

Nanjing Massacre survivor dies; 99 remain

She Ziqing, an 83-year-old survivor of the Nanjing Massacre, died on Wednesday in Nanjing, Jiangsu province. The number of survivors officially registered has declined to 99.



She Ziqing, a survivor of the Nanjing Massacre, recalls being clubbed on the head by a Japanese soldier using a rifle butt. She died on Wednesday at age 83. He was interviewed in 2014.[Photo/Xinhua]

She, born in April 1934, was only 4 years old when the massacre took place. His mother was killed, and he was clubbed on the head by a Japanese soldier using a rifle butt. He carried a scar for the rest of his life.

During the massacre, She was taken to the United States embassy for refuge, along with a neighbor's children. According to an oral history recorded earlier, he said he saw "layers of bodies everywhere on the streets" and his mother "died lying in a pool of blood".

"People said at the time that Japanese troops only killed middle-aged men, so my father fled from home while my mother, like many other women in the neighborhood, stayed to protect the house. Nobody thought that the Japanese soldiers would kill, rape and rob people without hesitation."

She later worked as a newsboy to support his family. In 1950, after his elder brother joined the PLA, She was able to get a job working for the railway system because he was the relative of a soldier.

In 1994, he retired. But in 2004, he applied to work as a guide, without pay, at the Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre, when it opened that year. He volunteered to guide Japanese visitors around the hall in the hope that through his words "the Japanese people, especially younger generations, would come to understand what happened during that period".

Every working day for 14 years, except Mondays when the hall was closed, She got up early and went to work. Earlier this year, in light of his health, the hall suggested he only work on Fridays.

But She insisted on coming to the hall accompanied by his wife. He said: "As long as I can breathe, I want to remind other people of a history that cannot be forgotten."

Xia Shuqin, another Nanjing Massacre survivor, who lost seven of her nine family members during the bloodbath, said that she would feel relieved and happy to be reunited with her deceased family members if the massacre were simply recognized by the Japanese government.

"I don't know if I will live long enough to see that happen," the 88-year-old woman said. "I'm too old. I don't have too much time. I don't know what to say to describe my feelings."

More than 300,000 Chinese were killed in a six-week rampage from Dec 13, 1937 to January 1938 after Japanese troops captured what was then China's capital.