

## Passage of H.Res. 121 on "Comfort Women", the US Congress and Historical Memory in Japan

**Kinue TOKUDOME**

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This article was originally written for a Japanese audience. My purpose was to inform them of the developments leading up to the passage of the "comfort women" resolution in the House of Representatives. I did not, therefore, devote much space to describe the tireless efforts made by Japanese scholars, lawyers, and activists who have long kept the "comfort women" issue alive. Their dedication to the historical truth and the victims resulted in such accomplishments as the creation of Women's Active Museum on War and Peace (<http://www.wam-peace.org/eng/>) in Tokyo and the 56 consecutive issues of the "The Report on Japan's War Responsibility" published by the Center for Research and Documentation of Japan's War Responsibility (<http://space.geocities.jp/japanwarres/center/english/index-english.htm>).

Former Siberian internee Mr. Ikeda Koichi, in a failed lawsuit, tried to hold the Japanese

government accountable for the sufferings of his 600,000 fellow internees. He once told me, "Many of us are getting old and powerless with very little time and money. Yet we have citizens who support us. They are grassroots activists who wholeheartedly support victims here in Japan and abroad. It is through the tireless efforts of these conscientious Japanese people that goodwill and friendship between this shameful nation and its former victims are narrowly maintained."

I hope that readers of this English version will not overlook the efforts made by countless Japanese in order to bring a just and honorable resolution to the "comfort women" issue. KT

"The 'comfort women' resolution passed!" The voice on the telephone of my long-time friend Annette Lantos, the wife of Congressman Tom Lantos, Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, was upbeat. Knowing that I was writing about this issue, she let me know the

news on the afternoon of July 30, 2007.

The final version of the “comfort women” resolution (H.Res.121) reads in pertinent part as follows:

That it is the sense of the House of Representatives that the Government of Japan

(1) should formally acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Forces' coercion of young women into sexual slavery, known to the world as “comfort women”, during its colonial and wartime occupation of Asia and the Pacific Islands from the 1930s through the duration of World War II;

(2) would help to resolve recurring questions about the sincerity and status of prior statements if the Prime Minister of Japan were to make such an apology as a public statement in his official capacity;

(3) should clearly and publicly refute any claims that the sexual enslavement and trafficking of the

“comfort women” for the Japanese Imperial Armed Forces never occurred; and

(4) should educate current and future generations about this horrible crime while following the recommendations of the international community with respect to the “comfort women” .

It had been six months since Congressman Michael Honda (D-CA) introduced H. Res. 121. Why was it passed by the full House on this occasion when all previous attempts over the past several years failed? This article describes the background of the H. Res. 121 and its supporters, and profiles Chairman Lantos who was instrumental in the successful passage of this resolution. Finally, it assesses the message this resolution sends to Japan.

### **Contribution of Scholars**

It was the spring of 2006 when the office of Chairman Henry Hyde (R-IL) of the House International Relations Committee (currently the Foreign Affairs Committee) contacted Mindy Kotler, Director of Asia Policy Point, a Washington, DC based non-profit research center. It was a request for advice on the “comfort women” resolution that was introduced

by Congressman Lane Evans (D-IL). As a Pacific War veteran himself, Chairman Hyde wanted to pass the resolution that Congressman Evans, who was to retire at the end of the term due to Parkinson's disease, had been working on for many years. Although the resolution was voted out of the Committee, it was not voted on by the full House, which was controlled by the Republican Party.

When Democrats achieved a majority in both houses of Congress, Congressman Michael Honda, Chairman of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus and a long-time advocate of human rights, who inherited the "comfort women" resolution. Congressman Honda asked Ms. Kotler to continue working on the resolution. Ms. Kotler formed a team of scholars in order to ensure that Congress would fully understand the politics and the history surrounding the "comfort women" issue. They were historians, political scientists, policy specialists, and security analysts from Japan, the US, and Australia. Congressman Honda received valuable input from this team including the contributions of skilled translators who read and analyzed the past statements that had been issued by the Japanese government.

