

Sh⁻ofu,Wianbu,Pi

By

Lucy Chau Lai-Tuen

©Lucy Sheen nom de plume Lucy 23a Silvester House,Sceptre
Chau Lai-Tuen aka Lucy Miller Road,London E2 0JT
e: lucy.sheen@icloud.com
m: +44 7973 771137
currently unrepresented

Cast of Characters

QIAO LIAN GUO/YOUN QIAO LIAN: Born in Harbin was about 13 when she ends up in Japanese camp. Old Qiao Lian is in her 70s

TOSHIA NISHIMURA/YOUNG TOSHIA: Born in Mihonoseki, ended up in Toyko as a young student, where she is offered factory work in China to help the war effort she is 22. Old Toshia is in her 70s

MARIA GALANG/YOUNG MARIA: Born in the Philipines.

BEIDA NALONG/YOUNG BIEDA: Born in Papa New Guinea

KIM JEONG/YOUNG KIM: Born in Korea the daughter of a prominent village elder and pro-Japanese. Kim was given to the Japanese in order to keep the village safe.

JOANNA VAN DER POLE/YOUNG JOANNA: White Dutch East-Indies

HIROHSI NAKAMURA/YOUNG NAKAMURA: Former Chief of the Medical section of the Japanese army. Now a prominent right wing member of the Japanese government

HIDEKI TANAKA: Adopted son of General Hideaki Tanaka. Now in his 70s and a senior member of the Japanese government

YOSHI TANAKA: Hideki's son and unaware of his background. A blindly loyal son and patriot

Incidental Characters:

JAPANESE OFFICER:

JAPANESE SOLDIERS:

CAMP NURSES:

CAMP INMATES:

RADIO ANNOUNCER:

(MORE)

Cast of Characters (cont'd)

CAMP ANNOUNCER: MALE or FEMALE

VO-MOTHER:

Scene

HOUSE OF HEALING IN RURAL ISOLATED JAPAN

Time

PAST 1940'S OCCUPIED EAST ASIA: PRESENT 21ST CENTURY
JAPAN, CITY AND RURAL COUNTRYSIDE HOUSE

Conventions

Interrupted dialogue /

Pause within speech -

Two or more characters speaking at the same time **Name/Name**

Qiao Lian, Toshia, Beida, Kim, Maria and Joanna appear as their present day older-selves, as well as their younger incarcerated selves. One actress will play both the Younger and older woman.

Younger Toshia, Younger Qiao Lian denotes the character as their younger-selves

NOTES

The stage directions are as much apart of the play text as the dialogue. Especially with regarding the projections and lighting states.

Characters

Originally this play was written with the female characters being written as two distinct roles a Younger and an Older.

However this is both impractical, costly and probably production-wise almost impossible. So as the writing developed and the play was redrafted the female characters were re-written and re-devised to be played by one actress favouring an older actress who can play younger - but firmly rooted in the older self.

The The House of Healing serves as a backdrop onto which photographs and moving images will be projected.

PROLOGUE

A large House frontage dark, bleak. Four large windows on the first floor and two large windows on the ground floor either side of the great black door. Neon red lights illuminate each window frame in series. Starting from the ground floor moving anti-clockwise up to the first floor until all the windows have a red halo of light.

In each window a woman appears
 Chinese QIAO LIAN
 Japanese TOSHIA
 Korean KIM
 White Dutch East Indies JOANNA
 South Asian (Papa New Guinea), BEIDA
 A Southeast Asian(Filipino), MARIA

Each woman strikes a different static grotesque sexual pose.
 Each women wears a "light" Kimono.
 Music starts (Raveyard vs. DJ Uinkxxx).

The women one by one dance as if they are puppets being forced against their will. It is a grotesque, perverse, animalistic, guttural and brutal sexual movement.

As the women "dance" projections appear on the front of the house.

Pictures of Japanese Comfort women.

1. Former comfort woman holding a picture of herself as a comfort woman.

2. Comfort Women being transported

3. Naked Comfort Woman

4. Rape victim

The last picture is ripped in two vertically from the bottom to the top as the bayonet in the photograph had continued on its path slicing the mutilated corpse in two

ACT ISCENE ONE

THE PRESENT THE HOUSE OF HEALING - A large old style house in a rural isolated area far from the modern cities and life of 21st century Japan.

This dialogue though spoken by several character should when performed run as if spoken by one person

TOSHIA

A Comfort House.

QIAO LIAN

A Whore House.

MARIA

A House of 'Ill repute.'

JOANNA

A House of pain and suffering.

KIM

A House of memory and recollection.

BEIDA

A safe house.

HIDEKI TANAKA

A house in a Red light district in down-town Hong Kong/

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Tokyo, Korea/

BEIDA

A safe house.

HIDEKI TANAKA

A house in a red light district in down-town Hong Kong/

BEIDA

Shanghai, Taiwan/

YOSHI TANAKA

Amsterdam, London/

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

The past/

HIDEKEI TANAKA

The present/

(CONTINUED)

YOSHI TANAKA

The future.

FADE TO BLACK

SCENE TWO

*Six Women march onto the stage and link arms. They carry a banner the length of their line with the words
"JUSTICE FOR THE SURVIVING JAPANESE COMFORT WOMEN"*

Slowly almost imperceptibly they "march" from upstage, inexorably downstage. As the women march a series of videos are projected onto the front of the house.

SOUTH KOREA: FORMER COMFORT WOMEN PROTEST AT JAPANESE EMBASSY 2015

[<https://youtu.be/aqBlQp-LBU0>]

this dissolves

"Japanese right wing nuts and denial of comfort women"

[https://youtu.be/1kuYPP5_01A]

WW II comfort women: Japan's denial & white washing of the human rights violation.

[<https://youtu.be/7HISloLYhr0>]

"Is this Japan's apology to comfort women?"

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UX4kP8oCNVo>]

Finally as the women reach the edge of the stage the video Experts viw Prof. Mark Selden on Japan and comfort women

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MBEVw7PjFj0>]

"Is this Japan's apology to comfort women?"

[<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UX4kP8oCNVo>]

QIAO LIAN

Addressing the rally

We are Ianfu, Shofu, Pi, Chosen Pi, Kyodo benjo, Comfort Women, sex slaves.

House lights are brought up

TOSHIA

I want to see who we are entrusting our memories to. Amongst you there may be those who have survived conflict. We holds hands together.

The women raise their hands

We are connected.

I and my sisters are running out of time.

Each year our numbers decrease.

We are tiny flames burning ever lower, until we shine no more.

(CONTINUED)

QIAO LIAN

This is why we march, why we must share our stories.
So the world does not forget.

TOSHIA

"Despite everything, I believe that people are really
good at heart."

Ann Frank.

I take her words and wrap them in my heart.

*Projection of Kono Statement of 1993 - section
About Korean Comforts women
[https://youtu.be/A9t_MbAGC-8]*

*projection bleeds into HIDEKI TANAKA a member of
the Japanese Government as he speaks at a press
conference.*

HIDEKI TANAKA

There is no evidence to suggest that Japanese
officials used coercion to hunt "comfort women."

KIM

For six years I was forced to have sex with the
Japanese soldiers.

HIDEKI TANAKA

The Japanese government is not to blame!

We will send an impartial representative to speak
with these women. The Government is anxious to hear
their grievances.

But this must be done in the appropriate manner.

*Projection of a former Soldier - Ex-Japanese
soldier Yasuji Kaneko's confession about Comfort
Women [<https://youtu.be/ewtKksMjuBg>] 0:00 -0:41*

KIM

I serve thirty, forty, sometimes fifty or more
soldiers a day.

HIDEKI TANAKA

The recent protest have be augmented by mischievous
Western elements with their own agendas.
These venerable old woman are being used as political
pawns!

QIAO LIAN

We have to do more.
One silent march a month is not enough/

TOSHIA

Why the sudden change, little one?

QIAO LIAN

I have spent enough time in silence/

TOSHIA

Rushing in head first never got anyone anywhere quickly.

QIAO LIAN

And where are we Toshia?

TOSHIA

Gaining public opinion and winning with dignity.

QIAO LIAN

Is that what you really think, Toshia?

HIDEKI TANAKA

Street protests are not the right forum to raise concerns about such matters.

QIAO LIAN

The world needs to know -
Not in silence/

*Projections of former Japanese Soldier
0:42 - 1:33 [<https://youtu.be/ewtKksMjuBg>]*

HIDEKI TANAKA

We will send an impartial representative to speak with these women. The Government is anxious to hear their grievances.

SCENE THREE

THE PAST JAPANESE MILITARY CAMP IN NORTHERN CHINA 1940s

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

*A military doctor, dressed in uniform, wearing a pristine white lab coat over the top.
They are not human as we know it. Simply, female volunteers.*

JOANNA

Joanna Van der Pole.
I am fifteen when I am taken from Ambarawa Internment Camp.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Ammunition for the use and support of our glorious Imperial Armed Forces. A necessary resource, like public toilets.

THE PAST HOUSE OF HEALING 65 YEARS AGO

(CONTINUED)

JOANNA

What is left of my life is short.
 It decreases each day that I breathe in and sleep
 as I breathe out.
 After the war I tried to return to my life.
 I hoped, I dared to believe I could start again.
 It was never the same. How could it be?
 The pain of allowing my family and friends to think I
 had died, was less than the agony of having them live
 with the shame of what I had become.

Pause

I live here.

Pointing at the house

When the war ended I just starting walking.
 I stumbled upon this house, suddenly my past was
 staring back at me through the smiling eyes of
 Toshia. Just sitting on a bench in front of me.

*TOSHIA appears sitting on a bench hands in her
 lap*

TOSHIA

How was your journey?

JOANNA

Toshia!
 Are you on your own?

*Maria, Beida, Kim and Qiao Lian appear in the
 windows and wave to Joanna. Joanna waves back
 and then breaks down.*

*Toshia gets up and helps her towards the house,
 MARIA, BEIDA, QIAO LIAN and KIM come out and
 gently escort JOANNA into the house.*

LIGHTS FADE

PRESENT DAY THE HOUSE OF HEALING

*Shortly after day break.
 TOSHIA AND QIAO LIAN and all the other women
 stand on the balcony waiting.
 Enter below a sober looking East Asian gentleman
 in his 30s maybe early 40s. YOSHI TANAKA.
 A private Japanese businessman and HIDEKI
 TANAKA's son.
 He is formal, stiff and ill at ease.
 He bows slightly to the women.
 TOSHIA bows deeply, QIAO LIAN hesitates but
 follows suite as do the other women somewhat
 reluctantly.*

(CONTINUED)

TOSHIA

Aside to QIAO LIAN
What we cannot avoid, we must welcome.

QIAO LIAN

Aside to TOSHIA
Better to have avoided in the first place!

YOSHI TANAKA

I am here at the behest of the government/

QIAO LIAN

Sotto voce
It speaks!

YOSHI TANAKA

Our government.

Beat then he speaks - rigidly with no feeling
"It is the sincere hope that mistakes made during
Japan's colonial past will never be made again.
And the cause of tremendous damage and suffering to
the people of many countries, particularly those of
Asia."

I express here the sincere feelings of our
government, their deep remorse and heartfelt
apologies.

YOSHI TANAKA formerly presents a scroll.

QIAO LIAN

hard edged
A government does not send a lackey/

BEIDA

A very well dressed lackey/

QIAO LIAN

without warning/

JOANNA

without expectation/

QIAO LIAN

or something in return!

*TOSHIA appears in front of the hours, bows and
accepts the scroll. There is a low dissatisfied
murmur from the women on the balcony.*

(CONTINUED)

TOSHIA

Come, walk with me. Let me show you the garden.
 We have willow, magnolia, maple and cherry blossom.
 I think you will appreciate them. If you would be so
 gracious I will ask you for your advice. Some of the
 trees are not thriving as we had hoped.
 I am old and out of practice.

