

Suping Lu

# The 1937 – 1938 Nanjing Atrocities

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## Preface

I started my research on the Nanjing Massacre in January 1997. Over the past 20 years, I travelled extensively in Asia, Europe, and within the United States to search for original and archival source material at the Library of Congress and the National Archives in Washington, DC; the National Archives II at College Park, MD; Yale Divinity School Library; Yenching and Houghton Libraries at Harvard; the National Library of China in Beijing; the Second Historical Archives of China in Nanjing; the Disciples of Christ Historical Society in Nashville, TN; the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia; Union Theological Seminary's Burke Library at Columbia University; the British Library and the Public Record Office in London; the National Archives of Scotland in Edinburgh; les Archives Nationale de France and Service Historique de la Défense in Paris; and Politisches Archiv, Auswärtiges Amt, and Bundesarchiv in Berlin. In addition, I obtained a large number of publications through interlibrary loan system, including Japanese language newspapers and Japanese soldiers' wartime diaries.

My research journey uncovered an enormous amount of valuable source material. *They Were in Nanjing: The Nanjing Massacre Witnessed by American and British Nationals* was published in 2004. However, only a small fraction of the sources was used in drafting the aforementioned book, so I decided to share the material with fellow researchers and scholars. I spent several years selecting, compiling, editing, and annotating the material for three volumes and eventually published *Terror in Minnie Vautrin's Nanjing: Diaries and Correspondence, 1937-38* (2008), *A Mission Under Duress: The Nanjing Massacre and Post-Massacre Social Conditions Documented by American Diplomats* (2010), and *A Dark Page in History: The Nanjing Massacre and Post-Massacre Social Conditions Recorded in British Diplomatic Dispatches, Admiralty Documents, and U.S. Intelligence Reports* (2012).

Up to this point, however, the research focuses only on the accounts and records left behind by American and British journalists and diplomats and American missionaries. As my research continues and generates more primary sources, especially those of Chinese, German, and Japanese origins, a comprehensive research project

based on the American, British, Chinese, German, and Japanese source material has emerged. *The 1937–1938 Nanjing Atrocities* examines such issues as the major events of the Nanjing Massacre, the testimonies provided by Chinese survivors and witnesses in different historical periods; the media coverage in Chinese, English, and Japanese in 1937/1938; the eyewitness accounts by the American and German nationals in Nanjing during the massacre period; the dispatches sent by American, British, and German diplomats in 1938; the descriptive accounts in Japanese soldiers' wartime diaries; the activities of burying victim bodies initiated by Japanese troops, charity organizations, family members, and others; the postwar military tribunals; the controversies over the Nanjing Massacre; and "the 100-man killing contest" and the related debates and lawsuits.

Chinese survivors and witnesses provided testimonies in the 1930s, the 1940s, the early 1950s, and the mid-1980s. A comparative study is performed for the consistency, reliability, and accuracy of the testimonies offered by the same survivors or witnesses in different historical periods or the testimonies by different parties in different periods about the same case.

Japanese soldiers' diaries from the collections published by both left and right circles of Japanese scholars are selected to provide the perspectives of those who participated in mass executing prisoners of war and civilians.

Controversy surrounding the Nanjing Massacre was initiated by writers and scholars in Japan in the 1970s and has continued and evolved since then. However, the key controversial issues have remained consistent, namely, the population of Nanjing in relation to the victim toll, the massacre victim number, and the reliability of the burial record. These three major arguments originate in the summation submitted by the Japanese defense on February 18, 1948, to the International Military Tribunal for the Far East. However, they were denied by the tribunal's judgment delivered by the tribunal president William Flood Webb on November 11, 1948. In the early 1980s, these issues were picked up by Japanese right-wing revisionist researchers. Since the textbook revision issue arose, Chinese scholars have become increasingly active. Herein, the history and evolvement of the controversies are analytically traced, while the writings by the left and right circles of Japanese researchers and the research done by Chinese and Japanese scholars are discussed and analyzed in a balanced manner.

The 100-man killing contest is another topic that has incited controversies. When the killing contest was first reported in Japan in 1937, Americans and Chinese responded that it was the killing of prisoners of war and civilians. They never considered the two sublieutenant war heroes. This viewpoint has remained unchanged, especially, for the Chinese. The controversies over the killing contest are largely among the Japanese and debated in Japan. The original Japanese media coverage of the killing contest and the memoirs of the reporters and those involved are faithfully introduced, while the debates in the 1970s and the lawsuits between 2003 and 2006 are impartially presented.

Meanwhile, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Research Council whose research grant made the publication of this book possible. I would also like to extend my gratitude to my daughter, Diana Lu, who worked tirelessly in an editing effort to improve the manuscript, and Brian O'Grady, who interlibrary loaned numerous items for this project.

Lincoln, NE, USA  
June 2019

Suping Lu

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## Self-portrait of the Author



## About the Author

**Suping Lu** is a professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is the author of *They Were in Nanjing: The Nanjing Massacre Witnessed by American and British Nationals* (2004), and editor of *Terror in Minnie Vautrin's Nanjing: Diaries and Correspondence, 1937-38* (2008), *A Mission under Duress: The Nanjing Massacre and Post-Massacre Social Conditions Documented by American Diplomats* (2010), and *A Dark Page in History: The Nanjing Massacre and Post-Massacre Social Conditions Recorded in British Diplomatic Dispatches, Admiralty Documents, and U.S. Naval Intelligence Reports* (2012 & 2019).

