

# Comfort

## Educator Study Guide



RED SNOW COLLECTIVE PRESENTS

# 慰界

# Comfort

A PLAY WRITTEN BY DIANA TSO

A DECLARATION OF LOVE . A STORY ABOUT RESILIENCE . INSPIRED BY THE 'COMFORT WOMEN'

DIRECTION WILLIAM YONG MUSIC CONSTANTINE CARAVASSILIS  
LIGHTING DESIGN REBECCA PICHERACK COSTUME DESIGN ERIKA CHONG SCENIC DESIGN WILLIAM YONG  
SET CONSTRUCTION JAMES KENDAL PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT A. J. MORRA VIDEOGRAPHER DARREN BRYANT  
CAST MEMBERS VANIA CHAN, PHOEBE HU, JEN HUM, VICKI KIM,  
OLIVER KOOSATIRA, TIMOTHY NG, JEFF YUNG  
MUSICIANS PATTY CHAN, CATHY NOSATY, BRANDON MIGUEL VALDIVIA

**WORLD PREMIERE**  
NOVEMBER 26 TO DECEMBER 10, 2016  
TUESDAYS TO SATURDAYS @ 8PM  
+ SATURDAYS MATINEES @ 2PM  
PREVIEW NOVEMBER 24 @ 8PM  
GALA PERFORMANCE NOVEMBER 25 @ 8PM

AKI STUDIO THEATRE - NATIVE EARTH PERFORMING ARTS  
585 DUNDAS STREET EAST, TORONTO

GENERAL ADMISSION \$28  
ARTS-WORKERS \$20 • STUDENTS \$15  
PREVIEW \$15  
TUESDAYS PAY-WHAT-YOU-CAN

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[WWW.REDSNOWCOLLECTIVE.CA](http://WWW.REDSNOWCOLLECTIVE.CA)

RED SNOW COLLECTIVE

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PHOTOGRAPHY BY DANIELA KATZ • GRAPHIC DESIGN BY ELYSHA POTRIER

Based on the play *Comfort* by Diana Tso  
Running November 26<sup>th</sup> to December 10<sup>th</sup> 2016  
Student Matinees Monday November 28<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday, November 30<sup>th</sup>, Monday  
December 5<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday December 7<sup>th</sup>, 11:00am

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## Play Information

<i>Playwright</i>	Diana Tso
<i>Director</i>	William Yong
<i>Music Composer</i>	Constantine Caravassilis
<i>Lighting Design</i>	Rebecca Picherack
<i>Scenic Design</i>	William Yong
<i>Costume Design</i>	Erika Chong
<i>Photographer</i>	Dahlia Katz
<i>Videographer</i>	Darren Byrant
<i>Cast</i>	<i>Musicians</i>
Vania Chan	Patty Chan
Phoebe Hu	Cathy Nosaty
Jen Hum	Brandon Miguel Valdivia
Vicki Kim	
Oliver Koomsatira	
Timothy Ng	
Jeff Yung	

*Venue:* Aki Studio Theatre (Daniels Spectrum), 585 Dundas Street East  
School shows: Contact Diana Tso at [redsnowcollective@gmail.com](mailto:redsnowcollective@gmail.com)

**Post-show workshops** are available in the theatre building or classroom. Professional artist educators (including the playwright, director, some of the actors and musicians) will provide 75-minute workshops connected to themes in the play using one or a combination of the following: theatre, creative writing, movement, dance, music.

\$15 per student - Performance + Post-show talk  
\$30 per student - Performance + Post-show talk + Art workshop led by artists in education (drama, writing, dance, music)

**Intended Grades:** Grades 9-12

**Curriculum Connections**

*The Arts:* Dramatic Arts Grades 9-12, Dance Grades 9-12, Music Grades 9-12

*English:* Grades 9-12, English as a Second Language and Literacy Development

*History and Geography:* Grade 10 Canadian History Since WWI, Grade 11 Canadian and World Issues, Grade 11 World History Since 1900, Grade 12 World History: The West and the World

*Equity Studies:* Grade 11 Gender Studies, Grade 11 Equity, Diversity and Social Justice, Grade 12 Equity and Social Justice: From Theory to Practice, Grade 12 World Cultures

**Major Themes and Issues:** Sexual violence against women; the oppression of women; the impact of war; the power of love, storytelling, and the arts; historical memory and commemoration; the erasure of women’s history.

