

## CHAPTER 4

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# THE JAPANESE MARCH IN

## The Atrocities Begin

12 DECEMBER

I FULLY EXPECTED the Japanese to have quietly taken the city, but that turns out not to be the case. All over our Zone you still see Chinese troops with yellow armbands and armed to the teeth with rifles, pistols, and hand grenades. Contrary to all agreements, the police are also armed with rifles instead of pistols. It looks as if both the military and the police are no longer obeying General Tang's orders. Under such circumstances, there's no hope of clearing them out of the Zone. At 8 a.m. the bombardment resumes.

At 11 o'clock Lung and Chow arrive and ask us, on behalf of General Tang, to make a last attempt at establishing a three-day armistice.

During these three days the defending forces are to depart, and then the city will be handed over to the Japanese. We put together a new telegram for the American ambassador, then a letter that General Tang must send us before the telegram can be sent, and lastly rules of conduct for the inter-

mediary who, under cover of a white flag, is to deliver a letter concerning the armistice to the commander of the Japanese forces.

Sperling volunteers to play the role of intermediary. We wait all afternoon for the return of Lung and Chow, who are supposed to get the necessary letter from General Tang. Finally, at around 6 o'clock, Lung appears and declares that unfortunately our efforts have been in vain. It's too late for an armistice now, the Japanese are at the gates.

I don't take it too tragically, am not even sad it turned out this way, because I wasn't very pleased with the idea from the start. It's transparently clear that General Tang wanted to conclude an armistice without the generalissimo's consent. Under no circumstances was the word "surrender" to be mentioned in the message to the Japanese. And above all, the proposal for an armistice was to be worded so that it would be viewed as having come from the International Committee. In other words: General Tang wanted to hide behind us, because he anticipated and feared severe censure from the generalissimo or the Foreign Ministry in Hankow. He wanted to put all responsibility on the committee, or perhaps its Chairman Rabe, and I didn't like that in the least!

6:30 P. M.

Uninterrupted artillery fire from Purple Mountain. Thunder and lightning around the hill, and suddenly the whole hill is in flames. They have set fire to some houses and a powder magazine. An old adage says: When Purple Mountain burns, Nanking is lost. To the south, you can see Chinese civilians fleeing through the streets of our Zone, trying to reach their lodgings. They are followed by various units of Chinese soldiers, who claim that the Japanese are hot on their heels. Not true! You only have to watch the way they're running—the last ones are actually strolling casually through the streets—to know that they're not being driven before the enemy.

We determine that the troops at the South Gate or in Goan Hoa Men came under heavy enemy artillery fire, panicked, and ran. The farther they got into the city, the calmer they became, and what was originally a mad flight turned into a casual stroll. But there can no longer be any doubt that the Japanese are at the gates and that the final push is about to start.

Together with Han, I head for home and make emergency preparations there in case we're shelled or bombed—which is to say, I order both my valise with the most necessary toiletries and the indispensable medical bag

with my insulin, bandages, etc. taken out to the new dugout, which seems somewhat safer than the old one. I stuff my fur coat with an emergency ration of medicine and instruments in case I have to abandon house and grounds.

I stop to consider for a moment. What else might I take along? I run through the rooms, carefully looking at everything, as if saying goodbye to all this precious stuff. There were a couple of photographs of my little grandchildren—into the bag! So now I'm armed and ready. I am fully aware that there's nothing to laugh about at the moment; but all the same, my gallows humor gains the upper hand.

Shortly before eight o'clock Colonels Lung and Chow arrive (Ling has marched off by now) and ask if they can take shelter in my house. I agree. Before Han and I left for home, these two gentlemen deposited 30,000 dollars in the committee's safe.

8 P. M.

The sky to the south is all in flames. The two dugouts in the garden are now filled to the brim with refugees. There are knocks at both gates to the property. Women and children plead to be let in. Several plucky fellows seeking shelter on my grounds climb over the garden wall behind the German School.

And I can't listen to their wailing any longer, so I open both gates and let everyone in who wants in. Since there's no more room in the dugouts, I allocate people to various sheds and to corners of the house. Most have brought their bedding and lie down in the open. A few very clever sorts spread their beds out under the large German flag we had stretched out in case of air raids. This location is considered especially "bombproof"!

The entire horizon to the south is a sea of flames. And there's one hell of a racket. I put on my steel helmet and press one down over the locks of the good Mr. Han, since neither one of us is about to go into the dugout now. There isn't room for us anyway. I run through the garden like a watchdog, moving from group to group, scolding here and calming there. And in the end they all obey my every word.

Shortly before midnight, there's a dreadful boom at the main gate, and my friend Christian Kröger from Carlowitz & Co. appears.

"Good Lord, Krischan! What are you doing here?"

"Just checking to see how you're doing!"

He reports that the main street is strewn with bits of uniform, hand

grenades, and all sorts of other military equipment cast aside by the fleeing Chinese troops.

