



Nanking! Nanking! • Nanjing! Nanjing!

Feature 35mm 100min.

Budget

US\$ 25,000,000 (HK\$195,000,000)

Funds Secured

US\$5,000,000 (HK\$39,000,000)

Producers

TIAN Zhuangzhuang

Production Company

Century Image Productions Co., Ltd

Partners Attached

Huayi Brothers & Taihe Film Investment Co., Ltd.

China Film Group Ltd.

HAF Goal

Funds

■ Introduction ■

From the award-winning director of *Kekexili* comes a courageous film chronicling one of the darkest chapters in the Sino-Japanese War – the Nanking Massacre. While being faithful to historical events, the director’s eye is primarily fixed on the personal, analyzing the human primal instinct through the gradual moral degeneration of one man. Structured in three parts, the narrative first alternates between the perspective of an ordinary Japanese soldier who becomes dehumanized in war, and the escape attempts of a low-ranking officer in the Nationalist army. The paths of these two men fighting on opposite sides meet in the third segment, when judgment is carried out.

■ Director ■

LU Chuan was born in Xinjiang, China, in 1971. He gained a Master of Arts degree from the Beijing Film Academy. After a stint as screenwriter for a China Central TV drama series named “Black Hole”, he made his first film, *Missing Gun* in 2001, directing and writing the script. The film was presented in the Upstream section in 2002 Viennale.

Kekexili (2004), Lu Chuan’s second film as director/scriptwriter, received enough international recognition for him to be named one of “10 Directors to Watch” by *Variety*. Following its China premiere, *Kekexili* won the Grand Jury Award at Tokyo IFF 2004, and went on to garner Best Picture and Best Cinematography at Taiwan’s Golden Horse Film Festival. It was selected for World Cinema Competition section at Sundance 2005 and for Berlin International Forum 2005.

■ Producer ■

TIAN Zhuangzhuang was born in Beijing in 1952. Among China’s 5th Generation directors, Tian is undisputedly one of the most influential today. Since graduating from the Beijing Film Academy in 1982, he has directed 10 features and one documentary. His third solo feature *Horse Thief* (1985) was one of the cornerstones of 5th Generation filmmaking, and opened a window on new Chinese talent to audiences in Eu-

rope and America. *The Blue Kite* (1991), now considered an all-time classic, won the Grand Prix at the 1992 Tokyo IFF. Now as active as ever, his 2002 new interpretation of Fei Mu’s classic *Springtime in a Small Town* won the San Marco Prize in Venice. From 2003-2004, he directed the documentary, *Delamu*, part of the “Tea-Horse Road” series, co-produced with Japan’s NHK.

Between 1994 and 1997, he ran the company Pegase within Beijing Film Studio and produced four features by young directors. He also acted in one of them, *How Steel is Forged*, directed by Lu Xuechang. In 2003, he set up BDI Films Inc. in Beijing specializing in HD films for the young generation of directors.

Feature films Tian made as Executive Producer/Supervisor since 1994 include: Lu Xuechang’s *How Steel is Forged*, Zhang Ming’s *In Expectation* (1996), Wang Xiaoshuai’s *So Close to Paradise* (1998), Xie Dong’s *The Coldest Day*, Zhu Wen’s *South of the Clouds* (2003) and Hou Yong’s *Jasmine Women* (2004).

■ Production Company ■

Century Image Productions Co., Ltd, formerly known as Lu Chuan Workshop, is one of China’s leading edge audiovisual companies. Offering a combination of film and TV production, advertising and broadcast services, the company’s recent film productions *Missing Gun* (2001) and *Kekexili* (2004) achieved international success.

■ Synopsis ■

Chapter 1: Masa, a Japanese soldier

1937. Like many ordinary Japanese people, Masa’s tranquil rural life is disrupted forever. Drafted into the Imperial Army, the young farmer receives two very different farewells on his departure. His mother gives him a samurai sword – to commit ritual suicide rather than shame his family and the Emperor. His nanny just tells him to come home alive, whatever.

