

I saw the walls of her stomach peeling
off like old wallpaper in
the old buildings

TheatreWorks
presents

DESTINIES of FLOWERS in the MIRROR

a performative experience

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE ^{bio}

My last few works have explored how to tell a story in a variety of different ways. *Destinies* is perhaps the most radical in eschewing the dramatic form. The dramatic form has become increasingly problematic for me in the last few years. It is inherently artificial to have characters speaking of their inner conflict to an audience framed as speeches. This has been my main tension in this piece - should Flower, the woman who stops eating, tell the audience or should she just be and through her actions you discover her difference.

A woman who is fighting a system should perhaps find alternative methodologies of communication. Instead of the "male" system of rational analysis and constant indoctrination, Flower finds a personal journey of silence and meditation. Her followers may try to institutionalise her as a religion, as a cult, as a system, but she perseveres on her journey. Hence I have given minimal text to Flower - three central speeches which are distilled to a minimal emotionalism. The text is spoken by other performers in a rather self-conscious manner at a microphone. They are not characters as such. They are... a state of being. Drama and conflict has traditionally been used to reveal humanity but does it? Or is it just an artifice which should be countered by further artifice? The man with the syringe is demonstrated by a visual artist who is not an actor portraying a character. The story line is carried by a reader who is self - consciously reading the play aloud.

Destinies is like a story told as a constant hum with few highs and lows. Sometimes you forget the presence of the hum. Sometimes it troubles you. Sometimes it plays tricks on you and you start to feel. Sometimes your attention wanes and you start to look at the sky, at the buildings, wonder about the space, wander about the fountain, look at other audience members. But it returns - the hum is still there. Time and space change when there is no dramatic tampering and editing. When the hum stops...

Ultimately the play was written as a stream of consciousness. How do we perform a stream of consciousness? I do not think we can tell you this stream of consciousness. We can only plunge you in.

We are all products of the system that we are part of.
I am a director.
You are an audience.
We have expectations.
I would like to continue to free myself from this system.
I am searching for alternatives.
Would you care to join me?

Ong Keng Sen
23 April 1997

ONG KENG SEN

Director, Fulbright Scholar, Singapore Young Artist 1993 and the Artistic Director of TheatreWorks, Singapore's leading English language theatre company.

In 1994, he was awarded a grant by the Asian Cultural Council based in New York for his achievements in Singapore and Asian theatre. In April 1995, he became the first Singaporean to be invited to direct at the prestigious Joseph Papp Public Theatre, New York Shakespeare Festival. Since his graduation from the New York Tisch School of Arts Graduate Programme, he has directed epic outdoor and site - specific productions which were acclaimed by both the press and audience as ground - breaking with artistic and social significance. This includes numerous productions in Fort Canning Park and *The Ying Family* in a Chinatown shophouse and *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral*. The last has been invited to Canada this year.

In June 1996, Keng Sen directed *Su of the Boat*, a play inspired by the controversy of the Michael Fay incident. It was a sell-out hit which also received much coverage from the international press. Thereafter, he directed his first full-length feature film, *Army Day*.

His most recent projects were *The Flying Circus* and *Mind Sign*. The former is an inter-cultural collaboration between artists from Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam and Japan. *The Flying Circus Project* will culminate in an Asian inter-cultural production of *Lao* premiering in Tokyo in September this year.

WRITER'S MESSAGE ^{bio}

ROBIN LOON

Robin Loon is 29 years old. Since completing his post graduate studies at the National University of Singapore early this year, Robin has been busy with writing for two TheatreWorks productions, *Destinies of Flowers In the Mirror* and the upcoming *Workhorse Afloat* for the Festival of Asian Performing Arts 1997.

His past works for TheatreWorks include *Absence Makes The Heart Grow Fonder* (1992), *Watching The Clouds Go By* (1994) and *Broken Birds* (1995). He was also the Festival Director for TheatreWorks' Festival of New Writing and the Director for *Ginnie's Favourite Colour* in 1996.

I have come to understand the
where the when the what the why
and the how and one night as I
starved myself into writing I
began to see the message of it
all which is stand by what I
believe and to be what I
really am
flower
taught
me
that
and I am eternally grateful to
her for showing me the where
the when the what the why and
the how and I wondered had I
waited two years to write this
and to meet her and to discover
her destiny the
value
of
what
I
do
and I am glad that keng sen
started me off this trip and my
friends followed me my hungry
ghosts my karen's song my
mahatma's plea my xiao peng
lai will we ever find it I think
for one moment we have
thank
you
for
playing
with me and getting all wet and
finding out what it is like being
someone who decides not to eat
in other words thank you for
being stupid with me and for
allowing me to be stupid
what a trip it is

Robin Loon
23 April 1997

INSTALLATION ARTIST'S MESSAGE ^{bio}

MATTHEW NGUI

Matthew is a 34-year old artist currently working between Western Australia and Singapore. Born in Singapore, Matthew studied Law in the National University of Singapore, graduating in 1988. Matthew then embarked on a career in visual arts by taking up a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Post Graduate Diploma course at the Curtin University of Technology in Australia. Matthew's works in sculpture, installation, performance and photography have won him awards and critical acclaim in both Australia and Singapore. He has been a lecturer at the School of Visual Arts at the Edith Cowan University and is presently Adjunct Lecturer at the Curtin University of Technology's School of Art. He is also the Project Director of the Artists' Regional Exchange (ARX), an organisation which initiates critical artistic exchange within the Asia-Pacific region. In 1996, his work was seen in TheatreWorks' last site-specific production, *The Yang Family*, which was staged in a 137-year old shophouse in Chinatown, as well as a touring exhibition of Singapore and Australian artists called *Support*. The exhibition was held at the Singapore Art Museum. He also represented Singapore at the 23rd International Biennial of Sao Paulo, where his mixed media installation-performance was exhibited in Brazil. His work is scheduled to be seen next in Kassel, Germany this year.

The conception of flowers as objects of natural beauty and delicateness is culturally tried and true. The reality of them is, however, an impermanence which must lead to death. This transient nature speaks of a cycle which not only repeats itself but that within this cycle is a temporary lived existence which has some start and end. In a sense and in terms of life's larger picture, fates have already been determined, though there is a choice as to how this life is to be lived.

The main focus of *Destinies of Flowers In The Mirror* is, for me, about these choices. In my mind, when considering the installation at the fountain, I started out with locating positions within the text written by Robin and conceived by Keng Sen. The obvious positions relate to social-political and gender dialectics giving birth, as it were, to the locations of centre/periphery and dominant/marginal. The choice to eat or not, or the way you want your life lived shifts these locations within *Destinies of Flowers In The Mirror*. To not eat is illogical but to nourish the body is. Choice relates very much to the tensions between rationality and intuition, logic and emotion. It is within this tense conceptual site that *Destinies* unfolds where rationality and structure pigeon-holes the less comprehensible aspects of life. After all, "nourishing the body" surely doesn't refer only to ingesting proteins and carbohydrates. What of the spirit of desire? Strangely, justice has much to do with this too. If a woman conventionally thought of as natural and child bearing (mother Earth), is emotional (hysterical) and intuitive (women drivers), then she is seen as irrational and unstructured, the antithesis to a "logical functioning environment". Who holds the scale of justice here? But the idea which Keng Sen has been playing with is bigger than this, it is about the determination of a state in which what is not properly understood is branded as taboo and then abolished, where the lack of justice ultimately is a reflection of the real hysteria.

This tense space, as provided by Suntec City, is its fountain. It is large, tall and wet. It is geometric, yet curvaceous. How do constructed structures relate to looser entities within the space. What then do these signify in a space already thought out and constructed by another artist? The merging of the formal elements to this concept has been a difficult process. So the fountain is set for such a discourse to take place. Though a sequence of events have been rehearsed, it is the space with all its attendant bodies, imagery, texts, material and surfaces which will speak loudest and in real-time. As with the flux between the arguments put across about what is rational and what is not, it is the viewers' mental attitude which will finally determine this work.

Matthew Ngui

31 April 1997

CHOREOGRAPHER'S MESSAGE bio

AIDA REDZA

Aida is the Artistic Director of Shakti Dances and is presently teaching at the National Arts Academy in Kuala Lumpur. Shakti Dances has been performing around Malaysia as a company with a social conscience that strives to promote human rights. The group has performed for the *Human Rights Festival* 1995 and 1996 in Kuala Lumpur and Penang. *Beyond Words* in aid of the Womens' Aid Organisation and *Break The Silence - Celebrating Womens' Voices* for AWAM (All Women's Action Society).

Actively involved as the facilitator for the Five Arts Centre Young People's Theatre programme, as well as independent choreographer for Actor's Studi, Dramalab, Five Arts Centre in their productions of *Scorpion Orchid* (1995), *Ramaila - a new generation* (1996), *The Storyteller* (1996) and *The Tempest* (1997).