"Among other things," Krischan says, "someone has just offered me a usable bus for 20 Mex.<sup>20</sup> dollars. Do you think we ought to take it?"

"Lord, Krischan. You can't be serious!"

"Well," Krischan says, "I've told the man to stop by the office tomorrow sometime."

Around midnight the noise abates somewhat, and I lie down to sleep. To the north the splendid Communications Ministry building is burning.

Every joint in my body hurts. I've not been out of these clothes for 48 hours. My guests are settling in for the night as well. Around 30 people are asleep in my office, three in the coal bin, eight women and children in the servant's lavatory, and the rest, over a hundred people, are in the dugouts or out in the open, in the garden, on the cobblestones, everywhere!

At nine o'clock Lung told me in confidence that General Tang had ordered the Chinese retreat for between nine and ten. Later I hear that General Tang actually broke away from his troops at eight o'clock and went by boat to Pukou. At the same time Lung told me that he and Chow have been left behind to care for the wounded. He pleaded with me to help him. The 30,000 dollars in the safe is to be used solely for that. I gladly accept the gift and promise to help him; the agonies of the wounded, who are without any kind of medical help, are indescribable.

### 13 DECEMBER

The Japanese took control of several city gates last night, but have yet to advance into the center.

Upon arrival at committee headquarters, it takes us ten minutes to found a branch of the International Red Cross, whose board of directors I join. Our good John Magee, who has been mulling over the same idea for weeks now, is chairman.

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. We get a goodly number of these employees back, because they screw up their courage again when they see the big Red Cross flag—some one quickly located one—flying above the Foreign Ministry hospital.



A main street in Nanking, strewn with the military equipment that fleeing Chinese troops had cast aside when the Japanese entered the city

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.

We drive very cautiously down the main street. There's a danger you may drive over one of the hand grenades lying about and be blown sky-high. We turn onto Shanghai Lu, where several dead civilians are lying, and drive on toward the advancing Japanese. One Japanese detachment, with a German-speaking doctor, tells us that the Japanese general is not expected for two days yet. Since the Japanese are marching north, we race down side streets to get around them and are able to save three detachments of about 600 Chinese soldiers by disarming them. Some of them don't want to obey the call to throw down their weapons, but then decide it's a good idea when they see the Japanese advancing in the distance. We then quartered these men at the Foreign Ministry and the Supreme Court.

Two of us committee members drive on ahead and near the Railway

Ministry we come across another group of 400 Chinese soldiers, whom we likewise persuade to lay down their weapons.

Shots are fired at us from somewhere. We hear the whistle of bullets, but don't know where they're coming from until we discover a mounted Chinese officer fooling around with his carbine. Maybe he didn't agree with what we were doing. I must admit: From his point of view, perhaps the man was right, but we couldn't do anything else. If it had come to a battle here in the streets bordering the Zone, fleeing Chinese soldiers would no doubt have retreated into the Safety Zone, which would then have been shelled by the Japanese and perhaps even totally destroyed because it was not demilitarized.

And we still had the hope that these fully disarmed troops would face nothing worse than being treated by the Japanese as prisoners of war. I don't know what happened to the officer who shot at us. But I did see our auto mechanic, Herr Hatz, an Austrian, grab his carbine away from him.

Returning to headquarters, I find a great throng at the entrance. Unable to escape by way of the Yangtze, a large number of Chinese soldiers have found their way here while we were gone. They all let us disarm them and then vanish into the Zone. Sperling stands at the main entrance with an earnest, stern look on his face and his Mauser pistol—without any bullets in it, by the way—in his hand and sees to it that the weapons are counted and placed in neat piles, since we plan to hand them over to the Japanese later on.

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 café 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.

Mr. Forster joins us on a visit to his mission's Anglican church on Taiping Road. Two grenades exploded in one of the houses beside the church.



A coolie leading his old, blind mother to safety. Rabe cut this photograph from a newspaper and pasted it into his diary.

The houses themselves have been broken into and looted. Forster 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.

We may no longer enter the Foreign Ministry, where we took wounded soldiers. Chinese doctors and nursing personnel are not allowed into the building, either.

We manage quickly to find lodging in some vacant buildings for a group of 125 Chinese refugees, before they fall into the hands of the Japa-

nese military. 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.

We have been under way without rest since six this morning, trying to gain exact information about these depredations. Han doesn't dare leave the house. The Japanese officers are all more or less polite and correct, but the behavior of some of the rank and file is disastrous. Meanwhile these people are dropping propaganda material from airplanes announcing that the civilian population will be treated humanely in all respects.

Exhausted and despairing, we return to our committee headquarters at Ninhai Lu 5. There are dangerous shortages at several places in the city. We use our own cars to deliver sacks of rice to the Ministry of Justice, where several hundred people have nothing to eat. I have no idea what the people inside the Waichiaopu,<sup>21</sup> with all those wounded, are living off. Seven gravely wounded people have been lying in the headquarters courtyard for hours now and can finally be transported by ambulance to Kulou Hospital, among them a child who was shot in the lower leg: a lad of ten, maybe, who makes not a sound despite his pain.

