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**Ship of Dreams: Kanrin Maru 咸臨丸
-150 Years of Hope, Struggle,
and Friendship**

**by
Tony Sano
Paul Heller
and
Mary Sano**

CAST

Commodore Perry

Two Ships who accompany Perry

Villagers

Nakahama Manjiro (also known as John Mung)

Townsend Harris, America's first Consul General to Japan

Inoue Shinano-No-Kami Kiyonao, Commissioner of Foreign Affairs for the Shogun

The Spirit of East and West

John Brooke

Two Sailors

Mary Sano

Mary's Mother

Mary's Father

Amber

Monique

(Young woman)

Junko

Musicians: Piano, Cello, Koto

Time: 1853 - Present. Edo (modern Tokyo), the deck of the Kanrin Maru, and the United States

Curtains open with projector screen upstage. Pianist, Cellist, and koto player are seated in their respective places.

We begin to hear the sound of ocean waves. The screen fades slowly into video of the ocean, stormy and misty, with waves crashing. Tony begins to play the Kanrin Maru theme on piano. Accompanied by cello. After a short time, the image “1853” fades in on the left side over the ocean waves, and fades out after a few seconds.

Three male figures in large black costumes (representing Perry’s black ships) emerge and move slowly downstage as theme song plays. Perry is in the front and flanked by two ‘ships’ behind him. As they approach the edge of stage, they stop. The man in the middle un.masks himself, he is Commodore Perry. He speaks above the audience. He is proud, and indignant. He holds a scroll.

The villagers watch him and react.

PERRY

My name is Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry. I offer the empire of Japan peace, prosperity, and a place amongst the Civilized nations of the world. All that the United States asks in return is safe harbor for her ships and sailors, ...and amicable trading rights, with the empire of Japan.

A Japanese flute lets out a high note from behind the audience. The Koto begins to play. Two Japanese dancers emerge from the downstage aisles from the audience (or Japan) and dance around the three ‘black ships’. They are afraid, inquisitive, much as the Japanese public must have felt about the ships at that time.

Dancers continue for about a minute with Koto accompaniment. They exit downstage right and off into South Wing. Koto Finishes. Manjiro, who is seated in the first row of seats downstage left, stands and makes his way to the stage, where he addresses the audience.

MANJIRO

This was the beginning. The Americans show up in Our Edo Bay, with mountains of gold and cloth, and GUNS. Cannons that would make your head SHAKE and ears RING for hours.... It seems impossible to imagine that from this violence we could build anything together, but this was just the beginning of a long journey. (A journey of perseverance that continues to this day.)

At the end of Manjiro’s first Paragraph, the word, “journey”, the two flanking ships to Perry turn and slowly make their way off stage. A Japanese ‘servant’ sets the futon and small chair for the ambassadors as Kiyonao makes his way toward the stage from the aisle and will enter downstage left.

Lights down on all except Manjiro, who continues his monologue, as the stage is set behind him for the next scene and images on the projector show the ongoing negotiations. 3 Images. About 4 sec each.

But first, the U. S. demanded a treaty. They hoped to secure favorable terms. Japanese delegates matched the Americans in their desire, hope and cunning. The negotiations dragged on and on year by year-

Once the two ships reach exit, Harris enters from upstage right. A Japanese 'servant' can set the futon and chair for the men. As Manjiro finishes his words, Perry turns to Harris, walks to him and hands him the scroll with a nod, before exiting upstage right. As Manjiro takes his seat, an image of Japanese Shoji appears on projector.

TOWNSEND HARRIS, America's Consul General enters from upstage right (with the scroll - the treaty agreement) and INOUE SHINANO-NO-KAMI KIYONAO, the Commissioner for Foreign Affairs for the Shogun enters from the aisle and takes his position downstage left.

HARRIS (subtext of irritation)

Minister Kiyonao, thank you for welcoming me back to your palace. Again.

KIYONAO

We are happy to be welcoming you, again, Consul General Harris.

