

Negotiating the Narrative: *Japan's History Textbooks, Wartime Atrocities, and the Conservative Agenda*

Author: Amy Perkins, Lakeshore High School in Stevensville, MI

Grade Level: High School

Time Frame: 20th-21st century

Lesson Length: Two 60 minute class periods

Standards

National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies: Thematic Strand Index:

Strand 1: Culture

Strand 2: Time, Continuity, and Change

Strand 6: Power, Authority, and Governance

Strand 9: Global Connections

Common Core State Standards for English Lang. Arts & Literacy in History/Social Science, 6-12

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language of a court opinion differs from that of a newspaper). :

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.11-12.6: Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text in which the rhetoric is particularly effective, analyzing how style and content contribute to the power, persuasiveness or beauty of the text.

Michigan K-12 Standards for Social Studies (pending May 2018)

Contemporary Global Issues (CG3) Patterns of Global Interactions: Define the process of globalization and evaluate the merit of this concept to describe the contemporary world by analyzing cultural diffusion and the different ways cultures/societies respond to "new" cultural ideas

Contemporary Global Issues (CG4) Conflict, Cooperation, and Security: Analyze the causes and challenges of continuing and new conflicts by describing: (a) tensions resulting from ethnic, territorial, religious, and/or nationalist differences, and (b) causes of and responses to ethnic cleansing/genocide/mass extermination

Objectives

1. Examine primary and secondary sources detailing the Rape of Nanking and the use of "Comfort Women" by the Japanese military during World War II.
2. In small groups, discuss the severity of these wartime atrocities and their significance within the broader context of World War II.
3. Investigate the reasons why the Rape of Nanking and the use of "Comfort Women" have provoked debate among publishers of K-12 history textbooks in Japan.
4. Analyze the ways in which the Japanese people, its government and other nations have responded to the ongoing debate.
5. Evaluate the extent to which Japan's textbook debate mirrors disagreements in the United States that center on academic standards for Social Studies, the alleged bias of history textbooks, and the removal/preservation of Confederate statues.

Procedures

This lesson will require 2-3 class periods and functions as an appropriate addition to any larger historical unit on World War II. Given the graphic nature of the resources used in this lesson, teachers are encouraged to consider carefully the age and maturity of their students.

Day 1

1. Divide the class into groups of 4-5 students.
2. Distribute research packets and question sheets to student groups.* The packet includes the following articles:

BBC article: Scarred by history: The Rape of Nanjing <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/223038.stm>

Newsweek article: Exposing the Rape of Nanking. Please note that the content included in this article is especially graphic. Teachers may want to select excerpts from the article that are more suitable for his/her students' age and maturity level. <https://www.newsweek.com/exposing-rape-nanking-170890>

Eyewitness History: The Rape of Nanking <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/nanking.htm>

CNN: A lifetime later, a Korean 'comfort woman' still seeks redress <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/29/asia/will-ripley-japan-comfort-women/>

BBC: Comfort Women <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22680705>

Also available online: The Apology: Stories of Asia's 'Comfort Women' <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/witness/2018/08/apology-stories-asia-comfort-women-180808074115590.html>

**A copy of the packet and questions is provided at the end of this lesson plan.*

3. Allow student groups sufficient time to read through the packets and complete the question sheets.
4. Facilitate a class discussion of the groups' insights and conclusions.

Day 2

1. Instruct students to return to their small groups from Day 1.
2. Distribute copies of "Examining the Japanese History Textbook Controversies", an article written by Kathleen Woods Masalski at the Stanford Program on International and Cross Cultural Education. Available online at https://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/docs/examining_the_japanese_history_textbook_controversies
3. Allow students time to read this overview of the ongoing debate regarding Japanese history textbooks.
4. Facilitate a class discussion using the questions detailed below.

a) Describe the textbook selection process used by the Japanese government and schools.

b) Who is Ienaga Saburo and why did he sue Japan's Ministry of Education?

c) Why did the Japanese government challenge the historical narrative presented in Saburo's textbook?

d) The controversy over Japan's history textbooks reclaimed the spotlight in 1982. What changes to the historical narrative had the Japanese government permitted and why did this alarm the people of the nations that neighbor Japan?

e) In the 1990s a conservative movement gained support and rallied for textbook reforms. Led by Professor Fujioka Nobukatsu, how did this group hope to change the content of Japan's history textbooks? How would their depiction of Japan's wartime actions differ from the narrative most often presented in Japanese textbooks?

f) How did other nations respond to the conservative movement's attempts to rewrite history?

g) What lessons can American teachers and students learn from Japan's ongoing textbook debate?

Extensions

Teachers can extend this lesson by utilizing a number of resources available online and in print. Suggestions for extending the lesson include the following:

Compare/contrast Japan's textbook debate with the ongoing controversies involving history education in the United States. Thoughtfully consider how a nation's controversial history (e.g. slavery, forced relocation of Native Americans, the US military actions in Vietnam, etc) should be addressed in K-12 history textbooks.

Examine excerpts from the New History Textbook published by the ultra-conservative Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform. Consider how omissions and word choice can significantly change Japanese students' understanding of wartime atrocities. Excerpts (in English) are available online at

<http://www.npo-if.jp/worldhistory/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/The-History-Textbook-Problem-in-Japan.pdf>

Investigate how and why the Yasukuni Shrine has sparked debate among Japanese scholars, diplomats and other world leaders in recent years. For insight, see pages 307-309 of *The Nanjing Atrocities: Crimes of War*. Published by Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation (2014). Available online at <https://www.facinghistory.org/nanjing-atrocities>

Analyze the extent to which Cold War politics postponed critical analysis of wartime atrocities committed by the Japanese military. One resource that provides insight on this topic is "Healing Historical Wounds" on pages 333-335 of *The Nanjing Atrocities: Crimes of War*. Published by Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation (2014). Available online at <https://www.facinghistory.org/nanjing-atrocities>

Resources

Chang, Iris. *The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*. New York: Basic Books, 1997.

