

75th observance of Nanking massacre on December 1 at UCSD Price Center Theater

The APHAFIC hosted the 75th observance of Nanking massacre featuring a movie of *“Torn memories of Nanking”*, a documentary film with Director Ms. Matsuoka Tamaki ((松岡 環) on Saturday, December 1 afternoon, at the at the Price Center Theater of University of California, San Diego University cosponsored UCSD Chinese Students and Scholars Association, US-China People Friendship Association, San Diego Chinese Art and Culture Association, San Diego Historical Society and Museum, House of China. Around 100 attendees included UCSD students and 30 students from Mesa College led by professor Lois Witner.

Ms. Matsuoka is a retired elementary school teacher, and had visited Nanjing for the first time in 1988 to gather material for their anti-war, peace and human rights activities. Since then every August 15, date when Japan surrendered to end WW II, she has been engaged in annual memorial ceremonies for the Nanjing Massacre victims and in sponsoring Nanjing Massacre study tours. Every December since 1996 she has invited Chinese victims and sponsored nationwide testimony gatherings in Japan.

In the movie, Matsuoka interviewed seven Chinese victims: 4 men and three women, plus six Japanese soldiers from a total of 250 soldiers and 300 victims interviewed. Quotes from Chinese women: ‘My mother and I, who was only seven years old, were raped in front of my father who was fatally injured for trying to save me.’, ‘I was raped when I tried to protect my grandfather who was threatened with a bayonet to help a woman’, ‘I was raped and my daughter was burnt to death by the Japanese soldiers near Pukou, the opposite bank of Nanking.’ Some quotes from Chinese men: ‘Mass slaughtered at the mouth of the Sancha River that flow into the Yangzi River’...’ I lay my belly on the ground and hid myself among the corpses. I narrowly escaped from being burn’.

Quotes from Japanese soldiers: ‘Set fire to the warehouses packed with huge number of captured Chinese. Confined woman in an occupied house and raped them in a group day after day.’, ‘ Rape was a matter of course for Japanese soldiers.’, ‘ The woman I raped in Nanking and on the way to Nanking numbered no fewer than fifty.’, ‘Set fire to the warehouses packed with huge number of captured Chinese. Confined woman in an occupied house and raped them in a group day after day.’, ‘ Rape was a matter of course for Japanese soldiers.’, ‘ I saw soldiers raping women everywhere. It came together with the war. I saw the soldiers carrying women away or raping them everywhere. They raped indiscriminately including old women. They raped and killed afterwards. It was a mess. ‘, ‘The Nanking Massacre took place indeed’

After the movie, and prior to Ms. Matsuoka's speech, professor Lei Guang (光磊), the founding director of the 21st Century China Program at UC San Diego gave a short talk on "**Historical memory and China and Japan**". Professor Guang indicated that ...The Pacific War was the single most devastating event in China's modern history, and it behooves political leaders in both countries not to distort its history for short-term political gain. Lei Guang also cautions that historical memories change, and that such memories are not unified in a country. He points out, for example, that historical memories about the war were contested inside Japan itself, with the right-wing politicians pushing for a revisionist history while the liberals and left-leaning political forces tend to be more reflective and critical of the imperial army. Historical memories also change over time. The best way to commemorate Nanjing is to celebrate Chinese people's resilience and bravery while putting pressure on international pressure on the right-wing Japanese politicians to abandon their dangerous revisionist history.

Ms. Matsuoka's gave a talk on why and how she had this movie made in Japanese with English translation by Ms. Akiko Izumitani (泉谷晶子), also a film maker. Ms. Matsuoka stated that whenever she held gatherings or film screenings about the Nanjing Massacre in Japan, right-wing thugs would try to disrupt them with trucks and loud speakers. In Japan , Nanjing Massacre documentation has been sealed since the end of World War II. The events in Nanjing are denied by politicians and scholars. Despite the fact that Nanjing Massacre research has progressed very well, denials are still frequent. However, amidst these conflicting opinions, little attention has been paid to the individual stories of victims and perpetrators who actually experienced and witnessed the massacre. She tried to search for the truth of the Nanjing Massacre by locating the Chinese victims and Japanese war veterans, and recording their memories. She interviewed 300 Chinese victims who survived the Nanjing Massacre and 250 Japanese war veterans who were in Nanjing during the massacre. We succeeded in recording voices that have never been heard before in public. As she interviewed both victims and assailants, she found out that the times and the places of their experiences of the atrocities conducted by Japanese soldiers (such as mass slaughter, rape, arson and plunder) surprisingly coincided. Her group have recorded all of their testimonies. She hopes to educate general public, about the suffering of victims and their families suffered and the mind set of Japanese soldiers during Nanking massacre. She also mentioned about the inadequate inclusion of Nanking massacre in Japanese history text books.



Picture 1: Ms. Matsuoka Tamaki (left) with translator Ms. Akiko Izumitani



Picture 2: Ms. Matsuoko Tamaki (fourth from left) with some APHFIC board members and professor Lei Guang (second from right)