This team briefed the staff of Congressman Honda on Japan's history and its political system and documented the fact that Japan had not officially apologized. Despite expressions of

regret by prime ministers and other officials, they showed that under the Japanese Constitution, an official apology could only come from the Japanese Cabinet. Anticipating Japanese government reaction to the resolution, these experts provided information that was eventually added to the resolution, notably the fact that Japan had signed the 1921 International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children and supported the 2000 United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, which recognized the unique impact of armed conflict on women. It praised Japan's efforts to promote human security, human rights, democratic values, and rule of law, as well as explained and praised the activities of the private "Asian Women's Fund", which brought together women from Japan and other Asian nations to call for official apology and reparations for the "comfort women". At the same time, it was noted that recently Japanese public officials had sought to dilute or rescind the 1993 statement by Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono Yohei on the "comfort women," which expressed the Government's sincere apologies and remorse for their ordeal.

The research conducted by the Kotler team was used to refute Japanese Embassy's website statements that explained what the Japanese government found problematic in the resolution.

The Japanese Embassy website

(<http://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/english/html/cw1.htm>) stated:

1. The Japanese Government has acknowledged the “comfort women” issue and extended official apologies on many important occasions;
2. The Government of Japan and the Japanese people have taken concrete measures for the victims; (The Asian Women’s Fund)
3. This issue is not neglected in the public school education of Japan.

It concluded:

- The draft House Resolution (H.Res.121) is erroneous in terms of the facts.
- Its adoption would be harmful to the friendship between the US and Japan.
- Prime Minister Abe has reaffirmed the 1993 statement.

Ms. Kotler responded:

1. A definitive, official government statement must fit one of four conditions:

- 1) a bill passed by the Diet. The Prime Minister, representing the Cabinet, submits a bill to the Diet (art. 72), which becomes a law upon passage by both Lower and Upper Houses (art. 59) and the signature of the competent Minister of State and the countersignature by the Prime Minister (art. 74);
- 2) a statement by a cabinet minister in a full session of the Diet;
- 3) a statement by a prime minister in an official communiqué while on an overseas visit;
- 4) a statement ratified by the Cabinet, known as a cabinet decision (kakugi kettei).

In practice, none of the first three examples of official statements are possible without a cabinet decision. A cabinet decision is the definitive expression of official government policy in Japan. Thus far, in regard to the Comfort Women, none of these conditions have been met.

(When I inquired of the Japanese Embassy about this issue, they replied, “All the apologies issued by the Japanese government, including the Kono Statement, were official.” The Embassy did not mention that Prime Minister Abe, on March 16, 2007, stated in a reply to written questions by Lower House member Tsujimoto Kiyomi that the Kono Statement was not officially endorsed by a cabinet decision (kakugi kettei).)

2. Although a laudable and notable effort, the Asian Women’s Fund is not a government organization.

3. The reference to the “comfort women” is disappearing from the Japanese textbooks.

4. Passage of the “comfort women” resolution could only strengthen, not weaken the US-Japan relationship.

(Asia Policy Point website ([http://www.jiaponline.org/resources/comfort\\_women.html](http://www.jiaponline.org/resources/comfort_women.html)))

The research conducted by the Kotler team was distributed among Congressional leaders, their staffs, the State Department, the White House, and the Congressional Research Service. It was also sent to major newspapers across the United States. Ms. Kotler said, “While the congressmen

might not remember all that was told to them, they did come away understanding that the ‘comfort women’ system was state sponsored and that the Japanese government had not offered an official apology.”

She also explained to those who worked on the resolution that the “comfort women” issue was a human rights issue that had relevance in today’s world. Testifying during the Congressional hearing held by the House Subcommittee on Asia Pacific and the Global Environment on February 15, 2007, following the testimonies of three former “comfort women,” she said,

“Japan is the precedent for today’s understanding of humanitarian issues and sexual violence in war. The most important tool in prosecuting/stopping sexual violence in war in the future is the precedent of past recognition of sexual violence, enslavement, and exploitation. Japan’s wartime military rape camps are the modern precedent for all the issues of sexual slavery, sexual violence in war, and human trafficking that so dominate today’s discussion of war and civil conflict—Bosnia, Rwanda, Nicaragua, Sierra Leone, Darfur, Burma.”

On April 3, 2007, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) issued a 23-page report entitled, “Japanese Military’s ‘Comfort Women’ System. (<http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2405>)” CRS is a non-partisan public policy research organization working exclusively for Members of Congress and their staff. Their research findings provide the basis on which lawmakers formulate their policy and legislation. After introducing primary sources, testimonies, and previous studies on the “Comfort Women” system, the report concluded, “There appears to have been little of a genuinely voluntarily nature to the system.”

