

# 2nd Conference of the 81st District of Rotary International Nanking, Republic of China – 11-13 April 1937

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The purpose of the District Conference is to provide opportunities for networking, inspirational addresses, and discussions of Rotary-related matters. The event should recognize the service programs, projects, and public relations achievements in the District in order to inspire Rotarians to become more involved in service. The Conference should also give Rotarians and clubs a vision of Rotary beyond the club level and provide a memorable fellowship experience. Many Rotarians have said that they were never truly enthusiastic about Rotary until they saw an inspirational presentation at a District Conference.

At a minimum, the District Conference program/itinerary should address the following:

- Schedule the Rotary International president's representative's two conference addresses and the brief remarks at the end of the Conference.
- Discuss and adopt the audited financial statement from the previous Rotary year.
- Approve the district levy, if it was not approved at the District Assembly or Presidents-Elect Training Seminar (PETS).
- Elect the district's representative to the Council on Legislation, during the Rotary year two years before the Council meets, if the District chooses not to use the nominating committee procedure.
- Elect the member of the nominating committee for the Rotary International Board of Directors, as appropriate for your Zone.

These additional guidelines can help to ensure the Conference is successful:

- Schedule the Conference for two to three days to include plenary sessions and group discussion on Rotary and Rotary Foundation topics.
- Avoid scheduling conflicts with the District Assembly, the International Assembly, Rotary Institute, Rotary International Convention, and public holidays.
- Hold the Conference with another District.
- Plan a program that will be interesting to district Rotarians.
- Involve the Rotary International president's representative in group discussions and other sessions.

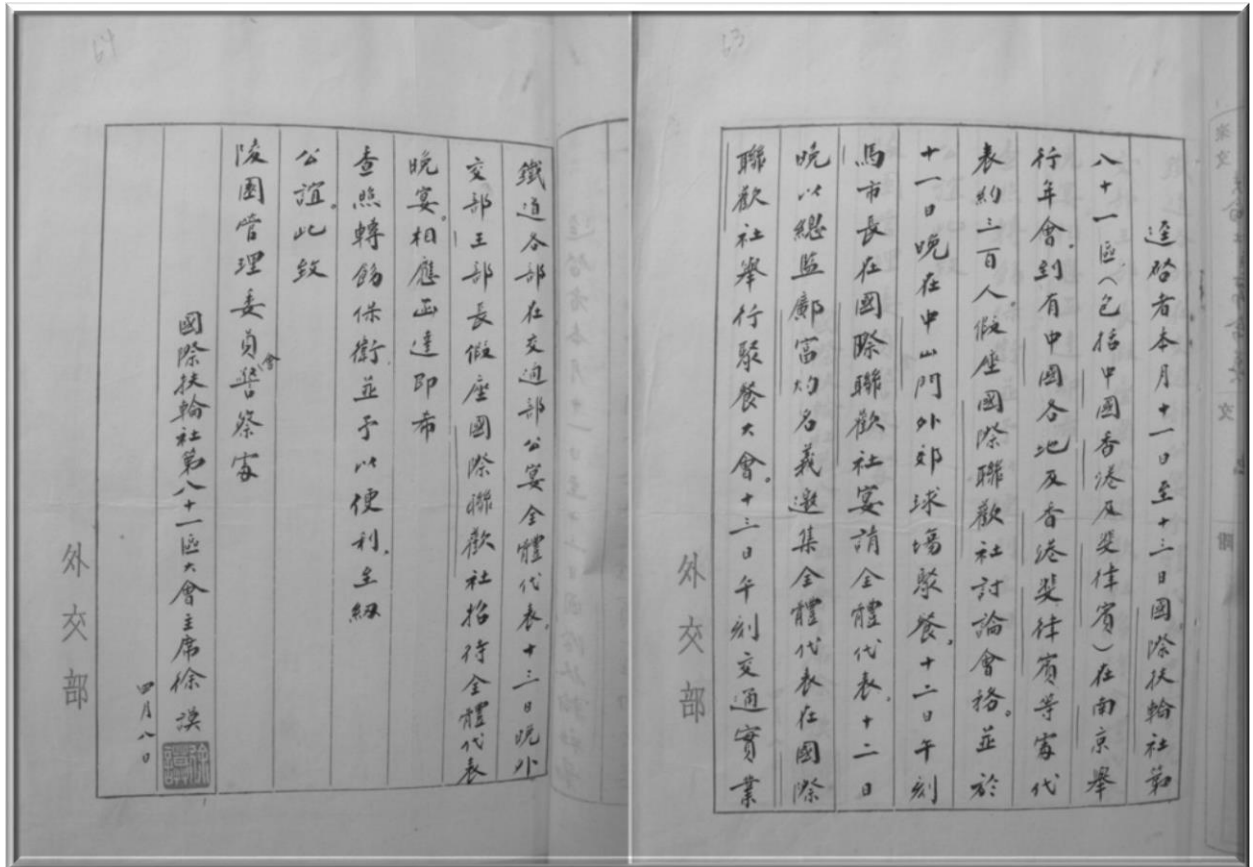
- Schedule spouse activities and other events at times that don't conflict with plenary sessions.
- Recognize and welcome new Rotarians, first-time conference attendees, club presidents, and incoming club officers.
- Include those who have participated in Rotary and Rotary Foundation activities.
- Consider district resolutions.
- Promote club and district projects.
- Provide a new member orientation event.
- Offer a district leadership seminar immediately before or after the Conference for interested Rotarians who have served as club president or held a club leadership role for at least three years.
- Keep costs low.
- Publicize next year's Conference, and encourage pre-registration.