#### 15 DECEMBER

At 10 a.m. we are paid a visit by naval Lieutenant Sekiguchi. We give him copies of the letters we have sent to the commanders of the Japanese army.

At 11 o'clock we receive Mr. Fukuda, the attaché of the Japanese embassy, with whom we discuss the details of our agenda. Mr. Fukuda agrees that it is obviously both in our interest and that of the Japanese authorities to have the electricity works, waterworks, and telephone system repaired as quickly as possible. And we, or I, can be of help to him.

Mr. Han and I are well acquainted with how these three facilities function, and I have no doubt that we can get engineers and workers to get them running again. At Japanese military headquarters, located in the Bank of Communications, we again meet with Fukuda, who is very helpful as a translator during our meeting with the current commandant.



Since we could not establish contact with the Japanese commandant yesterday, 14 December, we gave Mr. Fukuda a letter addressing the issue of what to do with the disarmed Chinese soldiers. It reads:

The International Committee for Nanking Safety Zone is very much perplexed by the problem of soldiers who have thrown away their arms. From the beginning the Committee strove to have this Zone entirely free of Chinese soldiers and up to the afternoon of Monday, December 13, had achieved considerable success in this respect. At that time several hundred soldiers approached or entered the Zone through the northern boundary and appealed to us for help. The Committee plainly told the soldiers that it could not protect them. But we told them that if they abandoned their arms and all resistance to the Japanese, we thought the Japanese would give them merciful treatment. . . .

The Committee fully recognizes that identified soldiers are lawful prisoners of war. But in dealing with those disarmed soldiers, the Committee hopes that the Japanese Army will use every precaution not to involve civilians. The Committee further hopes that the Japanese Army will in accordance with the recognized laws of war regarding prisoners and for reasons of humanity exercise mercy toward these former soldiers. They might be used to good advantage as laborers and would be glad to return to civilian life if possible.

Most respectfully yours,  
JOHN RABE, Chairman

In reply to this letter and our letter to the commandant of 14 December, we have now received from the latter the following recorded minutes.

### *Memorandum*

Of Interview with Chief of Special Service Corps (Bank of Communications, noon, December 15, 1937)

Translator: Mr. Fukuda.

Members of Committee present:

Mr. John Rabe, Chairman,

Dr. Smythe, Secretary

Dr. Sperling, Inspector-General

1. Must search the city for Chinese soldiers.
2. Will post guards at entrances to Zone.
3. People should return to their homes as soon as possible; therefore, we must search the Zone.

4. Trust humanitarian attitude of Japanese Army to care for the disarmed Chinese soldiers.
5. Police may patrol within the Zone if they are disarmed excepting for batons.
6. The 10,000 *tan*<sup>22</sup> of rice stored by your committee in the Zone you may use for refugees. But Japanese soldiers need rice, so in the Zone they should be allowed to buy rice. (Answer regarding our stores of rice outside of Zone, not clear.)
7. Telephone, electricity and water must be repaired; so this p.m. will go with Mr. Rabe to inspect and act accordingly.
8. We are anxious to get workers. From tomorrow will begin to clear city. Committee please assist. Will pay. Tomorrow want 100 to 200 workers.

As we were about to say goodbye to the commandant and Mr. Fukuda, General Harata entered and immediately expressed a desire to become acquainted with the Safety Zone, which we show him on a driving tour. We make an appointment for this afternoon to visit the electricity works in Hsiakwan.

Unfortunately I miss our visitors in the afternoon because a column of Japanese soldiers wants to lead away some former Chinese soldiers who have thrown away their weapons and fled into our Zone. I give my word that these refugees will do no more fighting, which is enough to set them free. No sooner am I back in my office at Committee Headquarters, than my boy arrives with bad news—the Japanese have returned and now have 1,300 refugees tied up. Along with Smythe and Mills I try to get these people released, but to no avail. They are surrounded by about 100 Japanese soldiers and, still tied up, are led off to be shot.

Smythe and I drive back to see Fukuda in an attempt to plead for these people. He promises to do his best; but we have scant hope. I point out that I will have difficulty finding workers for the Japanese if people are being executed. Fukuda admits as much and puts me off until tomorrow. I'm in a truly wretched mood. It's hard to see people driven off like animals. But they say that the Chinese shot 2,000 Japanese prisoners in Tsinanfu, too.

We hear by way of the Japanese navy that the gunboat USS *Panay*, on which the officials of the American embassy had sought safety, has been accidentally bombed and sunk by the Japanese. Two passengers are dead: Sandri, an Italian newspaper correspondent, and Charleson, the captain of the *Maypin*. Mr. Paxton of the American embassy was wounded in the knee

and shoulder; Squire was likewise wounded in the shoulder; Gassie broke a leg; Lieutenant Andrews is seriously wounded; and Captain Hughes also has broken a leg.