*YOSHI escorts TOSHIA to the garden, QIAO LIAN
 and the other women stand watching from the
 balcony confused and angry.*

SCENE FOUR**THE PAST A JAPANESE MILITARY CAMP NORTHERN CHINA 1940s**

*A girl screams.
 A clock begins to chime*

*YOUNG JOANNA scurries into the darkened room
 and hides under the table. she is petrified, she
 counts the chimes.
 A soldier enters the space he shouts in
 Japanese,
 he searches in time to the clocks chimes.
 As he searches he undoes this tunic, his belt,
 his shirt.
 He stops and listens, then makes a sudden grab
 for JOANNA. He pulls her by the leg from her
 hiding places. YOUNG JOANNA screams in Dutch.
 She resists hard, she kicks, she struggles . The
 soldier is too strong, he slides YOUNG JOANNA
 across the floor like a bowling ball, she is
 sent careering into the wall. Knocking her semi
 consciousness. The soldier strips off her
 clothing using his sword. He traces the inside
 of her leg with the tip of his sword. He unzips
 his fly and is on top of JOANNA. All we can see
 is JOANNA's face, the shock, her pain and the
 juddering motion of the soldier on top of her,
 pleasuring himself.*

BLACKOUT

THE HOUSE OF HEALING

QIAO LIAN walks out

THE PAST JAPANESE MILITARY CAMP IN NORTHERN CHINA 1940S

*YOUNG QIAO LIAN crouches in a corner crying.
 Various camp staff dressed in nursing uniforms
 try to soothe her. YOUNG QIAO LIAN is
 inconsolable.
 HIROSHI NAKAMURA enters pristine in his uniform
 and white lab coat. YOUNG QIAO LIAN takes one
 look at NAKAMUNRA and burst into a fresh bout of*

(CONTINUED)

wailing. The camp staff run from YOUNG QIAO LIAN, hands over their ears. NAKAMURA grabs hold of her and throws her into another "room". QIAO LIAN crawls to the nearest corner and cowers. NAKAMURA walks back into the space and starts talking quietly to other other person in the room.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

I have a final test for you.
Stop her from crying and I will spare you, both of you.
Fail and you will find yourselves in my laboratory.

NAKAMURA "pushes" YOUNG TOSHIA towards YOUNG QIAO LIAN. He watches for a moment "amused" by their fear. Then leaves abruptly.

YOUNG TOSHIA

She wraps her arms around QIAO LIAN
We will cry together.
Listen to the pulse of your heart.
Feel the rhythm of your tears, how they play to your sadness.

Beat

You and I are supposed to be enemies.
Here in this pit of hell there are no enemies.
Just those that die and those that live.

QIAO LIAN nods sheepishly.

Then you have to stop crying.
If we live, I can teach you how to survive, how to care for those that are broken in body and soul.
To sooth those who have miscarried and those who are suicidal/

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

You talk like my Mother.
How long have I been here?

Beat

How long have you been here?

YOUNG TOSHIA

Long enough to grow old too quickly.

Pause

Too long.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

Is that why you speak Chinese so well?

YOUNG TOSHIA

See a positive amongst all the gloom.

She gets up and holds out her hand.
Come Imoto

QIAO LIAN looks blankly at her.
It means, Litter sister.
I have to do my rounds.
Come, be my assistant.

More to herself
Perhaps I can keep you away from working in the rooms.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

Rooms?

TOSHIA points to a bag and QIAO LIAN picks it up and smiles.

Women appear from nowhere as if they have crawled out of the walls, the floor, the air. They huddle in corners "drape" themselves over filthy bedding, straddle, tied to devices, legs spread, ready to entertain. YOUNG QIAO LIAN spots YOUNG JOANNA, cowering and whimpering in a corner. She is dirty and bloody. YOUNG QIAO LIAN tugs at YOUNG TOSHIA she pulls YOUNG TOSHIA towards YOUNG JOANNA YOUNG.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

Ssh, you're new here?

YOUNG TOSHIA

Quietly otherwise the guards will come back.

To YOUNG QIAO LIAN
Hand me a sponge from my bag, little one.

QIAO LIAN rummages around in the bag and then produces a large sponge. TOSHIA takes the a sponge from QIAO LIAN and cleans JOANNA's face. JOANNA flings her arms around TOSHIA and holds on tight. TOSHIA continues un-phased.
You are not English?

Pause she continues to gently clean JOANNA's skin.
Zien, veel beter. Je wilt overleven?
[See, much better. You want to survive?]

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

What language is that!
Teach me I want to learn/

YOUNG TOSHIA

Smiles at QIAO LIAN
Maybe

Speaking to JOANNA
I can patch you up.
Stitch the cuts, sooth the scrapes.
But only you can decide whether you want to live.

Touches JOANNA's head and her heart.
It doesn't matter what they do outside,
but in here, and here, no one can get to you.

YOUNG JOANNA

Mother's voice was the last time I heard my language.
She said goodbye. She told me how much she loved me/

The sound of boots staggering

YOUNG TOSHIA

What ever happens little one stay behind me,
take care of -

To JOANNA

Wat is uw naam? [What's your name?]

YOUNG JOANNA

Joanna

*TOSHIA places QIAO LIAN's hand in JOANNA's and
speaks to QIAO LIAN.*

YOUNG TOSHIA

Do not let go of Joanna's hand.
Stay behind me, remain silent, understand?

*QIAO LIAN nods and squeezes JOANNA's hand.
A drunken Japanese soldier staggers in waving
his sword. He slips down onto his haunches.*

SOLDIER

What should I have done?
I am no saint.
There's war out there/

He drifts off to "asleep."

YOUNG JOANNA

He's sleeping we can slip away.

YOUNG TOSHIA

No!

*There is something in the way that TOSHIA
replies, it silences them.*

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG TOSHIA (cont'd)

He's blocking the entrance.
Be patient.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

Tell us a story.
Please/

YOUNG TOSHIA

Only if you promise to be silent women because/

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

They make the best listeners.

YOUNG TOSHIA

Exactly little one.

QIAO LIAN, JOANNA settle down.
Once upon a time . . .

SCENE FIVE

THE PAST JAPANESE MILITARY CAMP NORTHERN CHINA 1940s

YOUNG KIM walks out of the shadows.

YOUNG KIM

I woke up desperate for the nightmare to end.
Then it came to me.
I'll cut off all my hair, it'll make me less
attractive.

*KIM starts to cut her long hair, at first slowly
then picking up momentum. YOUNG BEIDA and YOUNG
MARIA enter and see what KIM is doing to
herself. They try to stop her. They struggle.
KIM breaks away and manically cuts the rest of
her off, cutting pulling until it is short like
a man's.*

YOUNG KIM

It made no difference. It made things worse.
I became a curiosity. All the soldiers wanted to have
sex with the girl who'd cut off her own hair.

*YOUNG KIM sits on her own rocking back and
forth.*
YOUNG TOSHIA sees her and sits down next to her.
She strokes KIM's hair.

YOUNG TOSHIA

What were you thinking Kim?
I could have done something. . . given you soup to
make you unwell/

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG KIM

It's not your responsibility.

Pause

I'm keeping my hair short.
Somehow it seems wrong to have such a luxury as long hair in a place like this.

Pause

When I am safe.
When I am back home,
then I will grow my hair again.

YOUNG TOSHIA

We will survive. Time will pass.
Help look after Joanne - keep her out of sight.

QIAO LIAN enters with JOANNA, looking for TOSHIA.

Come little one let's go see Beida she has not been well.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

Let's go of JOANNA's hand gently. KIM takes JOANNA's hand and the exit.

That story you told us, wasn't a story, was it?

YOUNG TOSHIA

Young, beautiful and clever too!

She hugs QIAO LIAN

I always wanted a younger sister!

*TOSHIA holds out her hand and QIAO LIAN takes it
They walk off smiling and laughing together.*

BLACKOUT

SCENE SIX**THE PAST JAPANESE MILITARY CAMP NORTHERN CHINA CIRCA 1940s**

YOUNG TOSHIA's "HUT"

YOUNG BEIDA, YOUNG MARIA, YOUNG KIM, YOUNG QIAO LIAN and YOUNG TOSHIA are seated together in the near dark, just the light from a small fire, eating. The door is flung open in walks a soldier dragging YOUNG JOANNA followed by HIROSHI NAKAMURA.

The girls jump to their feet. QIAO LIAN hides behind TOSHIA. The Soldier spots KIM and makes a grab for her, HIROSHI NAKAMURA intervenes.

(CONTINUED)

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Do not embarrass me.

Turns to TOSHIA

Haha-oya [respectful Japanese term for Mother]
Look after the White Horse. She is needed in two days
for a very special event. You have enough herbs,
bandages?

YOUNG TOSHIA

Bows deeply

Yes, sir.

Beat

Sir/

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Speak, you have my permission. I always have time for
my favourite little, 'Mother' and her new charge.

*NAKAMURA BENDS DOWN TO LOOK AT QIAO LIAN WHO
COWERS BEHIND TOSHIA.*

Don't be afraid little one, I don't bite, well, not
like a dog!

NAKAMURA laughs

It's good that you are making something of yourself
little Mother, passing on your skills to others.

YOUNG TOSHIA

I have no ginger or honey/

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

This will help in your healing?
It will restore the White horse?

TOSHIA nods

Then ginger and honey you shall have.

*Nakamura strokes YOUNG TOSHIA's and QIAO LIAN's
cheeks.*

Good, good.

To the soldier

Move, you disgust me!

Take note these two beauties are off limits.
They are my favourites, especially the little one.

more to himself

I have something very special in mind for
that one.

*The Soldier overhears NAKAMURA and starts to
touch himself, his breathing becomes audible.
NAKAMURA turns to see what the Soldier is doing.*

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

You disgust me!

*The Soldier stands to attention.
NAKAMURA leaves, the Soldier follows still
leering at QIAO LIAN. TOSHIA and QIAO LIAN
attend to JOANNA.*

YOUNG TOSHIA

To JOANNA
Do not speak.
Courage.
In two days they will come and take you to their
club.

JOANNA silently expresses her fear
If I could find someone to go in your place, I would.
They want a White Horse.
Only Officers ride white horses.

*KIM cradles JOANNA's head in her lap. BEIDA
gentle takes of her clothes and QIAO LIAN washes
the blood and grim from her limbs. MARIA
carefully and gently combs out the knots and
matted blood from JOANNA's hair. The women begin
to hum in unison, as they take care of JOANNA.*

BLACKOUT

SCENE SEVEN**PRESENT DAY JAPAN OUTSIDE SOBA STALL/BAR IT IS RAINING**

*YOSHI TANAKA SEATED AT A SOBA STALL/BAR ALONG
SIDE SEVERAL OTHER "BUSINESS MEN." ALL EATING
NOODLES TO SOAK UP AN EVENING OF DRINK BEFORE
GOING HOME.*

YOSHI TANAKA

*Takes out a letter from his inside jacket
pocket. He looks at the envelope and reads out
loud.*
Dono [Sir] Yoshi Tanaka,

*He tears open the envelope takes the letter out
and continues to read aloud, eating his noodles
and slurping along at the same time.*
'Have you been doing well?'
I would be better if I didn't have to deal with you
and your coven of women!

THE PRESENT HOUSE OF HEALING

*TOSHIA Stares at the envelope in her hand. The
other women are huddled around TOSHIA. She reads
aloud.*

(CONTINUED)

TOSHIA

Sama [Mrs.] Toshia Nishimura.

KIM

All very formal.

MARIA

What were you expecting, roses and pink hearts!

QIAO LIAN

I don't like this, I have an uneasy feeling/

BEIDA

Mockingly rolls eyes
When do you never not have an "uneasy feeling" about things?

Everyone laughs even QIAO LIAN

QIAO LIN/JOANNA

What are you waiting for Toshia?

TOSHIA

Don't rush me!
Give me some room!