## The Second District Conference in the Rotary China History

The Second Conference of the 81st District of Rotary International was held in Nanking (*Nanjing*) (南京), capital of the Republic of China (中華民國), on 11-13 April 1937. The 81st District, as from 1 October 1935 to 30 June 1937, was compiled with Rotary clubs from these 3 geographical regions -- (1) The Republic of China; (2) The British Crown Colony Hong Kong (英國殖民地香港); and (3) The Commonwealth of the Philippines (an unincorporated territory and commonwealth of U.S.A.). The Conference was convened and presided by District Governor Dr. FONG Foo-Sec (鄭富灼博士) (Shanghai Rotary Club 上海扶輪社 President 1931-1932; Rotary International Director 1933-1934), while the organizing committee chairman was Mr. HSU Mo (徐謨) (Charter Member 1934 and President 1935-1936 of Nanking Rotary Club 南京扶輪社) (China's Foreign Affairs Ministry Parliamentary Secretary 中華民國外交部政務次長), since Nanking Rotary Club was the host.

On 8 April 1937, Conference chair HSU Mo wrote to the local public security authority requesting for safety measures to the Conference delegates of about 300 persons who were from various cities of China, as well as from Hong Kong and The Philippines. In his letter, Hsu highlighted 4 remarkable events: (1) Luncheon hosted by Nanking Mayor MA Chao-Chun (南京市長馬超俊) on April 12; (2) District 81 Governor FONG's Banquet in the same evening; (3) Central Government Leadership's Luncheon on April 13; and (4) Dinner Banquet hosted by China's Foreign Affairs Minister WANG Ch'ung-Hui (外交部長王寵惠) on the same day. The original of this letter is now being kept by the Historical Archives No. 2 of China (中國第二歷史檔案館) located in Nanjing City. Photo copy is printed here on the next page.

The Conference venue was held in the International Club (國際聯歡社) (*see photo on next page*), which was the clubhouse of the Foreign Affairs Ministry. The complex was completed in 1936 by the architecture firm operated by Tientsin Rotarian Kwan Sung-Sing (天津扶輪社社員關頌聲). Today, the complex is still functioning and is being operated as part of the Jinjiang Nanjing Hotel (錦江南京飯店).



8 April 1937 --- Letter of Conference chair HSU Mo to Nanking public security authority



The Conference venue, as well as the official banquets, were held in this International Club (國際聯歡社), which was the clubhouse of the Foreign Affairs Ministry.

## [Conference Photo Gallery](#)

The original of photos shown here are being kept by and the copy-right of Central News Agency (CNA) (中央通訊社) now located in Taipei, Taiwan.