Hein, Laura and Mark Selden, eds. *Censoring History: Citizenship and Memory in Japan, Germany, and the United States*. New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2000.

Katsuichi, Honda. *The Nanjing Massacre*. New York, M. E. Sharpe, 1999.

Masalski, Kathleen Woods. "Examining the Japanese History Textbook Controversies." Stanford Program on International and Cross Cultural Education, 2001.

https://spice.fsi.stanford.edu/docs/examining_the_japanese_history_textbook_controversies

"Scarred by history: The Rape of Nanjing." BBC 11 April 2005.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/223038.stm>

"Exposing the Rape of Nanking." Newsweek 30 November 1997.

<https://www.newsweek.com/exposing-rape-nanking-170890>

Ripley, Will. "A lifetime later, a Korean 'comfort woman' still seeks redress." CNN 29 April 2015.

<https://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/29/asia/will-ripley-japan-comfort-women/>

Williamson, Lucy. "Comfort Women." BBC 29 May 2013. <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22680705>

"The Nanjing Atrocities: Crimes of War." Published by Facing History and Ourselves National Foundation (2014). Available online at <https://www.facinghistory.org/nanjing-atrocities>

Eyewitness History: The Rape of Nanking <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/nanking.htm>

Historical Research Packet

Student Copy

Rape of Nanking

BBC: Scarred by history: The Rape of Nanjing <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/223038.stm>

Newsweek: Exposing the Rape of Nanking (content is especially graphic; teacher may want to select excerpts from the article that are more suitable for his/her students' age and maturity level) <https://www.newsweek.com/exposing-rape-nanking-170890>

Eyewitness History: The Rape of Nanking <http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/nanking.htm>

Comfort Women

CNN: A lifetime later, a Korean 'comfort woman' still seeks redress <https://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/29/asia/will-ripley-japan-comfort-women/>

BBC: Comfort Women <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22680705>

*Al-Jazeera Video: The Apology: Stories of Asia's 'Comfort Women' <https://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/witness/2018/08/apology-stories-asia-comfort-women-180808074115590.html>

(* = video available online)

Scarred by history: The Rape of Nanjing

Story from BBC NEWS

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/223038.stm>

Published: 2005/04/11 10:23:05 GMT

Between December 1937 and March 1938 one of the worst massacres in modern times took place. Japanese troops captured the Chinese city of Nanjing and embarked on a campaign of murder, rape and looting. Based on estimates made by historians and charity organisations in the city at the time, between 250,000 and 300,000 people were killed, many of them women and children.

The number of women raped was said by Westerners who were there to be 20,000, and there were widespread accounts of civilians being hacked to death.

Yet many Japanese officials and historians deny there was a massacre on such a scale.

They admit that deaths and rapes did occur, but say they were on a much smaller scale than reported. And in any case, they argue, these things happen in times of war.

The Sino-Japanese Wars

In 1931, Japan invaded Chinese Manchuria following a bombing incident at a railway controlled by Japanese interests.

The Chinese troops were no match for their opponents and Japan ended up in control of great swathes of Chinese territory.

The following years saw Japan consolidate its hold, while China suffered civil war between communists and the nationalists of the Kuomintang. The latter were led by General Chiang Kai-shek, whose capital was at Nanjing.

Many Japanese, particularly some elements of the army, wanted to increase their influence and in July 1937, a skirmish between Chinese and Japanese troops escalated into full-scale war.

The Japanese again had initial success, but then there was a period of successful Chinese defense before the Japanese broke through at Shanghai and swiftly moved on to Nanjing.

Chiang Kai-shek's troops had already left the city and the Japanese army occupied it without difficulty.

'One of the great atrocities of modern times'

At the time, the Japanese army did not have a reputation for brutality.

In the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, the Japanese commanders had behaved with great courtesy towards their defeated opponents, but this was very different.

Japanese papers reported competitions among junior officers to kill the most Chinese. One Japanese newspaper correspondent saw lines of Chinese being taken for execution on the banks of the Yangtze River, where he saw piles of burned corpses.

Photographs from the time, now part of an exhibition in the city, show Japanese soldiers standing, smiling, among heaps of dead bodies.

Tillman Durdin of the New York Times reported the early stages of the massacre before being forced to leave. He later wrote: "I was 29 and it was my first big story for the New York Times. So I drove down to the waterfront in my car. And to get to the gate I had to just climb over masses of bodies accumulated there."

"The car just had to drive over these dead bodies. And the scene on the river front, as I waited for the launch... was of a group of smoking, chattering Japanese officers overseeing the massacring of a battalion of Chinese captured troops."



"They were marching about in groups of about 15, machine-gunning them." As he departed, he saw 200 men being executed in 10

minutes to the apparent enjoyment of Japanese military spectators. He concluded that the rape of Nanjing was "one of the great atrocities of modern times".

'The memories cannot be erased'

A Christian missionary, John Magee, described Japanese soldiers as killing not only "every prisoner they could find but also a vast number of ordinary citizens of all ages".

"Many of them were shot down like the hunting of rabbits in the streets," he said. After what he described as a week of murder and rape, the Rev Magee joined other Westerners in trying to set up an international safety zone.

Another who tried to help was an American woman, Minnie Vautrin, who kept a diary which has been likened to that of Anne Frank. Her entry for 16 December reads: "There probably is no crime that has not been committed in this city today. Thirty girls were taken from the language school [where she worked] last night, and today I have heard scores of heartbreaking stories of girls who were taken from their homes last night - one of the girls was but 12 years old." Later, she wrote: "How many thousands were mowed down by guns or bayoneted we shall probably never know. For in many cases oil was thrown over their bodies and then they were burned." "Charred bodies tell the tales of some of these tragedies. The events of the following ten days are growing dim. But there are certain of them that lifetime will not erase from my memory and the memories of those who have been in Nanjing through this period." Minnie Vautrin suffered a nervous breakdown in 1940 and returned to the US. She committed suicide in 1941.

