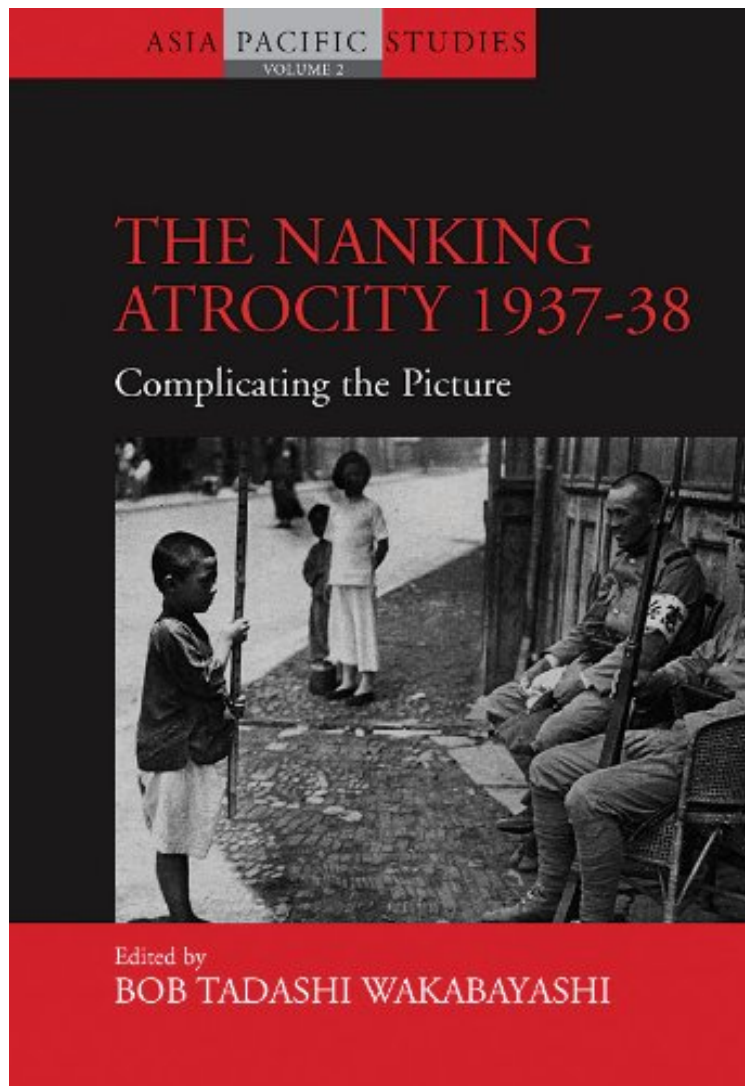


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## The Nanking Atrocity, 1937-1938: Complicating the Picture (Asia-Pacific Studies: Past and Present)

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**From Berghahn Books : The Nanking Atrocity, 1937-1938: Complicating the Picture (Asia-Pacific Studies: Past and Present)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Nanking Atrocity, 1937-1938: Complicating the Picture (Asia-Pacific Studies: Past and Present):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Necessary readingBy AveryThe most important part of this book is that the historians agree that the focus of the debate needs to be shifted. Japanese denialists make a huge issue out of

pushing the impossibility of the 300,000 death toll figure, and have tried to associate the term daigyakusatsu (great massacre) with this death toll, as if it is right and just to deny a massacre based on a specific term being used by leftist writers to express the pain of the Chinese. The Chinese public, informed by their own wounded nationalism, points to these arguments again and again as racist chauvinism. These essays, mostly by left-wing historians, examine this debate from many sides in a lot of human depth. Editor Wakabayashi's essay on the 100-man killing contest is a must-read. Generally, the contributors seek to point out that both sides are right: the 300,000 figure is wrong, but argument from death toll is indeed racist chauvinism and nothing else. The key moment for me came from an essay by one Kimura Takuji (who is not heavily involved in Nanking debates in Japanese, and indeed has not published very much), who pointed out that Japan's atrocities panned the Asian continent and that correct critique of prewar Japanese attitudes needs to begin from that fact rather than Nanking alone. I will be trying to look into this subject in more depth in the future, informed by this book. Check this one out. 16 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Beyond the Hype By Donald G. Wileman If you've just started trying to make sense of the Nanking atrocity, or if you've been at it a while and are tired of people calling each other genocidal liars, then this is the book you want. Calm (well, \*fairly\* calm), reasonable, knowledgeable people, with different opinions, did lots of research, put their heads together, and came up with the best estimates of what happened that the evidence will allow. They did not erase. They did not inflate. Some of the authors are actually witty (be careful not to giggle while reading a book about atrocities on the bus; people will look at you strangely). All the authors write clearly. This book's conclusions (such as a casualty range of... nah, telling you would be the academic equivalent of a "spoiler"), aren't likely to be disproved unless very unexpected new evidence turns up, so late. I felt at times that the authors repeated themselves too much, and drove each point home, step-by-step --as if it were a stake through Dracula's heart. Give them a break; there are far too many Undead arguments walking around on this topic: disproved years ago, but still re-published because people with money or power publish what they want to believe --and what they want \*you\* to believe. People fight about this subject in North America and Europe. In China and Japan it's Incandescent! Berghahn books took a big chance publishing this many voices. They published in paperback, in language and in styles almost anyone could understand. You won't find this book on Indigo Chapters' site, for all that they offer 41 "hits" on the subject (many of them repeats, mostly with words like "Super Holocaust" in their titles). I'd like to see this book succeed.--Donald G. Wileman teaches Modern European History at York University [Toronto] 5 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Possibly the Finest Book on the Subject By Stop Uyoku Top notch essays and readability make this novel the BEST available in the English language, hands down. Not only is the book meticulously researched and cited, it is composed of essays by the finest minds on the subject that the world currently has to offer. If you want to read a historically accurate and politically benign book on the subject, one that covers all the bases, then this is it. This should be required reading for any and all world or Asian history students, or for any US history class dedicated to the war in the Pacific.