**Advisory Warnings:** Staged violence, sexual abuse, infanticide, attempted suicide. See Pre-show Activity ‘Advice for Dealing with Sensitive Subject Matter in the Classroom’ for more.



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*Photography by Vince Ha*

Actors left to right: Vania Chan, Vicki Kim, Phoebe Hu, Jen Hum

## Synopsis of *Comfort*

Conceived and written by Diana Tso

*Comfort* is a love story between two youth, set in 1937 Nanjing, China. Dan Feng (Red Phoenix) is a silk merchant's daughter and Ping Yang (Peaceful Ocean), an orphan who makes a living as a fisherman. Her dream is to become a writer and his is to have a family. Ping Yang grows up with his ear glued to the walls of the opera house and his eyes on one young woman who shares the passion for *Butterfly Lovers*, an epic love story and its power of redemption. Dan Feng is charmed by the singing fisherman and offers him hope of education out of poverty. Their friendship is forbidden because of social class differences. They meet secretly at an abandoned garden, sharing their dreams and playing scenes from their beloved opera; she plays the bride and he the scholar. Dire news of Dan Feng's matched marriage sends her fleeing to Shanghai in Summer 1937 to help with the war efforts against Japan. Unbeknownst to her, Ping Yang's love for her goes beyond friendship, which impassions him to find a way to follow her and protect her in any way he can. Ping works as a coolie laborer, first hauling luggage for the wealthy who flee Nanjing as Japan's army approaches, and, later, hauling supplies and loot for the Japanese military.

In Shanghai, Ping discovers Dan Feng's imprisonment in a comfort house. While a coolie labourer for the Japanese military Ping Yang finds ways to communicate with Dan Feng while he racks his brain, thinking of how to rescue her, which is next to impossible. When Dan Feng sings the opera of the *Butterfly Lovers* to her captors, it is really directed to Ping Yang, who she hopes to see again if she survives. He sings quietly in response to her songs, knowing the horrors of what the soldiers are doing to the women in the comfort house. Dan Feng befriends a Korean comfort woman, Nabi, who replaces some of the comfort women who have died. The women are given Japanese names and not permitted to speak their native language. Dan Feng eventually becomes pregnant by a Japanese officer, and she attempts suicide with Nabi at her side. By the end of the war, she gives birth and is reunited with Ping Yang, who vows to love the child as his own. The play explores the meaning of comfort in war and how one survives the horrors of violence and human degradation, shining light on the resilience of the human spirit. The theatre of the living honors the lives of the dead and those who suffer in the present, creating a space for us to heal through the power of art and to find ways to be the change.

## Synopsis of *Butterfly Lovers*

The earliest record of this legend can be traced back to the late Tang Dynasty in *Shidao Sifan Zhi* (十道四蕃志), and authorship is attributed to Liang Zaiyan (梁載言). In the tale, Zhu Yingtai was the ninth child and only daughter of the Zhu family. Her dream was to go to school. She convinced her father of her clever plan to disguise herself as a boy to go to school in Hangzhou. Her father agreed. On her way to Hangzhou, she meets Liang Shanbo, a fellow student who will study at the same school. They share much in common, like the belief that women should have the right to the same education as men do. They become sworn brothers. During their studies, Yingtai falls in love with Shanbo and vows to reveal her love and marry him. After three years, Yingtai receives a letter from her father to return home. She reveals her secret to the schoolmaster's wife and asks her to be their matchmaker, giving her a jade butterfly pendant to give to Shanbo as a betrothal gift. As Shanbo sends her off, Yingtai attempts to reveal to him her true identity, but he is still oblivious. She remarks on the mandarin ducks always swimming in pairs like a married couple never to part. She remarks how the two of them are like the lovers, Cowherd and Weaver Girl, crossing the Milky Way, as Shanbo helps her across the bridge. Finally, Yingtai promises to be the matchmaker between Shanbo and her non-existent "twin-sister". When Shanbo graduates, he is elated to finally meet Yingtai's "sister" - who is really Yingtai herself, no longer disguised as a man - and to eventually marry her. Upon his visit, he finds out Yingtai's identity and is devastated to find that she is already betrothed to the son of the Ma family. Shanbo dies of a broken heart. Yingtai begs her father to allow her to visit Shanbo's grave on the way to her wedding. As Yingtai mourns at his grave, the winds whirl, thunder and lightning strike the earth, and Shanbo's grave opens. Yingtai jumps into the grave to be united with Shanbo. The next morning two butterflies fly from the tombstone. The lovers are free and together forever.