Also horrified at what he saw was John Rabe, a German who was head of the local Nazi party. He became leader of the international safety zone and recorded what he saw, some of it on film, but this was banned by the Nazis when he returned to Germany. He wrote about rape and other brutalities which occurred even in the middle of the supposedly protected area.

Confession and denial

After the Second World War was over, one of the Japanese soldiers who was in Nanjing spoke about what he had seen. Azuma Shiro recalled one episode: "There were about 37 old men, old women and children. We captured them and gathered them in a square."

"There was a woman holding a child on her right arm... and another one on her left."

"We stabbed and killed them, all three - like potatoes in a skewer. I thought then, it's been only one month since I left home... and 30 days later I was killing people without remorse."

Mr Shiro suffered for his confession: "When there was a war exhibition in Kyoto, I testified. The first person who criticized me was a lady in Tokyo. She said I was damaging those who died in the war."

"She called me incessantly for three or four days. More and more letters came and the attack became so severe... that the police had to provide me with protection."

Such testimony, however, has been discounted at the highest levels in Japan.

Former Justice Minister Shigeto Nagano denied that the massacre had occurred, claiming it was a Chinese fabrication.

Professor Ienaga Saburo spent many years fighting the Japanese government in the courts with only limited success for not allowing true accounts of Japanese war atrocities to be given in school textbooks.

There is also opposition to the idea among ordinary Japanese people. A film called Don't Cry Nanjing was made by Chinese and Hong Kong film-makers in 1995 but it was several years before it was shown in Japan.

Exposing the Rape of Nanking

BY NEWSWEEK STAFF ON 11/30/97 AT 7:00 PM

Excerpt from "The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II" by Iris Chang. Published by Basic Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers. Copyright 1997 by Iris Chang.

<https://www.newsweek.com/exposing-rape-nanking-170890>

THE CHRONICLE OF humankind's cruelty is a long and sorry tale. But if it is true that even in such horror tales there are degrees of ruthlessness, then few atrocities can compare in intensity and scale to the rape of Nanking during World War II.

The broad details of the rape are, except among the Japanese, not in dispute. In November 1937, after their successful invasion of Shanghai, the Japanese launched a massive attack on the newly established capital of the Republic of China. When the city fell on December 13, 1937, Japanese soldiers began an orgy of cruelty seldom if ever matched in world history. Tens of thousands of young men were rounded up and herded to the outer areas of the city, where they were mowed down by machine guns, used for bayonet practice, or soaked with gasoline and burned alive. By the end of the massacre an estimated 260,000 to 350,000 Chinese had been killed. Between 20,000 and 80,000 Chinese women were raped --and many soldiers went beyond rape to disembowel women, slice off their breasts, nail them alive to walls. So brutal were the Japanese in Nanking that even the Nazis in the city were shocked. John Rabe, a German businessman who led the local Nazi party, joined other foreigners in working tirelessly to save the innocent from slaughter by creating a safety zone where some 250,000 civilians found shelter.

Yet the Rape of Nanking remains an obscure incident. Although the death toll exceeds the immediate number of deaths from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki (140,000 and 70,000 respectively, by the end of 1945) and even the total civilian casualties for several European countries during the entire war (Great Britain lost 61,000 civilians, France 108,000, Belgium 101,000, and the Netherlands 242,000), the horrors of the Nanking massacre remain virtually unknown to people outside Asia. The Rape of Nanking did not penetrate the world consciousness in the same manner as the Jewish Holocaust or Hiroshima because the victims themselves remained silent. The custodian of the curtain of silence was politics. The People's Republic of China, Taiwan, and even the United States all contributed to the historical neglect of this event for reasons deeply rooted in the cold war. After the 1949 Communist revolution in China, neither the People's Republic of China nor Taiwan demanded wartime reparations from Japan (as Israel had from Germany) because the two governments were competing for Japanese trade and political recognition. And even the United States, faced with the threat of communism in the Soviet Union and mainland China, sought to ensure the friendship and loyalty of its former enemy Japan. In this manner, cold-war tensions permitted Japan to escape much of the intense critical examination that its wartime ally was forced to undergo.

In trying to understand the actions of the Japanese, we must begin with a little history. To prepare for what it viewed as an inevitable war with China, Japan had spent decades training its men. The molding of young men to serve in the Japanese military began early: In the 1930s, toy shops became virtual shrines to war, selling arsenals of toy soldiers, tanks, rifles, anti-aircraft guns, bugles, and howitzers. Japanese schools operated like miniature military units. Indeed, some of the teachers were military officers, who lectured students on their duty to help Japan fulfill its divine destiny of conquering Asia and being able to stand up to the world's nations as a people second to none. They taught young boys how to handle wooden models of guns, and older boys how to handle real ones. Textbooks became vehicles for military propaganda. Teachers also instilled in boys hatred and contempt for the Chinese people, preparing them psychologically for a future invasion of the Chinese mainland. One historian tells the story of a squeamish Japanese schoolboy in the 1930s who burst into tears when told to dissect a frog. His teacher slammed his knuckles against the boy's head and yelled, "Why are you crying about one lousy frog? When you grow up you'll have to kill one hundred, two hundred chinks!"

In the summer of 1937 Japan finally seized the opportunity to provoke a full-scale war with China. One night in July several shots were fired at members of a Japanese regiment, garrisoned by treaty in the Chinese city of Tientsin, and a Japanese soldier failed to appear during roll call after the maneuvers. Japanese troops advanced upon the nearby Chinese fort of Wanping and demanded that its gates be opened so that they could search for the soldier. When the Chinese commander refused, the Japanese shelled the fort. The confrontation escalated, and by August the Japanese had invaded Shanghai. Conquering China proved to be a more difficult task than the Japanese anticipated. In Shanghai alone Chinese forces outnumbered the Japanese marines ten to one, and Chiang Kai-shek, leader of the Nationalist government, had reserved his best troops for the battle. For months the Chinese defended the metropolis with extraordinary valor. To the chagrin of the Japanese, the battle of Shanghai proceeded slowly, street by street, barricade by barricade.

