of the atrocities at Nanking. Through the eyes of the victims, readers can see the victimization of Chinese refugees clearly. The passages of diaries of the International Committee help the reader to understand how this small band of foreigners managed to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of refugees. Finally, the quotes of Japanese military leaders clearly show the mindset of these soldiers, and the consequences of unchecked power within government.

## Tone

The tone of the novel is primarily accusatory and combative against the Japanese government. Chang clearly uses her fluid language ability to describe the atrocities of the Japanese, and to demand from the government the proper treatment of the situation. However, at times, the tone becomes instructional as Chang seeks to find reason amid the chaos of the events of Nanking. Her analysis of possible causes for the attack is highly intellectual and detailed, providing readers with an unbiased and objective reflection on the nature of the Japanese identity. The tone changes again when Chang discusses the victims of the massacre, providing a clearly empathic view of their plight, and again as the members of the International Committee are discussed in a partisan manner. These changes in tone help to show the clear goals of the novel. Those include an attempt to show the world that the Japanese government should take responsibility, the overwhelming thanks to the International Committee, the highly complex Japanese identity, and the sympathy of the author towards the victims of the Rape.

## Structure

The novel is separated into a timeline of events. The Introduction discusses the events leading to the invasion of China by Japan. Chapters One and Two follow the path of the Japanese soldiers from Shanghai to Nanking as their destructive force desecrates the



land. Chapters Three and Four discuss the events that occurred within the first six weeks of the invasion of Nanking. Chapter Five discusses the Nanking Safety Zone creation, and the enforcement of the zone. Chapters Six through Eight discuss the world's reaction to the massacre, the occupation of Nanking, and the War Trials. Chapters Nine and Ten close the story of Nanking by discussing the fate of the victims of Nanking, and the continued victimization of the Chinese. Finally, the Epilogue discusses the lessons to be learned from the Rape of Nanking. The book is 290 pages in length, with chapters of varying lengths. The book is also broken into three sections of four chapters each to further differentiate between events within the time line format.





## Quotes

"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 weight twelve hundred tons, and their bodies would fill twenty-five hundred rail road 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." p 5.

"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 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." p. 10

"During these impressionable years they have been walled off from all outside pleasures, interests, or influences . . . 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." p. 33

"Battalion battle reporter, at 2:00 received order from the regiment commander to comply with orders from brigade commanding headquarters, all prisoners of war are to be executed. Method of execution: Divide the prisoners into groups of a dozen. Shoot to kill separately . . . the vicinity of the imprisonment must be heavily guarded. Our intentions are absolutely not to be detected by the prisoners." p. 41

"Few know that soldiers impaled babies on bayonets and tossed them still alive into pots of boiling water . . . they gang-raped women from ages twelve to eighty and then killed them when they could no longer satisfy sexual requirements. I beheaded people,



starved them to death, burned them, and buried them alive, over two hundred in all. It is terrible that I could turn into an animal and do these things. There are really no words to explain what I was doing. I was truly a devil." p. 59

"One can only imagine the thoughts of the humiliated Tang as his launch moved across the river. His last glimpse of Nanking was a city in flames, its people frantically trying to save themselves, his own troops hanging onto driftwood to stay afloat in the dark cold waters of the Yangtze. He would later tell friends that while he had fought in hundreds of battles over twenty years, he had never experienced a day as dark as that one." p. 79

"Two rows up from him a pregnant woman began to fight for her life, clawing desperately at a soldier who tried to drag her away from the group to rape her. Nobody helped her, and in the end the soldier killed her, ripping open her belly with his bayonet and jerking out not only her intestines but a squirming fetus. That, Tang believes, should have been the moment for them to all rebel, to do something, to fight back and try to kill the soldiers even if they all died in the process. But even though the Chinese prisoners greatly outnumbered their Japanese tormentors and might have been able to overwhelm them, no one moved. Everyone remained eerily docile. Sad to say, of all the people around the pit, Tang remembers only the pregnant woman showing the slightest bit of courage." p. 86

"There is even compelling evidence that the Japanese themselves believe at the time of the massacre that the death toll at Nanking may have been as high as 300,000. The evidence is significant because not only was it generated by the Japanese themselves, but it was done so during the first month of the massacre, when the killing was far from over." p. 103

"Dark times paralyze most people, but some very few, for reasons most of us will never understand, are able to set aside all caution and do things even they could not imagine themselves doing in ordinary times. It is hard to talk about a bright spot in the horror that is the Rape of Nanking, but if one can, it is surely to shine a light on the actions of a small band of Americans and Europeans who risked their lives to defy the Japanese invaders and rescue hundreds of thousands of Chinese refugees from almost certain extermination." p. 106

"In the end, the royal family not only escaped scrutiny at the tribunal, but went on to enjoy lives of leisure and national adoration." p. 180

"Underneath the prosperity, however, hidden from view, were the last human links to the past - the elderly survivors of the Nanking massacre. . . Most lived in dark, squalid apartments cluttered with the debris of poverty and heavy with mildew and humidity. I learned that during the massacre some had received physical injuries so severe they had been prevented from making a decent living for decades." p. 183

"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." p. 200

"There are those who believe that the Japanese are uniquely sinister - a dangerous race of people who will never change. . . 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." p. 220

"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 sustained its history." p. 225



## Topics for Discussion

Chang gives several possible explanations for the ability of Japanese soldiers to commit atrocities in Nanking, including the Japanese identity. Explain, using details from the book, how this identity was formed, and what aspects may have contributed to the massacre at Nanking.

There were several foreigners who helped to save the lives of thousands of Chinese refugees. Why do you believe these individuals stayed to protect the people, when so many others fled? Be sure to explain your answers.

As part of the surrender of Japan, the royal family escaped all blame or consequences for their part in the war. Do you believe this was a fair choice? Be sure to consider the alternative to Japanese surrender in your answer.

Do you think Tang Sheng-chih could have saved the city if Chiang Kei-shek would have provided air support? Use examples from the book to defend your answer.

Chang lists several reasons for the apparent removal of the Nanking massacre from current history. Why do you believe society ignored the atrocities? Be sure to explain your answer.

Knowing what you now know after reading the book, what do you believe would be fair payment to the victims of the Rape of Nanking?

At the end of the novel, Chang lists three lessons to be learned from the massacre of Nanking. Choose one of these, and discuss, in depth, an application of the lesson in current world events. Do you believe the world learned these lessons after Nanking?