TOSHIA takes the letter from the envelope with care, opens it and reads aloud.
Sate [Well then, to business (formal)]

THE PRESENT SOBA BAR**YOSHI TANAKA**

Continues reading the letter aloud as he eats his noodles.
'The Government cannot merely wipe us from the pages of history/'

He splutters spraying liquid and noodles from his mouth. The other customers scowl at him and move away.
'You cannot paste over us, with words of convenience/'
If I had my way I'd paste over you with something far more effective than words.
'What happened to us was unforgivable/'

snorts
If it happened at all!
'It is time that the world hears the truth.'

THE PRESENT HOUSE OF HEALING

(cont'd)

TOSHIA

'The Government suggest we come to a mutual understanding/'

MARIA

They're going to rail-road us into submission/

TOSHIA

'In order to reach such an understanding we request that you discontinue the protests. They must be both taxing and physically demanding for people of such venerable ages/'

KIM

I'd like to see this TANAKA say that to my face!

TOSHIA

Losing her patience

Are you going to listen or chatter like a group of disorganised Monkeys?

SILENCE

'We will make a life for you that is comfortable. Help me to fulfil our duty, which honour and country demands.

I am authorised to offer you a generous donation, ensuring that you live the remainder of your lives in the peace and comfort that you deserve.

JOANNE

She spits on the floor

That is what I think of this letter!

The other women begin to talk all at once

(cont'd)

TOSHIA

Holds up her hand for silence

'We will prepare a joint statement which will be broadcast on national television. Once it has been signed we can put to rest this, regrettable past.'

THE PRESENT SOBA BAR

YOSHI TANAKA

'As great as you are and as insignificant as I and my sisters might be, what gives you the right to so dishonour us in our own house/'

You have the temerity to question my rights old woman! You speak of dishonour! What you and your followers are doing dishonours ALL of us!

(CONTINUED)

*The other customers are looking at YOSHI TANAKA.
He realises he's up on his feet and has
obviously been speaking out loud.
He slumps back down onto the stool.*

THE PRESENT HOUSE OF HEALING

JOANNA

If anything good is to come from our pain then the world must know what happened.

QIAO LIAN

The truth of war/

TOSHIA

Hiroshima and Nagasaki, that is the terrible truth of war! I wish it had been the be all and end all, of our war.

QIAO LIAN

It does not excuse a Country from it's duty/

Toshia continues to read the letter

TOSHIA

'Speaking on behalf of the government, in the matter of Ianfu.

There is no doubt that in some cases, mistreatment of the women, who were asked and offered work in the service of their country, was unfortunately over stepped and occasionally abused. But I think that much of the adverse publicity and reporting is less than factual and comes from the miss-memories of older people. Encouraged by the mischievous of Western powers, with agendas of their own.'

THE PRESENT

SOBA BAR

YOSHI TANAKA

Continues to the read aloud

'Who is to say that our memories are false?'

Because it did not happen. It would have been talked about at school. In our history books, my father would have spoken of these things,

'you, because you have no experience of the things we speak of? So great a person, with so little manners! We exercise out right to protest, the world must know the truth of Ianfu.'

You write as if you were my mother!
Reprimanding me, humiliating me, as if I was a child!

(CONTINUED)

*A hand is placed on YOSHI TANAKA's shoulder and
a face voice speaks*

FACELESS MALE VOICE

Your Father requests your presence, Sir,
Now.

*YOSHI TANAKA screws up the letter and throws it
in on the floor.*

BLACKOUT

**THE PRESENT HIDEKEI TANAKA'S HOME OPULENT MINIMALISM MIXED
WITH TRADITIONAL ARTEFACTS****HIDEKEI TANAKA**

You dishonour me, your country, your government and
the name given to you!

YOSHI TANAKA

Forgive me/

HIDEKI TANAKA

*Holding a copy of the letter YOSHI TANAKA sent
to TOSHIA NISHAMURA and The House of Healing.*
There should be no reason to ask for my forgiveness!
You were tasked with placation.
Not agitation!
A simple task of negotiation, of diplomacy.
Get the old women to stop their protest marches.

Beat

You will return to this, 'House of Healing.'
You will speak with courtesy, swallow your pride,
humble yourself, you will do everything to correct
this and to get these tiresome old women to stop
marching!

YOSHI TANAKA

I will do better, I will redouble my efforts/

HIDEKI TANAKA

Silence!

Beat

If I had wanted you to send a letter, I would have
dictated it myself.

YOSHI TANAKA

I am a grown man.
I make my own decisions!

HIDEKI TANAKA

Ill advised and ill conceived decisions!

Shaking the letter in YOSHI's face

(CONTINUED)

YOSHI TANAKA

You have always criticized my lack of initiative.

Regains control of himself

It is one of the many flaws in my character, that has always caused you pain.

I meant to command, sir/

HIDEKI TANAKA

Which is obvious from this,

waving the letter about

you are incapable of doing.

A humiliating exposure of your ineptitude!

YOSHI TANAKA

Maybe this is not the assignment for me.

I am not a politician.

HIDEKI TANAKA

Obviously!

YOSHI TANAKA

Is it your wish I resign this commission?

HIDEKI TANAKA

Resign?!

I thought that I had raised a son, not an apologist!

YOSHI TANAKA

Why do you treat me as if I am a child?

HIDEKI TANAKA

Because you have yet to show me you are a man!

Pause

Are you so arrogant, you think this task is beneath you? That you would turn your back on your duty to country, to family?

YOSHI TANAKA

What would you have me do, Father?

HIDEKI TANAKA

Ignoring YOSHI's question

Tread with care through this melon field that you have sown.

He throws the letter at YOSHI in contempt

Remedy this!

YOSHI TANAKA

Raising his voice

Tell me what it is you expect of me!

HIDEKI TANAKA

You are not a frog stranded in a well!
 You throw petrol onto a fire that was burning low.
 Your immature, ill-conceived, blundering actions have
 rekindled the flames, not doused them!

YOSHI TANAKA

You give these, "old women." more power, status and
 reverence than they deserve/

HIDEKI TANAKA

These "women" are not three day old Nuns!

YOSHI TANAKA

No, they old, without influence, wizened of any
 feminine power/

HIDEKI TANAKA

Without warning He strikes Yoshi across the face
 If you believe that, then you truly are stupid.

YOSHI TANAKA

Forgive me Father.

HIDEKEI TANAKA

I will not permit your incompetence, or our past
 mistakes to cause us political harm.

YOSHI TANAKA

What mistakes?

HIDEKI TANAKA

The fact that you have to ask, proves how little you
 have learnt.

YOSHI TANAKA

These women huddle together in a fantasy far from the
 eyes of reality.

Laughing slightly
 Surfacing only to march/

HIDEKI TANAKA

You find this amusing?

YOSHI TANAKA stops laughing
 Do not speak to me of things that you have no
 knowledge off and even less experience with!

YOSHI TANAKA

I have both knowledge and experience/

HIDEKI TANAKA

Three years study at a university does not make one
 knowledgeable.
 What life, have you actually experienced, that has

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HIDEKI TANAKA (cont'd)

not been smoothed, eased or made accessible to you because of the name that you bear?
I take partial responsibility for this.

YOSHI TANAKA

If you had so desperately wanted me to "experience life" and gain real knowledge you should have cut me off, had me state educated, forced me to fend for myself. But you couldn't have that, a Tanaka slumming it with children of normal, average income families. It's always about you not losing face, protecting the precious family name.

Beat

HIDEKEI TANAKA

You have been given every advantage available in life. Now it is time to payback the love and diligence your parents and upbringing have afforded you.
You will carry out my instructions, without question. Is that understood?

YOSHI TANAKA

Yes,
Sir.

HIDEKI TANAKA

Please close the door securely behind you on your way out.

YOSHI TANAKA exits

HIDEKI TANAKA (cont'd)

Circles within circles.
Father said, there is always an escape route.
I cannot find the path.
The government is wrong, this crow will not fly away.

Hiroshi Nakamura comes out from the shadows.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Why continue to reprimand yourself for the actions of your father, your adopted father.
Don't look so shocked.
General Hideaki Tanaka and I, we were comrades in arms, very close friends.

HIDEKEI TANAKA

That is not how my father remembers things/

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Pity.

Moves in very close to HIDEKEI almost whispering in his ear

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HIROSHI NAKAMURA (cont'd)

I am proud of what I accomplished during the years of conflict.

I did things no one else dreamt where possible.

And none of it would have been possible without your father's assistance.

I will not let anyone tarnish my good name and reputation, especially not a paper son!

HIDEKI TANAKA

Moving away from NAKAMURA

Unlike you Nakamura San, I am open to change.

I see a value in the ability to perceive matters from a different perspective. So did my father, especially towards the end.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Your father became weak. A regrettable side effect of old age. As The General in charge, he was not so squeamish. It was he who sanctioned and encouraged my scientific research. He was an eager spectator, I hasten to add/

HIDEKI TANAKA

The public look upon such actions, now, as monstrous. Quite rightly so and the perpetrators inhumane. Times change Nakamura. My father also understood this.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

We are not monsters!

We are pioneers, true patriots.

Men of honour!

HIDEKI TANAKA

Men of honour!

Men of honour do not kill women and defenceless children.

Men of honour do not perform vivisection on living human beings.

Men of honour, Nakamura, do not lie and you lied to my Father/

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

I did what needed to be done!

No more and no less than your father did when he was The General as he sanctioned all of my experiments.

Do not make the mistake of thinking that General Tanaka was any better or different to me.

HIDEKI TANAKA

Pause

We lost, we paid a heavy price - What had we done that western powers had not already done? Our mistake, we got caught.

(CONTINUED)

Beat

What is the truth, Nakamura?

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Truth of what?!

Yoshi is right, you give these old women too much reverence and power.

They "claim," they were forced into servicing soldiers. Soldiers that were fighting bravely and courageously for their country.

What does it matter now?

I should never have handed you over to The General.

HIDEKI TANAKA

That was the one of the few good things to emerge from the darkness of war. The General's act of kindness, giving me a home, a life.

How do I explain any of this to Yoshi?

He is an innocent.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Tanaka the "romantic," who'd have thought!

But you're not a real Tanaka. The blood that runs through your veins is not the same as that of your venerable father's.

How would your reputation fair if it was revealed that you're are but the off-spring of a Chinese whore? The Generals' supreme act of generosity and pity adopting you?

Leave the past in the past.

It is too late for "truth"/

HIDEKI TANAKA

Academics and old women, give me strength!

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Now that sounds more like your father!

There maybe hope for you yet.

Revel in the deeds and accomplishments of your father's great and glorious past and move on.

HIDEKI TANAKA

Why did you give me to The General/

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

The General wanted a son.

I and fortune provided him with one.

Be grateful for that.

HIDEKEI TANAKA

Why not some local villager/

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

And miss all the fun that we're now having?

Beat - a look of slow horrific realisation spreads across HIDEKI's face.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HIROSHI NAKAMURA (cont'd)

You always were a quick study, maybe you inherited that from your birth father.

NAKAMURA laughs as he exits

BLACKOUT

ACT IISCENE ONE**THE PAST JAPANESE MILITARY CAMP NORTHERN CHINA 1940s****YOUNG QIAO LIAN**

Four months of continuous forced sex, it was no surprise, the unfamiliar sensations inside me, the signs of new life growing within me -

*She sits on the edge of an examination table.
She is slowly adjusting her clothing.*

Sir?

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

You are pregnant.

Removing his rubber gloves with some irritation.
I will place you on light laundry duties.

*NAKAMURA slams his fists onto the table.
QIAO LIAN starts to cry but tries to hold it back.*

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

It wasn't my fault, Sir.
It was that Soldier/

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Through gritted teeth
I see.
With luck and manual labour, nature will take it's course.
If not -

Beat
A boy, I'll permit to live.
A girl, I will have to dispose of. We already have enough tofu sellers in this camp!
My Soldiers prefer their entertainment to be tight.
I cannot have unhappy soldiers.
What kind of Doctor would I be if I did not to take care of my flock?