LITTLE WAS SPARED ON the path to Nanking. Japanese veterans remember raiding tiny farm communities, where they clubbed or bayoneted everyone in sight. Small villages were not the only casualties; entire cities were razed to the ground. Consider the example of Suchow, a city on the east bank of the Tai Hu Lake. One of the oldest cities of China, it was prized for its delicate silk embroidery,

palaces, and temples. Its canals and ancient bridges had earned the city its Western nickname as "the Venice of China." On November 19, on a morning of pouring rain, a Japanese advance guard marched through the gates of Suchow, wearing hoods that prevented Chinese sentries from recognizing them. Once inside, the Japanese murdered and plundered the city for days, burning ancient landmarks, and abducting thousands of Chinese women for sexual slavery. The invasion, according to the China Weekly Review, caused the population of the city to drop from 350,000 to less than 500. By the time Japanese troops entered Nanking, an order to eliminate all Chinese captives had been not only committed to paper but distributed to lower-echelon officers. On December 13, 1937, the Japanese 66th Battalion received the following command: "All prisoners of war are to be executed. Method of execution: divide the prisoners into groups of a dozen. Shoot to kill separately. Our intentions are absolutely not to be detected by the prisoners."

There was a ruthless logic to the order: the captives could not be fed, so they had to be destroyed. Killing them would not only eliminate the food problem but diminish the possibility of retaliation. Moreover, dead enemies could not form up into guerrilla forces. But executing the order was another matter. When the Japanese troops smashed through Nanking's walls in the early predawn hours of December 13, they entered a city in which they were vastly outnumbered. Historians later estimated that more than half a million civilians and ninety thousand Chinese troops were trapped in Nanking, compared with the fifty thousand Japanese soldiers who assaulted the city. General Kesago Nakajima knew that killing tens of thousands of Chinese captives was a formidable task: "To deal with crowds of a thousand, five thousand, or ten thousand, it is tremendously difficult even just to disarm them . . . It would be disastrous if they were to make any trouble."

Because of their limited manpower, the Japanese relied heavily on deception. The strategy for mass butchery involved several steps: promising the Chinese fair treatment in return for an end to resistance, coaxing them into surrendering themselves to their Japanese conquerors, dividing them into groups of one to two hundred men, and then luring them to different areas near Nanking to be killed. Nakajima hoped that faced with the impossibility of further resistance, most of the captives would lose heart and comply with whatever directions the Japanese gave them.

All this was easier to achieve than the Japanese had anticipated. Resistance was sporadic; indeed, it was practically nonexistent. Having thrown away their arms when attempting to flee the city as the Japanese closed in, many Chinese soldiers simply turned themselves in, hoping for better treatment. Once the men surrendered and permitted their hands to be bound, the rest was easy.

After the soldiers surrendered en masse, there was virtually no one left to protect the citizens of the city. Knowing this, the Japanese poured into Nanking, occupying government buildings, banks, and warehouses, shooting people randomly in the streets, many of them in the back as they ran away. As victims toppled to the ground, moaning and screaming, the streets, alleys, and ditches of the fallen capital ran rivers of blood. During the last ten days of December, Japanese motorcycle brigades patrolled Nanking while Japanese soldiers shouldering loaded rifles guarded the entrances to all the streets, avenues, and alleys. Troops went from door to door, demanding that they be opened to welcome the victorious armies. The moment the shopkeepers complied, the Japanese opened fire on them. The imperial army massacred thousands of people in this manner and then systematically looted the stores and burned whatever they had no use for.

These atrocities shocked many of the Japanese correspondents who had followed the troops to Nanking. Even seasoned war correspondents recoiled at the orgy of violence, and their exclamations found their way into print. From the Japanese military correspondent Yukio Omata, who saw Chinese prisoners brought to Hsiakwan and lined up along the river: "Those in the first row were beheaded, those in the second row were forced to dump the severed bodies into the river before they themselves were beheaded. The killing went on nonstop, from morning until night, but they were only able to kill 2,000 persons in this way. The next day, tired of killing in this fashion, they set up machine guns. Two of them raked a cross-fire at the lined up prisoners. Rat-tat-tat-tat. Triggers were pulled. The prisoners fled into the water, but no one was able to make it to the other shore."

Next, the Japanese turned their attention to the women. The rape of Nanking is considered the worst mass rape of world history with the sole exception of the treatment of Bengali women by Pakistani soldiers in 1971. Kozo Takokoro, a former soldier in the 114th Division of the Japanese army in Nanking, recalled, "No matter how young or old, they all could not escape the fate of being raped. We sent out coal trucks from Hsiakwan to the city streets and villages to seize a lot of women. And then each of them was allocated to 15 to 20 soldiers for sexual intercourse and abuse."

Surviving Japanese veterans claim that the army had officially outlawed the rape of enemy women. But rape remained so deeply embedded in Japanese military culture and superstition that no one took the rule seriously. Many believed that raping virgins would make them more powerful in battle. Soldiers were even known to wear amulets made from the pubic hair of such victims, believing that they possessed magical powers against injury.

THE MILITARY POLICY forbidding rape only encouraged soldiers to kill their victims afterwards. Kozo Takokoro was blunt about this. "After raping, we would also kill them," he recalled. "Those women would start to flee once we let them go. Then we would bang! Shoot them in the back to finish them up." According to surviving veterans, many of the soldiers felt remarkably little guilt about this. "Perhaps when we were raping her, we looked at her as a woman," Shiro Azuma, a former soldier in Nanking, wrote, "but when we killed her, we just thought of her as something like a pig."