HARRIS

I am sure our negotiations will make excellent headway. After four years.

KIYONAO

Perhaps.

HARRIS

My people are anxious that we find ways to address our minor difficulties.

KIYONAO

Our Shogun is confident that we will breach this impasse.

(Beat)

KIYONAO (initiating)

Did you enjoy the gift I sent for you?

HARRIS

Eggs and beans. You people do give the oddest gifts.

Kiyanao

It is not just a gift, Mr. Harris. It is to ensure our plan is Fertile.

HARRIS

(small beat) Did you receive my gifts?

KIYONAO

The bolts of cotton and the little steam train. A hint?

HARRIS

A reminder. Steam has made the west rich. This is what this trade agreement can offer you.

(HARRIS proffers the treaty.)

KIYONAO

We are rich.

HARRIS

But are you safe?

KIYONAO

Mr. Harris, we have had two hundred and twenty-one years of peace because we have been able to keep foreigners out of our affairs.

HARRIS

But with the British amassing their navy along the coast of China, those years are over. This treaty is for your protection.

(Beat)

President Buchanan offers Japan a powerful friendship.

(HARRIS proffers the treaty again.)

MARY enters as the spirit of Japan beginning to take on Western influence. She watches and moves between both characters and is unseen by them. She will have on a mask or make-up to differentiate herself as spirit versus 'Mary'.

(KIYONAO takes the treaty.)

KIYONAO

We will sign this only after meeting your President Buchanan face to face.

HARRIS

We have a ship at anchor ready to take your delegation to Washington.

KIYONAO

We will send our own delegation to Washington.

HARRIS

Good. On our Frigate Powhatan.

KIYONAO

On our ship, Mr. Harris.

HARRIS

You don't have any ships, that's the Point of all this!

KIYONAO

We just commissioned one from Holland. The Kanrin Maru.

HARRIS

Kanrin Maru..? (Poor Pronunciation) And who is going to Captain this ship of yours??

KIYONAO stands as if to end the conversation. HARRIS also stands.

KIYONAO

We would not dream of inconveniencing you. We have a capable captain, named Katsu Rintaro. But perhaps there are some experienced naval officers available to.....

HARRIS

Command—

KIYONAO

Advise.

Harris nods his head slightly.

HARRIS

Very well.

MARY moves between them. Here we have MARY'S first dance solo, "East Meets West in Me." The theme is expectation, longing, and new beginnings. (Mary's

feelings toward her father before her trip to US. This parallels the emotions, fears, hopes the Japanese felt prior to the Kanrin Maru voyage.) The theme is IDENTITY and Maturing. Fighting the battles within as outside forces impinge. This is about a country that is being told what it must be or wear (black dress), while it wants to retain its own identity with pride. (kimono) Accompaniment will be koto and cello.

MANJIRO

Two great empires, used to the sound of their own voices. Would they listen to each other? Would the ocean waves bring us together, or tear us apart? This was the challenge we faced.

Fade up lights as sound of ocean is heard and perhaps visual images representing the sea on projector. Stage is now the deck of the ship, with a few props here and there denoting as such. Two or three 'sailors' work on doing various jobs on the deck, preparing for departure. Manjiro goes to work on something center left of stage.

2 Sailors enter from stairs down stage left, carrying boxes.... about 10 seconds apart. Sailor 1 is outspoken and a bit mischievous, while sailor 2 is more humble. They cross the stage and begin stowing boxes as the dialogue below unfolds. They are excited about their journey ahead, and very inquisitive toward Manjiro, who holds the only 1st hand information about their destination.

Sailor 1

Manjiro, I was wondering.... Is it true that the American women keep their men as slaves??

Manjiro

(Laughing) No.... Where did you hear that??

Manjiro sees Sailor 2 approaching- struggling with 2 larger boxes and goes to help him- the three men end up in a sort of triangle with Manjiro in the center...

Sailor 1

My Uncle Yoshi!!