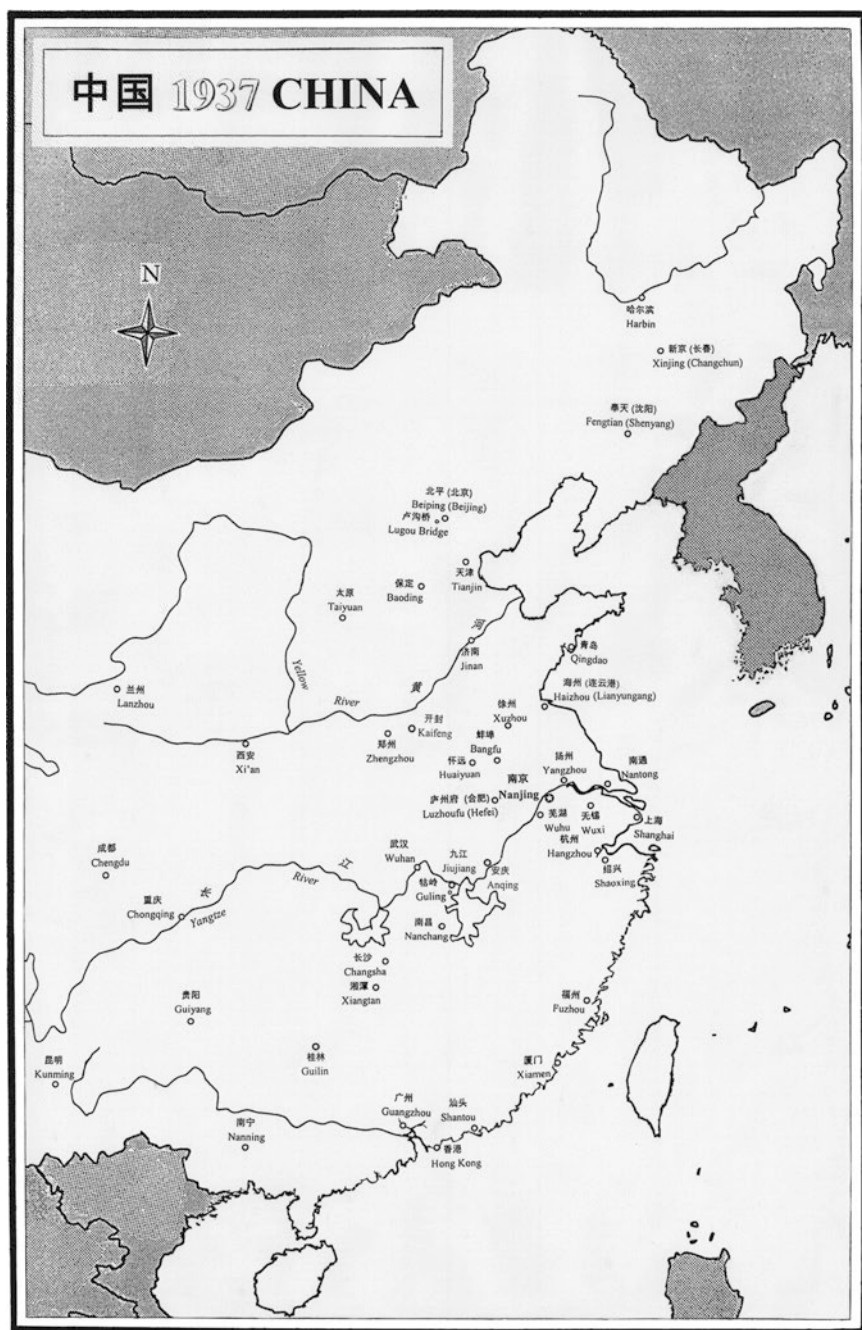
# Abbreviations

- ADN** 中国第二历史档案馆, 南京市档案馆 (Second Historical Archives of China & Nanjing Municipal Archives). *1937. 12. 13-侵华日军南京大屠杀档案 (Archival Documents Relating to the Horrible Massacre Committed by the Japanese Troops in Nanjing in December 1937)*, Nanjing: 江苏古籍出版社 (Jiangsu Archives Press), 1997.
- CTS** 朱成山 (Zhu, Chengshan). *侵华日军南京大屠杀幸存者证言集 (A Collection of Testimonies by the Survivors of the Nanjing Massacre Committed by the Japanese Troops Invading China)*, Nanjing: 南京大学出版社 (Nanjing University Press), 1994.
- DCHSL** Disciples of Christ Historical Society Library, Nashville, TN.
- KCT** 「百人斬り訴訟」裁判記録集 (*The Trial Record of “the 100-Man Killing Contest Lawsuits”*), Tokyo: 展転社 (Tendensha), 2007.
- NBSM** 南京戦史資料集 (*The Nanjing Battle History Related Source Materials*), 南京戦史編輯委員會編纂 (edited by Nanjing Battle History Editing Committee), Tokyo: 偕行社 (Kaikosha), 1989.
- NBSM2** 南京戦史編輯委員會 (*The Nanjing Battle History Editing Committee*). *南京戦史資料集 II (Nanjing Battle History Related Source Materials, II)*, Tokyo: 偕行社 (Kaikosha), 1993.
- NCSM** 松岡環 (Matsuoka, Tamaki). *南京戦: 閉ざされた記憶を尋ねて (The Nanjing Campaign: In search of the Sealed Memories)*, Tokyo: 社会評論社 (Shakai Hyoronsha), 2002.
- NDB** *南京保卫战 (The Nanjing Defense Battle)*, Beijing: 中国文史出版社 (China Culture and History Publishing Press), 1987.
- NIKD** 井口和起 (Kazuki, Iguchi), 木阪順一郎 (Junichiro Kisaka), 下里正樹 (Masaki Shimozato). *南京事件: 京都師団関係資料集 (The Nanjing Incident: Kyoto Division Related Source Materials)*, Tokyo: 青木書店 (Aoki Bookstore), 1989.