He stokes QIAO LIAN's cheek, then places his hands around her neck and begins to squeeze tighter and tighter.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA (cont'd)

I will deal with that Solider in due course.
I must confess I am very disappointed in you.
This is how you repay my kindness and consideration?
Pray nature takes pity on you and you miscarry.
I had such plans for you both and the little mother. Such a waste.

(CONTINUED)

NAKAMURA lets go of QIAO LIAN she slides onto the floor.

I hope you live to learn from your mistakes.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA steps over QIAO LIAN and exits.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

Not like this!
For pity sake/

KIM enters carrying a basket of soiled and blood stained towels. She doesn't see QIAO LIAN.

YOUNG KIM

Jesus!
What the hell at you doing in here?
I thought the Butcher was in here.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

He was.

YOUNG KIM

Sensing something is off, she drops the basket.
What's wrong?

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

I'm pregnant.

YOUNG KIM

Shit!
Does Toshia know?

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

No.
It was that solider, the one that dragged Joanna in to her hut, I think/

YOUNG KIM

You think, who else/

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

What was I supposed to do, Kim?
He ordered me to you, no one says no, to him/

YOUNG KIM

Yeah I know, but Toshia warned you, you should have told someone, after the first time/

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

I told him it was that Solider.
Not sure he believed me/

YOUNG KIM

Oh Qiao Lian, I'm so sorry.

(CONTINUED)

QIAO LIAN

He kept watching me.
I know that I'm . . . not experienced that way,
but I know enough.
He caught me off guard!

She breaks down

YOUNG KIM

She holds QIAO LIAN trying to comfort her.
It's done no use crying over spilt milk.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

If it's a boy, he'll let it live.
I'm on light laundry duty.

Beat

It isn't supposed to be like this, is it?
You're supposed to find a boy, fall in love.
I don't know why, but I don't want to lose this
baby.

YOUNG KIM

We have to tell Toshia, she'll know what to do.
Let's go break the good news.

KIM takes QIAO LIAN by the hand and they exit.

BLACKOUT

SCENE TWO**PRESENT DAY JAPAN, TOKYO
PRESS CONFERENCE**

*HIDEKI TANAKA, YOSHI TANAKA stand on a press
platform in front of flashing lights and general
buzz of expectation.*

HIDEKI TANAKA

The Japanese Government has prepared a statement

*Projection of ABE- film footage of Abe
delivering his 2015 "apology"*

[<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/08/14/asia/japan-wwii-abe-apo>]

We shall face squarely the historical facts as
described above instead of evading them, and take
them to heart as lessons of history/

*Suddenly the press conference is interrupted
KIM, BEIDA, MARIA, JOANNA and QIAO LIAN enter,
carrying the banner.*

"JUSTICE FOR ALL JAPANESE COMFORT WOMEN"

(CONTINUED)

KIM/BEIDA/MARIA/JOANNA/QIAO LIAN

Justice for all Comfort Women now.
 Justice for all Comfort Women now.
 Justice for all Comfort Women now.

*They march closer towards the press platform
 and conference.
 Lights flash, whistles and screams as the banner
 is tossed into the air and the women
 "disappear."*

*Silence
 The press conference resumes.*

HIDEKEI TANAKA

Visibly disturbed
 We hereby reiterate our firm determination never to repeat the same mistake by forever engraving such issues in our memories through the study and teaching of history. As actions have been brought to court in Japan and interests have been shown in this issue outside Japan, the Government of Japan shall continue to pay full attention to this matter.

BLACKOUT

SCENE THREE**THE PAST JAPANESE MILITARY CAMP SOMEWHERE IN NORTHERN CHINA 1940s**

*A crudely constructed dump and open sewer system.
 On one side and an open fire on the other side.
 YOUNG QIAO LIAN struggles with buckets of waste.
 as she drags and part lifts the buckets of human slop and buckets of soiled linen closer to where YOUNG TOSHIA works.*

YOUNG TOSHIA

She seems unusually irritable.

Snapping
 What's taking you so long!

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

She grimaces and tries to hold her breath so as not to breathe in the stench of the stale blood and rotting foetal matter.
 My hands are full!
 I can't do everything at once!

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG TOSHIA

I need your assistance now not in three weeks!

Glaring at QIAO LIAN

You're getting fat and lazy. Whatever you've been scrounging and stuffing your face with, stop it!

QIAO LIAN thuds the bucket down. Sticking her tongue out at TOSHIA behind her back. TOSHIA suddenly stops what she is doing as if she knows what's going on behind her. QIAO LIAN freezes and then sheepishly goes over to help TOSHIA burn the bloody soaked sheets and pour the buckets of human blood, foetal matter, organs and bones into a crudely made drain.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

Did the Butcher do this?

TOSHIA without warning slaps QIAO LIAN hard across the face knocking her to the floor. QIAO LIAN starts to cry. She backs away from TOSHIA.

YOUNG TOSHIA

Forgive me.

Never let anyone hear you call Nakamura, 'The Butcher'.

She moves closer to QIAO LIAN and sits down. I never thought that I would travel abroad.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

This isn't "abroad."

YOUNG TOSHIA

It's not Japan/

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

Petulant and irritated.
It's not my home.

YOUNG TOSHIA

She tentatively puts an arm around QIAO LIAN - QIAO LIAN does not resist but she does not completely "give" in.
I spent hours gazing at pictures in glossy magazines that I could not afford to buy/

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

That's stupid, what's the point?

YOUNG TOSHIA

It irritated the shopkeepers.

Silence

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

Where is all this blood from?

YOUNG TOSHIA

I'd day dream about Paris, South America, New York and London/

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

Women don't have time to day-dream, that's what my father used to say.

Looks at TOSHIA she is lost in thought. QIAO LIAN pokes her tongue out, TOSHIA does not react.

Toshia?!

YOUNG TOSHIA

Promise me little one, stay away from Nakamura.

Silence

They get up and continue their gruesome work burning the blood stained sheets and pouring away the human waste

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

I didn't mean to get pregnant.
You knew didn't you, before I told you/

YOUNG TOSHIA

Yes.
Forgive me/

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

For what?
It's not your fault I'm pregnant.
You warned me about Nakamura.
But he was always nice to us, to me/

YOUNG TOSHIA

People aren't always what they seem.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

Whose blood is this?

YOUNG TOSHIA

Everyone's.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN lets out a squeal of fright.

Yours.
Mine!

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

You're frightening me/

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG TOSHIA

Good!

Beat - She puts her finger on QIAO LIAN's lips.

QIAO LIAN

Toshia!

TOSHIA takes hold of her face in both or her bloody hands, QIAO LIAN at first resists but TOSHIA does not relent.

YOUNG TOSHIA

Look at me Qiao Lian!

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

What's wrong?

TOSHIA rest her forehead on QIAO LIANS

YOUNG TOSHIA

I love you like a sister.
Everything I do is to keep you safe/

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

What is it Toshia?

YOUNG TOSHIA

I'm just tired.
I miss my home.
I dreamt that I was sitting in the garden laughing
with my Mother.

Beat

I've seen things, I've done things/

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

I've never seen you like this/

YOUNG TOSHIA

He broke my body.
And still I found another way to survive.
Otherwise this, on these rags, in these buckets,
would be me.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN gasps

He plays with,
before/

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

Whispering
Nakamura, plays?

YOUNG TOSHIA

He cuts them open.
He enjoys it.

(CONTINUED)

Pause

I watched him -
once.

YOUNG TOSHIA and YOUNG QIAO LIAN turn and watch as HIROSHI NAKAMURA immaculately dressed enters, wearing a spotless white medical coat.

YOUNG TOSHIA

He sliced her open, she was alive, thankfully not for long.

NAKAMURA holds a scalpel in one hand. He raises the scalpel, there is a gleam in his eye, he brings the scalpel down.

There is a scream.

NAKAUMRA is bathed in red light.

NAKAUMRA fades into the background.

I've never heard a human being make such noises before.

Beat

That's why he's called The Butcher.

TOSHIA points to bucket full of blood and bits floating in it.

There is no waste.

I breath because I keep his world neat and clean.

Long silence as the two of them continue to burn and pour away what's left of human being.

YOUNG QIAO LIAN

I need to ask you something/

Approaching voices can be heard Toshia signals to Qiao Lian to hide and be quiet.

NAKAMURA and a Solider enter.

Toshia immediately bows.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Haha-oya [respectful Japanese term for Mother]

I need your assistance on two matters.

Indicating the piles of bloody sheets and buckets of human remains

That can wait.

I like your thinking.

To bring these items out of plain view, good, good.

To QIAO LIAN

You may leave us, take the day off!

(CONTINUED)

He smiles to himself.

The Solider man-handles QIAO LIAN trying to drag her away.

Nakamura grabs hold of the Solider's arm and twists until it snaps, the Soldier cries out in pain.

I did not tell you to touch her!

To QIAO LIAN, slightly mocking.

Go enjoy the rest of your day.

QIAO LIAN exits in a hurry.

To the Solider.

Take yourself back to the barracks and acquire some discipline.

The Soldier leaves cradling his arm

The little one is pregnant.

YOUNG TOSHIA

She backs away slightly

Yes Sir, she told me/

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

And you should have told me immediately!

TOSHIA cowers bracing herself for a blow.

Never fear little mother.

I won't hurt you.

I saved you.

I look after and protect you from the world out there.

NAKAMURA paces around TOSHIA like predator encircling its prey.

I have another task for you.

You are to go and call on The General's wife.

She has not been well, she pregnant too.

It will not last and neither will she.

But The General has set his heart on having this child. I will see to it that his wish is granted and you, little Mother will be my instrument.

NAKAMURA stops and stand behind TOSHIA who tries her best to hide her fear as NAKAMURA places his hands on her shoulders.

BLACKOUT

SCENE FOUR

THE PRESENT THE HOUSE OF HEALING

(CONTINUED)

JOANNA, TOSHIA, KIM, MARIE, BEIDA are all in the House standing, sitting on their balconies. YOSHI enters, the women talk amongst themselves. YOSHI faces the house front and the women and bows.

YOSHI TANAKA

I urgently need to speak with you.

MARIE

Who are you and what business do you have with this House of Healing?

YOSHI TANAKA

Coughs
To talk/

BEIDA

Of what?
Old times?
How we spent our youth?

MARIA

Our bodies are old, but our memories are young!

TOSHIA enters silently followed by QIAO LIAN.

TOSHIA

Enough.
Finish the decorating.

MARIA

What decorating/

KIM digs her sharply in the ribs.

BIEDA

Of course Toshia, we will have it all done by the time you get back.

TOSHIA

Good. Where is Qiao Lian?

QIAO LIAN enters and is momentarily taken aback by the sight of YOSHI TANAKA.

TOSHIA bows to YOSHI TANAKA, QIAO LIAN half heartedly follows TOSHIA's lead.
Tanaka San, walk with us through our garden.

She gestures to YOSHI TANAKA to walk on she waits for QIAO LIAN to escort YOSHI TANAKA. Then she turns back to the other women.
You will speak softly, calmly and with politeness.

BEIDA

You do know who his grandfather was/

TOSHIA

General HIDEAKI TANAKA.

BEIDA

Have you forgotten what he and his friend HIROSHI
NAKAMURA did to you - to us?

TOSHIA

I have not forgotten.

BEIDA

Really?
Because the way you've been behaving recently/

KIM

The Butcher's right hand man?
Toshia we have an opportunity in the palm of our
hands/

The Women start to talk all at once.

TOSHIA

I do not ask.
I demand!

Silence

JOANNA

We will be the epitome of good manners.

TOSHIA

I think that might be a little over the top.
Make sure the banner is prominently displayed so that
our guests can see.

BEIDA

Guests?
What aren't you telling us?

TOSHIA exits

*The women erupt into a heated full blown
argument all speaking at once, Dutch, Korean,
Tagalog -*

KIM

Wolf whistles
Shut it!

JOANNA

We must respect Toshia's wishes/

(CONTINUED)

BEIDA

I love Toshia like a sister/

KIM

We all do.
But -
We owe Toshia.

MARIA

Kim's right.