# Pre-show Questions and Activities

## Pre-show Discussion Questions

- What do you know about the so-called ‘comfort women’ of WWII?
- What impact does war have on people who are not directly involved in fighting, specifically women and children?
- How have women been oppressed throughout history? During times of war? In the world today?
- What do we learn about WWII in history books and classes? Which parts of the story are included, and whose voices are missing?
- Why is it important to learn about history outside of the Western world, such as places like Asia?
- How can art forms such as theatre be used as a vehicle for telling forgotten histories? For raising awareness about issues such as violence against women?
- Why is it important to tell these stories and what can we learn from them?
- What do we know about art forms such as theatre in other parts of the world? What would we like to know?
- How can we advocate for peace in the world today?
- How can we combat violence against women?

## Advice for Dealing with Sensitive Subject Matter in the Classroom

When taking students to see live theatre that tackles sensitive subject matter, it is important to prepare them for what they will see and debrief the experience. The following tips are useful for getting students prepared to see *Comfort*:

- Give students information about the play, such as the advisory warnings and some of its content. If necessary, you can alert them to specific scenes and details prior to the show.
- Give students background on the issues; share information about comfort women (see Appendix B Comfort Women Resource and Timeline), sexual slavery during times of war, and violence against women (see Resource List). Find reputable sources of information and always give students the option to ‘opt out’ if they find the material too difficult.
- Set up class norms for discussing sensitive subject matter: the right to ‘pass’, the use of trigger warnings, using ‘I’ statements to express feelings and opinions, and open permission to leave the room and take time for oneself.
- Use experts to help give context to the play, such as workers in gender-based violence prevention, rape crisis centres, and counselors.

## Research Activities

Before seeing the play, conduct research on topics to provide students with context. This lesson could be teacher-led or could be a group project in which students independently research and present their findings on any or all of the following topics:

- WWII and the Asian-Pacific war
- The Rape of Nanjing
- Comfort women
- Chinese Opera traditions
- The practice of foot binding in Asia

- Confucianism
- Symbolism in different cultures, such as Phoenix, Moon, and Dragon

### **Exploring Cultural Rituals**

Lead a discussion and/or research rituals in various cultures, exploring how these rituals might play a role in *Comfort*. For example:

- Define the term ‘ritual’ and brainstorm a list of examples of rituals in different cultures; or, assign students rituals to research and present
- Encourage students to share rituals from their own backgrounds, such as practices for special ceremonies or holidays
- Classify rituals according to type. For example, what are rituals associated with birth, marriage, death? How do these vary from culture to culture?
- Research rituals specific to China, such as hair-combing, coming-of-age, birth and death rituals
- Invite students to create ritual presentations through movement, drama, and music

### **Butterfly Lovers Activities**

Share with students the ‘origin story’ of the *Butterfly Lovers*, on which *Comfort* is loosely based. Use the story as the basis for activities such as:

- Summarizing the story through movement. Break the story into parts and assign one part to each group to dramatize for the class. They may add props, music, narration, and/or ritualistic movement. Present the parts in order to tell the story.
- Role play or script a conversation between characters in the story, such as Yingtai trying to persuade her parents to let her attend school, Shanbo and Yingtai’s first meeting, or the moment Yingtai reveals her true identity to her true love.
- Write in role as one of the lovers; for example, Yingtai telling her secret to Shanbo in the form of a letter. Consider making butterflies out of art materials and incorporating this writing into the artistic piece.
- *Butterfly Lovers* is one of China’s most famous stories, and became the basis for one of China’s most renowned operas. Watch clips of the opera and explore elements of Chinese opera as a class (see Resource List).
- Dramatize scenes from the story using some of the elements of Chinese opera, or have students research performance styles from non-Western theatre traditions.
- Find parallels between the *Butterfly Lovers* and William Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Use a t-chart to find similarities and differences between the stories.
- Discuss the theme of ‘forbidden love’ and why it continues to be so fascinating to theatre audiences. Brainstorm a list of books, plays, and films that explore this theme, or have students create an original story of their own.
- Research and debate the issue of girls’ education around the world. Why were women not permitted to attend school in so many cultures? Where is this still happening today? What can be done to improve women’s access to education? (See the documentary *Girl Rising* in the Resource List for more).

# Post-show Questions and Activities

## Post-show Discussion Questions

- How is colour used throughout the play? Why does it move from colour in Act 1 to black and white in Act 2?
- How is Ping Yang and Dan Feng's relationship similar to the story of Butterfly Lovers? How does their play-acting of the story in Act 1 foreshadow what happens to them in Act 2 of the play?
- What does Dan Feng aspire to be, and how does being a woman stand in the way of what she wants?
- What does she mean when she says "It was not my choice to be born a daughter to be raised as a pretty bird in a cage to be bartered" and "Books are full of useless words if women can never be scholars"?
- Why are Dan Feng's parents planning her marriage? Why can she not marry Ping Yang, the man she loves?
- Why does Dan Feng disguise herself as a man and run away at the end of Act 1?
- What major event happens between Acts 1 and Act 2? What effect does this have on Dan Feng and Ping Yang's friendship?
- What is a comfort house?
- Why would comfort women be forbidden from speaking their own languages?
- What do the laying of the stones symbolize? What other rituals are seen throughout the play?
- What symbols from the play stand out to you? How are music, movement, and visuals used to tell the story?
- What is the role of the Moon in the play, and how might it be read as a symbol?
- Why does Mei Ling take her own baby's life?
- What is symbolic about the meaning of Dan Feng's name, Red Phoenix, and Nabi's name, Butterfly?
- How do the characters find comfort for themselves during the war? i.e. Dan Feng, Ping Yang, Nabi, Mei Ling, the Officer
- How is the term "comfort women" ironic, in light of the abuse they suffered?
- How does the play show atrocities of war and their affect on people? What message do you think it is trying to send about this issue?
- Brainstorm the many ways the comfort women try to "record" their experiences in the play (i.e. writing their names, pictures, poetry). Why is it important for the women to do this? How does it relate to recording and remembering history?
- What does final image of the play suggest about how Ping Yang feels about baby? About the future of Dan Feng and Ping Yang?

## **Inquiry-based Learning: Commemoration and Remembrance Activity**

Commemoration is defined as: *to exist or be done in order to remind people of (an important event or person from the past); to do something special in order to remember and honor (an important event or person from the past).*

In *Comfort*, Dan Feng states “I must keep writing poems in my head to record everything, to remember this is real, we will survive and they will pay for every drop of blood. The war must end one day. But will I be alive to write our story.”

Lead a discussion about historical commemoration and the importance of survivor stories. **Teacher prompts:** How and why do we remember events that have happened in the past? Who decides what gets commemorated and how? Why are some events recognized and remembered, while others are erased?