- NMIA** 小野賢二 (Kenji Ono), 藤原彰 (Akira Fujiwara), 本多勝一 (Katsuichi Honda). *南京大虐殺を記録した皇軍兵士たち: 第十三師団山田支隊兵士の陣中日記 (The Nanjing Massacre Recorded by the Imperial Army Soldiers: The Field Diaries by the Soldiers of the Yamada*

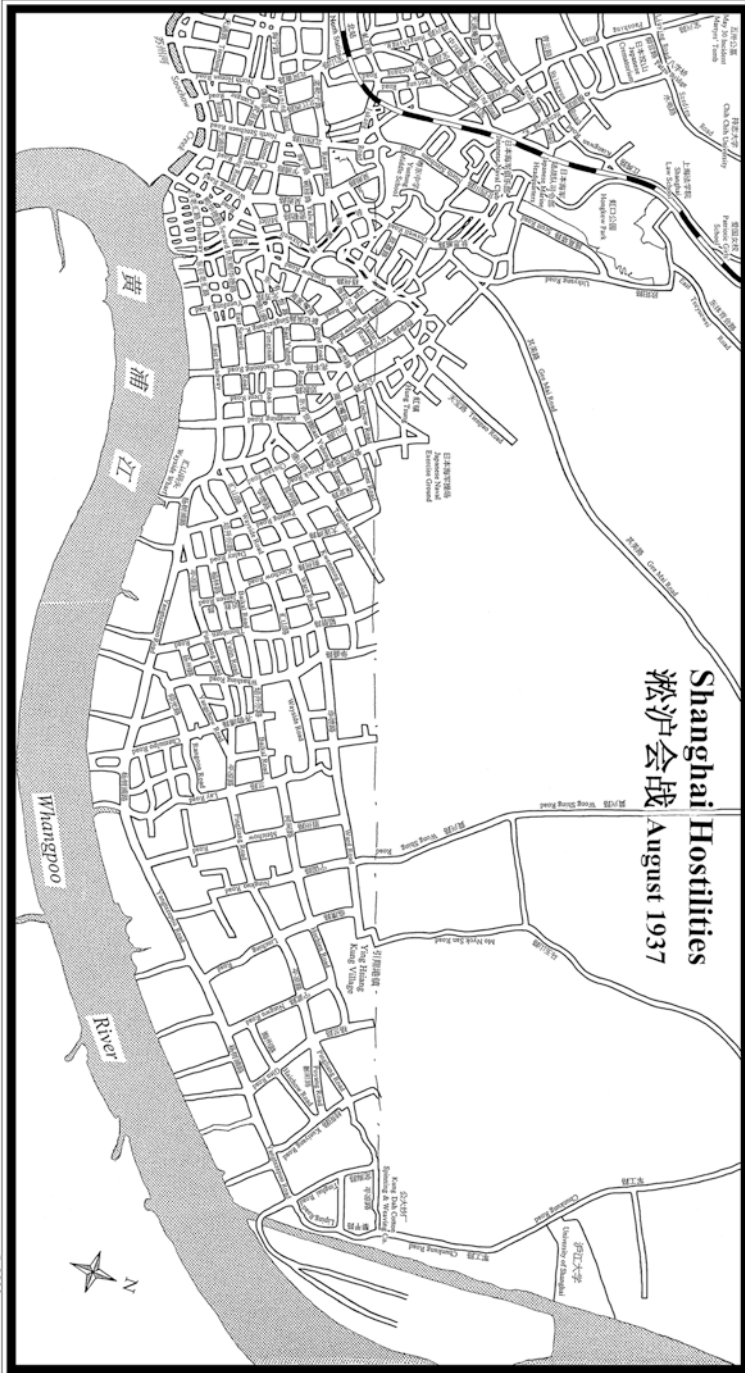
- Detachment, the 13th Division*), Tokyo: 大月書店 (Ttsuki Bookstore), 1996.
- NMV5 孙宅巍编 (Sun, Zhaiwei). *南京大屠杀史料集: 5 遇难者的尸体掩埋 (A Collection of Source Materials on the Nanjing Massacre: Vol. 5 Burying Victim Bodies)*, Nanjing: 江苏人民出版社 (Jiangsu People's Publishing House), 2005.
- NM24 胡菊蓉 (Hu, Jurong). *南京大屠杀史料集: 24 南京审判 (A Collection of Source Materials on the Nanjing Massacre: Vol. 24 Nanjing Trial)*, Nanjing: 江苏人民出版社 (Jiangsu People's Publishing House), 2006.
- SCA 中央档案馆, 中国第二历史档案馆, 吉林社会科学院 (Central Archives, Second Historical Archives of China, Jilin Academy of Social Sciences). *日本帝国主义侵华档案资料选编: 南京大屠杀 (Selected Collection of Archival Source Materials of Japanese Imperialists Invading China: The Nanjing Massacre)*, Beijing: 中华书局 (China Press), 1995.
- SMN 侵华日军南京大屠杀史料编委会, 南京图书馆编辑 (Committee on the Source Materials of the Nanjing Massacre Committed by the Japanese Troops Invading China and Nanjing Municipal Library). *1937. 12. 13-侵华日军南京大屠杀史料 (Source Materials Relating to the Horrible Massacre Committed by the Japanese Troops in Nanjing in December 1937)*, Nanjing: 江苏古籍出版社 (Jiangsu Archives Press), 1985.
- YDSL Special Collection, Yale Divinity School Library, New Haven, CT.