JOANNA

We are branded.
We are scared on the inside.
Nothing we do will ever cleanse or mend us.
There is not one single day that has not gone by and
I have not thought about revenge -
Toshia knows what she is doing.
I trust her and so should you.

*She looks at the other women
Let's get that banner up.*

*The women exit and return carrying a couple of
long ladders and the banner that says,*

"JUSTICE FOR ALL JAPANESE COMFORT WOMEN"

*They position the ladders either side of the
front of the house then KIM takes one end of the
banner and MARIA the other and together they
climb the ladders and hang the banner across the
front of the house.*

BLACKOUT

THE PRESENT THE HOUSE OF HEALING

*The women have started preparing for the evening
meal.
There is a general air of organised cooking
chaos. Mixed with laughter and banter. But there
is an underlying edge amongst all the chopping,
kneading, flour particles in the air, dicing,
slicing and general cooking activity.
Everyone one is busy.*

JOANNA (cont'd)

busy mixing ingredients together.
They ravaged my childhood, invaded my body, my dreams
and infected my memories.
But I'm damned if I'll let them take this home from
me.

(CONTINUED)

(cont'd)

MARIA

No one should be allowed to forget what happened.

BEIDA

The words they spoke, I didn't understand.
I was not the only girl to be thrown onto the back of
a truck. Not the only daughter that disappeared one
evening, never to return.

(cont'd)

JOANNA

We've all eaten in the pit.

smiles at Maria.

MARIA

Do you remember our first meeting?

JOANNA

How could I forget?

THE PAST MILITARY CAMP IN NORTHERN CHINA 1940s

*Sounds of military trucks pulling up.
OS Military orders being shouted out.*

O.S. MILITARY ORDERS

You will be shown to your new living quarters.
We will give you time to adjust, to rest.
If there is anything that you need, you have only to
ask.

(cont'd)

YOUNG JOANNA

Waar is mijn moeder? [Where's my Mother?]
I want my Mother!

*MARIA comes out from the shadows carrying a
basket of supplies.*

YOUNG MARIA

You're new aren't you?

YOUNG JOANNA

I don't understand. Where's my Mother?

YOUNG MARIA

Mother?

*Maria rocks an imaginary baby in her arms.
Joanna nods.*

YOUNG JOANNA

Hesitantly
Yes.

(CONTINUED)

YOUNG MARIA

Come with me.

MARIA takes JOANNA around the camp, introducing her, she is hugged, head patted, cheeks stroked and smiled at and generally made a huge fuss of.

YOUNG MARIA (cont'd)

I was bundling wood together before school.

JAPANESE SOLDIER

Baka! [Cow!]

MARIA is surprised and surrounded by several Japanese Soldiers.

YOUNG MARIA

I'm not a cow/

JAPANESE SOLDIER

Stupid!

He strikes MARIA with his riffle butt
Baka means Cow. What do we do with cows?
We milk them!

The soldiers laugh

JAPANESE Officer appears from nowhere, the laughter stops.

YOUNG MARIA

Already on her knees she puts her hands together as if praying.

Thank you Sir! Thank you for saving me/

Two soldiers pin MARIE to the ground, a third spreads her legs with his rifle bayonet and slices her under-garments off.

The JAPANESE OFFICER advances, taking of his cap, unbuttoning his tunic, undoing his trousers. He then rapes MARIA. When the officer has finished, he gets up. A Soldier takes out a clothes brush, brushes the officer's clothes, and helps the Officer to get dressed. Buttoning his tunic, handing and the officer a white handkerchief. Which the officer takes and wipes his face, neck and hands. The officer then throws the soiled handkerchief on the ground. Takes his cap from the soldier and walks away. The Soldier turns and approaches YOUNG MARIA. The Officer turns back and watches for a moment and then turns his back and disappears.

(CONTINUED)

MARIA screams. The stage is filled with the faces of women screaming. MARIA's lifeless body is picked up by a couple of Japanese soldiers and thrown onto a cart and wheeled off.

BLACKOUT

THE PAST JAPANESE CAMP SOMEWHERE IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA 1940s

JOANNA plays in the dirt with her doll. Sounds of laughing, giggling children and women speaking Dutch.

The sound of approaching trucks gets louder, then silence. JOANNA stands. The doll she was playing with drops to the ground.

JOANNA walks hesitantly forwards. We hear the murmur of frightened voices, crying children and babies. JOANNA comes to a stop, the noises peters out.

OS VOICE

This camp is not a suitable place for, babies, young children and mothers.

We are going to rehouse you all, in camps which are more suited to your needs.

YOUNG JOANNA

Joanna Van der Pole. I am twelve when I am taken from Ambarawa Internment Camp.

OS VOICE

Women with babies please make your way to the far trucks. Women who are single and over the age of thirty please make your way to the far trucks on your left. Young women and girls aged 11 to 25 please step into the middle trucks.

Boys please go to the first truck on your left.

Sounds of commotion, crying children, babies shouts of Mama, A single gun shot rings out.

This is just a temporary separation. Please do not be alarmed.

JOANNA moves forward she is frightened, a voice from the crowd rings out

OS MOTHER

Don't be afraid. Be a brave girl. We will be together again soon - I love you/

JOANNA turns back, desperately looking for the owner of the voice. The crying and chatter fades away. Only the noise of the trucks can be heard driving away.

(CONTINUED)

JOANNA

I never saw the camp or my Mother again.

BLACKOUT

SCENE FIVE**THE PRESENT THE GARDEN AT THE HOUSE OF HEALING**

TOSHIA, QIAO LIAN and YOSHI TANAKA walk with a measured pace through the grounds. The sound of running water and birds song complete this "idyllic" scene.

From the balcony of the house KIM, MARIA, BEIDE and JOANNA watch

KIM

The lucky ones were those that never saw their families again. Those who never had to face their loved ones. The looks they tried to hide, the disgust, the horror. Everyone knew, or suspected what had happened to us, but no one talked about it. They would have preferred - ghosts/

MARIA

Will we ever get justice?

BEIDA

A thousand years will go by, man will fly to Mars before they give us justice.

JOANNA

Justice? What then, Maria?
Everyone lives happily ever after!

MARIA

No!
I was just - thinking out loud.
I'm not stupid -
Sometimes I think you use the fact that you're the only white woman amongst us as some kind of badge, of "suffering".
That yours was greater, deeper, than everyone else's.
You're somehow better than us, your shame is worse than ours, it's like we're beneath you.
And no, it won't give us back anything.
We lost all normality the moment they laid their stinking hands on us.
I was just wondering whether there would ever be justice - that's all!

Stunned silence

BEIDA

Cackles her version of laughter

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEIDA (cont'd)

I never knew you had it in you.

KIM

That is the most I have ever heard you speak Maria.

BEIDA

No one thinks you're stupid Maria/
a little timid/

KIM

Beat

She's right you know, about Joanna -
You do take pride in being the White Horse.

JOANNA

That's a horrid thing to say!
I don't think that I'm better than anyone,
I don't think, I don't/

BEIDA

Oh shush!

To JOANNA

You just have an unfortunate way about you -
It's your nose. That's what it is.

JOANNA

What about my nose?

KIM

It's so big and long, it makes you look -

MARIA

Haughty?

KIM, BEIDA and MARIA burst out laughing.

JOANNA

Looking hurt

Do you really think that I'm stuck up and/

BEIDA

Of course not - it's just sometimes/

KIM

You can be a real bitch!

BEIDA

It always seems to be about you.
You've always been like that, clingy, needy.
It really doesn't matter -

SILENCE

(CONTINUED)

KIM

They think we want money.

BEIDE

The world wants peace.
Not dark reminders of the unspeakable things they
have done.
It's easier to turn their backs.

JOANNA

We don't want money, we want dignity/

MARIA

You're joking!
Central heating that doesn't work!
Water pipes that scream in the winter and whistle in
the summer!
A cooker that is older even than us.
Dignity is a luxury we cannot afford at the moment.
I'm simple, I dream of hot water and a cooker that
works! Land we can use to grow our own food on.
A washing machine that actually washes the clothes!

(cont'd)

JOANNA

Yes those things would be -
I would love all of those things and more -

They all laugh

You know what I mean.
They could give me my weight in gold and it would
still mean nothing.

KIM

Money would help to light up the dark corners.
It would make thinking in the dark a lot more fun.

Silence

MARIA

Come one, lets get the evening meal going.

BEIDA

What does it look like we've been doing?

*MARIA, KIM and JOANNA look at BEIDA making
"puppy dog eyes."*

No, we have no coconut/

JOANNA

Qiao Lian asked the gardener to bring up a box
yesterday.

BEIDA glares at them

(CONTINUED)

ALL

*To BEIDA like they were little children.
We want Mumu* and Chicken Pot!*

*Mumu - potatoes, sweet potatoes (called kumura), green vegetables, and some sort of meat cooked in coconut milk and wrapped in banana leaves.

BEIDA

What do think that I've been making!
I know all of you only too well.
But Qiao Lian has to make noodles - hand made mind.
Toshia dumplings.
Joanna pisang goreng and Maria -
Maria has to make Suman**!

** Suman a rice cake originating from the Philippines. It is made from glutinous rice cooked in coconut milk, and often steamed wrapped in buli or buri palm (Corypha) leaves. It is usually eaten sprinkled with sugar.

*The women continue to stir, batter, cut, dice,
mix and general make busy.
If we're going to cook, may as well show off!*

SCENE SIX**THE PRESENT THE HOUSE OF HEALING**

The women KIM, MARIA, BIEDA, JOANNA are still busy putting the final touches to the evening meal, they talk and laugh with each other. TOSHIA, QIAO LIAN and YOSHI TANAKA pause in front of the house. The banner now hangs across the front of the house.

The women watch as they continue with the final tasks of meal preparation.

TOSHIA

What do you really want from us?

QIAO LIAN is about to speak - TOSHIA signals for QIAO LIAN to wait.

What threat do we pose to the government?

The revisionist brand us as liars, nuisances and senile old women.

What do you think of all of this, Tanaka San?

These "tales" you have heard. Of the feeble old woman across East Asia, all who have the same nightmarish memories?

YOSHI TANAKA

I am not tasked with sharing my personal opinions.
I'm here to impart the wishes from our government.
Those wishes are that you suspend your protests. That the marches/

(CONTINUED)

YOSHI TANAKA clocks the banner.

TOSHIA

We dwell in this House of Healing because we ask and want nothing of anyone.
The only thing we seek from others, is peace. To be left to our devices.

QIAO LIAN

Look around you Tanaka San, the few modern comforts we have, like us are old and out of fashion.
We are not under the mischievous thrall of the west.
Is our government so blind and so easily lead?

TOSHIA

All we have is each other, this home and what was taken from us.

QIAO LIAN

You are more than welcome to share in our nightmares/

TOSHIA

Why did your father send you?

QIAO LIAN

If this issue is so important to the country, why didn't your father come in person?
Or are we beneath the merits and concerns of a senior Politician?

A low Chinese/East Asian bell sounds.

TOSHIA

It is time for the evening meal.
Join us.

YOSHI TANAKA

I should be/

TOSHIA

Don't insult us.
You were sent back with your tail between your legs to correct a mistake.

YOSHI TANAKA

Through gritted teeth
How perceptive of you/

TOSHIA

Old we maybe, stupid we are not.

YOSHI TANAKA

I mean no disrespect, but I really have to be getting/

(CONTINUED)

QIAO LIAN

At this time in the evening there really is nowhere to be getting back to/

TOSHIA

Where else would you be able to sample the best free Pan-Asian fusion food this side of the river?

YOSHI TANAKA

Embarrassed

If I agree to your hospitality, which I thank you for, do you think that you could take that banner down?

TOSHIA

You're asking me, an old lady of many years to climb up a rickety ladder and take down a banner?! Youngsters these days, tsk, tsk.

TOSHIA leaves

QIAO LIAN

Sit and eat with us, or don't. It means nothing, only that we have manners.

QIAO LIAN bows and leaves.