Use students’ answers for inquiry-based learning into historical remembrance, which might include:

- Researching examples of commemoration of WWII in various parts of the world
- Researching the ongoing struggle for recognition of comfort women’s suffering from the Japanese government (see the film *The Apology* as well as articles and websites in the Resource List).
- Reading testimonials of comfort women
- Making a case for why and how comfort women should be remembered (a speech to the UN, a design pitch for a statue or memorial)

**Research or Field Trip Activity:** Visit or read about memorials in and around your community; for example, the relic of the Korean comfort woman statue at Toronto’s Korean Cultural Centre, and/or the memorial to victims of the Montreal Massacre at Victoria College, University of Toronto. Have students discuss issues around the representation of female victims of violence, and/or make suggestions of new memorials that should be created based on other events in history.



### ***The Apology and Social Activism***

Either before or after seeing *Comfort*, watch the National Film Board documentary, *The Apology* (2016), directed by Tiffany Hsiung, which explores the social activism of survivors, who have petitioned the Japanese government for an apology for former comfort women.



Possible follow-up activities might include:

- Researching recent news about the ongoing quest for an official apology
- A debrief discussion of the film, making direct connections to the play *Comfort*
- Research into the survivor stories of comfort women (see Resource List)
- Create a social activism campaign to help in the fight for recognition of this event, such as a letter-writing campaign or petition
- Writing letters to the Grandmothers and/or filmmaker sharing their personal reactions to the film

### **Docudrama on Events of World War II**

*Docudrama* is a theatre form that dramatizes events from history using dramatic conventions such as tableaux, monologues, scenes, and movement. Break students into groups and invite each group to choose an event from WWII as the basis for their own original docudrama presentation. Provide students access to primary research materials to use for their creations. Possible topics might include:

- Comfort Women
- Pearl Harbour
- The Holocaust
- The Rise of the Nazi Party
- The Persecution of Gays and Lesbians (The Pink Triangle)
- Concentration Camps
- Japanese Internment
- The Atomic Bomb

### **Poetry and Songwriting Activities**

The play *Comfort* uses poetry and music to help convey the story and characters' emotions. Provide students with copies of one of these poems (see Appendix C) to use for any or all of the following activities:

- Set the poem to original music of your own and perform it for the class
- Write your own poem in the style of the poetry in *Comfort*, paying specific attention to language use, imagery, and symbols
- Create a choral reading of the poems, using movement to accentuate the meaning of the piece

### **Creative Response Choice Board**

As an alternative to the traditional play review assignment, give students the **Creative Response Choice Board** on the following page, and ask them to choose the way in which they would like to respond to the play. These assignments could also be shared with the class through presentations or informal group sharing.

## Creative Response Choice Board

<p><b>Artistic Response</b></p> <p>Create an original work of art that connects to a specific scene or image in the play. This piece could be a choreographic dance sequence, a painting or sculpture, or a musical composition.</p> <p>Include an artist's statement explaining your reasons for creating this piece, why you chose the medium you did to explore the play, and what you were hoping to accomplish through your work.</p>	<p><b>Creative Writing</b></p> <p>Write an original composition inspired by the play. This piece could be a monologue written in role from one character's perspective, a new scene, or a series of poems.</p> <p>With your writing piece, include a one-paragraph explanation of why you decided to write your original composition, and how it connects to the play.</p>	<p><b>Play Proposal</b></p> <p>Propose an idea for a new play that addresses one of the social or historical issues raised in the play <i>Comfort</i>. For example, your play could tell another story set during WWII, or address violence against women in contemporary society.</p> <p>In your proposal give a brief synopsis, character and setting descriptions, and describe some of the play's important themes and issues.</p>
<p><b>Research and Investigation</b></p> <p>Choose one topic from the play to research in more depth, such as Chinese opera, foot binding, the Japanese Imperial Army's involvement in WWII, or the ongoing activism of surviving comfort women today.</p> <p>Summarize your findings in a short report, Prezi or Powerpoint presentation, TED Talk, or bristol board display.</p>	<p><i>Instructions: Choose one of the following creative options for your response to the play <i>Comfort</i>.</i></p>	<p><b>Production Book</b></p> <p>Imagine that you were to create your own production of <i>Comfort</i>.</p> <p>Create a production book that includes some of the following for your show: set and costume designs, props, rehearsal schedule, notes on the script and characters, lighting and sound cues, etc.</p>
<p><b>Letter to Cast and Crew</b></p> <p>Write a letter to the cast and crew of <i>Comfort</i>. In your letter, describe your response to the show, giving specific details to back up your point of view.</p> <p>Include ten questions you would like to ask them about the process of producing the show.</p>	<p><b>Adaptation</b></p> <p>Adapt a scene from <i>Comfort</i> into another medium, such as a short story, poem, film, or comic.</p> <p>Include a one-paragraph statement that explains why you chose this scene to adapt and what you are trying to express or highlight in your adaptation.</p>	<p><b>Play Review</b></p> <p>Write a review of <i>Comfort</i> that includes your own opinion of the production.</p> <p>Format your review into a newspaper style article, including a visual, headline, and ranking of your plays (e.g. three stars out of five, two thumbs up).</p>