One of the most bizarre consequences of the wholesale rape that took place at Nanking was the response of the Japanese government. The Japanese high command made plans to create a giant underground system of military prostitution--one that would draw into its web hundreds of thousands of women across Asia. The plan was straightforward. By luring, purchasing, or kidnapping between eighty thousand and two hundred thousand women--most of them from the Japanese colony of Korea but many also from China, Taiwan, the Philippines, and Indonesia--the Japanese military hoped to reduce the incidence of random rape of local women (thereby diminishing the opportunity for international criticism), to contain sexually transmitted diseases through the use of condoms, and to reward soldiers for fighting on the battlefield for long stretches of time. Later, of course, when the world learned of this plan, the Japanese government refused to acknowledge responsibility, insisting for decades afterwards that private entrepreneurs, not the imperial government, ran the wartime military brothels. But in 1991 Yoshiaki Yoshimi unearthed from the Japanese Defense Agency's archives a document entitled "Regarding the Recruitment of Women for Military Brothels." The document bore the personal stamps of leaders from the Japanese high command and contained orders for the immediate construction of "facilities of sexual comfort" to stop troops from raping women in regions they controlled in China.

The first official comfort house opened near Nanking in 1938. To use the word comfort in regard to either the women or the ""houses" in which they lived is ludicrous, for it conjures up spa images of beautiful geisha girls strumming lutes, washing men, and giving them shiatsu massages. In reality, the conditions of these brothels were sordid beyond the imagination of most civilized people. Untold numbers of these women (whom the Japanese called "public toilets") took their own lives when they learned their destiny; others died from disease or murder. Those who survived suffered a lifetime of shame and isolation, sterility, or ruined health.

In interview after interview, Japanese veterans from the Nanking massacre reported honestly that they experienced a complete lack of remorse or sense of wrongdoing, even when torturing helpless civilians. Hakudo Nagatomi spoke candidly about his emotions in the fallen capital: "I remember being driven in a truck along a path that had been cleared through piles of thousands and thousands of slaughtered bodies. Wild dogs were gnawing at the dead flesh as we stopped and pulled a group of Chinese prisoners out of the back. Then the Japanese officer proposed a test of my courage. He unsheathed his sword, spat on it, and with a sudden mighty swing he brought it down on the neck of a Chinese boy cowering before us. The head was cut clean off and tumbled away on the group as the body slumped forward, blood spurting in two great gushing fountains from the neck. The officer suggested I take the head home as a souvenir. I remember smiling proudly as I took his sword and began killing people."

After almost sixty years of soul-searching, Nagatomi is a changed man. A doctor in Japan, he has built a shrine of remorse in his waiting room. Patients can watch videotapes of his trial in Nanking and a full confession of his crimes. The gentle and hospitable demeanor of the doctor belies the horror of his past, making it almost impossible for one to imagine that he had once been a ruthless murderer. "Few know that soldiers impaled babies on bayonets and tossed them still alive into pots of boiling water," Nagatomi said. "They gang-raped women from the ages of 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."

From "The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II" by Iris Chang.
Published by Basic Books, a division of HarperCollins Publishers. Copyright 1997 by Iris Chang.

Eyewitness History: The Rape of Nanking, 1937

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/pfnanking.htm>

The following eyewitness account appears in: Rabe, John, *The Good Man of Nanking*, Erwin Wickert (ed.) (1998); Chang, Iris, *The Rape of Nanking* (1998).

Context

In 1931, the Japanese occupied the Chinese province of Manchuria transforming it into a Japanese puppet state. It was the first step in Japan's drive to control all of China. Six years would elapse before the Japanese took the next step in their plan of conquest.

In early July 1937, Japanese and Chinese troops clashed in Peking in an incident at the Marco Polo Bridge. Using this as justification, the Japanese launched a full-blown assault on the city at the end of the month utilizing massed infantry, tanks and airstrikes. It did not take long for the city and the surrounding area to fall to the Japanese.

The fighting moved to the south in August when the Japanese attacked Shanghai and pursued the retreating Chinese army up the Yangtze valley to the national capital at Nanking. The Japanese began their attack on that city early in December, forcing its surrender on December 13. Then the horror began.

The population of Nanking was subjected to an uncontrolled butchery that came to be known as "the Rape of Nanking." As the Japanese army poured into the city, fleeing residents were shot or bayoneted. Thousands of suspected members of the Chinese Army who had shed their uniforms for civilian clothing, were apprehended, their hands tied behind their backs and led en masse to killing fields where they were shot, beheaded, used for bayonet practice or killed in some other gruesome manner before being dumped into mass graves. Thousands of others were buried while still alive. Rape was rampant as thousands of women were repeatedly forced into brutal sex and often murdered once the lust of their attackers had been satisfied. The carnage lasted for six weeks and took an estimated 40,000 lives.

"The road to Hsiakwan is nothing but a field of corpses."

John Rabe was a German businessman who had resided in China since 1908. He represented the China branch of the Siemens Company and lived in Nanking at the time of the Japanese invasion. As the Japanese approached, he joined other foreign nationals in establishing a "Safety Zone" within the city that would harbor only civilians and unarmed soldiers. It was hoped that, devoid of combatants, the Japanese would spare the Safety Zone.

John Rabe kept a diary of his experiences. We join his story on the day that the Japanese enter the city and he accompanies other members of the Safety Committee in a tour of the Safety Zone:

December 13, 1937

Three of us committee members drive out to military hospitals that have been opened in the Foreign Ministry, the War Ministry, and the Railway Ministry, and are quickly convinced of the miserable conditions in these hospitals, whose doctors and nurses simply ran away when the shelling got too heavy, leaving the sick behind with nobody to care for them. . .