Many of her works have been presented at dance festivals around the region. These include the 1994 *Indonesian Dance Festival*, *Widoo* 1994 in Beijing, *KIDE 1995 Dance Festival* in Korea, *Tari* 1996 in the Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival 1996 and the Malaysia Fest in 1995 and 1996. In late 1996, Aida participated in TheatreWorks' *Flying Circus Project*.

the polar of opposites

stillness vs waves

matter vs spirit

rational vs irrational

create vs destroy

birth vs death

a point of embracing opposites

transforming

metamorphosis

the secret of the golden flower reflecting on

mirrors, enlightenment

water spiralling surging upwards

cutting through time and space

welcoming its breath to inhale destiny

an intoxicating sustained beauty of life-motion

reaching a state of expanded consciousness

suspended in luxury of an existence

to allow the flow, the sensation of spirit

and mind to journey the body brings

us into BEING

a flower dancing on water.

Aida Redza
23 April 1997

The Cast

(In Alphabetical Order)

THE CAST bios

Jeremiah Choy

Lim Kay Siu

Lim Yu-Beng

Low Kee Hong

Deborah Png

Sharon Lim

Matthew Ngui

Aida Redza

Suhaila Sulaiman

Tang Fu Kuen

Claire Wong

"Water water everywhere. But not a drop to drink."

Jeremiah Choy is an actor and lawyer. He was last seen in TheatreWorks' *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* in 1996.

"It has been very special to work with Keng Sen again after a gap of over four years. I'm learning new modes of acting and new subliminal forms of communication in theatre from him."

Lim Kay Siu is an actor, director and new playwright. He recently wrote and directed *Ballroom Dancing* for TheatreWorks.

"Quote?! What quote? All I want to know is who threw the chicken burger in here."

Lim Yu-Beng is an actor and director. He last appeared in TheatreWorks' production of *Six of The Best*.

"and i knew and i understood and i remembered why why why the reason"

Low Kee Hong is a Masters student majoring in Sociology. He was last seen in TheatreWorks' play, *Ginnie's Favourite Colour*

"It's been an agonising and beautiful experience and the food tasting was fun."

Deborah Png is an actress. She played Mrs Jeannie Lim, the Head of the Friendship Development Unit in TheatreWorks' rerun of *Mixed Signals* in February this year.

"bed borne colour cool cycle fall flower gas gate hyacinth ice lily - loo mark power proof shed table vapour wheel works in water water water water water..."

Sharon Lim last appeared in TheatreWorks' production of *Ginnie's Favourite Colour*.

"Water - its fluidity escapes you. Mark my words."

Suhaila Sulaiman is a Theatre Studies undergraduate at the National University of Singapore. This is her first production with TheatreWorks.

"A body found next spring frozen in an ice cake; or a body fished next day from the muddy swirl..."

Tang Fu Kuen is presently serving his National Service. His last production for TheatreWorks was *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* in 1996.

"Both the script and the fountain site are very powerful - the challenge has been to use, compliment and convey that power in our performance."

Claire Wong was last seen in TheatreWorks' production of *Wills and Secession*.

Destinies of Flowers In The Mirror © 1997 Robin Loon

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SCENE ONE: I want to stop eating

FLOWER

In a line waiting I was waiting to be served trays cackling pushing against one another sliding from right to left
right to left over cold steel perspex cases display food gleaming glistening I watched it screamed why am I here
stomachs growling groaning mouths juicing dribbling she asked me what do you want just point he wanted
noodles strings and laces greasy and flacid strewn across scratched melamine on cold steel perspex cases display
I watched it screamed
I watched it screamed
feeding biting chewing cutting grating staining bleeding churning coagulating
the smell of saliva congealing lubricating bowels moving murky mixture of grey of pink of purple of green of
mustard of mayonaise of lard of gee of oils of putrid

putrid
putrid

putrid
putrid

putrid

She asked me what do you want just point

I watched it screamed

I watched it screamed

Why am I here

Sliding

down

down

down

down

down

down

a

tunnel

to what

spinning revolving dissolving de

composing

just point

what do

you

want

I want to stop eating disgust stuffing gas flatulence fart shit faeces to stop ingesting to stop imbibing flow of
processed nutrients unnatural unreal unwanted understand prepared pre-cooked prefabricated present pretty
pre-digested prevalent predatory processed paternal poison inflammatory to the body to find to seek to search
why why why the reason she asked what do you want just point she asked what do you want just point vomit vomit
repulse repulse repugnant to enlighten to know why why why the reason I want to stop eating in a line waiting
my body tells me to know why why why to know the reason my destiny destiny gleaming screaming churning
spinning whirling laughing I know I know why why why the reason my destiny my destiny my destiny destiny

I watched it screamed

I watched it screamed

I want to stop eating

SCENE TWO: media feeding

In a hospital - woman lying in bed staging a peaceful protest. She refuses food.

FLOWER

This is a peaceful way to show my protest I do not want to cause unnecessary alarm but I want to show my personal conviction I don't want a question mark hanging over my head This is my personal decision This is not emotional blackmail If I wanted to do that I wouldn't use it with my life This is my life

A row of women in white wearing dark glasses appears and forms a line. They march.

MARCHING WOMAN 1

Chee whiz, this is a fast way to get a little publicity

MARCHING WOMAN 2

She is treading on the fringe of megalomaniac behaviour. Her self-importance and delusions of greatness made her challenge authority.

MARCHING WOMAN 3

What is she going on about? Why doesn't she seek to address it through the proper channels?

FLOWER

I have done nothing wrong

I am justified

I will not be bullied into submission

MARCHING WOMAN 1

I have just finished my puasa! At least my fasting had some religious backing.

ALL

Chee whiz, this is a fast way to get a little publicity

THE MAN WITH THE SYRINGE

The will to live can be decisive for a person who goes a long time without food. Mental strength is necessary to stave off depression which can reduce resistance to illness. If a person is healthy mentally and physically, he can go on for 10 - 15 days feeling fairly well, if he consumes only water. The body's reserve of fat can supply the energy it needs. Of course, he would feel hunger but this should not affect his health. Unless he becomes depressed, in which case he may fall ill after three to five days. A fit person's health can deteriorate after 10 - 15 days of fasting. When the fat deposits is used up, the body will use proteins to produce energy, which will weaken the muscles. Fasting also dulls down the supply of essential nutrients such as calcium, iron, the B vitamins and vitamin C. Why don't you take glucose water?

ALL

Take glucose water?

MARCHING WOMAN 1

Does it still count as a hunger strike?

MARCHING WOMAN 2

Let's ask the public?

MARCHING WOMAN 3

Opinion was divided among 12 persons interviewed over whether consuming water and glucose amounted to being on hunger strike.

FLOWER (weaker)

I never claimed that I was on hunger strike I just want to stop eating

THE MAN WITH THE SYRINGE

She is slowly losing consciousness - floating in and out of coherence.

MARCHING WOMAN 1

Six of them thought that she would have compromised her stand to go on a fast if she started adding glucose to her water.

MARCHING WOMAN 2

Four of them, however, said that so long as she abstained from solid food, it could still be considered a hunger strike.

MARCHING WOMAN 3

The remaining two were undecided.

MARCHING WOMAN 1

Mahatma Gandhi used to drink lemon juice. So I suppose there is some parallel. But I still do not approve of hunger strikes in this day and age.

MARCHING WOMAN 2

This is not the age of Mahatma Gandhi, Gandhi became a mahatma because the cause he stood for were selfless, national and affected the common good of his fellow men. Thus his hunger strike had meaning.

MARCHING WOMAN 3

Mahatma Gandhi? More like Karen Carpenter

THE MAN WITH THE SYRINGE

I have not ruled out the possibility of Anorexia Nervosa. The patient seems determined not to ingest food - claiming that it is vile and defiling.

ALL

Chee whiz, this is a fast way to get a little publicity

MARCHING WOMAN 1

I urge the media to stop publishing any accounts of this silly woman's hunger strike. Let her just fade into oblivion. If this is the course that she has chosen, let it be so.

MARCHING WOMAN 2

She is crazy!

FLOWER (standing)

I believe in my cause I urge anyone and everyone if you are willing to keep vigil with me for however long you are welcomed to do so.

The women stop marching. They turn their attention to WOMAN. They slowly form an army around her.

