

## CHINESE AMERICAN HEROES

chineseamericanheroes.org

**July 30:** This date is dedicated to Congressman Michael Honda for his loyal and faithful defense of the Constitution of the United States and his stand for justice and fairness to all Americans as well as other citizens of the world. The date marks passage of United States House of Representatives House Resolution 121 (H.Res. 121) that was written and sponsored by Congressman Honda.

Congressman Honda is a third generation Japanese American, who has been called Japan's least favorite son, among many other names, for demanding that Japan acknowledge its war crimes during World War II against the Chinese, Koreans, and other peoples.

In the California State Assembly, Honda introduced a resolution asking the Japanese government to apologize for its World War II atrocities and pay reparations to its victims. The bill passed both houses of the state government. Honda was a strong supporter of Iris Chang and her book, *The Rape of Nanking*, which described the murderous and inhumane behavior of the Japanese Imperial Army during its World War II occupation of Nanjing. He honored her memory after her untimely death in 2004.

As a US Congressman, Mike Honda sponsored House Resolution 121, asking the Japanese government to unequivocally acknowledge its history of wartime sex slavery. He felt the resolution would provide justice to those 200,000 women from Korea, Taiwan, China, the Philippines and other parts of Asia who were drafted into brothels to service the Japanese Imperial Army. Called "comfort women," these sex slaves endured gang rape, forced abortions, humiliation, and sexual violence leading to mutilation, death, and suicide. The survivors have lived for many decades with the shame of having survived and oftentimes rejection from their families for the ordeals they endured through no fault of their own.

There are no references to comfort women in Japanese school textbooks and there has been no official apology to these women from the Japanese government. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe even denied the existence of military brothels and the harsh lives of comfort women, to the ongoing anger of many Asian nations. In a visit to Washington, Abe gave a carefully worded apology for the history that President Bush accepted. Mike Honda, however, felt the apology was not for an American president to accept, and pushed on with the resolution. The resolution passed on July 30, 2007, with no opposition voiced.

During World War II, Michael Honda and his family were sent to an internment camp in Colorado. The fourteen months at the camp would heavily influence his later politics, as did the eventual United States government's apology to the

Japanese American population in 1988. He feels that reconciliation must begin with acceptance. For Japan to be a world leader, he feels, it must accept and apologize for its past.

Honda has been accused of being an agent for the Chinese government. He has been asked how he can try to humiliate Japan when he himself is of Japanese descent. Honda's answer was that it did not matter the color of his skin, Japan needs to acknowledge shameful parts of its history.

All Asian Americans, including Chinese Americans, are extremely grateful to Congressman Honda for his strong stand for justice and actions to correct injustices in history.