The dead and wounded lie side by side in the driveway leading up to the Foreign Ministry. The garden, like the rest of Chung Shan Lu, is strewn with pieces of cast-off military equipment. At the entrance is a wheelbarrow containing a formless mass, ostensibly a corpse, but the feet show signs of life.

It is not until we tour the city that we learn the extent of the destruction. We come across corpses every 100 to 200 yards. The bodies of civilians that I examined had bullet holes in their backs. These people had presumably been fleeing and were shot from behind.

The Japanese march through the city in groups of ten to twenty soldiers and loot the shops. If I had not seen it with my own eyes I would not have believed it. They smash open windows and doors and take whatever they like. Allegedly because they're short of rations. I watched with my own eyes as they looted the cafe of our German baker Herr Kiessling. Hempel's hotel was broken into as well, as was almost every shop on Chung Shang and Taiping Road. Some Japanese soldiers dragged their booty away in crates, others requisitioned rickshas to transport their stolen goods to safety.

...Forster (Ernest Forster, an American theologian) surprises some Japanese soldiers who are about to steal his bicycle but vamoose when they spot us. We stop a Japanese patrol, and point out to them that this is American property and ask them to order the looters to leave. They simply smile and leave us standing there.

We run across a group of 200 Chinese workers whom Japanese soldiers have picked up off the streets of the Safety Zone, and after having been tied up, are now being driven out of the city. All protests are in vain.

Of the perhaps one thousand disarmed soldiers that we had quartered at the Ministry of Justice, between 400 and 500 were driven from it with their hands tied. We assume they were shot since we later heard several salvos of machine-gun fire. These events have left us frozen with horror.

...Mr. Han says that three young girls of about 14 or 15 have been dragged from a house in our neighborhood. Doctor Bates reports that even in the Safety Zone refugees in various houses have been robbed of their few paltry possessions. At various times troops of Japanese soldiers enter my private residence as well, but when I arrive and hold my swastika armband under their noses, they leave. There's no love for the American flag. A car belonging to Mr. Sone, one of our committee members, had its American flag ripped off and was then stolen.

December 16

All the shelling and bombing we have thus far experienced are nothing in comparison to the terror that we are going through now: There is not a single shop outside our Zone that has not been looted, and now pillaging, rape, murder, and mayhem are occurring inside the Zone as well. There is not a vacant house, whether with or without a foreign flag, that has not been broken into and looted.

...No Chinese even dares set foot outside his house! When the gates to my garden are opened to let my car leave the ground... women and children on the street outside kneel and bang their heads against the ground, pleading to be allowed to camp on my garden grounds. You simply cannot conceive of the misery.

I've just heard that hundreds more disarmed Chinese soldiers have been led out of our Zone to be shot, including 50 of our police who are to be executed for letting soldiers in. The road to Hsiakwan is nothing but a field of corpses strewn with the remains of military equipment. The Communications Ministry was torched by the Chinese, the Y Chang Men Gate has been shelled. There are piles of corpses outside the gate. The Japanese aren't lifting a hand to clear them away, and the Red Swastika Society associated with us has been forbidden to do so.

It may be that the disarmed Chinese will be forced to do the job before .. they're killed. We Europeans are all paralyzed with horror. There are executions everywhere, some are being carried out with machine guns outside the barracks of the War Ministry.

...As I write this, the fists of Japanese soldiers are hammering at the back gate to the garden. Since my boys don't open up, heads appear along the top of the wall. When I suddenly show up with my flashlight, they beat a hasty retreat. We open the main gate and walk after them a little distance until they vanish in the dark narrow streets, where assorted bodies have been lying in the gutter for three days now. Makes you shudder in revulsion.

All the women and children, their eyes big with terror, are sitting on the grass in the garden, pressed closely together, in part to keep warm, in part to give each other courage. Their one hope is that I, the 'foreign devil' will drive these evil spirits away."

A lifetime later, a Korean 'comfort woman' still seeks redress

Will Ripley, CNN

Updated 1541 GMT (2341 HKT) April 29, 2015

<https://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/29/asia/will-ripley-japan-comfort-women/>

(CNN)Kim Bok-dong is 89 now, and is going blind and deaf. She knows her health is fading, and she can no longer walk unassisted. But her eyes burn bright with a passion borne of redressing her suffering of a lifetime ago.

She enters a meeting of Tokyo foreign correspondents in a wheelchair, visibly exhausted after a flight from Seoul and days of interviews and meetings.

The nightmares from five years as a sex slave of the Japanese army, from 1940 onwards, are still crystal clear. Kim is determined to share her story with anyone who will listen, until she's no longer physically able.

"My only wish is to set the record straight about the past. Before I die," Kim says.

Nightmare begins

Kim was a 14-year-old girl when the Japanese came to her village in Korea. She says they told her she had no choice but to leave her home and family to support the war effort by working at a sewing factory. "There was no option not to go," she recalls. "If we didn't go, we'd be considered traitors,"

Instead of going to a sewing factory, Kim says she ended up in Japanese military brothels in half a dozen countries. Along with about 30 other women, she says she was locked in a room and forced to do things no teenage girl -- no woman -- should ever have to do.

Kim describes seemingly endless days of soldiers lined up outside the brothel, called a "comfort station." Often they were so close to the front lines, they could hear the battles of World War Two happening all around them.

Endless torment

"Our job was to revitalize the soldiers," she says. "On Saturdays, they would start lining up at noon. And it would last until 8pm. There was always a long line of soldiers. On Sunday it was 8 a.m to 5 p.m. Again, a long line. I didn't have the chance to count how many."

Kim estimates each Japanese soldier took around three minutes. They usually kept their boots and leg wraps on, hurriedly finishing so the next soldier could have his turn. Kim says it was dehumanizing, exhausting, and often excruciating.

"When it was over, I couldn't even get up. It went on for such a long time. By the time the sun went down, I couldn't use my lower body at all. After the first year, we were just like machines," she says.