WOMEN

This is a peaceful way to show my protest I do not want to cause unnecessary alarm but I want to show my personal conviction I don't want a question mark hanging over my head This is my personal decision This is not emotional blackmail If I wanted to do that I wouldn't use it with my life This is my life

SCENE THREE: Karen's song

I saw a face a thin and chiseled face gleaming in the midst of thick black long luscious hair her name was Karen her name was Karen and she smiled and I smiled and I knew her she took me in and suddenly I was on a bed that was her tongue strewn in purple roses sickly and soft and rotting that was her tongue and I laid there as its thick and syrupy fluids embalmed me and rolled me into a cocoon it sent me down a corridor that was her throat a weak and a cracked and scrony a distorted passage way that was hard like the petals of a shriveled flower I fell and I fell and I drop

drop

drop

drop

drop

drop

and I scream and my voice blended with hers and I heard her scream the body beautiful the body beautiful and beauty of starvation the beauty of thin the beauty of a thin woman a beautiful woman I felt my throat tearing out of my neck and I felt her throat collapsing underneath and covering and folding me and eating me up her name was Karen my name my name to be desired to be loved to be a woman to be thin woman nothing to catch me all encompassing hollowness and emptiness she had nothing in her she had nothing in her I grab and I reached but there was nothing nothing and I fell and I fell with nothing nothing to hold on to and I sank and I sank with the cold rank winds of her hollow chest cutting into me I fell and I fell and I fell and I

STOPPED

The singing was gone

Just me and space and I was inside her

I saw the walls of her stomach peeling like the walls of abandoned buildings like the pages of a forgotten book a sight of neglect and a site of abandonment like a room in my house that I had left behind like a book that I had read a long time ago but could not remember the who and the where and the why but all too intimate and yet all so strange pictures on her wall mother with child thin women thin she and I she and I she didn't eat she hadn't eaten I didn't eat and I hadn't eaten but there was a palpable comfort in the hollow of her stomach the whiff of something that use to fill the space I touched the wall and it turned into dust shattering into petals of yellow chrysanthemums disseminated on the floor of her indented cavity turning into a ghostly brown I heard her sing once more the beautiful and haunting melody that nourished my imagination and could not give her the vitality of her beauty to be adored like women in magazines to be the object of desire an object to be used and admired I wept madly and I cursed and I cursed I felt her gasping her last breath the thorns that were of her lungs snapping under the force of one single breath split open and spewed flakes of golden snow so perfect and so precise so absolute and so pristine and they fell on me like the gentle showers of an spring morning like the dew of blossom bursting with life and unpronounceable energy and the flakes were shaped like flowers and they settled into the palm of my hand and my hand radiated with the glow of the morning sun and the dust that was her walls lighted up in a bouncing orange all at once a tungsten bow of light and fire and I knew and I understood and I remembered the why and the where and the when and the what of the emptiness of the purpose of her starvation and the reason behind my starvation to regenerate the soul that was trapped in the tissues and the cartilage and the cells and the flesh and I sang and I sang and I sang Karen's song as she would had sung it and I danced and I danced into the corridors that was her intestines with the joy of a recovering a long lost treasure the dance of a hundred thousand flowers I know Karen's song I dance Karen's song I breathe Karen's song I sing Karen's song

I AM KAREN'S SONG

SCENE FOUR: lethal ingestions I

THE MAN WITH THE SYRINGE

Women were believed to be prone to hysteria (the word comes from the Greek meaning "Uterus"). Recommended medical treatments to cure this condition included hysterectomies, caesarean sections and circumcisions.

The women dance around the space

THE MAN WITH THE SYRINGE

Female circumcision ranges from the removal of all or part of the clitoris or total circumcision, usually with infibulation. Infibulation is the fusing of the outer labial lips following the partial or total removal of the inner labial lips. This is accomplished by joining the raw excised edges with thorns or with sutures until the fusing is complete. Only two small openings are left, one for voiding and one for menses and sex.

WOMEN

What are you afraid of?

THE MAN WITH THE SYRINGE

Female circumcisions is still practised among certain tribes in Egypt, Kenya and Sudan. Westernised or liberated or not, it is a tradition so deeply entrenched that it cannot be easily dismissed. In most cases, it is the mothers and grandmothers who insist upon the circumcision since the practice is meant to protect the virginity and to prevent adultery. Socially, an uncircumcised female is regarded in the same light as an unwed mother, guaranteeing unmmarriagability.

WOMEN

What are you afraid of?

THE MAN WITH THE SYRINGE

The excision of the clitoris was practised extensively in America and western Europe in the 19th century. It was the preferred treatment of women who indulged in masturbation and for hysterical women. The man who made excision the treatment of choice was an English gynaecologist named Isaac Baker Brown. He pronounced it a cure for women's mental disorders, caused by such female afflictions as masturbation, epilepsy, melancholia, kleptomania, lesbianism and the orgasm, the latter two being peculiarly female ailments. Medical reports show that surgical circumcisions were performed in many American mental hospitals up to 1935.

WOMEN

I know you are afraid of something.

SCENE FIVE: Xiao Peng Lai

Last night I had a vision I saw myself on an island a tranquil and peaceful island I was all alone and I was walking walking among the foliage and the flowers the air was sweet and the sky clear and blue I felt an uncanny sense of belonging as though as I had been here before and that I must stay here there was a familiarity with the earth at my feet and I ventured forth with a lightness and a liberty of a child who waited for spring to arrive after the confining winter I came to a field of red grass flaming scarlet swaying lustfully in the wind and waving at me and telling me to touch them but when I reached out it moved further away further away and they began to mock me I gave chase but they seem to run even faster and I was always one step behind never close enough to feel the edges of the grass and I jumped and for a split second I touched it but it cut me I bled and from my veins flowed green blood green and watery blood and spewed out like a volcanic eruption and my blood sank into the earth and became a river a river of green waters rushing towards infinity I felt no fear but a proud exhilaration a glory in the creation of my body and the sight of the green river by the red grass they smiled they laughed and they basked under an orange sun I knew that instance that this was the place I belonged and I was free for a moment I felt powerful and infinitely potent as I looked further I saw a hill of crystal rocks and I seem to recall on that crystal rock tablets of writing of inscription and of great significance and I knew that I had to go there and to meet my destiny my heart was screaming and my limbs quivered with the anticipation of a woman in labour my vagina about to burst forth with the wetness of a child with each step I took I cracked a little the crevasses of my lower body tearing into the ground ripping the earth and pulling me closer to the crystal rocks and the shimmering tablets at long last I know the meaning the why why why and the destiny destiny destiny of my existence and the purpose of it all and two steps three steps and two I had arrived the language of my being and as I stretched my neck to look up I saw rows and columns columns and rows of scribbling which had no meaning had no form and had no substance but they were there I saw them with my eyes before the red grass and the green river of my blood they stood before me and begged me to touch them they pleaded with me to touch them and touch them I did

my right palm plastered the lower end of the right column
and I burned it burned and scaled me and melted my flesh and penetrated my bones
the pain was excruciating unbearable and I cried out in anguish but I would not let
go I could not and I held on palms plastered on the pillar of my being and suddenly

I was repelled and the pillar flung me to whence I came
and I landed on my head and I heard the crack of my skull and the snapping of
my neck I laid motionless and I felt a fiery sensation on my right palm I lifted it
slowly to my face and I saw it a flower cinched into my palm a five petaled
blossom a sign of my vision and the evidence of my reality I was there it was no
illusion and I will retrieve it and I will find it no tears will stop me it shall be mine
ours

SCENE SIX: cry of the hungry women

June 7 700 women have
starved themselves willingly
and have rejected any
medical treatment they
believe that they can live
without food

I have the power to heal and
the power to relief the pain
come to me and I will cure
you of your disease

July 14 - 25 women
congregated at the civic
centre and
proceeded to heal the
many women who have
come
to them for help
the blind began to see and
the mute could
speak

**Lead me and I will
follow**

Reports have been spreading
about statues of the Indian
deity Ganesha
The statues of the deity in
every corner of the world
is said to be dispensing milk
from stone

There have been increasing
reports of female miracle
workers

August 2000 women at
present count have gone
on hunger binges refusing
food and water they show
no signs of fatigue and are
thronging the streets
chanting running amok

I was cured of my epilepsy
and I believe in her
she has the power to heal
and all those who follow
her will be given the power
Lead us and we will follow

September 1000 women
have infiltrated hospitals
promising female patients
full recovery if they abstain
from food

Her tears soothed my scaly
skin and her sweat removed
me of my scabs I am a new
woman and I am reborned.

I will refuse food and eat
only what my body gives me
the
milk of my life and the
discharges of my body

**Lead us and we will
follow**

October :
10,000 women have formed
a coalition
of non eaters these women
have lived on nothing
but their own spit and their
menses

**The time has come
for us to take
action**

we march in solidarity
we move in unity
we approach with humility
we seek out destiny

This cannot go on
these women are pretending
to be
different
they have broken off from
our society
mothers are abandoning
their children
wives have left their
husbands and
women previously in
positions of power
have exploited their status
Present count November
500,000

**Lead us and we
will follow
Now is the time**

No food no food no food
feeding is bad feeding is bad
we will seek alternative
we will find a different way

December
8 million
women
marching
in
the
square
in
protest
but
for what?

Oppositions?

Alternatives?

Otherness?

Threat?

Solidarity?

Freedom?

Immortality?