*Conference Plenary Session*



*The Conference Banquet*



*Group Photos*



*Dr. FONG Foo-Sec (鄭富灼博士) --- the 2nd Governor of the 81st District, RI*



*Foreign Affairs Minister WANG Ch'ung-Hui (外交部長王寵惠) (left )  
and District Governor FONG Foo-Sec (地區總監鄭富灼)*



*Mr. Lyndon B. Johnson (詹森) (left) and his lady were two of the Conference guests. Commenced on 10 April 1937, Johnson served in the U.S. House of Representatives. He later became the 36th President of the United States (1963–1969).*



*Coffee break at the House of Friendship*

## 《APPENDIX》 – Extended Reading

### The Fall of Nanking 1937-1945

Eight months later after the international event of the 2nd Conference of the 81st District of Rotary International, the entire city of Nanking was severely destroyed by disastrous war fire. Nanking Rotary Club was not able to function properly, and was terminated on 31 December 1943. After the War, the Club was re-organized and was re-admitted to Rotary International on 24 December 1946 until its second time termination on 24 January 1952.

In December of 1937, the Imperial Japanese Army invaded into China's capital city of Nanking and proceeded to murder 300,000 out of 600,000 civilians and soldiers in the city. The six weeks of carnage would become known as the "Rape of Nanking" (南京大屠殺 Nanking Massacre) and represented the single worst atrocity during the World War II era in either the European or Pacific theaters of war. The actual military invasion of Nanking was preceded by a tough battle at Shanghai (淞滬會戰) that began in the summer of 1937. Chinese forces there put up surprisingly stiff resistance against the Japanese Army and Marine which had expected an easy victory in China. The Japanese had even bragged they would conquer all of China in just three months. The stubborn resistance by the Chinese troops upset that timetable, with the battle dragging on through the summer into late fall. This infuriated the Japanese and whetted their appetite for the revenge that was to follow at Nanking. After finally defeating the Chinese at Shanghai in November, 50,000 Japanese soldiers then marched on toward Nanking. Unlike the troops at Shanghai, Chinese soldiers at Nanking were poorly led and loosely organized. Although they greatly outnumbered the Japanese and had plenty of ammunition, they withered under the ferocity of the Japanese attack, then engaged in a chaotic retreat. After just four days of fighting, Japanese troops smashed into the city on 13 December 1937, with orders issued to "kill all captives."

Their first concern was to eliminate any threat from the 90,000 Chinese soldiers who surrendered. To the Japanese, surrender was an unthinkable act of cowardice and the ultimate violation of the rigid code of military honor drilled into them from childhood onward. Thus they looked upon Chinese prisoners-of-war (POWs) with utter contempt, viewing them as less than human, unworthy of life.

The elimination of the Chinese POWs began after they were transported by trucks to remote locations on the outskirts of Nanking. As soon as they were assembled, the savagery began, with young Japanese soldiers encouraged by their superiors to inflict maximum pain and suffering upon individual POWs as a way of toughening themselves up for future battles, and also to eradicate any civilized notions of mercy. Filmed footage and still photographs taken by the Japanese themselves document the brutality. Smiling soldiers can be seen conducting bayonet practice on live prisoners, decapitating them and displaying severed heads as souvenirs, and proudly standing among mutilated corpses. Some of the Chinese POWs were simply mowed down by machine-gun fire while others were tied-up, soaked with gasoline and burned alive. After the destruction of the POWs, the soldiers turned their attention to the women of Nanking and an outright animalistic hunt ensued. Old women over the age of 70 as well as little girls under the age of 8 were dragged off to be sexually

abused. More than 20,000 females (with some estimates as high as 80,000 were gang-raped by Japanese soldiers, then stabbed to death with bayonets or shot so they could never bear witness.

Throughout the city of Nanking, random acts of murder occurred as soldiers frequently fired their rifles into panicked crowds of civilians, killing indiscriminately. Other soldiers killed shopkeepers, looted their stores, then set the buildings on fire after locking people of all ages inside. They took pleasure in the extraordinary suffering that ensued as the people desperately tried to escape the flames by climbing onto rooftops or leaping down onto the street.

