# Movie Review on City of Life and Death

*City of Life and Death* portrays in a documentary style the Rape of Nanking, with an estimated death toll of 300 000. Like its German counterpart, it portrays sympathetic characters on both sides of the war and has its themes on the brutality of war.

The controversy of this film would be in the viewpoint of a Japanese soldier Kadokawa as a somewhat heroic character. Chinese traditional education has it that the Japanese were beasts slaughtering the Chinese, and while the Japanese did had a methodical program, as seen in the Sook Ching Massacre, the director chose to show the humanity of Kadokawa as he intended to provoke talk about human behavior on both sides. In addition, the German John Rabe is forced to decide between his career and his morality as he continues to keep refugees, and heartbreakingly leaves China and abandons his diplomatic career as well as the refugees dependent on him.

Yet the movie ends on an optimistic note; the last image being that of the boy that Kadokawa had saved before committing suicide. Like similar war movies, it showed that hope prevailed despite impossible odd, and thus both the brutality and kindness of humanity have prevailed throughout this movie.