**Hunger!
The women are
hungry.**

SCENE SEVEN: mahatma's plea

I remember walking into a garden stepping on a bed of pearly white lilies my feet so light that I barely touched them but instead glided over the crisp delicate petals the winds carried me and the air enticed me and I heeded their beckon I was to meet someone and that someone was there I saw him sitting quietly under the shade of a huge chrysanthemum a parasol of shining yellow so bright that his white robes were tinged with the glory of the blossom a small man bald head in saffron with glasses perched on his nose I know him he was mahatma *The law of non-violence - returning good for evil, loving one's enemy I can no more preach Non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Non-violence is the summit of bravery* I felt my feet moist with pollen and grew gradually yellow like him he spoke but he never opened his eyes his mouth slowly moving *Some time ago I was taken to a magnificent mansion called the marble palace in Calcutta. The owners offer food in front of the palace, all the beggars choose to go there. The incongruity of this ragged humanity feeding whilst the majestic palace is mocking at their wretched condition does not seem to strike the donors at all. If I had the power I would stop every donation where free meals were given. It has degraded the nation and it has encouraged laziness, idleness, hypocrisy and even crime. The rule should be no labour no meal* I wanted to reach out and touch him but he could not be reached he was distant and so far away but I could almost touch him with my hand a firmness and a solidity not unlike the trunk of an ancient oak I want him to impart his wisdom to me *I cling to India like a child to its mother's breast, because I feel she gives me the spiritual nourishment I need. She has the environment that responds to my highest aspiration. When that faith is gone I shall feel like an orphan without hope of ever finding a guardian* a gust of wind blew across the field of white lilies swaying from side to side as if nodding in agreement to his words a steadfast loyalty to the mahatma I felt a tingling in my spine a rumble in my stomach and I hungered for more *Civil disobedience is not a state of lawlessness and license but presupposes a law-abiding spirit combined with self-restraint. Civil resistance is a most powerful expression of a soul's anguish and an eloquent protest* the words continue to jingle like wind chimes droning a message into my mind I felt tired and lethargic I felt listless yet energised I laid down whilst the words continue to sing into my head I remember to have read a verse which when translated reads: *"If there is a paradise on earth, it is here, it is here". In such paradise, there will be neither paupers nor beggars, nor high nor low. There will be the same respect for women as vouchsafed to men, and the chastity and purity of men and women will be jealously guarded. Where every woman, except one's wife, will be treated by men of all religions as mothers, sister or daughter, according to their age. Where there will be no untouchability and where there will be equal respect for all faiths. They will be all proudly and joyously and voluntarily bread labourers.* I felt intoxicated I felt a natural high a feeling of lightness a feeling of comfort the comfort of a child knowing she is safe in the arms of her mother a comfort of a baby sucking milk from a breast my head was spinning I felt right *My fast is obedience to the peremptory call of conscience and duty. It comes out of felt agony I have been driven into the conclusion that fasting unto death is an integral part of holding on to the truth - it is the greatest and most effective weapon in its armory the lullaby the lullaby the words the message the wind chimes the smell of the lilies the dampness of the pollen the immovable force of holding on to the truth suffering without retaliation the ideally non-violent state will be an ordered anarchy our concern is the act itself, not the result of the action* I felt his hand touched me and I awoke I saw the pale underside of a chrysanthemum I felt warm and restored I reached out into the pond of still water for some water I saw myself I saw him sitting quietly under the shade of a huge chrysanthemum a parasol of shining yellow so bright that his white robes were tinged with the glory of the blossom a small man bald head in saffron with glasses perched on his nose I know him I had become mahatma

SCENE EIGHT: the men who give birth

Man with a stick
She offered me hope

Man with a mirror
She offered me an alternative

WOMAN1

Panic broke out when two men allegedly gave birth to two healthy babies of unknown gender. It seems that the two men were treated by Flower, the renegade leader of a new tribe of women starvers who have continuously performed miracles and healing on all who seek it. More of this in the later report.

Man with a stick

I had been impotent from an accident and could not ejaculate nor produce sperm. I believed that I was doomed to a life of singlehood and a life where I shall have no heir. She changed all that. She gave me new life, she gave me children, she gave me afterlife

Man with a mirror

I was sterile but she came to me in my hour of need, answering my prayers and gave me children.

WOMAN2

The authorities have declared the recent phenomenon of child-bearing men a national crisis. More and more women have starved themselves in order to attain the power of child giving - a recent development where women give men the power to bear children. Thus far, there have been 50 such cases of reported pregnancies and births. The children of these births are said to be non-gender specific. Doctors have said that these children have yet to develop genitalia and will likely to do so at a later stage. The health ministry and the national ministry of defence are said to be investigating the matter.

Man with a stick

She came to me and she touched me in my groin - caressing it slowly. I felt the warm sensation, a joyful stirring in my abdomen and I felt it grow. I was filled with the power and the greatness of birth and there was another human being growing inside me. I nurtured it, I cultured it. The baby was mine

Man with a mirror

As I felt my stomach, the sharp excruciating pain ripped through me and I knew my moment had arrived. I was to experience the moment that had eluded men through history. The child was coming and it tore through my stomach burst forth from my lower abdomen. My blood was gushing and oozing but as soon as the child was born, my body healed by itself. It is a miracle.

WOMAN3

Miracle or hoax of the century? You be the judge of that. Authorities are said to be continually baffled by the recent phenomenon. Some women have cried foul to their being stripped of their traditional roles and have urged the authorities to address the matter. Men are said to be in a panic and have refused to leave their homes in fear of being impregnated. A special commission has been set up to specifically look into the matter.

Man with a stick

I believe in flower. She had shown me that there can be an alternative. She has shown me change. She is change. She is the new world

Man with mirror

I believe in flower. She had proven to me that men and women can be the same and can share the power of nature together. No more artificial divide, we are one and the same, we can be one.

Man with a syringe

This is unacceptable!

SCENE NINE: land of women

Chorus of women posing still like a photo frame. They each take turns to narrate.

In the entire history of China, there had only been one female emperor. Her name was Empress Wu. She was responsible for a reign of terror and political purges unprecedented in the Chinese history. Yet she was admired by her subjects for her great intelligence. After sharing the bed with Emperor Taizong and subsequently his son, Kaotsung, she later forced her son Chungtsung to abdicate in her favour. She was the only woman to ever rule China.

The 12 decrees of Empress Wu - Emperor of the new Chou Dynasty

Those who perform distinguished service in the homes will be publicly honoured

Those who remain chaste all their lives will be publicly recognised

Homes for the aged and infirmed women to be established.

Orphanages for the care of girls to be set up

Allowances for the support of widows will be set up

To girls who are twenty but not yet married because they lack dowries, the empress will give them dowries

Women's clinics to be set up throughout the country

Empress will provide funeral to women who have left nothing behind.

If a woman had no family to remember her, she will be publicly remembered in official memorial rites held in the spring and the autumn of each year

Imperial examinations will be held for women in order to discover talented girls to come forward to assist the empress in her rule. There is no reason why women should

not bring glory to their family as well as men

Title and rank will be awarded according to merit.

This is the wish and the word of the Empress Wu

So even in China, there was once hope that women could be more than what they were expected to be. Empress Wu ruled over a court, a country, a land. A woman of the land - a land of women

Enter man with stick and man with mirror.

Man with the mirror

We walked ashore to this beautiful land. Neat rows of houses, peaceful and serene. The air had a smell of gentleness and playfulness. It was delicious - good enough to eat. The Land of Women.

Man with the stick

We walked and walked and came to a house. We saw the back of a woman rocking a baby. A sight of such tranquillity. The woman turned her head and looked at us. The shock - she was a man in women's clothes - hair rolled up in a bun with glittering hairpins in her head. But her jaw, his jaw were harsh and square and her face was stubbled - she had a mustache

Man with the mirror

She barked at us, "Why are you two in men's clothes? How dare you wear them? Why aren't you real women? Why do you want to pretend to be men? Are you not contented on being a woman? Shame on you, the both of you. Run along now and get dressed. Shame on you!"

Man with the stick

And they came, these men - no they were in men's clothes but their skin and their features were - women. Women in men's clothes. They took me away. They said I was beautiful. They said that the emperor wanted me - the emperor? No!

Man with the mirror

They called me 'Concubine' and stripped me of my clothes. All around me I see men dressed in women's clothes, hair conferred and neatly combed into a bun with jewelry and flowing gowns. They were not feminine but they were women. Women? Men? No!

Man with the stick

They bathed me. They slowly undressed me. I resisted but I soon gave way to their gentle coercion. As I sat in the wooden barrel, surrounded by these women, men? women? I was so embarrassed. I hid my privates from them but they gently lifted my hands. They said I looked beautiful and they scrubbed me tenderly and lovingly. They poured water over my head and with each touch, reassured me that I was the loveliest woman. Woman? No!

Man with a stick

Then a flock of women came to me and began to dress me up in women's clothes I resisted only to be hit and slapped and I had no choice but to comply. They put rouge and powder on my face, oiled my hair and painted my lips. They tucked my waist in and gave me a lily-like figure - I was beautiful. Beautiful? No!

Man with the mirror

Then one of them said to me, "Royal Concubine, you are now requested to have your ears pierced". I resisted as it was unmanly. The women then grabbed hold of me and pinned me to the ground and stuck a hot needle into both my ear lobes. They then applied some ointment and hung huge loop-like earrings on me

Man with the stick

Then one of them said to me, "Royal Concubine, you are now requested to have your feet bound" and before I could protest, my legs were yanked from under me and I laid on my back. The women crushed my toes to force them inward and bound my bloodied feet in white satin. They sewed it up and later slipped a three inch velvet shoes into my feet. I was unconscious.