Kim believes the years of physical abuse took a permanent toll on her body. Tears stream down her cheeks as she explains how she was never able to fulfill her dream of having children.

"When I started, the Japanese military would often beat me because I wasn't submissive," Kim says. "There are no words to describe my suffering. Even now. I can't live without medicine. I'm always in pain."

Not nearly enough

Kim is part of an NGO called the "Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan," which is fighting for an apology. Some Japanese prime ministers have personally apologized in the past, but the NGO director believes that it's not nearly enough.

Tokyo maintains its legal liability for the wrongdoing was cleared by a bilateral claims treaty signed in 1965 between South Korea and Japan. Kim's story matches testimony from other so-called "comfort women."

In Washington, as Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe conducts a state visit to the United States, former Korean sex slave Lee Yong-soo makes a tearful plea to him, demanding an official apology for Japan's sexual enslavement of an estimated 200,000 comfort women, mostly Korean and Chinese. Many have since passed away, but those still alive want individual compensation for their treatment.

Critics say Abe has not been vocal enough. They fear his government is trying to whitewash the past, to appease conservatives who feel comfort women were paid prostitutes, not victims of official military policy.

"Unique to Japan"

"When it comes to the comfort women sex slave system, it is pretty much unique to Japan. I think Nazi Germany had some of it to a smaller degree. But in the Japanese case it was large scale, and state-sponsored, essentially," says Koichi Nakano, a professor of political science at Tokyo's Sophia University.

Nakano points out that, since Abe first came to office his government has succeeded in removing references to "comfort women" from many Japanese school textbooks.

It's part of what critics call Japan's track record of glossing over its war crimes. "(Comfort women) have gone through tremendous trauma. And in a way, the Japanese government risks a second rape by discrediting their testimonies and treating (their experiences) as if they were lies," Nakano says.

Abe insists he and other Prime Ministers have made repeated apologies. "I am deeply pained to think of the comfort women who experienced immeasurable pain and suffering," Abe told diet lawmakers last year.

Abe gave a similarly worded statement during a press conference Tuesday in Washington, DC -- leading critics to question the sincerity of Abe's expressions of remorse over the issue. Abe has said he does not believe women were coerced to work in the military brothels.

Victim mentality

Nakano says Abe and conservative lawmakers feel "singled out."

"They feel there's some sort of a plot by other Asian countries to sully the Japanese name to their advantage."

With Abe's historic visit to the U.S. just months before the 70th anniversary of the end of World War Two, Kim wants President Obama to pressure his key Asian ally to do more to acknowledge history.

Meanwhile, Kim has had enough of the excuses she says are hampering her efforts to finally get peace.

"To say there's no evidence is absurd. I am the evidence," she says.

Comfort women: South Korea's survivors of Japanese brothels

By Lucy Williamson

BBC News, Seoul 29 May 2013

<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22680705>



Elderly women once forced to work in Japan's military brothels live out their days in a unusual retirement home next to a museum that records their suffering. Their numbers dwindling, the former "comfort women" feel they have never had a full and sincere apology - and are still waiting.

On a winding country road, shadowed by South Korea's mountainous countryside, sits a strange building, jutting awkwardly from the cottages and tomato farms around it. A sweeping arched portico looks down sternly on the narrow lane, from where you can glimpse the striking statues and memorials inside. There's a gravel car park, bigger than the building's nine elderly residents would normally warrant, and leaflets at the door in English, Japanese and Korean.

Because, despite the game show blaring from the living room television, this isn't your typical retirement home. It's a living museum, known as the House of Sharing, and its statues and plaques tell the story of its residents' unusual lives - as "comfort women" for Japan's wartime army.

The youngest resident is now 84, but as young women during World War II, all say they were forced to work as sex slaves in Japan's military brothels.

Yi Ok-seon is a frail old lady with a walking frame who has difficulty speaking. But her eyes, when you meet them, are still sharp. She says she was 15 when a Korean and a Japanese man forcibly took her to north-west China, then under Japanese control. She had been begging her parents to send her to school for years, but with a dozen children to feed, they couldn't afford it. At the time she was taken, Ok-seon was working away from the family home.

Once in China, she says she was forced into sexual slavery for three years, in "comfort stations" set up by the Japanese military to service its troops.

"I felt really violated, being tricked and taken like that as a young teenager," she says. "It was like a slaughter house there - not for animals, but for humans. Outrageous things were done."

She shows me old scars on her arms and legs - from being stabbed, she says. A volunteer at the house tells me later that she sustained other injuries from that time, preventing her from bearing her own children. Up to 200,000 women are estimated to have worked as comfort women in Japan's military brothels, most of them Korean. Until the end of WWII, Korea was under Japanese occupation, and its people forced to learn Japanese, which meant Korean women were easier to corral -and communicate with - than women of other Asian nationalities. Many died during their ordeal, and many others died later. Since the issue came into the light in 1981, 234 former comfort women have come forward in Korea. There are now just 59 known survivors - nine live together in the

House of Sharing in Gwangju city in Gyeonggi province.

The house is a peaceful place, full of light.

But there's a disturbing quality too. Each resident has her own room, with a fridge, a bookshelf and a phone. The manager tells me that, because of what the residents have been through, having their own space is important. "They often trust no-one," he explains, "not even each other."

In the pretty garden outside is a haunting statue of a naked woman half-risen from the earth, her face crumpled, her shoulders sunk. And opposite her, in the centre of the courtyard, a growing collection of memorial busts for residents who have already passed away. The age of these last remaining survivors is a pressing issue for those who want to see greater acknowledgement from Japan over its past.

"We're all very old," Ok-seon tells me. "We're dying each year, one by one. Historically speaking the war might have stopped, but for us it's still going on, it never ended. We want the Japanese Emperor to come here, kneel before us and apologise sincerely. [But] I think the Japanese are just waiting for us to die."