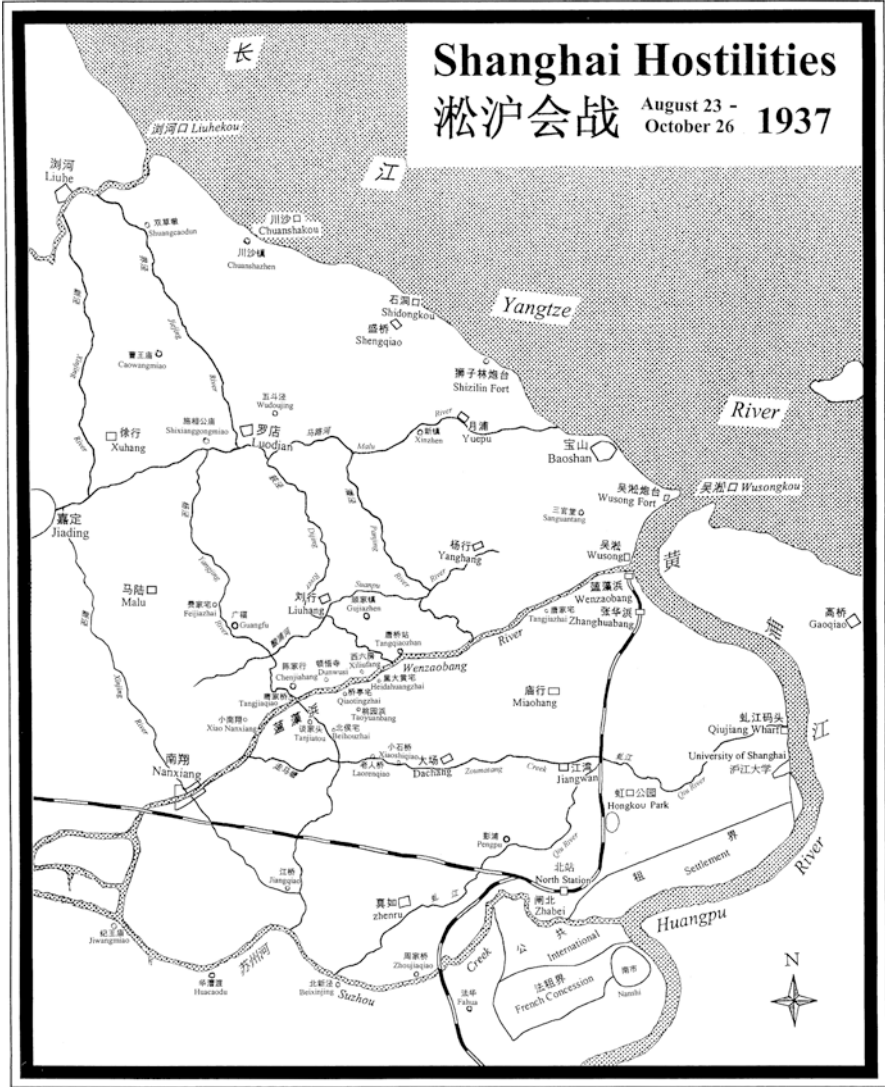
# Maps



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