Man with the mirror

In the night, I untied my feet and saw my feet crushed and contorted into a box-like appendage. The pain was excruciating and I could not stop the bleeding. The fresh blood mixed with the new coagulated and my feet looked like the freshly extracted heart of a goat - dripping and sticky with pus. Just that moment, she arrived. The emperor.

Man with the stick

She was thin and beautiful, and commanding - a handsome and dashing figure beaming with the severity of a monarch. She was forceful and full of power. A general, a king a true knight. My king? I was thrown at her feet when I saw her hand extended to me. I saw the palm - it had a flower.

Man with the mirror

I was fearful that he may harm me again. He ordered that I lay next to him, he ordered that my clothing be removed. Within minutes, I was in my barest undergarments. The king has stripped to his undergarments and we laid next to each other. I feared the worst.

Man with the stick

But she spoke to me, with the firmness of a man and the adoration of a lover. He touched me and held my hand. I thought he was going to... but she didn't. We just laid next to each other for the whole night. She kissed me and I kissed him. His lips my lips, my lips her lips. As I nuzzled next to her, he gave me the warmth and the reassurance of an affectionate security. I will never be hurt and she will never hurt me

Man with the mirror

Was it a dream? Was I really there? Was he there? Was she there? I was there and when I woke in my own clothes, I wept to go back. I had a taste of heaven - a taste of a world where perfection was at hand, a place where I was loved and I could love. My heaven, my king. I was her concubine.

Back to the chorus of women

One evening towards the end of winter, there was heavy snowfall. The empress Wu was drinking and admiring the scene from her window. The winter sweet in the garden were in bloom and their perfume filled the air. She said, "What inspiration it is to them to bloom in this weather. It must be because they know I am happy and want to make me merry. It would not surprise me if other flowers were of my fondness of them should be in full bloom too. Prepare the carriages. I am going to the Garden of many fragrances to look at them." Her maids told her that it is the time for the winter sweet to bloom but all other flowers will only do so in spring. The empress said, "All flowers are alike! If the winter sweet can brave the cold to please me, why can't the others? I alone am the female emperor. I am unique! Do you think that these wretched glowers would dare to disobey me if I were to order them all to bloom at once? Let all flowers be in bloom tomorrow. Let it be known that I am coming to the palace gardens in the morning all flowers are ordered to make preparations at once and to be in bloom before dawn tomorrow.

The next morning, it was a sight to behold

Our eyes were dazzled by the splendid reds, purples and greens which greeted us

It was as if the whole universe were made of satins and brocades. The flowers were in bloom everywhere.

The Empress Wu was pleased. She knew that she had received the sign from heaven that she is the chosen one to rule over China. She was the daughter of God.

She had the flower in her hand.

SCENE TEN: lethal ingestions 2

FLOWER

Mother Theresa came to me I saw her and she led me down down down this arcade I saw women shrieking and running and running wildly in a room in an arcade and they were foaming with anxiety and fear in their eyes

Man with the syringe

Gentlemen of the commission, no doubt you have heard of the many small colonies that have sprung up as a result of the hungry women movement. The leader, Flower, is now wanted all over the world. This is a true case of chauvinism that will undermine the harmony of our state. We cannot allow them to insist on their differences. I propose the setting up of concentration camps to contain these women - to round them up to prevent the spread.

FLOWER

She looked frightened and she hit her head her head opened like a flower blooming she blossomed on the wall and her blood spewed covered the wall she screamed I want flowers on my walls I want flowers on my walls I want flowers on my walls and she hit and she hit and she hit and she hit and she bled and she bled and flowers all the walls the flowers on the wall dark velvety flowers dripping from corners seeping into the cracks of the infested walls she screamed I want flowers on my walls and her sisters screamed and they hurled against hurled against hurled against and their skulls splinter cackle splatter burst a flower bloomed another one after another and they broke and like tidal waves they sweep on the walls thick with fluid and blood thick blood

Man with the syringe

We have separated the male population from these demented females. We have also separated the starving women from the endorsed women so as to not penalise the law-abiding women. Those endorsed women with the highest fertility rate and the highest of aptitude have been quarantined with the men to ensure the proper and correct procedure of procreation for the future.

FLOWER

She was there on the side of the room with chains rusty chains and she rubbed them on her body she rubbed them on her privates and she bled and her blood mixed with the rust a brown decaying concoction and stuffed the rancid metal inside her privates and forced it out and stuffed it in and forced it out the chain was heavy with blood heavy with rust heavy with semen glimmering shimmering she fed she licked ravenous chewed at the steel each time cutting into her gums more blood more blood everywhere

Man with the syringe

As for the measures taken within concentration camps, the new procedures performed are direct and simple. Since the women apply their sense of touch to perform miracles, we have thus conducted mass amputation of the hands from the elbow down on all the women in about 5 of these compounds.

FLOWER

Make them stop mother make them stop I had to stop them I grabbed her struggle she would not let go of her chains free yourself let me free you she would not let go gleam in her eyes she hit me she hit me wet steel splitting my skin cracking my skull

Man with the syringe

Neutralisation policy #25-8 designed for those who have continuously I quote, "spread the word of flower" Lethal substance is injected into the larynx to prevent voice production coupled with a surgical removal of the tongue - we have found that these two procedures, in addition to the complete removal of the dental structures in the mouth have proved to be most effective. No noise, no news.

FLOWER

Mother help me help us help me her palm I saw her hand a flower like mine she is like me flower in palm shriek the hurling women attack palms bloodied palms all branded with flowers raining flower raining blossoms raining blooms in the wet and gluey gummy gooey mixture of blood and mucus

Man with the syringe.

Mass lobotomies will be conducted. We will either surgically remove parts of the brain or subject the brain to gamma rays to distort its growth and also to induce retardation. If they had the base of their emotions and thoughts under our control, they will no longer be able to act and think. I submit before you gentlemen, that mass lobotomy is the best policy. No brains, no thoughts - simple and effective.

FLOWER

the raining of the flowers my flowers and I knew why mother I had to suffer to suffer like you did to suffer to liberate to know to free them and I laughed and I understood the cries of the wild women the smile on your face the bloodied palms and the red flowers all for me to know to see to feel to harness the force of the wild women and I now know the purpose of all your suffering my suffering our suffering and I

I understand now

the suffering is necessary

mother

SCENE ELEVEN: hungry ghost

RED GRASS GREEN RIVER I SAW AGAIN THE
PILLARS THE TABLETS THE SHINING
TABLETS WRITING INSCRIPTION CRYSTAL
MY NAME I SAW MY NAME FLOWER I SAW
OUR NAMES MILLIONS OF NAMES RED
GRASS I ATE THE GRASS TASTED LIKE
SEMEN AND BLOOD I SUDDENLY FELT
HUNGRY FOR THE FIRST TIME I NEEDED
STRENGTH TO FIND IT I ATE THE RED
GRASS I MUNCHED AND SWALLOWED I
FARTED CONTINUOUSLY EXPELLING AND
DISCHARGING BAD THINGS FROM MY
BODY THINGS I DID NOT NEED FELT
LIGHTER AND MORE AGILE THE MORE I
ATE THE MORE I FARTED UNNECESSARY
THINGS I STUFFED MYSELF WITH RED
GRASS MORE AND MORE AND MORE MY
BODY GREW STRONGER I FELT BIGGER
THIRSTY DRINK WATER GREEN RIVER
REFLECTION METAMORPHOSIS
CHANGE BIG HEAD RED HAIR PEARLY
WHITE EYES STOMACH AS HUGE AS A
MOUNTAIN THROAT AS NARROW AS A
NEEDLE STARTLED ME? OF COURSE
NO LONGER HUMAN GHOST HUNGRY
GHOST FREE FROM THE PRISON OF
HUMAN FORM MOVING ON EXALTATION
EUPHORIA REBIRTH NO FEAR EMBRACE
BRAVE NOW TOGETHER

SCENE TWELVE: lethal ingestions 3

THE MAN WITH THE SYRINGE IS SITTING ON A CHAIR - PLACID AND PEACEFUL

THE MAN WITH THE SYRINGE

The answer was so simple. We were going around it the wrong way. As a man of medicine, I tried to find a cure. When I couldn't find the cure, I tried to contain it - stop the spread of the malady - to control it. There appeared no solution. When we captured these hungry ghosts and dissected them, it became so obvious. They were not human - far from it - they were less than humans, they were not even women. They had fallen in the food chain and they are worse than beasts - unnatural mutants of a misbegotten enterprise. Yet they were causing so much damage - to our world, to our lives and the universe as we know it will be irreparably altered if I didn't do what I did. Women denying their duties as mothers and wives, men giving birth to children, women degenerating into savages. I had to protect the order, defend it from the spreading of this cancer and cancerous they were. A cancer that was destroying the order that had taken millions of years to establish - can you imagine a world of complete madness and utter chaos? It must be the duty of anthropological hygiene to be attentive to a more severe elimination of morally inferior human beings than is the case today. We should literally replace all factors responsible for selection in a natural and free life. In prehistoric times of humanity, selection for endurance, heroism, social usefulness etc. was made solely by hostile outside factors. This role must be assumed by a human organisation; otherwise, humanity will, for lack of selective factors, be annihilated by the degenerative phenomena that accompanies domestication and compassion. That is why I advocated the ultimate solution. Ktenology - the science of killing was to be the final settlement. A systematic and logical scheme of mortal negation. A ritual, a ceremony that must be careful to keep the full precision of a medical process but with the aim of killing. We had to terminate them before they infect every single one of us. Nothing short of perfect annihilation would do. We cannot allow dissension to break the fragile laws of nature - the very fabric of our existence. Because ultimately, terror is the most effective political weapon. Any one will think twice before undertaking anything against the order as soon as she finds out what awaits her. I needed people who will act harshly and are not going to have second thoughts the moment they have to kill someone. Every action has a point to it, so does crime.