The report further listed all the remarks that Prime Minister Abe made after H. Res. 121 was introduced—including this: “‘There is no evidence to back up that there was coercion as defined initially’ in the role of ‘the Japanese military or government’ in recruiting comfort women.” and extending to his telephone conversation with President Bush where he “affirmed that the stood by the consistent position of the Government of Japan, represented by the statement of the former Chief Cabinet Secretary Kono, and expressed heartfelt sympathy and sincere apologies to the women who suffered immeasurable pain and hardship.”

The report went on to point out the conflicting nature of Prime Minister Abe’s statement and his

government’ position by revealing that the Japanese Cabinet was still declaring that the government did not find a description which directly proves that there was so-called coercive recruitment by the military or government authority. The column (<http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/17770834/site/newsweek/>) written by Japanese historian Kase Hideaki and published in the April 2nd issue of Newsweek made it clear that some people in Japan never shared the “heartfelt sympathy and sincere apologies” reaffirmed by Prime Minister Abe.

During his visit to Washington DC on April 26 and 27, of 2007, Prime Minister Abe stated to Congressional leaders and President Bush, “... both personally and as Prime Minister of Japan, my heart goes out in sympathy to all those who suffered extreme hardships as “comfort women”; and I expressed my apologies for the fact that they were forced to endure such extreme and harsh conditions.” However, based on an examination of the language used in the Japanese version of the statement and the briefing by the Foreign Ministry, Ms. Kotler reported that Prime Minister Abe’s statement constituted an expression of regret but not an official apology.

Although President Bush “accepted” Prime Minister Abe’s “apology,” former “comfort women” were outraged that such an “apology” was offered to the President of the United States

and not to them.

On June 14, 2007, a group of Japanese Diet members and commentators placed an advertisement entitled, "The Facts," in the Washington Post. It claimed that (1) no documents have been found to demonstrate that women were forced against their will into prostitution by the Japanese army, (2) those who forced women to become "comfort women" against their will were punished, (3) those who were involved in forcing Dutch women into sexual slavery were punished, (4) testimonies of former "comfort women" are not reliable, and (5) "comfort women" were professional prostitutes who earned a lot of money.

Within days, Ms. Kotler compiled the names and background of those who endorsed this advertisement and distributed it among the people working on the congressional resolution. She also informed them of Prime Minister Abe's long and close working relations with these people.

On June 22, 2007, Ambassador Kato Ryoza wrote to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (<http://japanfocus.org/data/KatoLetter22June07.pdf>) and other key members of Congress that the adoption of this measure (H. Res. 121) "will almost certainly have lasting and harmful effects on the deep friendship, close trust and wide-ranging cooperation our two nations now enjoy."

He also suggested that Japan might reconsider its role as one of the few loyal supporters of U.S. policy in Iraq. Four days later the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed the resolution with an overwhelming majority, 39 to 2. Speaker Pelosi immediately issued a statement saying, "I look forward to the House of Representatives passing this resolution and sending a strong message that we will not forget the horrors endured by the "comfort women".

H. Res. 121 was passed by the full House on July 30, 2007, after the Japanese Upper House elections were held in order to avoid affecting the outcome of the elections. There were some changes in the final version of the resolution. It was added that "the United States-Japan alliance continues to be based on shared vital interests and values in the Asia-Pacific region, including the preservation and promotion of political and economic freedoms, support for human rights and democratic institutions, and the securing of prosperity for the people of both countries and the international community." The sentence seeking a Japanese apology was also somewhat softened from the original version, "Japan should have this official apology given as a public statement presented by the Prime Minister of Japan in his official capacity" to the versions appearing at the beginning of this article.

The basic message, however, that "the Government of Japan should formally

acknowledge, apologize, and accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner for its Imperial Armed Forces' coercion of young women into sexual slavery" remained intact.

### Korean Americans' Successful Grassroots Campaign

Mrs. Lantos explained to me that Korean American supporters of the resolution ran a very successful campaign and suggested that I interview their leader, Annabel Park. Having studied at Boston University and Oxford University, Ms. Park is a documentary film producer, writer, researcher, and strategist for the New York Times. If the team Ms. Kotler assembled provided the resolution with a strong scholarly base, it was the support organization Ms. Park created that exerted powerful influence that exceeded that of the lobbyists who were hired by the Japanese government to the tune of \$60,000 per month. (more on Japan's lobbyists (<http://www.harpers.org/archive/2006/10/sb-cold-comfort-women-1160006345>))

Ms. Park made the decision to support the resolution when she listened to testimonies of former "comfort women" during the Congressional hearing in February 2007. She had successfully run a campaign to mobilize Asian American voters in the Senatorial election in Virginia in 2006, helping former Navy Secretary James Webb defeat Republican incumbent

George Allen. Using that experience, Ms. Park started organizing a network of support groups through the Internet by taking advantage of innovative websites such as You-Tube.