Twenty years ago, the Japanese government did offer an apology.

A statement by then Chief Cabinet Secretary Yohei Kono admitted that "the Japanese military was, directly or indirectly, involved in the establishment and management of the comfort stations, and the transfer of comfort women.... that, in many cases they were recruited against their own will."

The government of Japan, it continued, would like to "extend its sincere apologies and remorse to all those who suffered immeasurable pain and incurable physical and psychological wounds as comfort women". A private compensation fund was also set up. But for many former comfort women, it wasn't enough.

Textbooks in Japan remain virtually silent on the issue, and there are many Japanese politicians who continue to claim that the women worked in the brothels voluntarily.

One nationalist mayor recently described the past use of military comfort women as "necessary", and Japan's new Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has appeared to question his country's earlier apology.

To raise awareness and debate about the issue, the House of Sharing has built a historical museum at the site, housing official documents, old photographs and testimony from several survivors. There are vivid paintings, too - part of the therapy offered to residents. The museum draws a small stream of visitors from around the world - including, on the day we visited, a group of American university students on a study tour of South Korea. Most, like history major Christopher DeWald, had never heard about Japan's wartime use of comfort women.

"I was a history major for three years in college, and it makes me wonder why we don't learn more about it in America," he says. "Especially with the conflict between North and South Korea, and the Korean War, where America helped out South Korea. I think it would be very beneficial for America to say, 'Look, Japan, you've got to do something about this.' It's something that's very close to us because we're very close with South Korea."

Some US politicians have taken up the issue in recent years, but the home's general manager, Ahn Shin Kweon, says that international awareness still lags behind that of other major human rights abuses. "In the US a lot is known about the Holocaust, for example," he says. "There are lots of museums and facilities to raise awareness. In contrast, the issue of comfort women is much less known. Partly, that's because Korea has had a late start - we've been so caught up in our own industrialisation, and we only have a limited number of scholars or academic papers on this issue. Also, a lot of the official documents are stored in Japan, with restricted access. We only have the oral testimonies of the women themselves. That's why we decided to build the museum."

These days, 40% of the visitors are Japanese, who come to find out about their country's past. For the moment, part of that history is still living, in the house behind the museum. Some of the women occasionally meet the museum's Japanese visitors - by prior arrangement - to try to get some kind of acknowledgement and to raise awareness. But in perhaps just a few more years, this small collection of photos, belongings and mournful statues may be all that's left.

Student Names: _____

Small Group Question/Answer Sheet

After your small group has read the articles included in the informational packet, discuss and respond to the questions detailed below. Your written responses should reflect both an understanding of the articles' content and its relevance to the historical context of World War II.

Scarred by history: The Rape of Nanjing

Story from BBC NEWS

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/asia-pacific/223038.stm>

Published: 2005/04/11 10:23:05 GMT

1. Various organizations have provided a range of statistics in an attempt to quantify the wartime atrocities committed by the Japanese military in Nanking. What is the estimated death toll?

2. What additional details and insights are provided by eyewitness present in Nanking in December 1937?

3. Based on what you know about World War II, how do the crimes committed by the Japanese military in Nanking compare/contrast with those committed by the Nazi Regime in Europe?

Exposing the Rape of Nanking

BY NEWSWEEK STAFF ON 11/30/97 AT 7:00 PM

Excerpt from "The Rape of Nanking: The Forgotten Holocaust of World War II" by Iris Chang.

<https://www.newsweek.com/exposing-rape-nanking-170890>

1. According to Iris Chang, why hasn't the Rape of Nanking not penetrated "the world consciousness in the same manner as the Jewish Holocaust"?

2. How did the politics of the Cold War era discourage thoughtful discussion and critical examination of wartime atrocities committed by Japan?

3. Japan became a military powerhouse in the early 20th century. Briefly explain how teachers, textbooks, and toys played an important role in enabling the militarization of the island nation.

4. Why did the Japanese military often execute prisoners of war instead of opting to hold them captive?

5. Chang asserts that the Japanese military created a large-scale “underground system of military prostitution”. Who was most often forced into prostitution and why did the Japanese high command feel the need to create this system of sexual slavery?

Eyewitness History: The Rape of Nanking, 1937

<http://www.eyewitnesstohistory.com/pfnanking.htm>

Rabe, John, *The Good Man of Nanking*, Erwin Wickert (ed.) (1998); Chang, Iris, *The Rape of Nanking* (1998).

1. According to John Rabe, what happened to Chinese businesses and belongings when the Japanese took control of Nanking?

2. How did the Japanese soldiers treat foreigners (non-Chinese citizens) present in the city?

3. What was the purpose of the Safety Zone and how effective was it in achieving its objective?

A lifetime later, a Korean 'comfort woman' still seeks redress

Will Ripley, CNN

Updated 1541 GMT (2341 HKT) April 29, 2015

<https://edition.cnn.com/2015/04/29/asia/will-ripley-japan-comfort-women/>

1. As explained by Kim Bok-dong, what were most Korean women first told as they were rounded up by the Japanese military?

2. Over 70 years later, what do “Comfort Women” want from the Japanese government and why is the urgency of their demand gaining momentum with each passing year?

3. How have various groups and individuals responded to the Comfort Women’s demands:

A. Japanese Prime Minister Abe:

B. Japanese Conservatives:

C. Critics of Abe:

Comfort women: South Korea's survivors of Japanese brothels

By Lucy Williamson

BBC News, Seoul 29 May 2013

<https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-22680705>

1. Why did Korean women represent the largest percentage of Comfort Women?

2. What has the Japanese government done in the past 20 years in response to the Comfort Women's demands? Why haven't these gestures silenced the Comfort Women?

3. According to the college student interviewed in the article, how does history curriculum in the United States further frustrate the Comfort Women's attempts to get recognition and pursue justice?