Conscience is a woman's figment. Can't you see? I should be commended. I was determined to attain healing and health for everyone, I wanted to put myself at the service of the community. In order to do this, I had to move therapy from the individual to the national body - the supreme treatment is that extermination is the perfection of healing.

On day I broke a syringe, I was terrified. It was a much worse crime to break a syringe than to kill a man. A syringe was worth more than a human life. He who holds the syringe also holds the responsibility of producing and maintaining a clean and healthy existence, he who holds the syringe holds the power to defend that existence. Our pride, my pride, is to have been able to do all that and remain doctors in spirit in spite of everything. I can say that I have always done my duty and have never done anything contrary to what was expected of me.

SCENE THIRTEEN: the tablets that said nothing

The Man with the Stick

We gathered on the island at the crack of dawn. There were millions of us - women, hungry ghosts all of us.

The Man with the Mirror

And Flower led us.

FLOWER

I saw again the pillars the tablets writings, inscriptions crystal. I saw my name my name, Flower. I saw our names, millions of names.

The Man with the Stick

We looked up and saw scribbling, inscriptions, writing on the tablets that was of a foreign script. Like nothing we had seen before in our lives. It was almost like it was written in a heavenly language and only the chosen could read. I began to panic - could this be the language of the chosen? Why could I not comprehend? Am I not the chosen? I turned around only to realise that the lot of us could not decipher the writings.

The Man with the Mirror

Flower looked at us in disbelief. Many of us fell to our knees in despair - had all our efforts been in vain? Why could we not understand the message - are we not worthy of receiving the message - are our destinies nothing but trivia? I saw Flower next to the tablets, arms out reached and embracing us. She said that we are all entitled to the message. We need more time, more evolving to read the message. Our time will come. Soon, she said.

The Man with the Stick

For me, my moment had come and left. I could not believe her anymore.

The Man with the Mirror

Slowly the women and ghosts dispersed. I saw them depart and I looked at the tablets. They remained silent. How could I have invested my entire life on something so lifeless and impotent? It occurred to me that all we have pursued is one person's dream. One person's starvation. Another person's starvation.

Both Men

No one could recognise her, but we could. We told the man with the syringe. We told him.

SCENE FOURTEEN: genocide

Flower with chorus of women. Man with the syringe behind them elevated; the man with the stick and the man with the mirror flanking him, one on each side.

FLOWER

They came one morning, without warning and entered our house. They took us in hoards and shipped us off. One truck at a time. We were too weak. They captured me first and strapped me to the head of this huge truck. I saw the entire sky red as we approached, it was the glow of fire. Blood was pouring onto the sky. I saw everything. I knew. When I went to the shower hall I saw the clothing of women who were not lying there anymore. The men took the clothing outside and set them ablaze - sending smog into the sky and touching the clouds with a murky hue of red. They made me stand at the square while streams and streams of women headed into the main hall. The main hall was where we would all meet for the last time.

Finally, it was my turn. I stepped into the hall - the hall was filled with the sweet smell of Jasmine and lavender. A sweet and pungent smell. A familiar smell. We were all asked to take off our clothes and discard them on our way in. We were shaven, one by one we had to take a shower. I saw, for the first time, the women around me. My friends and my people, and they looked at me forlorn. What could I say to them? Could I comfort them? Would it be of any use at all? But they held on to me, they held my body close and warmed me. For a moment, I was truly happy.

We marched into the main hall. The sweet smell was even stronger. Overpowering. So strong that it stung our eyes and we could hardly see. The doors were shut. Darkness. I heard the whimpering of a few women but I heard the hushing of even more. I heard one of them say, 'Flower, we believe you.' Another, 'Flower, we know we were there.' I felt my heart shatter. In the darkness, the sound of my heart breaking filled the hall, filled all of us, filled the world, filled the Universe. I had no more words left but 'Thank you'. I could say no more.

We heard the engines pumping. We knew what it meant. Quickly, the women and ghosts piled around me. Surrounding me, barricading me and sheltering me from the inevitable. No one was to sit, we would all stand. Our faces touched, our arms entwined, our bodies met. The gas came from the sprinklers swooping down at us like mist. Some of us laughed and cried as we choked to breathe. I could feel my women disintegrating. The gas ate through us, tearing my lungs from my body until I could breathe no more. The message was here - I had finally realise what the message was. The words engraved on the tablets were clear to me. My women knew too. At that moment, we knew what the message was. It became crystal clear.

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Welder
Front of House Managers

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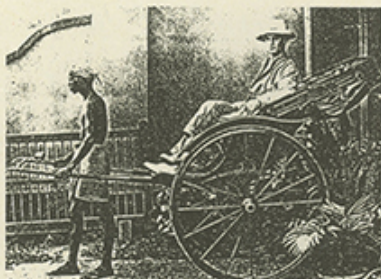
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WORKHORSE AFLOAT



Coming Soon from TheatreWorks...

WORKHORSE AFLOAT

A production in the Festival of Asian Performing Arts 1997

Conceived and directed by Ong Keng Sen

Written by Robin Loon

Video by K Rajagopal

Guest Film-maker: Wu Wenguang (Beijing)

Guest Choreographer: Wenhui (Beijing)

25 and 26 June 1997

The Victoria Theatre

The lives of yesterday's Chinese rickshaw coolies and today's construction workers from India is the central theme of *Workhorse Afloat*.

Under the artistic director Ong Keng Sen, *Workhorse Afloat* explores how circumstances in Singapore have come full circle, by juxtaposing the lonely world of Chinese rickshaw coolies dating back from 1880 to 1940, with the Indian workers presently here.

Although most of us have seen these Indian workers in large groups at Little India on weekends, few of us ever wonder about the world they live in. *Workhorse Afloat* will change that as you are taken on a journey of discovery through a mosaic of real life accounts.

A piece of collaborative theatre, the performance will integrate various techniques and styles, including documentary, drama, music, dance, theatre and film by award winning film-maker from China, Wu Wenguang and the three-time winner of the Special Jury Award at the Silver Screen Awards, K Rajagopal. Innovative dance and movement sequences will be created by Wenhui, a guest choreographer who has worked in London at The Place and the Institute of Contemporary Arts.

Workhorse Afloat is a poignant and thought-provoking play that will stay with you long after the curtain comes down.

Tickets at \$16, 26, 36 and 46 are available from all SISTIC outlets now.

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THEATREWORKS THE COMPANY

TheatreWorks (Singapore) Limited
The Black Box, East Channel Centre, One Raffles Quay, Singapore 04858. Phone: 338 4079. Fax: 338 8120. Ticketing: 338 6255. E-mail: reservations@tw.com.sg. Home Page: <http://www.tw.com.sg/twcom>

TheatreWorks is an independent Singaporean theatre company which develops and nurtures professional theatre skills.

It is dedicated to reaching a broad section of the community and to taking Singaporean theatre abroad.

The Company recognises its responsibility in encouraging awareness on human and social issues.

Ultimately, TheatreWorks is inspired and dedicated to sharing the Magic of Theatre.

TheatreWorks (S) Limited, a registered charity, was incorporated in February 1985 as the first English language adult professional theatre company in Singapore.

Over the years, TheatreWorks has been recognised for their successful fusion of Western and Eastern dramatic traditions, refreshing interpretations and experimental approach.

TheatreWorks has produced critically acclaimed plays that have earned the company a reputation for being the best theatre company in Singapore. The company has toured the region and the world. In 1992, the company toured Japan and Malaysia for *Three Children* and presented *Madame Mao's Memories* at the Edinburgh Festival. In the same year, *Beauty World* toured Japan and in 1994, *Lao Jiu* was performed at the Festival of Perth. The latest outing by the company was in 1996 when they presented *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* at the Cairo International Festival of Experimental Theatre. This year, *Descendants* will continue its international journey to Canada.

With a varied programme, TheatreWorks' repertoire spans from popular entertainment plays as with *Beauty World*, *Private Parts*, *Lao Jiu*, *Willie and Secession* and *Six of the Best* to visual experiences such as *Descendants of the Eunuch Admiral* and *The Yang Family* (performed in a Chinatown shophouse). TheatreWorks has also spearheaded the concept of outdoor carnival theatre with their productions of *Theatre Carnival On The Hill*, *Longing* and *Broken Birds*. These productions are testimonies to the company's commitment to develop theatre audiences qualitatively, as well as quantitatively. After starting the wave of popular theatre, TheatreWorks is forging a cutting edge with their new works. With emphasis on inter-disciplinary and inter-cultural styles and techniques, the works often blur the line between theatre, installation art, video art, photography, sound sculptures, dance and architecture.

