

Holocaust and Genocide Review (HGR) Information Resources

New Initiatives in Genocide Studies and Prevention

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Featured Program in this Issue

The Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders

Nanjing Massacre

The Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders

URL: <http://www.nj1937.org/english/default.asp>

E mail :nj1937@126.com

The compound of the Memorial is located at one of the execution grounds of the Massacre called jiangdongmen, noe, Nanjing. Since opening to the public on August 15, 1985, more than 8,000,000 visitors from all over the world have visited the Memorial.

The Memorial Hall for Compatriots killed in the Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Forces of Aggression is located in the southwestern corner of Nanjing known as Jiangdongmen, which used to be one of the execution grounds and mass burial places of the cruel holocaust.

Occupying an area about 28,000 square meters with a floor space of 3,000, it was built in 1985 in memory of the 300,000 victims in the event. Later, in 1995 it was enlarged and renovated. The buildings in the complex are fashioned out of black and white granite blocks, looking spectacular and magnificent, rendering a feeling of solemnity and reverence. It is an exhibition site with historical records and objects as well as architecture, sculptures and video and film projections to unfold a specific chapter of history concerning one of the ugliest experiences forced on mankind.

The memorial consists of three parts: the outdoor exhibits, the remaining bones of the killed and the museum for historical material displaying. In the outdoor sector, group sculptures, full-length statues, relief carvings, signboards, monuments, redeeming and repentant tablets, withered trees and broken walls as well as a wall carved with the names of part of the victims so far that have been located cluster together with green shrubs and lawns to suggest a graveyard-style architecture with the themes of life and death, grief and indignation. A building shaped like a coffin is to shelter some of the victims' bones excavated from the pits of thousands of bodies right in the site when the memorial was in construction-iron evidence for the bloody crimes committed by the aggressive Japanese troops. The museum lies half buried in the ground like a colossal tomb. Inside, an immense collection of pictures, objects, charts and photographs relate the horror of the Rape of Nanjing. Through a versatility of means for exhibitions such as lighted cabinets, sand trays, clay moldings, oil paintings, micro-computers appliances, documentary shows and so on, the tragedy of the cruel holocaust in Nanjing and the beastly atrocities of the Japanese militarists are pictured and recounted.

Past experience, if not forgotten, is the guide for the future. The Nanjing Memorial has become an important site for international communities to pray for PEACE as well as a site for historical and cultural exchanges. In China, it is also a national demonstrative educational base for patriotism.