Sailor 2 comes in almost on top of Sailor 1...

Sailor 2

But they do walk about naked from wrist to shoulder and sit while the men stand, yes??

Manjiro

Well, yes... But it is not a terrible thing. It's just a different way. It is similar to the way we here respect our parents. Is that so strange??

**The Two Sailors pause for a moment, a little awed by Manjiro's reply....
Their excitement returns quickly, and they begin another series of
questions...**

Sailor 1

And what about their homes?? I heard that every one lives in a Giant mansion, with many many fine things!!

Sailor 2

Yes, will the Americans have any use for these gifts we offer??

Sailor 1

Surely they'll have little use for our Samurai swords and saddles..!?!?

Manjiro smiles slightly.

Manjiro

We may not have the same guns and steam trains that they do, but we have many valuable things to offer. Gifts are only symbols.

As Manjiro begins delivering his last line, Brooke appears from upstage right and makes his way downstage. Something appears to be weighing on his mind. He looks out at the 'weather' and says, mostly to himself,

Brooke

Looks like we'll be here a few more days....

MANJIRO

Mr. Brooke, advisor to the captain?

Brooke is slightly startled, also by the fact that Manjiro can speak English.

BROOKE

Yes.

MANJIRO

I am Manjiro, the ship's translator. I heard Captain Rintaro mention we will likely set sail in the morning...

Brooke Nods.

(BROOKE and MANJIRO look out over the harbor.)

BROOKE

I've been stranded in Japan since a typhoon wrecked my ship off the coast... I haven't seen my wife for two years and I'm very anxious to set sail.

MANJIRO

I understand your desire to get home.

BROOKE

From what I understand, your men haven't been more than a week out at sea.

MANJIRO

I think you'll see what delivering this treaty will do to the men's sense of mission. Give us a chance, Mr. Brooke. We must succeed.

Brooke nods slightly.

BROOKE

Very well.

Brooke moves upstage left and begins working on another part of the ship. Lights fade on background as Manjiro moves into light downstage left.

Manjiro

JAPAN was ready. We were ready to show the United States, and the WORLD, that we were a strong and CIVILIZED country. That we could man our own ship and travel across the Great Sea. What would become of this first voyage across the Pacific? The Kanrin Maru, 'the ship of dreams', would decide.

On the "Kanrin Maru" the sail is unfurled, sound effect to highlight 'Unfurling.'

We all played a part, and this was mine.

Lightning (lighting) and sound of rough weather and waves strike just after Manjiro finishes his sentence. Ocean background image goes to darkness and rough weather waves.

Apparently the Gods are not without a sense of irony. Almost immediately after leaving harbor we were hit by a series of storms, unlike anything most of us had ever seen. It seemed a bad omen...Captain Rintaro even wanted to turn the ship around...

Begin Dance of Storm. The dance is turbulent wild, representing the storm and the danger that the ship faced. Early in the dance, we will have Voiceover quotes from the men aboard with English translation appear across the screen, expressing their fears and experience during the storm.

BROOKE (to SAILOR TWO)

The mast will snap if you turn about in this gale. We need to trim the main sail.

(SAILOR TWO does not understand.)

Does no one understand me? Manjiro! Goddamn it, where's Manjiro?

(MANJIRO enters.)

MANJIRO

Yes, Mr. Brooke.

BROOKE

He is incompetent. That man there – that seaman – he is competent.

MANJIRO

I'm sorry, sir. He is not as high a rank as the Lieutenant.

BROOKE

But I can see he is a sailor. A real sailor. He knows what he's doing. I insist he take over the task.

MANJIRO

The officers are samurai, sir. They would not consider my speaking to them.

BROOKE

Then get the captain.

MANJIRO

The captain cannot come.

BROOKE

Why can the captain not come?

MANJIRO

It's hard to explain.

BROOKE

Do you not know the word in English?