In the meantime a member of the committee has been wounded as well: Krischan Kröger came too close with an open flame to an almost empty gasoline can and has burned both hands. I gave him a good dressing-down. Hempel is bewailing the fact that the Japanese have completely destroyed his hotel. It appears there isn't much left of Kiessling's café, either.

### *Report of an Address by Mr. Smith (Reuters) in Hankow<sup>23</sup>*

By the morning of 13 December, there were still no Japanese soldiers to be seen in the city. The South City was still in Chinese hands. Two serious battles had been fought at the South Gate during the night, and the number of the Chinese dead was put at over 1,000.

By the eve of 13 December, Chinese troops and civilians had begun to loot. Mainly grocery stores were pillaged, but Chinese soldiers were also seen leaving private homes with food. It would be a mistake, however, to claim that Chinese troops were intent on systematic looting.

It is worth describing the scenes that took place outside Chinese clothing stores in South City. Hundreds of soldiers thronged before these shops. Ready-made civilian clothes of every sort sold like hotcakes. Soldiers spent their last cent on these clothes, changed into them out in the street, threw their uniforms away, and vanished as civilians. Several hundred of these civilians gathered later at the Military College and the International Club. It was not until almost noon that Mr. McDaniel spotted the first Japanese patrols in South City. In groups of six to twelve men they cautiously and slowly felt their way forward along the main streets. Occasional shots could be heard. Here and there one saw dead civilians at the side of the road, who, or so the Japanese said, had been shot while trying to flee. At the sight of the Japanese, a sense of relief seemed to pass through the Chinese civilian population, and they came out ready to accept the Japanese if they would have behaved humanely.

In the so-called Safety Zone about a hundred Chinese had been killed by stray bullets and grenades and several hundreds more wounded. By night Japanese troops had entered the Safety Zone as well. About 7,000 disarmed Chinese soldiers were inside the Zone. They had been quartered at the Military College and other buildings. The police in the Safety Zone had been augmented by several hundred Chinese policemen who had fled to South City.

By the morning of 14 December, the Japanese soldiers had still adopted no hostile attitude toward the Chinese civilian population. By

noon, however, in many locations small groups of six to ten Japanese had formed, who then moved from house to house, looting. Whereas the Chinese had restricted their theft primarily to food, nothing was secure from the Japanese. They have looted the city systematically and thoroughly. Until the day I departed, 15 December, by my own observation and that of other Europeans, the houses of the Chinese had without exception been looted, as had most of those belonging to Europeans. European flags flying over these houses were pulled down by the Japanese. Groups of Japanese could be seen departing with various household furnishings, though they appeared to have a special preference for wall clocks.

Flags were first ripped from the few foreign automobiles still remaining in Nanking before they were commandeered. The Japanese commandeered two cars and several trucks from the Safety Zone Committee. Outside the firm of Kiessling & Bader I ran into Herr Rabe, who with the help of the owner threw out several Japanese who had pulled down the flag and were busy looting the shop. In Hsiakwan the Japanese had bound 400 to 500 Chinese and led them away. All attempts by Europeans to reach them were vigorously forbidden by the Japanese. On 15 December the Japanese granted foreign correspondents permission to board a Japanese gunboat leaving Nanking for Shanghai. It later proved possible to take the same journey on an English gunboat. We were told to gather on the pier. When the wait for our departure lasted longer than expected, we used the time to undertake a short investigative walk. We saw how the Japanese had tied up some thousand Chinese out in an open field, and watched as small groups of them were led away to be shot. They were forced to kneel and were then shot in the back of the head. We had observed some 100 such executions, when the Japanese officer in charge noticed us and ordered us to leave at once. What happened to the rest of the Chinese, I cannot say.

Mr. Smith had the highest praise for the work of the Germans remaining in Nanking: Rabe, Kröger, and Sperling who are serving their fellowmen and caring for the welfare of Chinese refugees.

#### 16 DECEMBER

At 8:45 a.m. I receive a note from Mr. Kikuchi, a very modest and charming Japanese translator, that the so-called "Safety Zone" is to be searched for Chinese soldiers.

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. The following letter to Mr. Fukuda provides a general notion of current circumstances and the cases mentioned in the letter are only a few out of a great many that we know about:

Mr. Tokuyashu Fukuda,  
Attaché to the Japanese Embassy,  
Nanking.

Dear Sir:

Yesterday the continued disorders committed by Japanese soldiers in the Safety Zone increased the state of panic among the refugees. Refugees in large buildings are afraid to even go to nearby soup kitchens to secure the cooked rice. Consequently, we are having to deliver rice to these compounds directly, thereby complicating our problem. We could not even get coolies out to load rice and coal to take to our soup kitchens and therefore this morning thousands of people had to go without their breakfast.

Foreign members of the International Committee are this morning making desperate efforts to get trucks through Japanese patrols so these civilians can be fed. Yesterday foreign members of our Committee had several attempts made to take their personal cars away from them by Japanese soldiers. (A list of cases of disorder is appended.)