Supporters with Ms. Lee Yong-soo (Ms. Park 2nd from Left)

Soon she created a coalition of support groups, the "121 Coalition," comprised of almost 200 organizations across the US. They were mostly Korean American citizen groups and well-known human rights organizations such as Amnesty International. The Washington Coalition for Comfort Women Issues, Inc. (WCCW), an organization that had been working on the "comfort women" issue for many years, also joined the coalition.

Reports produced by Ms. Kotler's team were posted on the website, "Support 121 ([http://support121.org/?page\\_id=158](http://support121.org/?page_id=158))". It also posted the articles of major newspapers in the US criticizing Prime Minister Abe for declaring that there was no evidence to prove there was government or military coercion. Supporters of



the resolution across the US brought the information posted on their website with them when they visited Congressional representatives to ask their support. Korean American attorney Daniel Lee who headed the LA area chapter of “121 Coalition” explained how he persuaded Congresswoman Jane Harman, Chair of the House subcommittee of Intelligence, Information Sharing and Terrorism Risk Assessment.

“We emphasized to her that H. Res. 121 is the ultimate human rights and woman’s rights issue, not a Japan-bashing issue. Also we told her that the passage of the resolution will not and should not affect the goodwill between US and Japan. Congresswoman Harman wanted to carefully examine all the factors before she agreed to co-sponsor the resolution. Finally, she understood that H. Res. 121 is truly a human rights resolution. Also, she felt that such resolution will increase awareness of issues of the exploitation of women and children during any war, such as Darfur in Sudan.”

When Chairman Lantos announced during a fundraising event in Los Angeles organized by Korean Americans on June 17, 2007, that H. Res.

121 would be brought up at a regular session of the Foreign Affairs Committee on June 26, 2007, the video clip of his announcement was immediately posted on “Support 121.” Chairman Lantos announced his support for the resolution and became a co-sponsor a few days later. As the campaign by the “121 Coalition” spread across the US, the number of co-sponsors increased steadily. By the time the resolution was passed by the House there were 167 co-sponsors.

Chinese American activist organizations also joined the “121 Coalition”, but Ms. Park described their relationship as follows.

“We tried to cooperate with members of Global Alliance, but they were not close partners. Although we shared the same goal of passing H.Res.121, there were significant differences in style and message that prevented us from working together effectively. They preferred what Ignatius Ding called “hardball tactics” and we were not interested in those tactics. The “121 Coalition” was focused solely on traditional grassroots lobbying: writing letters, getting petitions and meeting with House Members and their staff. This is how we got 167 co-sponsors. . .

In terms of the message, we felt uncomfortable with Global Alliance's message. We felt that their message was focused on Japan, whereas the 121 Coalition was focused on the principle of human rights and women's rights.

We have enormous respect for the experience, persistence and sincerity of Global Alliance. We just had respectful disagreements about what's effective."

On July 30, Ms. Lantos invited Ms. Park's group and former "comfort woman" Lee Yong-Soo to the House gallery where they could view the voting process. Speaker Pelosi also attended the celebration party honoring Congressman Honda and embraced Ms. Lee.



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi with former "Comfort Woman" Ms. Lee Yong-soo. Photo courtesy Ms. Jean Chung

Although he had just had heart surgery, former Chairman of the House International Relations Committee, Henry Hyde, issued the following statement.

"As a veteran of the Pacific War and former Chairman whose Committee favorably reported out this resolution last September, I welcome passage of H. Res.121, the 'comfort women' resolution. Protection of women and children from exploitation on the battlefield is not just an issue from the long-ago Second World War. It has relevancy for situations today, such as the tragedy unfolding in Darfur. The 'comfort women' have come to symbolize all women suffering in these wartime situations."

### **Chairman Tom Lantos Was Instrumental in the Passage of the Resolution**

The common approach taken by all the Congressmen/women who supported the "comfort women" resolution was that "Japan is our important ally and close friend, but we will send a message to Japan that it is important for a nation to squarely face its past wrongdoings." It was Chairman Lantos who, through the

cooperation of Republican members and House Speaker Pelosi, successfully brought the resolution from his Committee to the House floor.