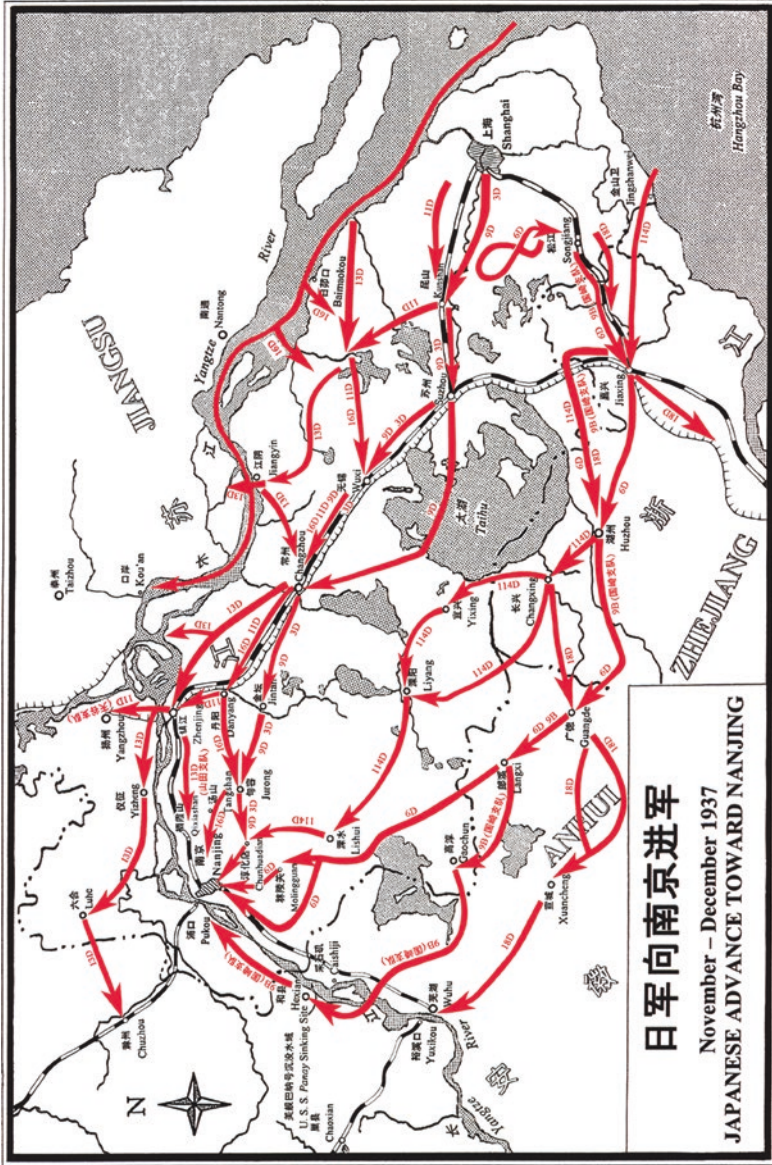


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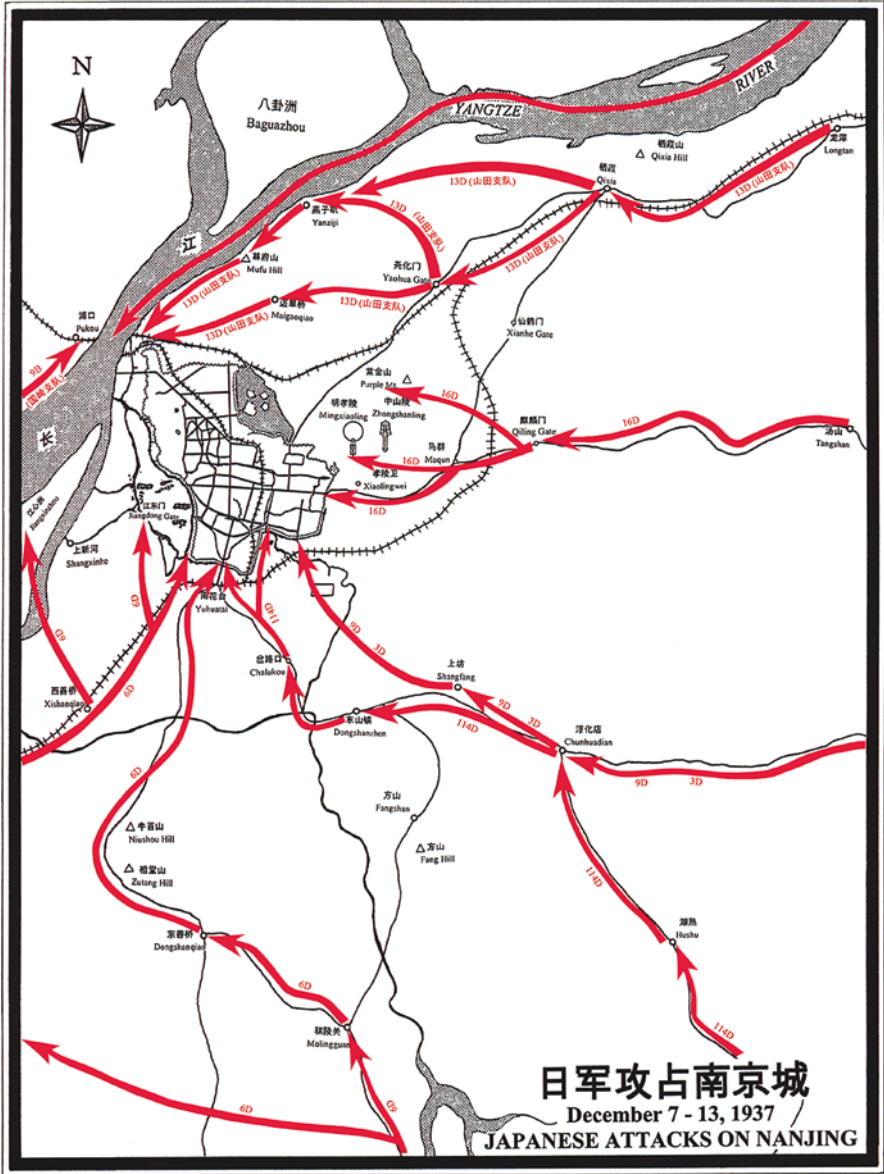