Until this state of panic is allayed, it is going to be impossible to get any normal activity started in the city, such as: telephone workers, electric plant workers, probably the water plant workers, shops of all kinds, or even street cleaning. . . .

We refrained from protesting yesterday because we thought when the High Commander arrived order in the city would be restored, but last night was even worse than the night before, so we decided these matters should be called to the attention of the Imperial Japanese Army, which we are sure does not approve of such actions by its soldiers.

Most respectfully yours,

JOHN RABE  
Chairman

LEWIS S. C. SMYTHE  
Secretary

Almost all the houses of the German military advisors have been looted by Japanese soldiers. No Chinese even dares set foot outside his house! When the gates to my garden are opened to let my car leave the grounds—where I have already taken in over a hundred of the poorest refugees—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 drive to Hsiakwan with Kikuchi to check on the electricity works and some of what rice remains. The electricity works looks to be intact and could probably be running again within a few days if the workers trusted the Japanese to protect them. I am willing to help, but given the incredible behavior of the Japanese soldiery, prospects are slim that I could drum up the 40 to 45 workers needed. And given the circumstances, neither would I like to risk having the Japanese authorities call one of our German engineers back from Shanghai.

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



Hundreds of Chinese were executed in the open areas of the city.



This gate, Y Chang Men, led to the harbor suburb of Hsiakwan. Only one passage was still open, and in it the bodies of Chinese soldiers were piled high, along with sandbags. People driving to Hsiakwan had to pass them for weeks.

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<sup>24</sup> 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.

Katsuo Okazaki, the consul general, who visited us this evening, explained that while it was true that a few soldiers were being shot, the rest were to be interned in a concentration camp on an island in the Yangtze.

Our former school porter is in Kulou Hospital; he's been shot. He had been conscripted to do labor, was given a paper attesting to the work done, and on his way home was shot twice in the back for no reason at all. His old certificate of employment, issued by the German embassy, lies before me drenched with blood.

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 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.

#### 17 DECEMBER

Two Japanese soldiers have climbed over the garden wall and are about to break into our house. When I appear they give the excuse that they saw two Chinese soldiers climb over the wall. When I show them my party badge they return the same way they came.

In one of the houses in the narrow street behind my garden wall, a woman was raped, and then wounded in the neck with a bayonet. I manage to get an ambulance so we can take her to Kulou Hospital. There are about 200 refugees in the garden now. They fall to their knees when you walk by, even though in all this misery we barely know up from down ourselves. One of the Americans put it this way: "The Safety Zone has turned into a public house for the Japanese soldiers."

That's very close to the truth. Last night up to 1,000 women and girls are said to have been raped, about 100 girls at Ginling Girls College alone. You hear of nothing but rape. If husbands or brothers intervene, they're shot. What you hear and see on all sides is the brutality and bestiality of the Japanese soldiery.

Herr Hatz, our Austrian auto mechanic, gets into an argument with a Japanese soldier, who reaches for his sidearm but is immediately floored by a well-placed hook to the chin, whereupon he and his two Japanese comrades, all armed to the teeth, take off.

The Japanese consul general, Katsuo Okazaki, demanded yesterday that the refugees leave the Zone for their homes and open their shops again as soon as possible. The Japanese soldiers have saved them the trouble of opening their shops: There's hardly a shop in the city that has not been broken into and looted. Miraculously, the house of the German ambassador, Dr. Trautmann, has been spared.

When Kröger and I arrive back at my house after checking on Trautmann's, Kröger is amazed to find his car again behind my house. Japanese



soldiers had taken it away from him yesterday while he was inside the hotel with some Japanese officers. Kröger stands his ground in front of the car until it is returned to him by its three Japanese occupants, one of whom says, "We friend—you go!"

This afternoon during my absence, these same soldiers are back in my garden again and take Lorenz's car instead. I had instructed Han that if he couldn't get rid of such guests, he should get a receipt, no matter what. He got one, too. It reads as follows: "I thank you present! Nippon Army, K. Sato."

That'll make Lorenz happy!

Across from the War Ministry, at the base of a dugout mound, are 30 bodies of Chinese soldiers who were shot there yesterday under martial law. The Japanese are now starting to clean up the city. From Shansi Road Circle ("Bavarian Square") to the War Ministry, everything is tidy already. The corpses are simply tossed into the ditches.

At 6 p.m. I bring 60 straw mats to my refugees in the garden. Great joy! Four Japanese soldiers scramble over the garden wall again. I catch three of them on the spot and chase them off. The fourth works his way through the rows of refugees as far as the main iron gate, where I nab him and politely escort him out the door. No sooner are these fellows outside than they take off at a run. They don't want to tangle with a German.



Bodies were piled into ditches and left there.