## Appendix A: Resource List

### Books

Tso, Diana (2016). *Comfort*. Playwrights Guild of Canada.

\*Chang, Iris (2012). *The Rape of Nanking, the Forgotten Holocaust of World War II*. Basic Books.

Galang, Evelina (2013). *Angel de la Luna and the 5<sup>th</sup> Glorious Mystery*. Coffee House Press.

Harmsen, Peter (2015). *Nanking 1937 and Shanghai 1937*. Casemate.

Hicks, George (1997). *Japan's Brutal Regime of Enforced Prostitution in the Second World War*. WW Norton.

Hu, Hua-Ling (2010). *The Undaunted Women of Nanking: The Wartime Diaries of Minnie Vautrin and Tsen Shui-fang*. Southern Illinois University Press.

Keller, Nora Okja Keller (1998). *Comfort Women: A Novel*. Penguin Books.

\*Lee, Jeff Jongbo (2015). *Can You Hear Us? The Untold Narratives of Comfort Women*. Gil-Job-Ie Media. Alpha Education.

\*Matsuoka, Tamaki (2015). *Torn Memories of Nanjing, Testimonies of Japanese War Veterans and Chinese Survivors of the Nanjing Massacre*. Alpha Education.

Pilzer, Joshua (2012). *Hearts of Pine, Songs in the Lives of Three Korean Survivors of the Japanese "Comfort Women"*. Oxford University Press.

\*Qiu, Peipei with Su Zhiliang and Chen Lifei (2014). *Chinese Comfort Women, Testimonies from Imperial Japan's Sex Slaves*. Alpha Education.

Rabe, John (2002). *The Good Man of Nanking: The Diaries of John Rabe*. Vintage.

Ruff-O'Herne, Jan (2011). *Fifty Years of Silence: Extraordinary Memoir of a War Rape Survivor*. Ebook. RHA eBooks Adult

Soh, C. Sarah (2009). *The Comfort Women: Sexual Violence and Postcolonial Memory in Korea and Japan*, C. University of Chicago Press.

Van Der Wal, Tetske T (2010). *I thought you should know: A memoir*. Xlibris Corporation.

\*Note: These books are available for sale at ALPHA Education  
<http://www.alphaeducation.org> (416) 299-0111

## Video

### *Documentaries and Feature Films*

*The Apology* (2016), directed by Tiffany Hsiung, National Film Board of Canada.

<https://www.nfb.ca/film/apology/>

*Girl Rising* (2013), directed by Richard E. Rogers, The Documentary Group.

<http://girlrising.com/>

*City of Life and Death* (2011), directed by Lu Chuan, Kino Lorber Films.

*Nanking* (2007), directed by Bill Guttentag and Dan Sturman with Woody Harrelson; mixed with live footage of survivor testimonies. HBO Documentary Films.

*Letters from Iwo Jima* (2007), directed by Clint Eastwood (from Japanese soldier perspective) companion film to *Flags of our Fathers* (from American soldier perspective). Dreamworks.