The incredible carnage --- citywide burnings, stabbings, drownings, strangulations, rapes, thefts, and massive property destruction --- continued unabated for about six weeks, from mid-December 1937 through the beginning of February 1938. Young or old, male or female, anyone could be shot on a whim by any Japanese soldier for any reason. Corpses could be seen everywhere throughout the city. The streets of Nanking were said to literally have run red with blood.

Those who were not killed on the spot were taken to the outskirts of the city and forced to dig their own graves, large rectangular pits that would be filled with decapitated corpses resulting from killing contests the Japanese held among themselves. Other times, the Japanese forced the Chinese to bury each other alive in the dirt.

After this period of unprecedented violence, the Japanese eased off somewhat and settled in for the duration of the war. To pacify the population during the long occupation, highly addictive narcotics, including opium and heroin, were distributed by Japanese soldiers to the people of Nanking, regardless of age. An estimated 50,000 persons became addicted to heroin while many others lost themselves in the city's opium dens. In addition, the notorious Comfort Women (慰安婦) system was introduced which forced young Chinese women to become slave-prostitutes, existing solely for the sexual pleasure of Japanese soldiers.

News reports of the happenings in Nanking appeared in the official Japanese press and also in the West, as page-one reports in newspapers such as the *《New York Times》*. Japanese news reports reflected the militaristic mood of the country in which any victory by the Imperial Army resulting in further expansion of the Japanese empire was celebrated. Eyewitness reports by Japanese military correspondents concerning the sufferings of the people of Nanking also appeared. They reflected a mentality in which the brutal dominance of subjugated or so-called inferior peoples was considered just. Incredibly, one paper, the *《Japan Advertiser》*, actually published a running count of the heads severed by two officers involved in a decapitation contest, as if it was some kind of a sporting match.

In the United States, reports published in the *《New York Times》*, *《Reader's Digest》* and *《Time》* Magazine, were greeted with skepticism from the American public. The stories smuggled out of Nanking seemed almost too fantastic to be believed. Overall, most Americans had only a passing knowledge or little interest in Asia. Political leaders in both

America and Britain remained overwhelmingly focused on the situation in Europe where Adolf Hitler was rapidly re-arming Nazi Germany while at the same time expanding the borders of the Nazi Reich through devious political maneuvers.