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# Chapter 1

## Japanese Military Expansion



The 1868 Meiji Restoration (明治维新) led to a profound reform process aimed to build up Japan's national power and achieve military and economic equality with Western powers. The following decades witnessed tremendous political, social, economic, and military changes in Japan. However, as an island nation, Japan lacked the natural resources it badly needed for industrialization. The modernization transformation, to a large extent, encouraged military expansion, which was intended to expand Japan's boundaries for natural resources, wealth, and more territories for further development. As Japan advanced steadily along a path of military expansion, neighboring countries inevitably fell victim to Japanese military conquest.

In May 1874, Japan launched a military expedition to China's Taiwan. Japanese soldiers slaughtered Taiwan's aborigines as punishment for their roles in the murder of shipwrecked fishermen from the Liuqiu Islands (琉球群島), or the Ryukyu Islands,<sup>1</sup> an independent kingdom that was also one of China's tributary states. This incident, known as the Taiwan Expedition in Japan and the Mudan Incident in China led to the agreement the Japanese and the Chinese governments reached in October 1874 in Beijing. It stipulated that China would pay 100,000 taels as "consolation money to the families of the distressed (or shipwrecked) people who were injured," and would pay Japan 400,000 taels of silver in exchange for Japan's withdrawal of troops from Taiwan.<sup>2</sup> Japan, however, seized the expedition as an opportunity to lay claim to the Liuqiu Kingdom. Consequently, the kingdom was annexed into Japan in March 1879, despite repeated protests from China. The Liuqiu King, Sho Tai (尚泰, 1843–1901, in reign 1848–79), was deposed and escorted to Tokyo. Thus, the Liuqiu Kingdom was turned into Japan's Okinawa ken (沖縄県).<sup>3</sup>

The Japanese had long coveted Korea. As early as 1875, Japan dispatched ships to reconnoiter Korea's coast and harbors, seeking opportunities to provoke incidents with the Koreans. The *Japan Herald* reported in June 1875:

The Japanese Government has dispatched two vessels to Corea to reconnoitre, and to acquire information about its coast and harbours. The vessels are to proceed up the river to the capital. Should the Coreans adopt the same hostile policy as that adopted towards the

Americans, the chances are that the vessels may be fired on, in which case something serious may arise out of the affair. ... and the action taken by the Japanese Government would seem to indicate that they either intend to bring affairs to a crisis, or that they expect that the knowledge they seek to gain of the vulnerability of the Korean peninsula will be of use, should hostilities be declared between the two countries.<sup>4</sup>

Such an opportunity came in September 1875, when the Japanese warship *Unyokuwan*, or *Unyō* (雲揚), was fired upon by the Koreans while navigating in the Bay of Koba off Kanghwa Island (江華島). In response, *Unyokuwan* fired at Korean forts, then landed and attacked the Korean positions, killing 30 Korean soldiers, capturing 12 soldiers along with cannon and muskets, and setting fire to houses. The Japanese immediately dispatched more warships and troops, threatening war against Korea.<sup>5</sup> On February 27, 1876, Korea was forced to sign the Treaty of Kanghwa (江華島條約) with Japan. The treaty stipulated that Korea was to be an independent country with its long-standing tributary relationship to China abolished; Korea would open Pusan and two other ports for trade; the Japanese legation and consulates were to be established in Seoul and the other ports; and extra-territory rights were granted to the Japanese consulate officials, who were authorized to try all Japanese living in Korea.<sup>6</sup> The Treaty of Kanghwa marked the beginning of the competitive struggles between China and Japan for control over Korea for the following two decades.<sup>7</sup> As a result of the treaty, the Japanese not only penetrated deeply into Korean political infrastructure, including the military, but also played a dominant role in Korea.

Years of Japanese subjugation led to a military uprising in Korea. Dissatisfied with the social reality and Japanese-style military training, rebellious Korean soldiers in Seoul attacked and set fire to the Japanese legation in July 1882, killing Japanese military instructors and Korean officials, and forcing their way into the royal palace.<sup>8</sup> The 1882 uprising was a protest against Japanese dominance over Korea, the influx of Japanese people and goods after the Treaty of Kanghwa, and the introduction of Japanese-style social and military reforms. China, however, saw the rebellion as an opportunity to intervene and reassert its former suzerain-tributary relationship with Korea. The Chinese Government dispatched 5000 soldiers under Yuan Shikai (袁世凱)'s command to help the Korean Government terminate the uprising, as well as abolish all Japanese-style reforms.<sup>9</sup> Chinese influence grew as a result of the military intervention.