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.

"This collection of 16 thoroughly researched articles is a refreshingly candid response to Japanese scholarship that denies or minimizes the attack on Nanking in order to advance contemporary jingoistic politics... the volume provides an invaluable summary of the politics surrounding the atrocity in Japan... Highly recommended." Choice "This volume is of great use to historians of modern China and Japan, and proves valuable for scholars working on comparative genocide A number of chapters would work well in terms of undergraduate and graduate teaching Taken together, the essays here drive the point home that only through more detailed historical study can we remove the politicized lens of contemporary nationalism which continue to cloud our understanding of the horrendous episode of history." History "...the vociferous debates over what happened at Nanjing are far from over. Wakabayashi's book has provided an admirable starting point however for approaching the subject with balance and as much objectivity as can be gathered...professional historians and researchers of the period, especially Western historians, would do well to consult *The Nanjing Atrocity* in their efforts at gaining a more complete picture of the event." In-Spire: Journal of Law,

Politics and Societies "The book offers a much more nuanced approach to the study of the Atrocity, based on new research findings, and represents a springboard for future scholarship. The many shades of opinion on Nanking are represented and discussed with a fairness and balance not often found in this particular field. The book deserves to be read widely, and should be deemed compulsory reading for undergraduate and postgraduate students of East Asian history and contemporary international relations." *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* "All of the articles in the volume are essential reading for anyone interested in the subject..." *The Historian* "...Wakabayashi called on his authors to offer cutting-edge, revisionist perspectives based on new empirical research. As such, most of the essays rise to this challenge and successfully undermine many of the assumptions and basic facts employed by both the Chinese nationalists and the Japanese deniers...any scholar or student serious about exploring the significance of Nanjing 1937-38 should have this book at the top of their reading list." *Electronic Journal of Contemporary Japanese Studies (EJCJS)* "This excellent book... is an outstanding contribution to furthering our understanding and conversation about one of the most controversial episodes in the twentieth century." *Journal of Japanese Studies* "These articles are presented as point of departure for discussions and not as the conclusion of a debate that will continue to be heated in the years to come. They are essential reading for those who try and understand not only the events of Nanking in 1937-38 but also their importance in Asian politics today." *Vingtime Sicle* "The essays are of high quality and are carefully edited ... Wakabayashi's introductory essay sets out the 'messiness' of historical reality very clearly, arguing against melodramatic interpretations ... These essays are meant as a starting point for discussion...Yet for anyone concerned to understand not only the events in Nanjing in 1937-38 but the question of why they are so potent in Asian politics today, they will be essential reading." *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* "...a timely, valuable addition to a controversial field...The 16 chapters provide a carefully considered balance of historiography and research based on Chinese, English and Japanese sources...[this publication] provides a tremendous service to those interested in the current, especially Japanese, state of the field." *Pacific Affairs* "This outstanding collection of essays detailing what is known about what actually happened at Nanjing, and overview of the historiographic battle lines, is an invaluable contribution to an understanding of the 'Atrocity.' These essays provide a compelling refutation of the tired and implausible arguments typically espoused by the deniers and minimizers and also vividly portray the various atrocities committed by the Imperial Armed Forces. This collection also offers refreshing counterpoints to the hyperbole that biases - and undermines - Chinese accounts of the tragedy." *Japan Times*

About the Author Bob Tadashi Wakabayashi is Professor of History at York University, Toronto, specializing in Japanese political thought and World War Two in East Asia. His publications include *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early-Modern Japan* (Harvard University Press, 1986), *Japanese Loyalty Reconstructed* (University of Hawaii Press, 1995), and *Modern Japanese Thought* (Ed., Cambridge University Press, 1999).