Usually all I have to do is shout "Deutsch" and "Hitler" and they turn polite, whereas the Americans have real trouble getting their way. Our letter of protest directed to the Japanese embassy has apparently made a lasting impression on Mr. Kiyoshi Fukui, the 2nd secretary. At any rate he promised that he would pass the letter on at once to the highest level of army command. While Dr. Smythe and I are speaking with Fukui at the Japanese embassy, Mr. Riggs arrives and asks us to return to headquarters, where Mr. Fukuda is waiting for us. The question of getting the electricity works back into operation is discussed. At the request of the Japanese I send the following telegram to Shanghai:

Siemens China Co.  
244 Nanking Road, Shanghai

Japanese authorities would like German engineer to come to Nanking to restart the local power plant. No damage to plant apparently was done in last fighting. Please reply through Japanese authorities.

R A B B E

The Japanese understand that it's in their interest to come to terms with us, although they recognize us only reluctantly. I tell them to give the commandant my regards and to tell him that I have had enough of my post as "mayor" and would be happy to resign.

18 DECEMBER

Our hope that order would return with the arrival of the commandant has unfortunately not been realized; on the contrary, things are worse today than yesterday. I already had to expel soldiers from our garden early this morning. One of them comes at me with his sidearm drawn, but he quickly puts it away.

As long as I am personally at the house, everything is all right. So far these fellows have shown some respect for Europeans, but not for Chinese. I am constantly being called from headquarters by various people in the neighborhood whose houses soldiers have broken into. I drag two Japanese out of a back room in a house that has been totally looted. While we are speaking with a Japanese officer about getting the electricity works running again, one of our cars just outside the door is stolen. We barely manage to get the car back. The soldiers have almost no regard for their officers.

A Chinese man dashes into the room and tells us that his brother was shot because he refused to give his cigarette case to the soldier who had forced his way into the house. When I protest, the Japanese officer with whom we are negotiating about the electricity works provides me with a Japanese pass to be affixed to the front door. We drive home to paste it on right away.

Just as we arrive we catch a soldier trying to break in. He is driven off by the officer. At the same moment one of my Chinese neighbors arrives and tells us that four soldiers have broken into his house and that one of them is about to violate his wife. The Japanese officer and I storm into the neighbor's house and prevent the worst; the soldier gets a slap on each cheek by the officer, and is then allowed to go.

Just as we are about to drive off again, Han arrives and reports that he has been robbed by one of the soldiers who broke in during my absence. That was too much for me. I got out of the car and told the Japanese officer to drive back without me. All these dreadful events had left me feeling physically ill.

But the Japanese colonel wouldn't hear of it. He apologized and declared quite candidly that after seeing what he had seen today, he was convinced that we had not been exaggerating and would do his best to put an end to this state of affairs.

6:00 P. M.

I arrive home just in time to meet up with a pair of Japanese soldiers who had entered by way of the garden wall. One of the two has already taken off his uniform and sidearm and is about to violate one of the girls among the refugees, when I come up and demand that he return at once the same way he came. The other fellow is already sitting astraddle the wall when he spots me and a gentle push sends him on his way.

At 8 o'clock Herr Hatz shows up in a truck with a Japanese police commissioner and a whole battery of gendarmes, who are supposed to guard Ginling College tonight. Our protest at the Japanese embassy already seems to have helped a little.

I open the gate at our Committee Headquarters at Ninhai Lu No. 5 in order to let in a number of women and children who have fled to us. The wailing of these poor women and children echoes in my ears for hours afterward. The 5,500 square feet in my garden and grounds keep filling up with more and more refugees. There must be about 300 people living here

with me now. My house is considered the safest spot. When I'm at home that's probably true, for I physically remove each intruder, but when I'm gone the safety doesn't amount to much. Japanese notices pasted on doors do little good. The soldiers pay no attention to them. Most climb over the garden wall anyway. Chang's wife became so ill during the night that we had to take her to Kulou Hospital early this morning. Unfortunately several nurses at Kulou Hospital have been raped as well.

## 19 DECEMBER

The night passed peacefully at our house. Next to our main office on Nin-hai Lu is a house where about 20 women are sheltered, and Japanese soldiers broke in there to rape the women. Hatz springs over the garden wall and chases the scoundrels off. The following plea for help has come from a refugee camp at Canton Road No. 83-85:

*To the International Committee of the  
Nanking Safety Zone, Nanking*

There are about 540 refugees crowded in Nos. 83 and 85 on Canton Road. Since 13th inst. up to the 17th those houses have been searched and robbed many many times a day by Japanese soldiers in groups of three to five. Today the soldiers are looting the places mentioned above continually and all the jewelries, money, watches, clothes of any sort are taken away. At present women of younger ages are forced to go with the soldiers every night who send motor trucks to take them and release them the next morning. More than 30 women and girls have been raped. The women and children are crying all night. Conditions inside the compound are worse than we can describe. Please give us help.

Yours truly  
Nanking, 18 December 1937

ALL THE REFUGEES.

We don't know how we can protect these people. The Japanese soldiers are completely out of control. Under such circumstances I can't find the workers needed to get the electricity works running again. When Mr. Kikuchi calls on me about it again today, I point out to him that the workers have run off because they do not believe that they and their families will be protected, particularly since not even we Europeans are spared the bestiality of these soldiers.