Panel hosted by the Women's Human Rights Education Institute connecting survivors and activists on Japanese military sexual slavery during WWII with parallel contexts of colonial and militarized sexual violence against women.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VhfCW9RXGuA>

### *Butterfly Lovers Links*

A popular version of the Butterfly Lovers, this video is a more playful pop version of the story in comparison to traditional Chinese Opera.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCA5ukcIrSc>

A more traditional version of the Chinese Opera; the melody is less 'catchy' and may be more difficult for students to learn.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8x7TASY8fjA>

## Websites

Teaching Historical Thinking: The Critical Thinking Consortium.

<https://tc2.ca/history.php>

What is Historical Thinking? Teaching History.

<http://teachinghistory.org/historical-thinking-intro>

ALPHA Education. A Canadian not-for-profit organization that promotes the learning and critical understanding of the history of WWII in Asia and the atrocities of war, to affirm the values of justice, peace and reconciliation from a humanity perspective.

<http://www.alphaeducation.org/>

ALPHA Teacher Resources Guide

<http://www.alphaeducation.org/#!teacher-resource-guide/cq57>

Information on Japanese Military Sexual Slavery and The Apology Campaign.

<http://learnwhr.org/comfort-women/>

Website for the Korean Council for the Women Drafted for Military Sexual Slavery by Japan.

<https://www.womenandwar.net>

The 100 million signatures campaign.

[https://www.womenandwar.net/contents/custom/campaign/en/campaign.nx?page\\_str\\_menu=230401](https://www.womenandwar.net/contents/custom/campaign/en/campaign.nx?page_str_menu=230401)

Statement by the UN Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice in response to WHRI-Korean Council Communication.

<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=17209&LangID=E>

*Japan Times* article ‘Statues honoring Korean, Chinese ‘comfort women’ erected in Seoul, 29 October 2015.

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2015/10/29/national/politics-diplomacy/statues-honoring-korean-chinese-comfort-women-erected-in-seoul/#.V6DdOhQT9Ec>

Comfort Women Monuments Around the World.

[http://peace.maripo.com/p\\_comfort\\_women.htm](http://peace.maripo.com/p_comfort_women.htm)

Case Study of the Nanjing Massacre.

[http://www.gendercide.org/case\\_nanking.html](http://www.gendercide.org/case_nanking.html)

Facing History and Ourselves: The Nanjing Atrocities.

<https://www.facinghistory.org/nanjing-atrocities>

I’m the Evidence: E-Museum for the Victims of Japanese Military Sexual Slavery.

<http://www.actionforpeace.net/>

The Pacific War Online Encyclopedia.

[http://pwencycl.kgbudge.com/P/r/Prisoners\\_Of\\_War.htm](http://pwencycl.kgbudge.com/P/r/Prisoners_Of_War.htm)

The Asia-Pacific Journal, Imperialism and WWII by Richard J. Smethurst

<http://apjpf.org/2012/10/37/Richard-J.-Smethurst/3825/article.html>

**Appendix B**  
**Comfort Women Resource**  
**ALPHA Education**

<http://www.alphaeducation.org/>

During the years of the Asia-Pacific War, the Imperial Japanese Army mobilized more than 200,000 women from across Asia into a military sexual slavery system. Those women coming from distinct culture, identity, heritage, and memory were exploited as sex slaves and have been euphemistically referred to as ‘comfort women’. This is one of the largest cases of human trafficking in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Even today, ‘comfort women’ issues face denial, revisionism, and have been left out of many textbooks in Asia and North America.

The ongoing struggle has brought survivors of Japanese military sexual slavery together in solidarity for their rights as women, as human beings. Since 1931, survivors, educators, artists, social activists, and the UN have been advocating for the acknowledgement of ‘comfort women’ issues and have demanded the Japanese government to take legal responsibility but the Japanese government continues to deny the coercion of women into military sexual slavery during WWII.

The play *Comfort*, and its post-show workshops, address the trauma and pain that the survivors of military sexual slavery went through, and will engage audiences in a conversation about how artistic, educational, and activist work has broken the silence and confronted the ‘comfort women’ issues that still exist today. Through the collaboration between survivors and social activists, these untold stories have opened up missing chapters in the history of WWII in Asia and exposed the many violations of human rights.