The only Holocaust survivor ever elected to the US Congress, Chairman Lantos has dealt with many international issues during his quarter-century career in the US Congress, making trips to such places as Libya and North Korea. During the Committee meeting on June 26, 2007, Chairman Lantos severely criticized the Washington Post's "The Facts" advertisement, saying that it smeared the survivors of the "comfort women" system.

This was not the first time that Chairman Lantos has expressed his concern over Japan's inability to come to terms with her wartime history. In October of 1999, he sent a letter to then Prime Minister Obuchi Keizo regarding the records on Unit 731. In that letter, he pointed out that the Japanese government failed to cooperate with the US Justice Department that sought access to documents on Unit 731 that had been returned to Japan in the 1950s. He wrote, "I urge your government to make fundamental changes in dealing with the issue of open access to Japanese military and diplomatic archives and other records that address the period before 1945." He concluded, "Such an initiative would bring great honor to the Japanese nation, as it would courageously demonstrate to the world Japan's

commitment to democracy, truth, justice, and openness."



Kinue Tokudome with Chairman Ben Gilman, Mrs. Annette Lantos and Congressman Tom Lantos

What follows are Chairman Lantos' answers to my question upon the passage of the "comfort women" resolution.

*It was widely reported in Japan that Ambassador Kato Ryozo and Senator Daniel Inouye asked you not to pass the "comfort women" resolution because it would negatively affect the US-Japan relationship. How do you convince the Japanese people that this resolution will not harm the relationship?*

The strong alliance and deep friendship between the United States and Japan are based on mutual respect and admiration that have developed over the last fifty years. Our two countries share wide-ranging strategic interests, but most importantly we share common values of democracy, economic opportunity, and human rights. It is because of our commitment to these shared

values that we must speak out on behalf of those who have suffered human rights abuses around the world, including the women who were forced to become so-called “comfort women” during World War Two. If we stay silent, we violate these fundamental principles shared by our two peoples. This resolution is not about punishing Japan for the actions of its past governments. Instead, as a true friend to Japan, Congress asks in H. Res. 121 that Japan fully and formally acknowledge this difficult time in its history so that these women, and the Japanese nation, can heal and move on. Such a healing process would not just affirm Japan's commitment to human rights; it would improve Japan's relationship with its neighbors, strengthening its position as a leader in Asia and around the world. As we progress into the 21st century, Japan should play an increasingly active role in global affairs. Squarely facing this history would help this process, and would strengthen, not weaken, the U.S.-Japan relationship.

### Message to Japan

The “comfort women” resolution was passed because it received bipartisan support as a human rights issue. Additionally, the resolution contained a message that said that the US Congress had concern over the current trend in Japan regarding her views of World War II history. The resolution’s foreword mentioned the desire of some Japanese officials to dilute or

rescind the Kono Statement. Chairman Lantos also said as he placed the resolution before his Committee, “The true strength of a nation is tested when it is forced to confront the darkest chapters in its history. Will it have the courage to face up to the truth of its past?” He went on to declare, “Post-War Germany made the right choice. Japan, on the other hand, has actively promoted historical amnesia.”



Japanese neonationalist magazine Will headlines "Mike Honda is a Chinese 'Comfort Woman'"

The concerns of the US Congress are not only on the issue of “comfort women” but also on the larger issue of Japan’s views on World War II. During the September 2006 hearing, Chairman Hyde of the House International Relations Committee criticized the exhibit of the Yushukan Museum of Yasukuni Shrine. He said, “It is troubling to those of my generation to learn that Yushukan Museum in Tokyo is teaching younger generations of Japanese that the Second World

War in Asia was launched by Tokyo to free the people of Asia and the Pacific from the yoke of western imperialism. I just visited Korea, the Philippines, Singapore, the Solomon Islands, and I can tell you that while some spoke frankly of bitter experiences remembered during the Japanese occupation, not one person in any of these countries told any member of our delegation that they fondly remembered the Imperial Japanese Army as liberators. The history being taught at this museum is not based on the facts, and it should be corrected." Prior to Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to the US last year, Chairman Hyde also sent a letter to then House Speaker Dennis Hastert stating that the Prime Minister should not be invited to address a joint session of Congress unless he voluntarily pledged not to visit Yasukuni Shrine again.