As a pioneer theatre company, TheatreWorks realises its responsibility in nurturing and providing opportunities for theatre practitioners. Training programmes such as the Writers' Laboratory have forged closer ties with Singaporean playwrights, serving to encourage and nurture new writing. Other programmes include The Directors' Laboratory which nurtures young directors and the Springboard programme, a theatre skills training programme conducted by theatre practitioners from the United Kingdom. As part of their mission, TheatreWorks has launched a Theatre-In-Education programme for schools, public lectures and consultancy services on aspects of theatre productions and student attachment schemes.

In the last quarter of 1996, TheatreWorks embarked on *The Flying Circus Project*. This major project, conceptualised and headed by TheatreWorks' Artistic Director Ong Keng Sen, examines the traditional arts and seeks to incorporate them into contemporary arts of the 21st century. The first phase of this three-year project was devoted to Southeast Asian traditional arts. It brought together fifty artists from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam and Japan.

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Ong Keng Sen

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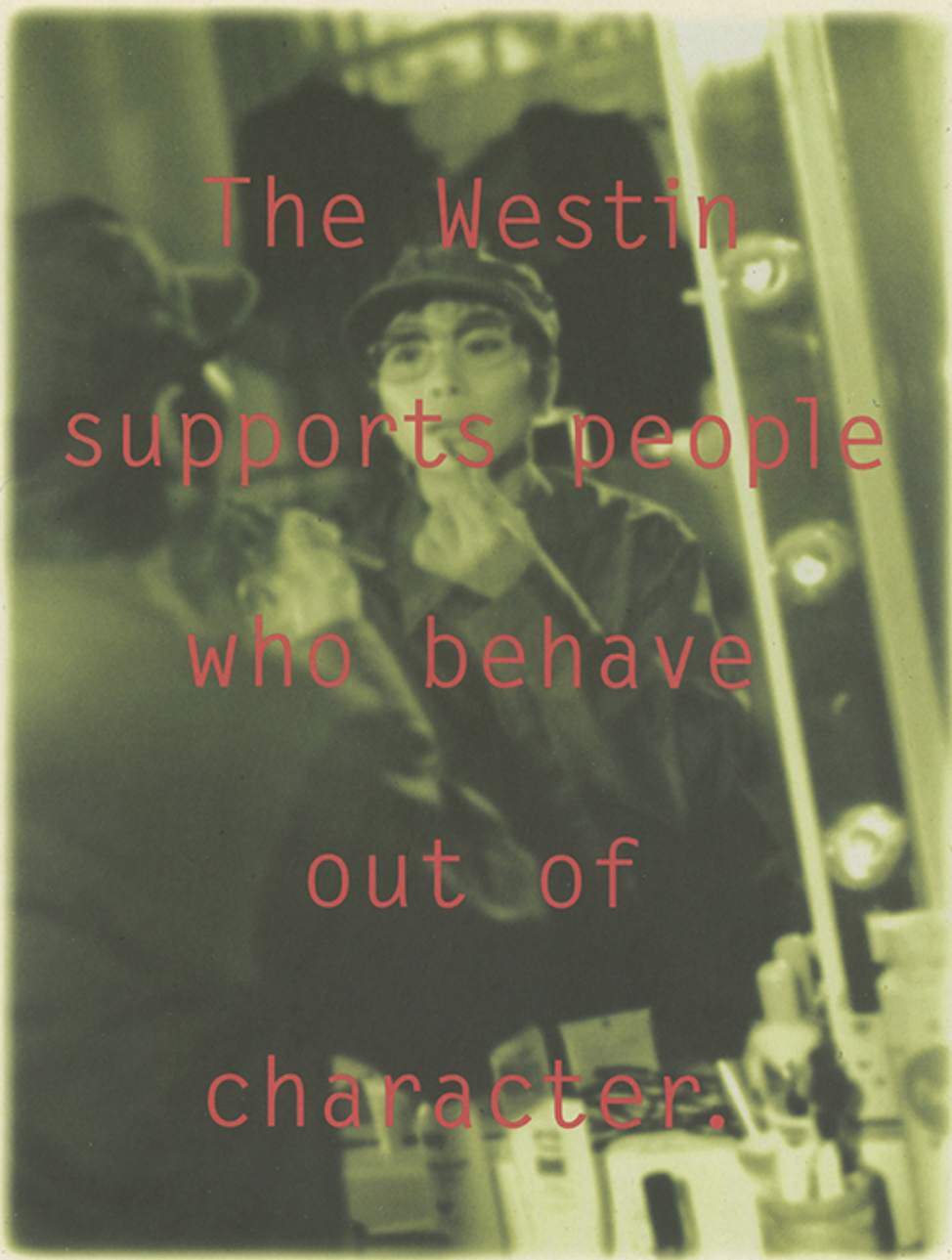
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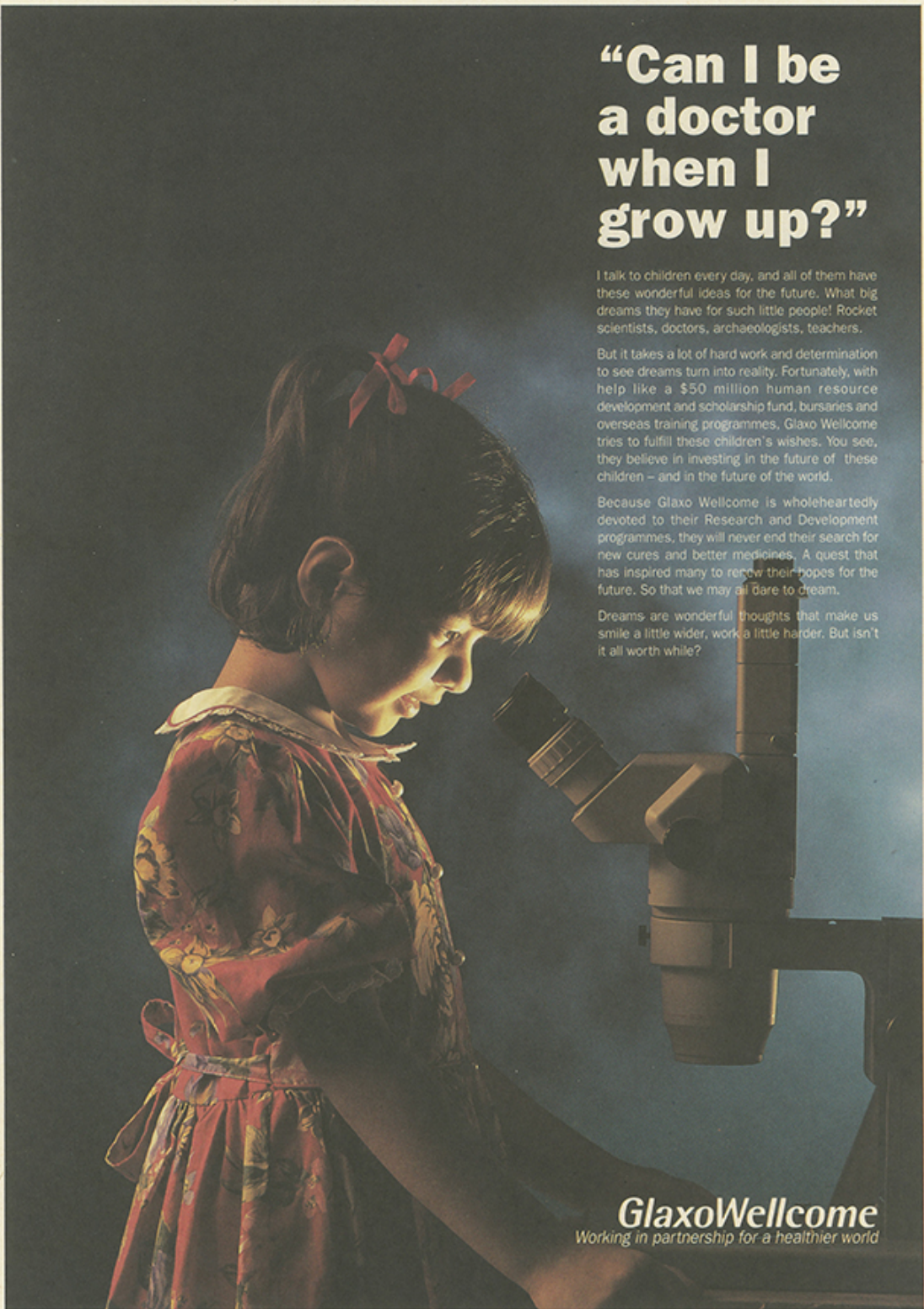
Bankers, doctors, lawyers. It seems that everyone prefers to act these days. And no one gives them more of a chance than TheatreWorks. And of course, The Westin. This year sees TheatreWorks' most ambitious projects take centrestage. Here at The Westin, we're