MANJIRO

This is not just about translating. It would not be appropriate. Captain Rintaro cannot be a captain right now due to the rough weather, and the storm, and the movement of the ship, so it is not possible to put the captain in a position such as you ask.

(Storm becomes louder and more violent.)

BROOKE

Tell the captain to take charge of this ship and his men, before we all die!!

MANJIRO

I am sorry, I cannot dishonor him with such a request.

BROOKE

This is madness! If the captain can't command the ship – ask him – request permission that I speak with his authority.

MANJIRO

We can try. May I suggest you and I take the watch, sir.

BROOKE

Do you know how to navigate?

MANJIRO

I am at your command.

(The dance of the storm subsides. They are saved. Manjiro and Brooke are exhausted and lie next to each other on deck. They have a flask.)

BROOKE

Thank you, Manjiro.

MANJIRO

Mr. Brooke—

BROOKE

Please, John.

MANJIRO

My name is John.

BROOKE

John?

MANJIRO

Yes. See I, like you, was once stranded far from home. I was marooned on an island hundreds of miles from Japan, when my fishing boat was blown out to sea many years ago. I was just fourteen. My crew and I survived for five months, before we were finally spotted by an American whaling ship. The captain of the ship was a good man. He took us aboard, fed us, and clothed us. He even took a liking to me, and named me 'John' after his ship, the *John Howland*. When he dropped the rest of the crew off in Hawaii, he asked me if I would like to stay on and get an education in Boston. I took him up on his offer.

BROOKE

Well, thank God you did, John. Today our lives depended on it.

(They shake hands.)

Lighting is blue/white and dreamlike. We begin to hear a scratchy, old-record like version of "I Love you for Sentimental Reasons" by Nat King Cole. After a few seconds, we begin to see images on the screen from the Kanrin Maru's cross-country tour. Over the video we can use Voiceover to portray positive quotes from the Japanese emissaries, or English quotes from the Press or US dignitaries. These will go on and build to the signing of the agreement which will be at about two minutes into the song.

At this point KIYONAO enters with the treaty and against the slide show, hands it to President Buchanan (the actor playing HARRIS, with a top hat) They sign it. While –

MANJIRO

We left Edo February 10, 1860. 37 days later, we spied the Farallon Islands off the coast of California. The next day, we sailed through the Golden Gate and docked at San Francisco, March 17. Throughout the passage, the greatest harmony has existed between our men and the American sailors. Once in America, our Ambassadors were treated like royalty.

At the very last line of the song "Given you my Heart", the record scratches and suddenly begins to repeat the word "MY". Slowly at first, then faster and more violently At first it will seem like a glitch, but soon the images on the screen will begin to evolve into negative news and events from the

journey, as well as quotes that can be VO'd. For example, the Japanese were unable to amend the unequal clauses in the original agreement on that first mission. As the "My's" speed up, we will venture forward in the historical timeline, showing newspaper clippings etc of diplomatic differences and incidents that occurred throughout the late 1800's and early 1900's. We will then show the build up of actions leading to the second World War (Pearl Harbor, Internment Camps, Bombings, etc.).... The "My's" reach a feverish pace as images of pain and death flash quickly across..... THEN..... a brief PAUSE..... before.... "HEAAAART" is heard as video of the Atomic Bombing is seen on the screen, as song finishes, projector goes to black. There is silence for a few seconds before bells begin to be heard from different areas of the stage, and from behind the audience. Tony begins to play a piano solo, alone on stage, perhaps with Koto. Tony goes to version of original theme, and ocean image comes on background. Manjiro stands and delivers.

MANJIRO

There were steps forward, but also many back. . . . There was progress, and hope, but there was also hate, suffering, and sadly, great loss of life. . . . But often out of death, comes new beginnings, and new life

Tony begins to play Kanrin Maru theme. One grey ship appears, and slowly moves downstage as it did in the opening. When reaching a point near center stage, MARY'S MOTHER is seen moving upstage. The ship removes his mask as he nears center stage. He is MARY'S FATHER, who wears a military outfit. FATHER and MOTHER stop about 12 ft. from one another at center stage as the music fades out. In silence, they circle around each other slowly, eyes transfixed. They circle closer and closer until they graze shoulders, and then... hands. Finally, they embrace. Soon after, FATHER breaks away.