Although the 1882 rebellion set back Japan's influence in Korea tremendously, the Japanese continued their struggle for control over Korea. In December 1884, Japanese troops stationed in Seoul supported a Korean coup d'état that, while killing six ministers, succeeded in seizing the royal palace, establishing a new government, and proclaiming a reform platform. Shortly after, the Chinese army launched a successful counterattack that forced Japanese troops to retreat and reinstated a pro-Chinese government.<sup>10</sup>

To combat Japan's deteriorated position in Korea, the Japanese proposed that both Chinese and Japanese troops withdraw from Korea.<sup>11</sup> The Li Hongzhang-Hirobumi Ito Convention (李鴻章-伊藤博文協定), also known as the Treaty of Tianjin (天津條約), which was signed on April 18, 1885, stated that both China and

Japan would withdraw troops within 4 months, and in case of grave disturbance, neither would send troops without informing the other, and after the matter was settled both should withdraw their troops.<sup>12</sup>

May 1894 witnessed another incident, the Tonghak Rebellion (東學黨起義), in Korea. The Tonghak Society was a religious organization engaged in political activities, particularly against excessive taxation, government corruption, and foreign encroachment. The 1893 famine and the heavy taxes imposed on the people of southern Korea triggered the rebellion, which spread quickly and gained popular support. Unable to quell the uprising, the Korean Government requested Chinese military assistance. China informed Japan that it would send troops to Korea, but Japan rushed in troops as well, under the pretext of protecting Japanese subjects and properties in Korea. Within weeks, the number of Japanese troops surged from 1000 to 15,000. According to the terms of the 1885 Li-Ito Treaty, after the rebellion was suppressed, both the Chinese and Japanese troops were to withdraw. The Chinese proposed a simultaneous withdrawal. Japan, however, while showing no sign of withdrawal, attempted to establish military control over Korea. On July 22, 1894, Japanese troops entered Seoul and attacked the royal palace. The king, queen and other royal family members were abducted as prisoners to the Japanese Legation. While China responded by sending more troops, the Japanese navy attacked Chinese warships and sank the British steamer *Gaosheng* (高陞號) off the Korean coast on July 25, which had 1220 Chinese troops on board. Japan declared war on July 31, 1894; China followed suit on August 1. After fierce fighting, the Japanese captured Pyongyang (平壤) from the Chinese on September 16, won the battle in the Yellow Sea the following day, seized China's Lushun Port (旅順港) on the tip of the Liaodong Peninsula (遼東半島) on November 21, and demolished the Chinese fleet at Weihaiwei (威海衛) on February 12, 1895.<sup>13</sup>

The outcome of the First Sino-Japanese War was the Treaty of Shimonoseki (馬關條約), signed on April 17, 1895, which stipulated China's recognition of Korea's independence, cession of Taiwan, the Penghu Islands (澎湖列島), and the Liaodong Peninsula to Japan, and payment of 200 million taels war indemnity to Japan.<sup>14</sup>

Barely one week after the Treaty of Shimonoseki was signed, Russia, France and Germany jointly forced Japan to return the Liaodong Peninsula to China. In 1896, Russia obtained the rights to mines, railroads and police forces in Northeast China, also known as Manchuria, and forced China to lease Lushun Port and Dalian (大連) to the Russians in 1898. (pp. 549–550 & 565–567) Russian influence expanded in Korea. The Japanese exclusive right in the Korean Peninsula was challenged and infringed by the Russians.

Since the 1840 Opium War, repeated foreign invasions, a succession of treaties the Qing Government was forced to sign with foreign powers, and Christian influence aroused spontaneous grassroots animosity among peasants, particularly in North China, toward the increasing presence of Westerners and missionaries.<sup>15</sup> The peasants formed a martial art organization known as the Boxers. They attacked and killed foreigners, missionaries, and Chinese Christians. The movement culminated in the 1900 Boxer Rebellion, in which the Boxers besieged foreign diplomatic compounds in Beijing and killed diplomats.

In response, Germany, Britain, France, Russia, Japan, United States, Italy and Austria-Hungary formed the international forces known as the Eight-Nation Alliance Expedition Forces (八國聯軍), which invaded Tianjin (天津) and Beijing in the summer of 1900 to suppress the Boxer Rebellion. On September 7, 1901, China was forced to sign the treaty commonly known as the Boxer Protocol. China was forced to pay an exorbitant indemnity of 450 million taels of silver and allow foreign powers the right to station troops along a number of locations between Shanhaiguan (山海關), Tianjin and Beijing.<sup>16</sup> Thus, Japan began to station troops around Beijing. However, the Japanese stationed troops at locations beyond the areas designated in the Boxer Protocol, and the number of troops continued to increase in the decades thereafter. Meanwhile, after the Boxer Rebellion, Russian troops, instead of withdrawing, were transferred and stationed in Northeast China despite protests from other powers.<sup>17</sup> As a result, Russia not only consolidated its foothold in Northeast China, but also strengthened its ties with Korea.

