

This thesis describes the beginning of the Second Sino-Japanese War, which occurred in 1937 and ended in 1945. In its first part the thesis describes the history of the mutual relations between China and Japan in the preceding decades. The main focus lies on the analysis of the so-called Marco Polo Bridge Incident, which is considered to be the beginning of the war, and on the description of the following Japanese offensive military operations. The thesis ends with the fall of Nanjing and the so-called Nanjing Massacre.