**Simplified Timeline**

1932	The first comfort station is established in Shanghai, China.
1937	The Nanking Massacre happens & the comfort women system is institutionalized.
1931~1945	200,000 women from different countries under Japanese occupation are forced into military sexual slavery.
1945	Germany surrenders in May & Japan surrenders in August after US drops atomic bombs on Hiroshima & Nagasaki.
1946-1990	SILENCE from survivors of Japanese wartime sexual slavery. False claims are made about 'comfort women'.
1991	Kim hak-Sun, a former Korea 'comfort woman' steps out & gives the first public testimony about her experience as a wartime sex slave.
1992	The first 'Wednesday Protest' in front of the Japanese embassy in South Korea begins & continues to this day.
1994	The Japanese government establishes the "Asian Women's Fund" for 'comfort women' through private donations to evade legal responsibility. Survivors strongly protest against the fund.
2000	Civil society and women's organizations hold a Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery. The court's final judgement convicts the Japanese state and late Emperor Hirohito of Japan guilty of war crimes. The ruling is not legally binding due to the civil nature of the court.
2007~2008	The U.N. and countries like Canada, US, the EU, Philippines, and Netherlands pass motions to urge Japan to accept historical responsibility, make official apology, and teach a more accurate history.
2015	A Korea - Japan "comfort women" agreement was made in December <i>attempting</i> to resolve the decades-long dispute. Survivors and many social activists have denounced the agreement.

## Appendix C – Poetry from *Comfort*

### *Magnolia Flower* by Li Qingzhao

A burst of spring blooms  
Sprinkled with teardrops  
Tinged with traces of  
Rose clouds and morning dew.

Should my beloved think  
I am not as fair as the flower?  
I wear it slanting in my cloud hair,  
Asking him to see which is lovelier.

### **静夜思** Quiet Night Thought by Li Bai

**床前明月光**  
**疑是地上霜**  
**举头望明月**  
**低头思故乡**

Moonlight falling near my bed  
Its brightness like snow on the ground  
My eyes look up at the moon  
My head hangs down thinking of home

### *Dan Feng's Poem in Comfort*, by Diana Tso

A white butterfly visits me at the window  
She hides beneath a single leaf cowering from the heat  
Above her, green opens its palm to touch a piece of the sun  
Its light is as thin as a spider's thread, hanging from the ashen skies  
Will one last flower bloom before summer ends?  
Or has it no hope, knowing autumn will take away her last breath?  
Curling, crumbling in the grasp of the first morning frost

*Comfort Women Choral Piece*

DAN FENG

Bodies of soldiers like the wheels of a train crushing the bones of birds  
Their breath stink of wine and war  
Their lips rub against my paper-thin eyelids  
Torn open again and again by the lust of men  
The hungry leaches biting down on my spirit

MEI LING

Eating our sweet innocence  
Licking away our youth  
The stench of their sweat sinks shame into my skin  
Their weapons tear into me

DAN FENG/MEI LING

Reckless - Fierce – Endless

OLD WIDOW

I roll over to vomit up this nightmare  
Glance over my shoulder to see the imprint of my ghost on the soiled mattress  
An open coffin of torn cotton, dust and blood

MEI LING

Bury me so that the feet of ants have hills and valleys to run over

DAN FENG

Bury me so that worms can make kaleidoscope pictures in my flesh

OLD WIDOW

Bury me so that spiders can make a home between my toes and fingers

ALL

Bury me so I will breathe new life into the earth



## **Appendix D – Comfort Women Testimonials**

To find first-hand accounts of the experiences of comfort women, consult the following sources:

Matsuoka, Tamaki (2015). *Torn Memories of Nanjing, Testimonies of Japanese War Veterans and Chinese Survivors of the Nanjing Massacre*. Alpha Education.

Qiu, Peipei with Su Zhiliang and Chen Lifei (2014). *Chinese Comfort Women, Testimonies from Imperial Japan's Sex Slaves*. Alpha Education.

Note: These books are available for sale at ALPHA Education  
<http://www.alphaeducation.org> (416) 299-0111