Kikuchi answers: "It was no different in Belgium."

6:00 P.M.

Six Japanese climbed over my garden wall and attempted to open the gates from the inside. When I arrive and shine my flashlight in the face of one of the bandits, he reaches for his pistol, but his hand drops quickly enough when I yell at him and hold my swastika armband under his nose. Then, on my orders, all six have to scramble back over the wall. My gates will never be opened to riffraff like that.

There are large fires spreading to the north and the south of my house. Since the waterworks have been destroyed and the firemen have been taken away by the soldiers, there's nothing we can do. In Gou Fo Lu it looks as if a whole block of houses is burning down. The sky is bright as day. The 300 to 400 refugees here in my garden—I no longer know how many there really are—have used straw mats, old doors, and sheets of tin to build huts for a little protection against the snow and cold. Unfortunately they have started to cook inside these huts. I had to forbid it out of fear of fire. I'm so afraid a fire will break out, for there are still 64 large cans of gasoline stored on the grounds. I have ordered that cooking be done in only two places in the garden.



Crowds of refugees thronged Rabe's house and the streets of the Safety Zone.

20 DECEMBER

At our committee's headquarters I find a Japanese officer who asks for 20 workers to clean the Metropol Hotel, which is to be occupied by Japanese staff officers. I give him 16 workers from our committee, whom he personally delivers back to me by truck at noon and to each of whom, moreover, he pays 5 China dollars. This is the first time that we have experienced serious consideration on the part of Japanese military authorities. And it obviously made a good impression on the Chinese.

Returning to Ninhai Lu, I make the acquaintance of Herr Bernhard Arp Sindberg of the Kiangnan Cement Works in Hsi Sha Shan. Sindberg had wanted to bring several wounded Chinese to Nanking, since he had heard on the radio that Nanking was perfectly calm, with its electricity and water-works as well as its telephone system fully restored. He was not a little amazed to learn about current conditions. About halfway here he had to send the wounded Chinese back to Hsi Sha Shan, since the Japanese wouldn't let him through. He took it into his head, however, that he had to press on to Nanking no matter what and walked a good part of the way before being picked up by a Japanese truck that brought him safely to the North Gate. Now the question is how to get back home.

At 6 o'clock, I was paid a visit from Mr. Moriyama, the correspondent of the *Osaka Asahi Shimbun*, who was introduced to me by Rev. Mills. Moriyama speaks good German and English and interviews me in regular journalistic fashion. I do not keep my opinions to myself, and I ask him to use his influence to see that order is reestablished among the Japanese troops as quickly as possible. He admits that the matter is indeed urgent and crucial, since otherwise the reputation of the Japanese army will suffer.

As I write this a good number of houses are on fire again, some not all that far away, including the YMCA building. One might almost believe that these fires are set with the knowledge, and perhaps even on the order, of the Japanese military authorities.

During my absence, Japanese soldiers tried to break through the main iron-plated gate to my house with their bayonets. They didn't succeed, but several bayonet slashes in the doors and the bent corners of the iron-work attest to their activity. I order the battered doors hammered back into shape as best as possible. The bayonet slashes are to be left as a memento. Kröger and Sindberg come by to borrow a car from Han for Sindberg's trip home. Han unfortunately assents to this; I am not at all in agreement, be-

cause Han's car is sure to be a casualty of the trip, or if not the whole car, then most certainly all four tires.

## 21 DECEMBER

There can no longer be any doubt that the Japanese are burning the city, presumably to erase all traces of their looting and thievery. Yesterday evening the city was on fire in six different places.

I was awakened at 2:30 a.m. by the sound of walls collapsing and roofs crashing. There was now a very great danger that fire would spread to the last row of houses between Chung Shan Lu and my own house, but thank God it didn't come to that. Only flying and drifting sparks presented a threat to the straw roofs of my refugee camp in the garden and to the supply of gasoline stored there, which absolutely has to be moved.

The following telegram gives some idea of the desperate mood among the Americans.

They want to send this telegram by way of the Japanese embassy, since there is no other way to forward a telegram. The text, however, is so transparent that I seriously doubt that the Japanese will even accept the telegram for sending:

Nanking 20th December 1937

Telegram to American Consulate-General in Shanghai:

Important questions require immediate presence American diplomatic representatives in Nanking stop Situation daily more urgent stop Please inform ambassador and Department of State stop signed *Magee, Mills, McCallum, Riggs, Smythe, Sone, Trimmer, Vautrin, Wilson* Delivered to Japanese Embassy 20 December, with request for transmission by naval wireless.