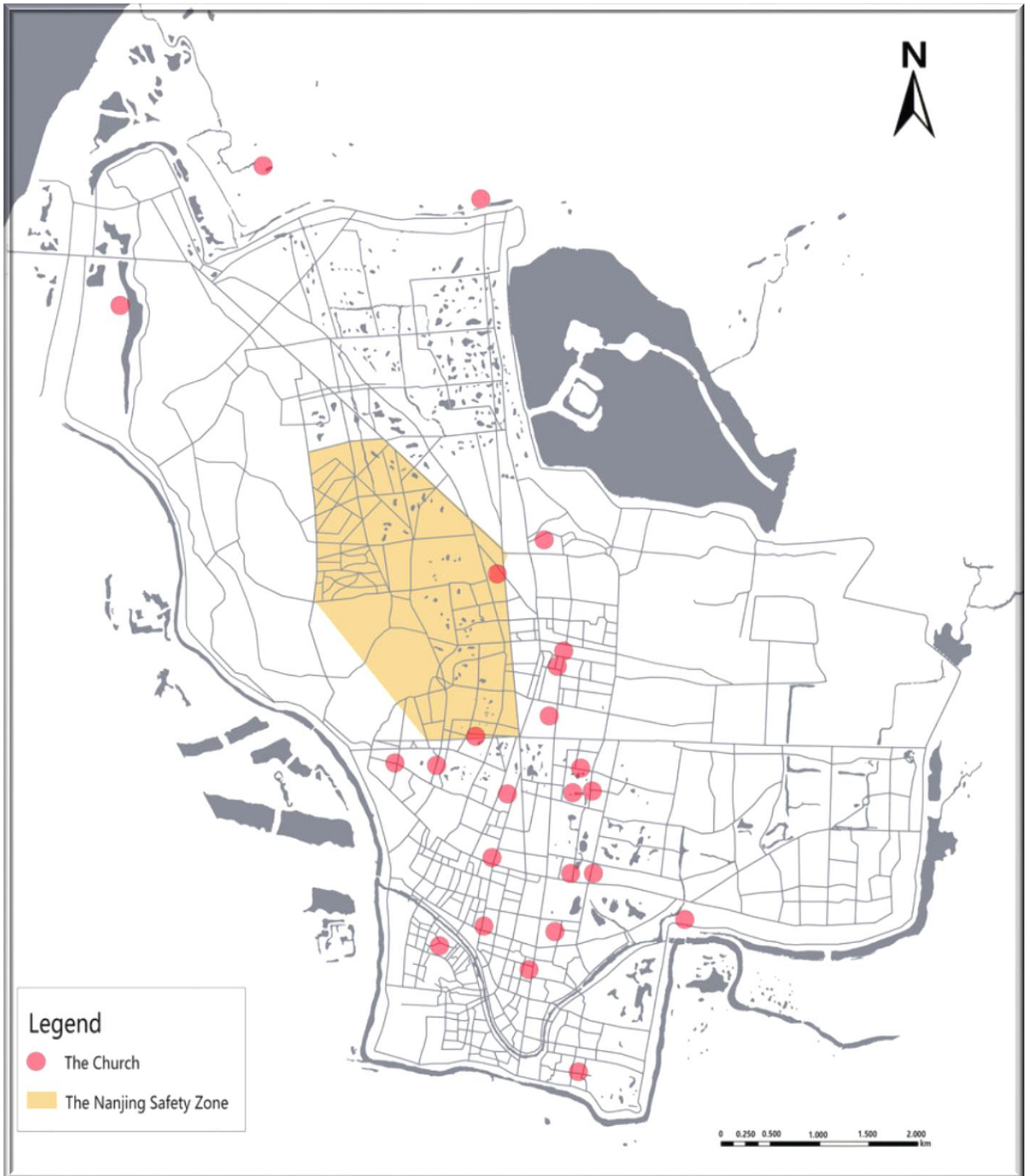
Back in Nanking, however, all was not lost. An extraordinary group of about 20 Americans and Europeans remaining in the city, composed of missionaries, doctors and businessmen, took it upon themselves to establish an International Committee Nanking Safety Zone. Using Red Cross flags, they brazenly declared a 2.5 square-mile area in the middle of the city off limits to the Japanese forces. On numerous occasions, they also risked their lives by personally intervening to prevent the execution of Chinese men or the rape of women and young girls. These Westerners became the unsung heroes of Nanking, working day and night to the point of exhaustion to aid the Chinese. They also wrote down their impressions of the daily scenes they witnessed, with one describing Nanking as “hell on earth.” Another wrote of the Japanese soldiers: “I did not imagine that such cruel people existed in the modern world.” About 300,000 Chinese civilians took refuge inside their Safety Zone. Almost all of the people who did not make it into the Zone during the “Rape of Nanking” ultimately perished.

### **The Rotarian eyewitness and smuggler**

The Nanking Safety Zone administrator was a Rotarian, George Ashmore Fitch (費吳生) (1883-1979) (Shanghai Rotary Club President 1930-1931). Fitch was an American Presbyterian missionary of YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association) that lived and worked in China for 80 years, and then in South Korea, and Taiwan before final retirement in the United States. Fitch is most notable for his assistance of civilians and documentation of the Nanking Massacre. Fitch served as director of the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone. He kept a diary and collected photo and video evidence of the war crimes. After he was allowed by the Japanese to leave to Shanghai, Fitch smuggled the only known reels of film plus his evidence and testimony of the atrocities and embarked on a public awareness tour across the United States that drew significant media attention.



