



The Nanking Atrocity, 1937-38: Complicating the Picture (Asia-Pacific Studies: Past and Present)

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December 13, 2007 marks the 70th anniversary of the fall of the Chinese city of Nanking to the Japanese army. The "Nanking Atrocity" of winter 1937-8, also known as the "Nanking Massacre," lies at the core of bitter disputes over history, wartime victimization, and postwar restitution that preclude amicable Sino-Japanese relations to this day. This volume, which is both history and historiography, offers the most recent scholarship about what actually happened in Nanking and places those findings in the context of how Chinese and Japanese writers have attributed mutually incompatible meanings to the event ever since; an event that is coined, on the Chinese side, as "the forgotten Holocaust," after the subtitle of Iris' Chang's 1997 bestseller, *The Rape of Nanking*, uncritically adopted by Western public opinion, a gross distortion according to the contributors of this volume. However, the authors also deflate Japanese exculpatory narratives which, serving their own ideological agendas, holds that Nanking was a combat operation against unlawful belligerents, which produced only a few dozen innocent victims. This volume presents new facts and fresh interpretations with the overriding aim to "complicate the picture" and to debunk myths, expose fallacies, and rectify misconceptions that obstruct a clear understanding of the issues and prevent ultimate reconciliation between China and Japan.

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