Russia was thus considered by Japan as an obstacle to its expansion to and dominance in Korea and Northeast China. To defer Russian advances, while forming an Anglo-Japanese alliance in 1902, Japan applied a huge Chinese war indemnity to its army and navy buildup. The diplomatic impasse over the Japanese and Russian interests in Korea and Northeast China convinced Japan that only military actions would drive the Russians out of the region. In February 1904, Japanese destroyers attacked the Russian fleet at Lushun Port. Meanwhile, the Japanese army landed in Korea, defeated the Russians at the Yalu River (鴨綠江), and crossed the river into China in May. The Japanese won almost all land and naval battles of the Russo-Japanese War. After fierce fighting and heavy casualties, Lushun Port fell to the Japanese on January 2, 1905, and the Russian Baltic fleet was destroyed in the Tsushima Strait (對馬海峽) in May. Eventually, the decisive battle was waged near Shenyang (沈陽) from February to March 1905 to finalize the Japanese victory. The Russo-Japanese Treaty was signed at Portsmouth, New Hampshire, on September 5, 1905. According to the treaty, Japanese primacy in Korea was recognized, and Russia was to surrender to Japan its rights in the southern part of China's Northeast, including the Liaodong Peninsula and the southern half of Sakhalin Island (庫頁島).<sup>18</sup>

No sooner was the war concluded than Japan accelerated its process of annexing Korea. Under Japanese pressure, Korea abrogated all agreements and treaties with Russia in May 1905. Under the First Japanese-Korean Convention, signed on August 23, 1905, Korea would appoint Japanese-recommended advisors in the Ministries of Finance and Foreign Affairs. Several months later, the Second Japanese-Korean Convention, which was reached on November 19, 1905, stipulated that Korea's foreign affairs were to be directed and supervised by the Japanese Foreign Office in Tokyo, and a Resident General representing the Japanese Government was instated in Seoul to control foreign affairs.<sup>19</sup> Ito Hirobumi was appointed the first Resident General in February 1906. His power, however, went well beyond foreign affairs.

Though Korea had indeed become a colony of Japan, the Japanese were not fully satisfied. The Korean king was forced to abdicate, and the army was disbanded in

July 1907. The Resident General controlled internal affairs, codifying laws, appointing high officials, and performing other important administrative duties. The administration of justice and law enforcement, including police and prisons, were placed under Japanese control in July 1909. Eventually, the August 1910 treaty finalized the annexing process: Japan had completely subjugated Korea.<sup>20</sup>

When World War I broke out in 1914, the Western powers became fully occupied in Europe. Japan, taking advantage of the opportunity to advance its interest in China, as well as avenging Germany's role in forcing Japan to withdraw from Liaodong Peninsula after the First Sino-Japanese War, issued an ultimatum to the German Government on August 15, 1914, ordering Germany, without condition or compensation, to surrender its leased territory of China's Jiaodong Peninsula (膠東半島) within a month. With no response from the Germans, Japan declared war on August 23 and captured the German garrison in Qingdao (青島) on November 7.<sup>21</sup>

On January 18, 1915, the Japanese secretly presented the Chinese Government with a list of 21 demands for more rights and privileges in China. The items in Group V would erode China's rights as an independent country and reduce China to the status of a Japanese ward. Some of the terms concerned the extension of leases and concessions that would soon expire, or legalize the Japanese position of newly captured Jiaodong Peninsula. Other terms demanded that the Chinese Central Government hire Japanese advisors in political, financial and military affairs and require China to buy munitions from Japan. The new privileges included Japanese rights to construct railways, own property and reside as farmers and businessmen in the interior regions of the southern part of Northeast China and eastern Inner Mongolia. (pp. 768–770) On May 7, 1915, Japan issued a 48-hour ultimatum and coerced China to accept a set of demands somewhat revised from the original ones. Consequently, Japan gained extensive privileges and concessions in Northeast China and confirmation of its gains in Shandong from Germany, as well as making China promise not to allow any other powers to lay hands on the coast of Fujian, the province opposite Taiwan, that Japan annexed from China in 1895. Meanwhile, the 21 Demands invited bitter opposition from the Chinese populous, including anti-Japanese demonstrations and a vigorous boycott of Japanese goods in cities all over China.<sup>22</sup>

At the Paris Peace Conference immediately after World War I in 1919, it was decided that the German-leased territory of Jiaozhou Bay (膠州灣), Qingdao city, the Qingdao-Ji'nan railroad (膠濟鐵路), and mines in Shandong were to be transferred to Japan rather than returned to China, as the Chinese delegates had urged. The news reached Beijing and triggered a vigorous patriotic upsurge known as the May Fourth Movement of 1919. Consequently, the Chinese representatives refused to sign the Treaty of Versailles on June 28, 1919. The German lease issue remained unresolved until the Shandong Treaty was signed on February 4, 1922 at the Washington Conference. The treaty required that, within 6 months from the date the treaty was signed, Japan should return to China the territory at Jiaozhou Bay, and Japanese troops should withdraw as soon as possible from the railroad lines and the leased territory. China was to pay Japan for all the improvements it made to the German holdings after 1915.<sup>23</sup>