

Book Review

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, written by Iris Chang begins by telling the story of how the Japanese set the stage for their invasion of China through brutal military influence on the everyday lives of citizens. The author describes how the children of Japan were so ingrained in a military society that “teachers instilled in boys hatred and contempt for Chinese people” and were subjected to physical beatings by their teachers for even the slightest mistakes.¹ Chang then explains that once the second Sino Japanese war had begun and Shanghai fell, there was no stopping Japan's military ego

When the Japanese arrived at Nanking they had but one order: “Kill all captives.”² Unfortunately for the Chinese soldiers attempting retreat and for the innocent Chinese civilians, this order was accompanied by the fact that the city of Nanking was surrounded by a massive wall, where the Japanese blocked the only exit. Chang's book mostly consists of the countless tales of individual and inventive accounts of torture the citizens of Nanking faced if they were caught. Families were forced to commit incest at gunpoint for the entertainment of Japanese troops.³ Women were kidnapped into sexual slavery and sometimes even raped to death.⁴ Even the elderly women were subjected to rape.⁵ The men of Nanking faced torture as a form of entertainment for the troops. They were “blamed for the death of their families.”