As stories on the Yushukan Museum began to appear in major newspapers in the US, Americans have become increasingly aware of the problematic nature of its exhibit. I recently brought two American friends, a senior staff member of an influential US Senator and an official of a Los Angeles based human rights organization, to Yasukuni Shrine and its Yushukan Museum. My friend who had worked for two Senators for the last 25 years said of the Museum, "What I saw was the institutionalization of historical denial." Because the museum contains English translations of some exhibits, many American visitors may have

similar reactions.

As many Americans have recognized that the Iraq War was a mistake, the critical task for the US is to restore American influence based not on military forces but on the universal values of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law. With American popular confidence in the Bush Administration at an all-time low, it is up to the US Congress to exercise leadership in that task. It cannot afford to compromise on universal values if it is to maintain a moral high ground against terrorists and those who condone their acts. Whoever will be elected as the next President in 2008, he/she will have to work closely with Congress to restore the status and influence of the United States as a world leader.

It is more important now than ever for the US to have Japan as an ally, who shares universal values of democracy and human rights and is trusted by her neighboring countries in Asia. The US Congress is genuinely concerned that Japan's inability to come to terms with the past is preventing her from attaining her rightful influence in Asia.

Other wartime human rights issues concern both Asian and American victims. These are issues of forced labor, including former American POWs of the Japanese as well as tens of thousands of Chinese and Korean forced laborers. Like the "comfort women" issue, many dedicated

historians, lawyers, and activists in Japan have been working for many years to bring long-overdue justice to those victims. In the case of American POWs, their grievances were never resolved in part because the Bush administration and its predecessors have protected Japan from having to deal with the issue. Neither the Japanese government nor the companies that enslaved POWs during World War II have ever acknowledged their abuse that resulted in the 40% death rate of American POWs, much less apologized for it. The US Archives contain the records of those Japanese companies that used POWs as slave laborers, among them was Aso Mining which was owned by the family of former Foreign Minister Aso Taro. (Article on Aso Mining (<http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2432>),)

The US Congress may realize soon that their country's failure to support their former POWs in their pursuit of justice might have contributed to the Japanese government's unwillingness to address the entire issue of wartime forced labor. As Asian victims keep losing their legal battle against the Japanese government and companies that enslaved them, their claims are becoming increasingly similar to those of American POWs—demanding Japan to take “moral” responsibility. It seems that the US Congress now has every reason to ask the Japanese government to resolve all of its history issues.

What the International community is asking Japan to do is not very difficult. Unlike other seemingly insurmountable issues that affect so many other parts of the world, it would be resolved overnight if the Japanese political leadership decides to accept responsibility. Not only victims of the “comfort women” system, but also those of forced labor and POW abuse, including Asian and American forced laborers, requires that Japan accept historical responsibility in a clear and unequivocal manner.

Ambassador Kato wrote in his letter to Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Lantos, and other Congressional leaders, “Congress’s decision to move H. Res. 121 will only serve the purposes of those who wish to undermine the Japan-U.S. relationship.” It is high time for Japan to abandon such unfounded excuses and to start working on a comprehensive resolution of all the history issues that have damaged its relations with neighboring countries and the United States. Resolution of longstanding historical issues will make it possible to fully engage in important discussion with their American counterparts to resolve problems we confront in the world today.

*Kinue Tokudome is Founder/ Executive Director of the bilingual website, US-Japan Dialogue on POWs (<http://www.us-japandialogueonpows.org>) A Japanese version of this article is available [here](http://www.us-japandialogueonpows.org/CWresoluti) (<http://www.us-japandialogueonpows.org/CWresoluti>)*

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By Hank Nelson

This article was published at Japan Focus on August 30, 2007. *Japan's 'Comfort Women': It's time for the truth (in the ordinary, everyday sense of the word)* (<http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2373>)

By Tessa Morris-Suzuki

*Other recent articles on the Comfort Women controversy include*

*The Courts, Japan's 'Military Comfort Women,' and the Conscience of Humanity: The Ruling in VAWW-Net Japan v. NHK* (<http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2352>)

By Norma Field

*The Japanese Apology on the "Comfort Women" Cannot Be Considered Official: Interview with Congressman Michael Honda* (<http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2438>)

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*Government, the Military and Business in Japan's Wartime Comfort Woman System*

*The New Guinea Comfort Women, Japan and the Australian Connection: out of the shadow*

By Hayashi Hirofumi

(<http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2426>)

(<http://japanfocus.org/products/details/2332>)