YOSHI TANAKA

Takes out his mobile phone and dials no answer. Where are you father?

YOSHI TANAKA leaves

BLACKOUT

SCENE SEVEN**THE PRESENT THE HOUSE OF HEALING - THE EVENING MEAL**

A long table has been laid with food ready. TOSHIA is seated at the middle of the table with people either side. YOSHI TANAKA is seated to her left and QIAO LIAN to her right. TOSHIA stands.

TOSHIA

In Japanese we say, Let's eat!

KIM

In Korean we say - Thank you for making this food.

QIAO LIAN

In Chinese we say, Eat everyone

(CONTINUED)

MARIA

In Tagalog it's simply Let's eat!

BEIDE

At home we just say, Thank you

JOANNA

In Dutch it's the same, Let's eat!

TOSHIA sits and indicates for everyone to eat, which they do so initially in silence.

YOSHI finds the silence disturbing.

YOSHI tastes the food rather timid at first but is pleasantly surprised.

YOSHI TANAKA

This is a beautiful meal thank you.

I have only ever tasted gyoza like this at the family table.

To TOSHIA

Whereabouts in Japan are your family from?

TOSHIA

I am glad that you find our hospitality enjoyable. It is a group effort. The dumplings are a speciality of Qiao Lian's and mine.

Silence

YOSHI TANAKA

Qiao Lin have you ever travelled through Japan/

QIAO LIAN

No, only to the Northern China where there were a good many Japanese -

Embarrassed pause

Then after the war straight here to this House. My travelling days are over.

MARIA

What does the government want?

BEIDE

Sixty, seventy years we have been left, forgotten.

KIM

And you cannot even bring yourselves to apologies!

KIM leaves abruptly.

MARIA and BEIDA start to get up to follow KIM.

TOSHIA

Leave her.

Come finish the meal that we have all worked so hard to provide.

YOSHI TANAKA

I'm sorry I should not have come.
This is my fault.

QIAO LIAN

It's to be expected when you release a fox into a
chicken house/

YOSHI TANAKA

Stands up

I do not want to be disrespectful. Contrary to your
beliefs I am not a bad person. I don't know what you
have against my family, but we have done nothing to
you. I don't know any of you. I am sure, whatever
happened to you was dreadful, and I am truly sorry.
But that was many years ago. Our government is trying
to do the right thing. Your allegations, the marches,
it has to stop.

QIAO LIAN

"Allegations?"
Why don't you ask your sainted grandfather/

YOSHI TANAKA

That would be somewhat difficult, since he passed
away four years ago.

TOSHIA

Speak to the living.
Hiroshi Nakamura I'm sure would be delighted to tell
you about the war years.
Please, finish your food, don't let it go cold.

YOSHI TANAKA

If you'll excuse me, I have lost my appetite.

TOSHIA

Then we will clear away.

*The women get up still munching and picking at
food as they clear away.*

MARIA and BEIDA hesitate

JOANNA starts to pick up bowls and utensils.

To MARIA and BEIDA

Now, not tomorrow or the day after!

*MARIA and BEIDA do as asked in silence and then
leave carrying piles of dishes, utensils and
uneaten food.*

YOSHI TANAKA

Thank you for the meal and your hospitality.
The goyza, truly were spectacular!

YOSHI stands.

TOSHIA

I will show/

YOSHI TANAKA

Please don't trouble yourself.

YOSHI TANAKA bows slightly to both women and exits.

QIAO LIAN

An opportunity wasted!

TOSHIA

Sighs

How many graves are you prepared to dig?

QIAO LIAN

As many as it takes, I don't care!

TOSHIA

Lie to yourself, but not to me.

QIAO LIAN

Of all people, I expected you to understand/

TOSHIA

Little one I do, and it is because I understand, I know the danger of the path you wish to take/

QIAO LIAN

You're protecting you're own!

TOSHIA

Now you have crossed a line!
You truly believe that, you know where the door is.
You are free to leave whenever you wish.

Awkward silence

QIAO LIAN

He was sitting right there. We could have/

TOSHIA

Bashed him over the head and kept him a prisoner in the cellar?
Feeding him only rotten tofu and stale bread?

QIAO LIAN

Exactly!

TOSHIA

How long could we have kept him?

(CONTINUED)

QIAO LIAN

It's not him I'm after/

TOSHIA

People would come looking for him.
Powerful people, then what?

QIAO LIAN

I want them to pay!
To understand what it was like.
Is that so wrong?

TOSHIA

No/

QIAO LIAN

I thought you wanted the truth to be told.
For those responsible to held accountable?

TOSHIA

I want justice.
What you want, little one, is revenge.

QIAO LIAN

You really piss me off when you start/

TOSHIA

Talking sense/

QIAO LIAN

Spouting your bull shit sage, sayings.

TOSHIA

A wise person will follow their own timing and not
get swept along by the herd.

QIAO LIAN

Argh!

TOSHIA

Pause

If you pursue this path are you ready for what you
will find. Will you accept and not be consumed by it?
Some dogs are too dangerous, they need to remain
asleep until death.

QIAO LIAN

I cannot! If there is a chance/

TOSHIA

There is always a chance/

QIAO LIAN

I have to know.

(CONTINUED)

TOSHIA

I will always love you

QIAO LIAN

And I will always love you.

TOSHIA kisses QIAO LIAN on the forehead and exits.

QIAO LIAN wanders off to the garden and sits listening to the water and the insects.

YOSHI TANAKA re-enters on his mobile phone. There is an awkward moment.

YOSHI TANAKA

Placing his hand over his mobile phone
I did not mean to intrude.

QIAO LIAN

You intruded the moment you stepped over our threshold.

YOSHI TANAKA

The camp where you claim . . .
Where you were held, that's where my grandfather was stationed General HIDEAKI TANAKA.

QIAO LIAN

I know who you're grandfather is/

YOSHI TANAKA

Was, who he was. Grandfather died four years ago.

QIAO LIAN

He lives on through the consequences of his actions and haunts the living, a nightmare that never ends!

YOSHI TANAKA

I'm sorry, I really am, about whatever happened to you and your friends.
But Grandfather was a good and great man he would never have/

QIAO LIAN

Tortured, raped, or allowed human experimentation?

YOSHI TANAKA

No.
He was a dedicated and loving father. He lived for his son, a son he never thought he would have.
He dedicated his life to charitable works, devoted to making life better for all/

(CONTINUED)

QIAO LIAN

Goodbye Yoshi Tanaka, I hope we never meet again.

QIAO LIAN begins to make her way back to the house and then stops in her tracks

What did you mean when you said, 'your grandfather had a son he never thought he would have?'

YOSHI TANAKA

My grandmother had, had multiple miscarriages, but was fortunate in the end. She fell pregnant whilst in Northern China visiting her husband.

Sadly she died giving birth to my father, not that it is really any of your business.

QIAO LIAN

You're right, it really is none of my business, just a nosey old woman.

QIAO LIAN walks into The House of Healing leaving YOSHI TANAKA staring at the banner "JUSTICE FOR ALL JAPANESE COMFORT WOMEN"

YOSHI TANAKA

Shit!

YOSHI TANAKA exits

BLACKOUT

ACT IIISCENE ONE**THE PRESENT THE HOUSE OF HEALING**

*Early morning in front of the House of Healing.
HIDEKI TANAKA stands waiting.
TOSHIA and QIAO LIAN enter from the House and
HIROSHI NAKAMURA enters from the garden.*

HIDEKI TANAKA

Bows slightly
Good morning

Pause he looks at QIAO LIAN
Excuse me . . . It's nothing.

*TOSHIA and QIAO LIAN bow deeply as they make to
leave QIAO LIAN notices NAKAMURA striding
towards HIDEKEI TANAKA to greet him.*

*QIAO LIAN cannot help herself, she makes an
audible noise.
NAKAMURA sees QIAO LIAN. He stands to attention
and mockingly bows. TOSHIA supports QIAO LIAN by
taking her hand, helping her back into the
house. The "exchange" between NAKAMURA and QIAO
LIAN has not gone unnoticed by YOSHI TANAKA.*

YOSHI TANAKA

Is something wrong?

HIDEKI TANAKA

There is something, familiar about those two.
I can't quite place it -

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Like old times.

HIDEKI TANAKA

Only it isn't, is it.
Times and people change

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

True, mores the pity.
I am subject to the ravages and curses of progressing
years.
Concentrate on more pressing matters Tanaka San,
such as the future don't allow the past to hinder
you.

HIDEKI TANAKA

The past is powerful tool/

(CONTINUED)

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Smiles dismissively interrupting
Indeed

He lays his hand firmly on YOSHI's shoulder
I will wait for you in the car.

NAKAMURA leaves.

YOSHI TANAKA

I underestimated -

Pause
. . . You are angry/

HIDEKI TANAKA

Not angry, disappointed.

YOSHI TANAKA

I saw the news reports.
I did some research of my own.
Between 80,000 and 200,000 women "enslaved"
by the Imperial Army?

HIDEKI TANAKA

War, it is a complex affair.

YOSHI TANAKA

Kill all, Burn all, Destroy all?

HIDEKI TANAKA

Impatient
Those troupes were tasked with specific duties/

YOSHI TANAKA

By the General in command, Hiedeaki Tanaka, your
father, my grandfather.
When I was a student I beat a fellow class mate to a
near pulp, in your defence, in grandfather's defence!
Because my grandfather, would never have been
involved in/

HIDEKI TANAKA

He was not in command of such operations/

YOSHI TANAKA

The google picture search on grandfather and Hiroshi
Nakamura

*He slaps a bunch of photocopied pictures and web
pages on his father's chest.*
Says otherwise.

I pounded that student because I truly believed that
my

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

YOSHI TANAKA (cont'd)

Grandfather would never have allowed women let alone girls, to be forced into - ! I was so sure that he was nothing like the Nazis!

HIDEKI TANAKA

You have no understanding/

YOSHI TANAKA

Is there any truth in anything that you and grandfather told me about the war, anything?

HIDEKI TANAKA

Irrelevant/

YOSHI TANAKA

I have a right to know!

HIDEKI TANAKA

Are you threatening me?

YOSHI TANAKA

If you do not tell me then I will go to those that will!

HIDEKI TANAKA

Let the past remain in the past

YOSHI TANAKA

Stares at his father
My god!

HIDEKI TANAKA

In war there is no place for sentimental likes and dislikes. Your grandfather was fighting for the country's very existence/

YOSHI TANAKA

You have a meeting. We must leave, I would not want to be responsible for making you - late.

YOSHI leaves. HIDEKI follows. TOSHIA and QIAO LIAN appear on the balcony. TOSHIA watches QIAO LIAN carefully.

QIAO LIAN

You knew?

TOSHIA

I suspected.

QIAO LIAN

Would you have told me?

TOSHIA

Wrong question to be asking.

Pause

What good would it have done?

QIAO LIAN

You had no right!

TOSHIA

I did not want to cause you any more pain

QIAO LIAN

Yet that's what you have given me.

TOSHIA

I'm so sorry little one/

QIAO LIAN

Don't call me that!

Beat

I have not been the little one for a long, long time.

TOSHIA

I know/

QIAO LIAN

This take more than a few sweet words and dumplings/

TOSHIA

I've always looked after you, loved you, protected you/

QIAO LIAN

This goes deeper than survival, Toshia. It's the piece of they tried to dispose of. The splinter that should never have been pulled out/

TOSHIA

If you had given birth to a girl, she would have sat on Nakamura's shelf preserved in a jar.

QIAO LIAN covers her ears.

TOSHIA ently takes Qiao Lian's hands away from her ears.

Yes you had a son. He survived. Because they took him away from you.

QIAO LIAN

Nakamura told me he was still born.
But you always believed that he survived.
And I loved you even more for having that belief.
Do you think Lok knows?

(CONTINUED)

TOSHIA

Lok?
You named him?