With a look of sorrow, FATHER begins to move away from MOTHER and goes back upstage from where he came. He looks back several times as he walks toward the exit. He stops just short of the exit with his back to audience. MOTHER looks to him for a beat then turns toward the audience and looks down to her stomach, and places her hands over her womb, uncertainty and fear on her face. Lights fade to black. MOTHER exits. In darkness, we hear a high version of the theme song, it is dream-like.

During the above, old photographs appear on screen of FATHER, first in G.I. gear, then in more casual clothing, and with MOTHER on his lap. These eventually fade away into black.

After a few seconds we hear MARY'S voice on a recorded track. "I had a dream. I had a dream of meeting my father for the first time."

Lights fade up as Tony begins to play 'Father'. Mary's FATHER still stands in the corner, back to audience, and MARY, enters from downstage. She makes her way upstage toward FATHER, but he disappears behind the curtain as she gets near him. She continues to search for him throughout the course of the 2 minute piece. She ends holding her father's 'cloak'. Lights fade down.

After a brief pause, Tony begins playing 'Bittersweet Lullaby'. Shortly thereafter, FATHER appears and moves toward MARY. Lights fade up slightly as the two begin to dance. It is full of love and laughter, dreamlike..... At end of piece, FATHER puts MARY to sleep upstage left. Song ends. Lights fade to black.

Manjiro appears in his usual spot.

MANJIRO

There have been many beautiful dreams, and horrible nightmares since our great voyage across the Pacific. The children of the Kanrin Maru continue to dream, and each of us, dream a little differently.

MONIQUE enters and goes to mark upstage right. Spotlight comes on.

MONIQUE

I had a dream. I was a strong, independent person of mixed race. I was not male or female, yellow or white. I was human, just human.

She lies down and sleeps, like Mary. A young woman who is of mixed race enters and comes downstage left.

AYANA

My name is (include many of her family names). I'm one quarter Japanese and a little bit French, an eighth Cambodian, and my great grandma was Peruvian, her husband was Turkish, and my other side if from Morocco.

Piano accompaniment begins with five other dancers with Ayana, as directed by Soto. The dancers proceed to start popping up and down - each person representing another side of her ethnicity with different ideas, wants etc.... During this bit, Amber (one of the dancers) goes on a riff about being 'White' and what that means to her. After the dance, Ayana comes forward downstage left into spotlight and states:

My dream is that I could live in a country, and a world where I don't need to be Mexican at Sunday dinner, and Japanese at Friday Church Group, and Cambodian at Aunt Lily's.... My dream is that I can just be ME.

The group clears behind her, except for Amber, who looks on. Once Ayana goes to sleep, Amber comes forward to the right of Ayana, and states:

AMBER

Option: I had a dream. I had a dream where we could ALL have a Clean slate. Where the actions of my ancestors would not define me or my motives.

Option: I had a dream where being white could be an ethnicity. Where I could HAVE an ethnicity... to be proud of....

She lies down and sleeps.

JUNKO enters and moves to a mark downstage right.

JUNKO

I have a dream of my daughter. She is playing in a time and place I do not recognize. She is singing in English, and laughing in Japanese. She is innocent and carefree. She does not know the history and struggle that came before her, that allowed her to be so free; but I tell her. I will tell her about John Manjiro and John Brooke, and the Kanrin Maru. I will tell her about Pearl Harbor, and Manzanar, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. I will teach her that life and history are filled with fear, anger, and tragedy. But they are also filled with hope, laughter, progress and the mutual understanding of love. The dream of the Kanrin Maru is alive, and we must persevere, to make it a reality.

Dance of Perseverance 5 dancers with piano, cello and koto)

END