The military drills are tough and rigorous, but like most young

recruits, Masa is dying to go to China and fight for the Emperor.

Masa's unit fights its way into Shanghai, but they lose almost half the men. One of the officers promoted are Masa and Sozo. A few months later, they enter the city of Nanking as decorated heroes. Ordered to eliminate 7,000 surrendered Chinese soldiers, the two start a killing competition. It is photographed by the Japanese newspaper Asahi Shimbun.

Although Masa initially forbids his men to violate any woman, the sight of one of them raping a mother and daughter arouses a physical instinct in him. He joins the rape and receives a round of cheers for it. He orders the victims to be killed. Rape becomes a pastime and addiction for him. One officer is murdered during a raping spree in a refugee camp. Masa has all the Chinese men in the camp executed.

Chapter 2: Xiong, a Chinese soldier

As the Japanese troops sink into a downward spiral of cruelty, Xiong, a lieutenant of the National Party, does his best to defend the country. After losing his platoon at the fall of Nanking, he hides out in the refugee camp set up by a German businessman, John Rabe. Xiong's greatest worry is Yun, his lover who has gone missing.

Rabe has provided a sanctuary for tens of thousands of Chinese.

One day, Japanese soldiers search the camp for Chinese soldiers. Xiong is detained along with others. At the point of execution, Rabe intercedes with five women claiming him and four other men as their husbands, and proving their civilian status. Yun is one of them. However, this is their final meeting as Yun is caught in further rescue attempts and gets shot before Xiong's very eyes.

Xiong works undercover as a Red Cross member to save civilians. Thanks to his uniform, he is spared from the massacre of all males in the camp, ordered by Masa.

Thousands of Chinese men are used as live targets for training rookie Japanese soldiers. Xiong and the older men are given the task of dumping the bodies into a river. Rabe finally rescues Xiong – the last man to survive Masa's killing spree.

This drives Masa mad. Three days later, he spots Xiong on the street and arrests him. Eventually, after a night of unexpected reversals, Masa releases Xiong, who escapes to rejoin the Chinese resistance, and survives the war. On the eve of his escape, he breaks down in tears before Rabe.

Chapter 3: Masa and Xiong

1945. Masa is repatriated. His mother has passed away, and his nanny arranges his marriage to a sweet hometown girl. However, he is arrested as a war criminal by the American occupation on his wedding day.

1946. Masa faces trial in China. The photograph taken by Japanese press becomes incriminating evidence for his death sentence. At the execution, he notices a familiar face. It is Xiong, who carried out the execution. Xiong finds himself weeping afterwards. No one knows he is a survivor from Nanking.

300,000 Chinese were murdered in Nanking in 1937.

■ Director's Statement ■

Through this film, I wish to portray how humanity can mutate and become distorted by war. The story is focused on an ordinary Japanese soldier's experience of the Sino-Japanese War. By representing what the Japanese Army did in Nanking in 1937, I want to reveal how the basic nature of the soldiers underwent changes.

Japan never saw herself as a criminal of war. Her people always felt they were victims of war. They hardly ever reflected on the terrible catastrophes that they have brought upon other nations. I want to explore how extreme patriotism and an almost religious devotion to the Emperor during the war blocked any self-reflection or independent judgment, and culminated in a nearly total lack of empathy for other races. I hope this film can put them in touch with their own primal insecurity and their barbaric subversive instincts towards the others – a condition they have yet to admit to or realize.

The senseless war and atrocities committed in Nanking made this period one of the darkest episodes in the history of wars. Somehow, the Chinese's passivity also encouraged and prolonged the massacre. It is certainly not my intention to fan the fires of racial hatred. I just want to recreate accurately a chapter in history and interpret the reason behind its happening. My ultimate goal is to expose the distortion of human nature by war. This is a theme that applies not just to

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