BATES

The Americans are indeed in a bad way. While I succeed in making a suitable impression by pompously pointing to my swastika armband and party badge, and at the German flags in my house, the Japanese have no regard whatever for the American flag. Whereas I simply bellowed down the soldiers who stopped my car this morning and after pointing to my flag was allowed to drive on my way, shots were fired at Dr. Trimmer and Mr. McCallum inside Kulou Hospital. Fortunately the shots missed; but the fact that we are being shot at is so monstrous that you can understand why the

Americans, who have given refuge to so many women and girls at their universities, have lost their patience.

How long, Dr. Smythe asked quite rightly yesterday, will we be able to keep up the bluff that we are equal to the situation? If one Chinese man in our refugee camps kills a Japanese soldier for raping his wife or daughter, everything will fall apart; then there'll be a bloodbath inside the Safety Zone.

The news has just arrived that, just as I predicted, the telegram to the American consulate general in Shanghai was not accepted by the Japanese embassy.

I'm having the entire gasoline supply moved this morning from my house and garden to Ninhai Lu, because I'm afraid that a whole row of houses on Chung Shan Lu will be torched. We now know all the signs of an impending fire. If a largish number of trucks assembles in a given spot, the houses are usually looted and torched shortly thereafter.

At 2 this afternoon all the Germans and Americans, etc., meaning the entire foreign colony, assemble outside Kulou Hospital and march in closed ranks to the Japanese embassy. There were 14 Americans, five Germans, two White Russians, and an Austrian. We presented a letter to the Japanese embassy, asking, for humanitarian reasons, that

1. the burning of large parts of the city be stopped;
2. an end be put at once to the disorderly conduct of the Japanese troops; and
3. whatever steps necessary be taken to restore law and order, so that our food and coal supplies can be replenished. All those demonstrating signed the letter.

We are introduced to Commandant Matsui, who shakes hands all round. I assume the role of spokesman at the Japanese embassy and explain to Mr. Tanaka that we infer that the city is to be burned down. Tanaka denies this with a smile, promises however to discuss the first two points in our letter with the military authorities. As to point 3, he refuses even to discuss it. The Japanese themselves are short on rations and are not interested in whether or not we can make do with our supplies.

During our visit at the Japanese embassy, a Japanese naval officer hands me a letter from Dr. Rosen, who is on board the English gunboat *Bee*, which is anchored very close to Nanking but may not dock. They don't want any more witnesses here. I have no idea how Dr. Rosen, Scharffen-



berg, and Hürter found their way onto the *Bee*. Mr. Fukuda, whom I ask about this, fears that the *Jardines Hulk* has also been shelled and sunk.

*Letter from Legation Secretary Rosen to John Rabe*

Near Nanking, 19 December 1937  
On board the HMS *Bee*

Dear Herr Rabe:

We have been just outside the city since yesterday, but cannot enter it. Please let me know how you all are and whether any German buildings have been damaged. I can wire the ambassador directly from on board ship. We've been through a lot ourselves, more about that in person later. I will attempt to get this letter to you via the Japanese (and hope that your answer will arrive by the same route).

With many greetings and Heil Hitler,  
Respectfully,  
ROSEN

22 DECEMBER

Two Japanese from Military Police Headquarters pay me a visit and tell me that the Japanese now want to form their own refugee committee. All refugees will have to be registered. The "bad people" (meaning ex-soldiers) are to be put in a special camp. Our help is requested, and I agree to give it.

In the meantime the official arson continues. I am constantly worried that the fires destroying buildings near the Shanghai Com-Sav Bank will spread across to the west side of the main street, which is part of the Zone. If that were to happen my house would also be in danger. While cleaning up the Zone, we find many bodies in the ponds, civilians who have been shot (30 in just one pond), most of them with their hands bound, some with stones tied to their necks.

The number of refugees living with me is still growing. Six people are now sleeping just in my little private office. The floor in the office, the grounds of the garden are thick with sleepers, all of them a blood-red hue from the light of the massive fires. I've just now counted seven different fire locations.

I promised the Japanese to help them look for employees of the electricity works and told them to look, among other places, in Hsiakwan, where 54 electricity plant workers were housed. We now learn that about three or

four days ago, 43 of them were tied up and led down to the riverbank and machine-gunned, ostensibly because they were the employees of an enterprise managed by the Chinese government. News of this execution was brought to me by one of the condemned workers, who fell unwounded into the river beneath the bodies of two of the victims and so was able to save himself.

This afternoon Kröger and Hatz saw a Chinese being bayoneted in the neck by a drunken Japanese soldier; when they hurried to his aid, they were themselves attacked. Hatz defended himself with a chair. The Japanese is reported to have succeeded in tying Kröger up, possibly because Kröger's burned left hand is still bandaged. Mr. Fitch and I raced at top speed to their rescue, met up with them as they were heading for home, and returned with them then to investigate the case on the spot. We found the soldier still there, being slapped around by a Japanese general who just happened by. Mr. Tanaka from the Japanese embassy was also present.

The soldier had apparently painted the two Germans' role in a very unfavorable light, but all the same—and luckily for us—he still was given a thrashing that brought tears to his eyes. The affair turned out all right for us once again; but it could have turned out otherwise.