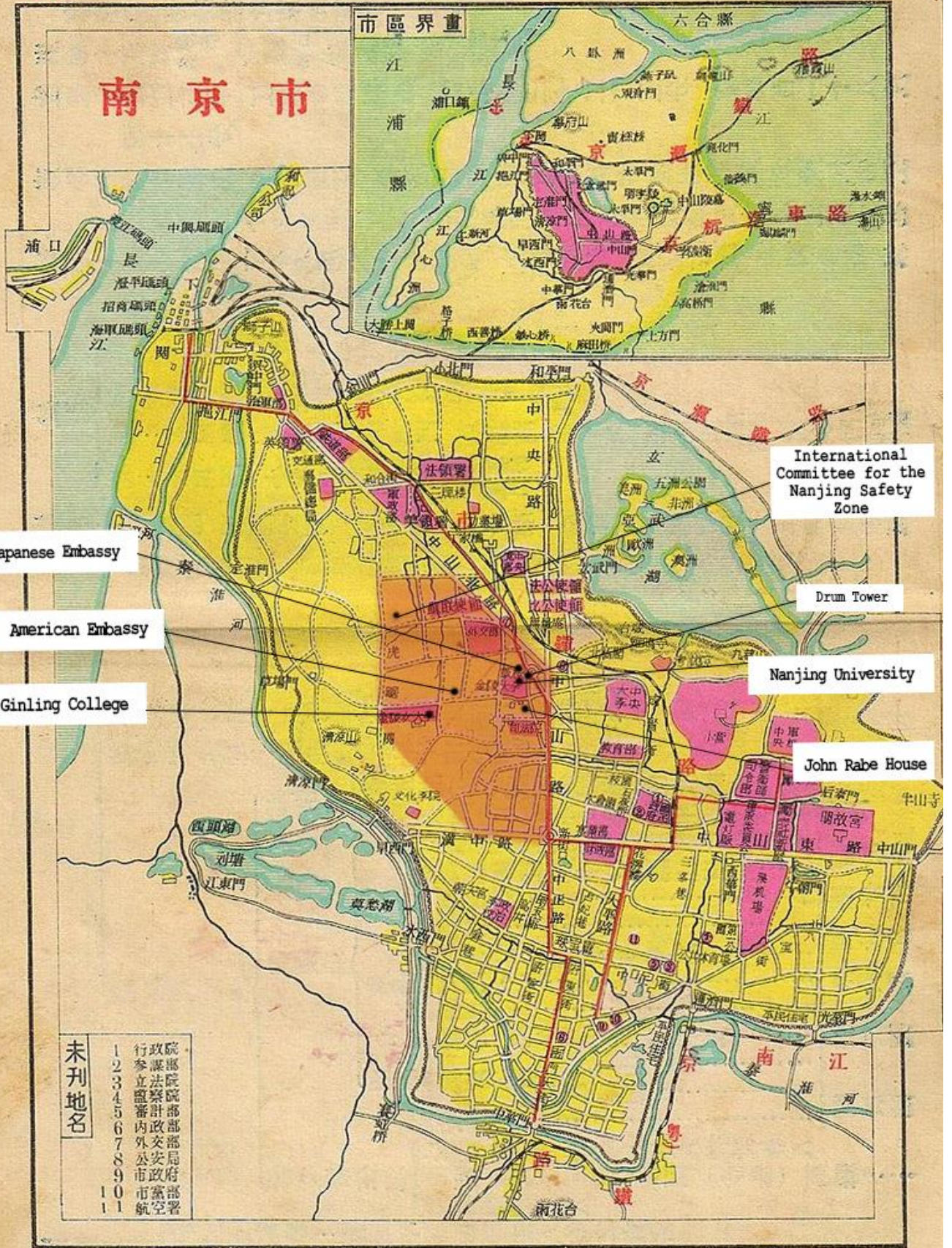
*The Nanking Safety Zone International Committee partial members at the time of the Nanking Massacre 1937: (left to right) Ernest H. Forster (American), W. Plumer Mills (American), John H.D. Rabe (German), Lewis Smythe (American), Eduard Sperling (German), George Ashmore Fitch (American)*



*The pink area indicates the territory of the Nanking Safety Zone located inside the walled city.*

# 南京市

## 市區界畫



Japanese Embassy

American Embassy

Ginling College

International Committee for the Nanjing Safety Zone

Drum Tower

Nanjing University

John Rabe House

- 未刊地名
- 1 院
  - 2 行
  - 3 參
  - 4 立
  - 5 監
  - 6 審
  - 7 內
  - 8 外
  - 9 公
  - 10 市
  - 11 航
- 院部院部部部局部部  
政議法察計政交安政政  
參立監審內外公市市航

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*Nanking Drum Tower (南京鼓楼) as in 1937*



*The City Wall of Nanking*