She hugs Qiao Lian who lets her
You foolish/

QIAO LIAN

I've seen my son, Toshia.
My son.
He's a grown man.
I know nothing about him.
He knows nothing about me/

TOSHIA

That's not true.
You know he's a politician and you know what his name
is.

QIAO LIAN

Hideki Tanaka.

Beat
How did you know that my son didn't die.

TOSHIA

I was the one who took him away

TOSHIA exits

BLACKOUT

INTERVAL

SCENE TWO**THS PRESENT****THE HOUSE OF HEALING**

Music Raveyards vs. DJ Uinkxxx lights up on the House. In each window a woman/women/man/men sit posed as in a still photograph hung in an exhibition. Captions are projected under each pose these poses will be taken from famous photographs of Japanese comfort women, moving through time to other conflicts showing violence and the slavery of women during conflict.

The women pose in the windows and on the balcony in photographic still life compositions they are for the moment gallery exhibits. Projected beneath each pose a caption.

OS FEMALE VOICE

Welcome to the "The human cost of Being a Comfort Woman" A new exhibition from the renowned photographer Lin Masura. Between 1936-1945 and

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

OS FEMALE VOICE (cont'd)

estimated 200, 000 women and "children" were recruited, duped, kidnapped or force ably coerced into the service of The Imperial Army as "comfort women."

The sound of marching feet, blue flashing lights, sirens, screams.

OS MALE VOICE

This exhibition is now closed.

BLACKOUT

Projections of news clippings, about the closure of the exhibition and the ensuing protest.

BLACKOUT

OFFICES OF HIDEKI TANAKA OPULENT MINIMALISM MIXED WITH A FEW CHOICE PIECES OF TRADITIONAL ART AND ANTIQUES

It is obvious from the plethora of newspapers spread out across a long dinning table that HIDEKI has been reading the national and international press. YOSHI TANAKA stands behind his father in attendance.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA is seated at the other end of the table.

HIDEKI TANAKA

You are a fossil Nakamura.
A Dinosaurs from the past.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

I was a loyal soldier and protector of our country and Emperor. I have done nothing to be ashamed of.

HIDEKI TANAKA

Grimaces
So you would do it all again.
You would tread the same path?

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Yes and so would my friend, your father/

HIDEKI TANAKA

"Friend" would imply a level of personal intimacy and trust Nakamura.
My father never had any of that for you.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

I see.
I am to be sacrificed!

(CONTINUED)

HIDEKI TANAKA

As soon as a well respected academic uncovered the government military records and orders/

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

You talk like a frightened woman, not like the modern day Samurai that Hideaki raised you to be.

HIDEKI TANAKA

"Life is not so important when forced to choose between life and integrity."

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

You dare quote Yamamoto Tsunetomo* to me!

[*Yamamoto Tsunetomo, also read Yamamoto Jōchō was a samurai of the Saga Domain in Hizen Province under his lord Nabeshima Mitsushige. For thirty years Yamamoto devoted his life to the service of his lord and clan.]

HIDEKI TANAKA

Put away your false indignation Hiroshi.
In 1992 Yoshiaki Yoshimi, uncovered not one, not two but six factual documents and now Hayashi Hirofumi Professor at Kanto Gakuin University unearths fresh evidence. Further implicating the Imperial Army and the use of military funding to disguise the use and activity of Comfort Women.
So you will forgive me, if I find the difference between right and wrong, and seek to always do the right thing and avoid the wrong. It is the only way that a bushido can continue to live.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

I never expected to hear such weak-willed sentiments.

HIDEKI TANAKA

Even our own government findings in 1992-1993 reported that military officials in different locales initiated the process of establishing comfort stations where they were stationed. The military also helped to equip these comfort stations and drew up the regulations for their operations. Are all our ministers and government officials "weak-willed?" Are the paper records found in the numerous colonial outposts all fictitious. Are the reports and testimonies our own soldiers fabrications? Lieutenant-General Ishii Shiro was a brutal psychopath his perverted imagination allowed his obsession with biological and chemical warfare to blossom, encouraged by people who should have known better. I am a loyal and patriotic citizen. I have fought for my country. I also have to accept, for my country my mistakes, my errors in judgement. It matters not what we thought during the war. What matters now is how we conduct ourselves now. What we are prepared to do now and how we will be remembered

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HIDEKI TANAKA (cont'd)

by our children and the world. Experimenting on civilians and prisoners of war is not the way. This is not how I wish to be remembered. There are rules even in times of war and I want not part of this dishonourable behaviour.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

All that I did was for my country. To make my country great. I would do it all again. I am not afraid to be a true patriot/

HIDEKI TANAKA

I find no patriotism in the bottom of a putrid petri dish, the cultivation of deadly pathogens, or the brutality of human experimentation and rape. How did this help the war effort?

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

You cannot deny that you personally benefited from the war.

HIDEKI TANAKA

I readily concede that I personally have benefited in that had it not been for the conflict I would not have existed.

Now if you will please excuse me, I and my son have much to discuss.

NAKAMURA exits

Walk with me.

HIDEKI TANAKA leaves followed by YOSHI TANAKA

SCENE THREE

THE PRESENT

GROUNDS OF TANAKA'S OFFICE

YOSHI and HIDEKI walk through a "typical Japanese garden. Seating themselves on a stone bench. The soothing sound of gently flowing water can be heard underscoring all that happens.

HIDEKI TANAKA

What type of man, do you consider yourself to be?

YOSHI TANAKA

Whatever it is that I have done to displease you I am ready to take responsibility.

HIDEKI TANAKA

You are my son.

(CONTINUED)

YOSHI TANAKA

What of it?

HIDEKI TANAKA

I find this modern trend of endless overt displays of emotion, unnatural.

It does not mean I do not feel -
that I am not deeply proud of you/

YOSHI TANAKA

And the 'classifier' is -

HIDEKI TANAKA

Must there be one?

YOSHI TANAKA

Always -

HIDEKI TANAKA

There are very few things that I regret.
Regrets are for fools.

I do regret that you, your grandfather and I were never able to sit down and talk about your grandmother and your Mother/

YOSHI TANAKA

Who died in order to give me life, like your Mother did with you.

HIDEKI TANAKA

When you have the responsibility of your own son and wife, you will truly appreciate and understand what I am about to tell you.

YOSHI TANAKA

If it concerns the women of The House of Healing then I ask that you give me a second chance.
I am ready to return at a moments notice.

HIDEKI TANAKA

Yoshi be still.

YOSHI TANAKA

Whatever it is tell me.

HIDEKI TANAKA

He stands and turns away from YOSHI
I am not the blood son/

YOSHI TANAKA

I admit, I have made mistakes -
What do you mean you are not the blood son/

HIDEKI TANAKA

My blood is not the same as that of my father's.

(CONTINUED)

Pause

Your grandfather acquired me, when I was a few hours old.

YOSHI TANAKA

What?

Beat

You waited -

You have lied, both of you lied!

HIDEKI TANAKA

Akiko, your grandmother, was unable to have children. At least ones that lived.

Then fate, or so they thought, at the time, intervened. The doctor where your grandfather was stationed/

YOSHI TANAKA

Hiroshi Nakamura?

HIDEKEI TANAKA

Just so.

Nakamura knew that one of the women in the camp was pregnant.

A local family could not be found for the baby.

Knowing my Father's desperate desire for an heir

Nakamura suggested that they take the child.

No one would know. The real mother, would not say a thing. As the Surgeon General he was free to play god with the camp inhabitants

Looks at Yoshi

But for Nakamura I would no doubt be dead and you would never have existed.

YOSHI TANAKA

So your birth mother is Japanese -

HIDEKI TANAKA

There were a good many women in the camp/

YOSHI TANAKA

What am I/

HIDEKI TANAKA

My son/

YOSHI TANAKA

And whose son are you?

HIROSHI NAKAMURA enters

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

A very fortunate one!

Who at this moment, is behaving in a reprehensible manner.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

HIROSHI NAKAMURA (cont'd)

Had it not been for the generosity of your grandfather, I am sure young Tanaka would not be standing here whining!
If you could please excuse us, I have urgent matters of state to discuss with your father.

YOSHI TANAKA stiffly bows to his father and to NAKAMURA and leaves

I warned you!

HIDEKI TANAKA

The mother did not die, did she Hiroshi?

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

The Chinese whore who gave birth to you?
I told the General that the Mother had died in childbirth and the Mother was told by her closest friend that her baby had been still born.
What ever became of her, I wonder.

HIDEKI TANAKA

He scrutinizes NAKAMURA

You know where she is. You have known all along.
And you are afraid and the fact that Hiroshi Nakamura, The Butcher, is afraid, disturbs me deeply.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

When did you become such a liberal!

HIDEKI TANAKA

I have always been "liberal".
Father made peace with the actions of his past many year ago.
He had resigned himself to the day when his past would be called into question.
Can you say the same Nakamura San?

HIDEKI TANAKA exits.

Leaving NAKAMURA ALONE.

YOSHI TANAKA returns, NAKAMURA melts into the background,

YOSHI carries an overnight bag, he places a letter on his father's table, HIDEKI TANAKA re-enters unannounced.

HIDEKI TANAKA (cont'd)

So leaving like a thief in the night?

YOSHI TANAKA

No.

Completing the assignment that was given to me.
Excuse me, Sir, I have a train to catch.

HIDEKI TANAKA

So do I, we will take my car, I insist.

YOSHI TANAKA

Of course you do, after you.

*YOSHI stands asides and allows HIDEKI to exit
he follows a discreet distance behind
HIROSHI NAKAMURA appears from out of the shadows
he takes out a cigarette lights it and smokes.*

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

I couldn't possibly miss this family reunion!

*NAKAMURA exits in the same direction as HIDEKI
AND YOSHI TANAKA*

SCENE FOUR**PRESENT DAY THE HOUSE OF HEALING**

*Some of the women sit in a circle, the
atmosphere is tense.*

QIAO LIAN

You should have told us everything.
The letters, the invitations, everything.

BEIDA

We have nothing left to loose.
People out there, support us, listen to us.
They are willing us on.

JOANNA

Part of me wants to curl up into a ball and roll
away. But that's selfish isn't it?
We have to stand up speak for those who cannot

QIAO LIAN

Toshia?

TOSHIA

Do as you wish.

QIAO LIAN

We push forward with the protests.
We take the truth to them!

TOSHIA

Be certain within yourselves, if you do this, that
you are ready to stare directly into the black heart
of the past.

KIM

Never let the world forget, how often have you said
that?

(CONTINUED)

TOSHIA

The world forget,
I am old, I am tired.
Maybe I want to forget too.
I have been sleeping even less than usual since our
unexpected guests arrived/

QIAO LIAN

Memories such a burden, eh, little Mother,

TOSHIA

What's done is done
I will have to live with it

KIM

Toshia?
What's going on with you two?

QIAO LIAN

Like Toshia said, unwelcome dreams and unwelcome
guests/

BEIDA

Good ridence glad they've gone/

TOSHIA

They'll be back/

MARIA enters in a hurry

MARIA

They're back, climbing the path and there are more of
them!

BLACKOUT

SCENE FIVE**THE PRESENT THE HOUSE OF HEALING THE GARDEN**

*TOSHIA, QIAO LIAN and JOANNA are seated on a
bench in the garden in silence. TANAKA, YOSHI
TANAKA and NAKAMURA are ushered in by BEIDA.*

*BEIDA squats down and watches like a hawk. MARIA
and KIM join the group.*

*The women do not immediately acknowledge the
men's presence much to the annoyance of
NAKAMURA.*

TOSHIA

Perhaps we should open a boarding house and take in
paying guests.

HIDEKI TANAKA

I apologies for this intrusion/

(CONTINUED)

TOSHIA

Yet Tanaka San, here you are, again. uninvited.
What is it that you want from us?

NAKAMURA cannot hide his displeasure
Squirm away NAKAMURA SAN!
But you are in our domain now.

YOSHI starts to protest HIDEKI TANAKA swiftly
interjects and stops him.
Did you think that you would go unnoticed snake!

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Mocking, laughs
You remember!