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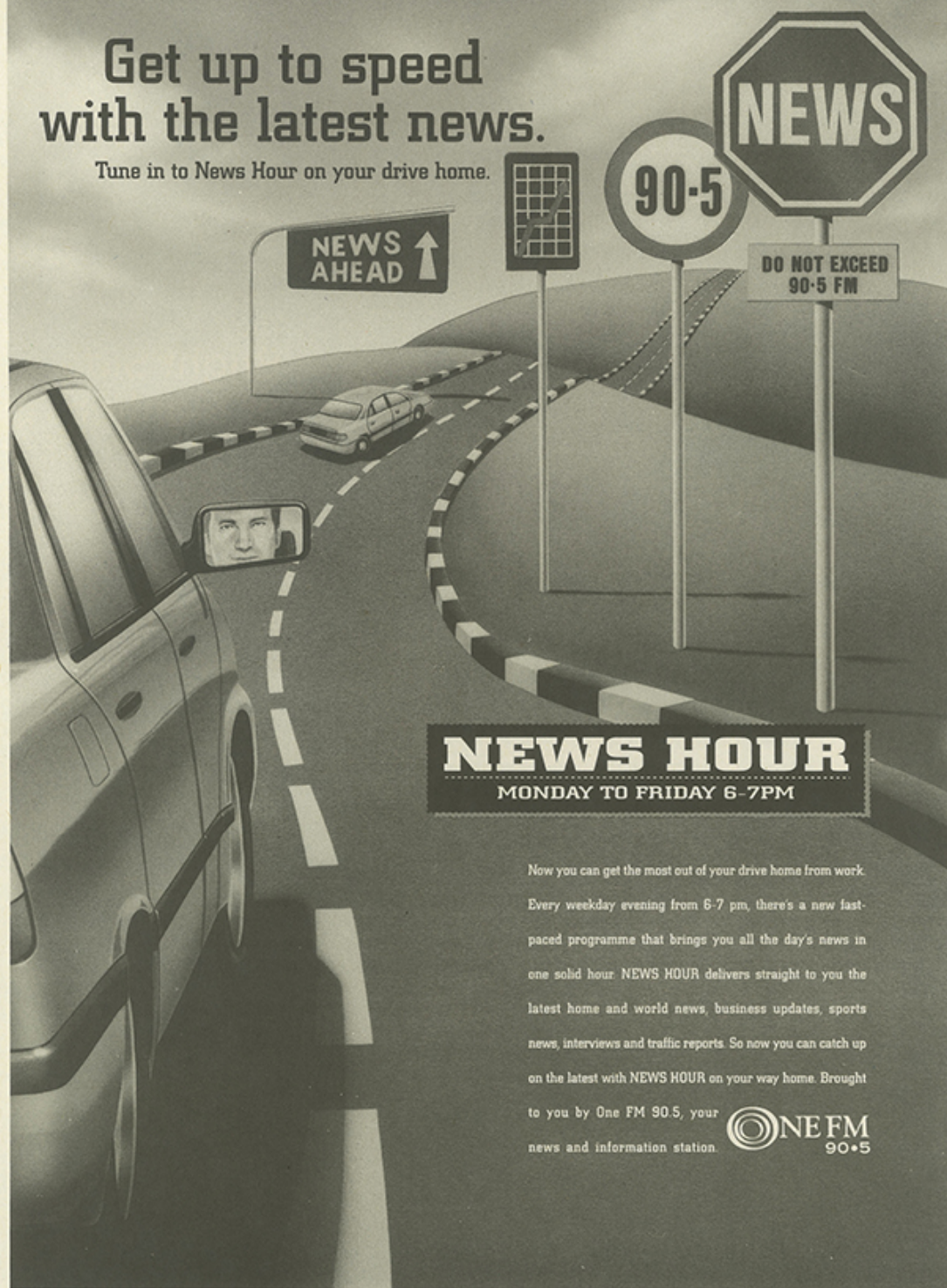
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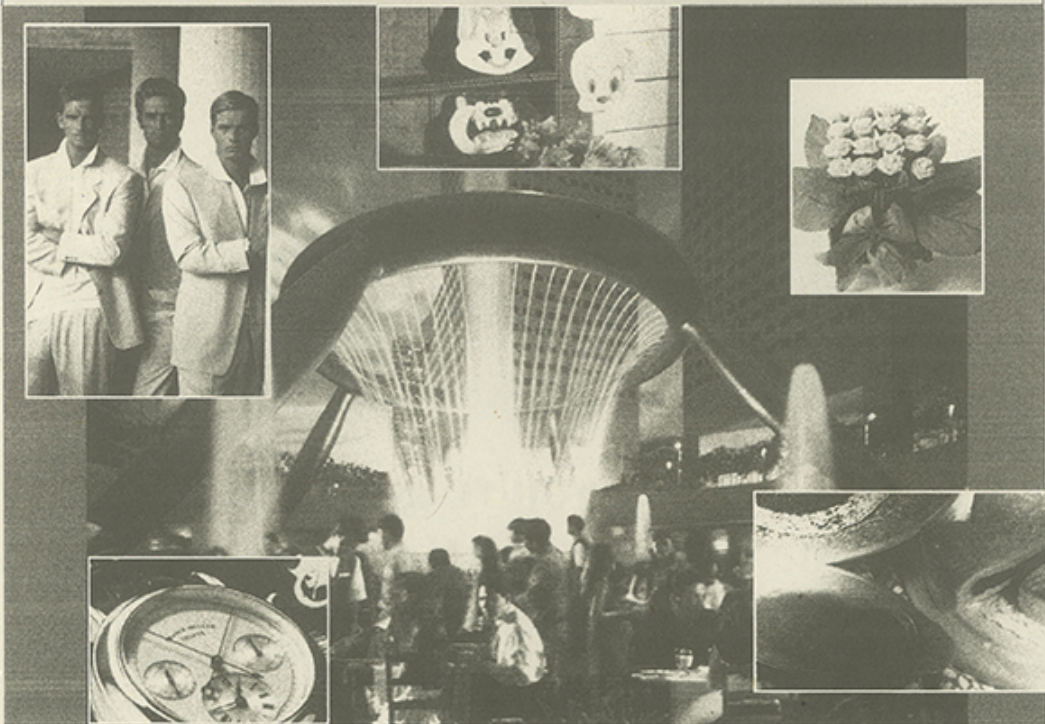


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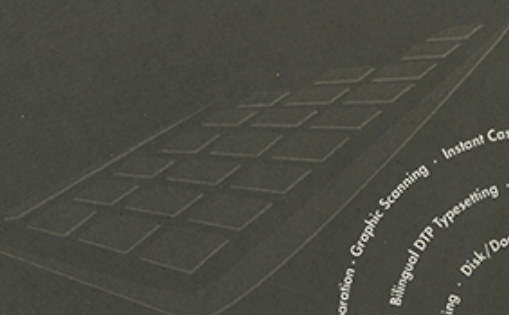
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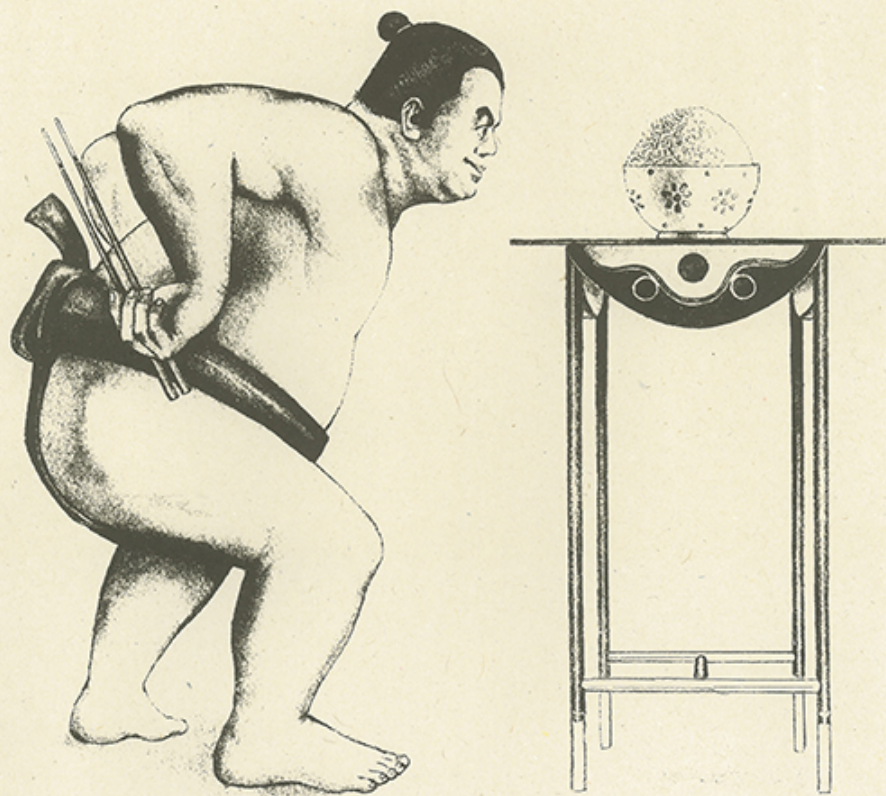
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