QIAO LIAN

You cannot hide behind old age and grey hair!

JOANNA

The eyes never change/

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

The White Horse speaks!

Laughing
Personally I never did understand the preference for
white meat.

KIM is about to make a move MARIA and BEIDA hold
onto her

QIAO LIAN

Slowly QIAO LIAN fits the pieces together.
It was always the baby -

NAKAMURA slow hand-claps

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

If only you had been able to show restraint
I had such plans for you and the baby
Such a pity that you allowed that oaf of a soldier to
touch you -

Sighs

But that's what one gets for wasting time and
resources on a couple of low life whores.

NAKAMURA turns and starts to leave

QIAO LIAN

Don't you turn your back on me, Butcher!

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Still walking away
Tsk, tsk!
This is how you repay my kindness?

NAKAMURA turns to face QIAO LIAN.
I kept you and your little Mother safe!
You owe your very existence to me!

NAKAMURA grabs QIAO LIAN he squeezes her face and in one seamless movement has wrapped his arm around her neck. Choking her. The speed at which he engineers this movement takes everyone by surprise. TOSHIA, KIM AND BEIDA make a move but are stopped in their tracks as NAKAMURA tightens his grip on QIAO LIAN.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA (cont'd)

What can you do sick old women of the East?

QIAO LIAN

Gasping for breath in desperation.
This!

Initially NAKAMURA looks puzzled. The he sees the dagger that QIAO LIAN has lodged in his gut.

NAKAMURA loosens his grip on QIAO LIAN. TOSHIA seizes the opportunity to pull her away from NAKAMURA. As TOSHIA pulls QIAO LIAN away from NAKAMURA's grasp QIAO LIAN winces. NAKAMURA catches QIAO LIAN's eye.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

One bad deed deserves another!

NAKAMURA leaves. Unsteady on his feet. YOSHI tries to assist NAKAMURA. He pushes him away.

HIROSHI NAKAMURA

Keep your stinking hands away from me!

NAKAMURA staggers off.

HIDEKI TANAKA

This is-
Most regrettable

QIAO LIAN

To TOSHIA
Take me in, please -

TOSHIA

Can you forgive me/

QIAO LIAN

Just get me inside -

TOSHIA

Qiao Lian . . ?

QIAO LIAN shows TOSHIA the wound
You must excuse us Tanaka San, Qiao Lian needs to rest. Too much excitement is not good for her blood pressure.

TOSHIA helps QIAO LIAN into the house. The other women get up as if to accompany them, TOSHIA gestures for them to remain where they are.

YOSHI TANAKA

She called Nakamura, "The Butcher."

HIDEKI TANAKA

Now is not the time.

YOSHI TANAKA

It is never the time Father with you.
I am no longer a child.

TOSHIA reappears on her own. YOSHI approaches TOSHIA as she joins the other women and bows deeply.

I want to know.

TOSHIA

In this regard your Father is right, now is not the time.

HIDEKI TANAKA lets out an audible sigh of relief
Give me an hour, or so, we must tend to Qiao Lian.
Return here, to our garden.
Then you can ask your questions and receive answers.

YOSHI is about to leave
Make sure your Father comes with you.

YOSHI and HIDEKI protest
You have questions Yoshi Tanaka which concern not just you but your father.

To HIDEKI TANAKA
This day has always been on our event horizon.
Go and look for your Nakamura.

HIDEKI TANAKA

Why?

(CONTINUED)

TOSHIA

He will need medical attention
 Something which we might find hard to administer.

HIDEKI TANAKA looks at the women almost a mirror image of the earlier photographs of The Comfort Women worn out as they rest uncomfortably before being moved on.

Excuse me, we really must attend to Qiao Lian.

TOSHIA and the women go inside the House of Healing.

YOSHI and TANAKA are left outside.

YOSHI TANAKA

At college there were rumours.
 Dreadful stories, atrocities carried out during the war on Chinese civilians and other peoples in occupied territories.
 Photographs of human experimentation.
 Like most of my classmates, I thought these were fakes.

YOSHI turns his back on TANAKA and exits.

HIDEKI TANAKA is left speechless and alone.

BLACKOUT

SCENE SIX**THE PRESENT THE HOUSE OF HEALING THE GARDEN**

*QIAO LIAN is resting on a make shift "day bed" she is dying well.
 The other women sit close by. Occupying themselves, reading, sewing, knitting.*

TOSHIA is sits in a chair next to QIAO LIAN. Her eyes closed, her hands lightly folded on her lap.

YOSHI and HIDEKI TANAKA enter. They approach, BEIDA and MARIA get and place chairs forming a triangle with TOSHIA at the point. They invite the men to be seated.

*YOSHI and HIDEKI sit.
 There is an air of formality.
 YOSHI fidgets.
 HIDEKI TANAKA sits in silence, waiting.*

TOSHIA

"Live in harmony with the way of Great Nature,
 Moving with its changes"*

*Shinto Norito: A Book of Prayers

(CONTINUED)

HIDEKI TANAKA

"North, north-east, east, south-east South, south west, west, north west - From all corners of universe,"**

** SHINTO NORITO: A BOOK OF PRAYERS

TOSHIA

"Take away all impurities of myself," ***

*** Shinto Norito: A Book of Prayers

HIDEKI TANAKA

"My home, and the world, Teach me to live with a pure and sincere heart. Grant that I stay on the path of sincerity and truth." ****

**** SHINTO NORITO: A BOOK OF PRAYERS

SILENCE

QIAO LIAN moves

TOSHIA

Had a pleasant nap did we?

QIAO LIAN and TOSHIA laugh

QIAO LIAN

What's the prognosis, older sister?

TOSHIA

Nakamura's resourcefulness was matched only by his spite.
Little one you have nothing to fear from The Butcher.

HIDEKI TANAKA

Nakamura is dead.

YOSHI TANAKA

What?

TOSHIA

He sought solace in the old tradition of Seppuku.

YOSHI TANAKA

Could it have anything/

HIDEKI TANAKA

Tragic.

QIAO LIAN

Breathless

Nakamura was not the only who knew how to wield a blade

(CONTINUED)

HIDEKI TANAKA

Ask your questions so that we can leave and return the body of our countryman to his home.

YOSHI TANAKA

To Toshia
You know, knew Hiroshi Nakamura

TOSHIA

To QIAO LIAN
Perhaps you should answer

QIAO LIAN

I was thirteen when I was transferred to a medical research facility in Northern China. Every new inmate to the camp was extensively and intimately examined by The Surgeon General, Hiroshi Nakamura, in front of the Camp commander General Hideaki Tanaka and other high ranking officers.

YOSHI TANAKA

Disgusting!

HIDEKI TANAKA

Standing
You asked for answers, have the courtesy to accept what you hear.

YOSHI TANAKA

You cannot tell me what to do!

HIDEKI TANAKA

As a senior Kokumu daijin [minister of state] you have pledged to take instruction from me. Do you now renege upon your pledge?

YOSHI TANAKA

With reluctance.
No Sir!

HIDEKI TANAKA

Apologies

He bows and seats himself.

QIAO LIAN

What we endured in those camps was unspeakable. But we found ways to survive, to live on.

TOSHIA

What of the people who were the instruments and perpetrators of our pain?

HIDEKI TANAKA

My father made his peace.

TOSHIA

So why are you seated here, now?

SILENCE HIDEKI remains seated with his head bowed.

I found her

indicates QIAO LIAN huddled in an outhouse.

I trained her to heal, to mend, to be useful, to know the difference between a herbal cure and nature's poisons - Qiao Lian became pregnant.

If it was a girl it would be "disposed" of.

It was a boy, so Nakamura had it removed from her, he ordered me to take the boy from her and bring it to him so he could offer the baby to a family that had no children.

QIAO LIAN

Nakamura said my son was still born.

TOSHIA

I thought nothing of it, babies died, or were taken and dumped into a pit on a regular basis.

Comfort Women who had babies interfered with their duties.

I later learnt that General TANAKA has fathered a son, but tragically lost his wife during child birth.

HIDEKI TANAKA

My grandmother had tried for many years.

QIAO LIAN

In the back of my heart I knew that my son was alive.

QIAO LIAN and TOSHIA turns their eyes to HIDEKI TANAKA.

The child Nakamura gave to General Hideaki Tanaka, was my supposed still born son.

YOSHI TANAKA

Laughs
But you're Chinese

Beat

HIDEKI TANAKA

Yoshi!

YOSHI TANAKA

Is anything in my life true?

HIDEKI TANAKA

Control yourself!

YOSHI TANAKA

Grandfather my my hero. Someone I admired, looked up to and aspired to be like -

HIDEKI TANAKA gets up and walks towards Yoshi his arms open in a conciliatory manner.

YOSHI gets up with contained determination and embraces TANAKA with one arm. With the other he pulls out a short Bamboo Tanto [a short dagger] YOSHI plunges the dagger into TANAKA twists and removes in one fluid motion. The act is done before anyone has had time to understand what is/has happened.

Just as my grandfather taught me, Father.

YOSHI bows to the Women

Please excuse me this has been a most trying time for me.

YOSHI exits TANAKA slumps onto the chair.

QIAO LIAN

My son!

TOSHIA

Sir, look at me.

TOSHIA starts to try and tend to the wound Saint or sinner, blood is just as red, just as messy.

TANAKA stops her.

HIDEKI TANAKA

Stop. This pointless.

speaking to QIAO LIAN

He loved me.

I was his son.

I am truly sorry for your loss, your pain.

That I will never have the opportunity to know you.

HIDEKI struggles to main upright as he bleeds out.

QIAO LIAN

I dreamt of holding my son.

Feeling the warmth of my flesh and my blood coursing through another living being.

Feeling your presence in my hands, looking into your eyes and seeing a little of myself -

(CONTINUED)

HIDEKI TANAKA

And what do you see?

QIAO LIAN

Nothing but the empty eyes of a stranger.

BLACKOUT

SCENE SEVEN**THE PRESENT DAY THE HOUSE OF HEALING**

The women are seated on the balconies outside the windows, with the exception of QIAO LIAN who is no longer there.

TOSHIA sit in a chair near the big black door.

RADIO ANNOUNCER

International news -

Now the shock announcement of the sudden death of two Japan's most senior and high profile politicians, HIDEKI TANAKA son of the decorated war veteran, HIDEAKI TANAKA, and The former Surgeon General HIROSHI NAKAMURA sends shock waves through the country.

It is thought though not confirmed that HIDEKI TANAKA was in the midst of delicate negotiations surrounding the controversial subject of Comfort Women. Recently the hitherto silent occasional protests by a small group of women claiming to be Comfort Women survivors had become increasingly more frequent and vocal much to the embarrassment and concern of many in minsters and members of the general public. It is understood that Hideki Tanaka may have suffered from a fatal heart attack.

There is a mummer from the women

No mystery surrounds the death of HIROSHI NAKAMURA. Who took his life by performing the ancient act of Seppuku. A controversial figure to the end. A right-wing hard line traditionalist. Rumours had persisted concerning Nakamura's personal involvement with the medical experiments conducted on civilians in Northern China during world war II.

The radio broadcast fades out and the lights begin to slowly dim.

EPILOGUE

TOSHIA sits on a chair the surrounding space in darkness. She alone is illuminated from above by a single spot.

(CONTINUED)

TOSHIA

Each year our numbers dwindle there is one less of us to remember, one less of us to tell our stories.

The lights in the windows go out one by one and the women disappear leaving only TOSHIA.
We leave our stories, our memories, in your hands.

I leave you with these words from the American/Spanish philosopher George Sataynan.

"Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it."

The light slowly dims on TOSHIA as she sits on her chair hands in her lap.

A projection shows a picture of the Comfort Woman statue as it is projected onto TOSHIA.

The Light dims on TOSHIA until she disappears and all we are left with is the projection of the Comfort Woman statue. From above a gentle shower of cherry blossom and poppy petals flutter to the ground as the last of the petals flutter to the ground the light fades to black.

THE END