

FEATURE

Declassification of Japanese War Crime Records in the U.S. Completed: A tribute to the Late Dr. Jesse Hwa



By Nancy Lo, Ph.D.

On January 12, 2007, the Nazi crimes and Japanese imperial government records Interagency working Group (IWG) under “Japanese Imperial Government Disclosure Act of 2000” announced the completion of its work with regard to the documents on Japanese war crimes and made available 100,000 pages of newly declassified records (see below).

This news is indeed a tribute to our grassroots efforts and to the leadership of late Dr. Jesse Hwa, Dr. Wen-Hsuan Chang, and Prof. Ivy Lee. Sadly the late Dr. Hwa passed away on July 2nd, 2005 in Stamford, CT, battling cancer for 18 months before witnessing the full completion of IWG’s work. Rather than mourning the loss of Dr. Jesse Hwa, an able leader and a strong contributor to polymer science and engineering, members of his Push Team wish to emphasize that we can all repay our debts to him by utilizing the declassified materials to ensure justice for the victims of the Japanese Imperial Forces of WW II.

It all began 10 years ago in 1997: Congressman William Lipinski (IL) in the 105th Congress introduced HCR126, a resolution to call on the Japanese government to make formal apologies and reparations to the victims of the Japanese Imperial Army during WWII. Dr. Jesse Hwa and Dr. Wen-Hsuan Chang of AOHWA (Association for Preserving the History of WW II in Asia), based in Pennsylvania, took the lead to push for its passage. The resolution was referred to and died in the Subcommittee on Asia & Pacific, and thus failed.

In 1999, Dr. Jesse Hwa, in consultation with a few individuals who gained valuable experience from working on HCR126, decided to take a different tack. He formed a Push Team, a national coalition of grassroots, coordinated and headed by him and co-chaired with Prof. Ivy Lee, Sacramento, CA. Its members further consist of: Jeannie Liu of LA Cindy Chan of AOHWA and myself. Together, we resolved to ride on the momentum created by the passage in the 105th Congress of the Nazi war crimes declassification bill. We approached Senator Diane Feinstein to introduce another bill, this time to declassify Japanese war crimes. Senator Feinstein graciously consented and introduced S1902 in the 106th Congress. The companion bill in the House, HR 3561, was introduced by Rep Brian Bilbray of San Diego, who worked closely with Nancy Lo, Jack Meng and Claudia Ma of APHAFIC (Association for preserving historical accuracy of foreign invasions in China).

Eventually, the bill was passed as Public Law 106-567 which contains the “Japanese Imperial Government Disclosure Act of 2000”. Under this Act, the then Nazi war crimes Interagency Working Group, a group tasked by the legislation to oversee the actual declassification, was expanded and named Nazi crimes and Japanese imperial government records Interagency working Group. The passage of the bill was not possible without the effort of the push team and many concerned individuals who spread the word and contacted their legislators such as Kaimay Terry in MN, Wen-Husan Chang and Zehao Zhou in PA, late Peter Wygle of AXPOW, late Major Richard Gordon of Battling Bastards of Bataan, Lee Allen of Utah

and many others too numerous to name individually.

Nancy C.H. Lo is the president of the Association for preserving historical accuracy of foreign invasions in China (APHLAFIC: www.geocities.com/APHLAFIC) and the regional president of western region of GA (Global Alliance for preserving history of WWII in Asia). She served on the board of San Diego Chinese Historical Society in the late 1990s and House of China in San Diego since 1999. She was the president of American Statistical Association San Diego Chapter from 2003-2005. She also was the Executive Director of International Chinese Statistical Association (ICSA), 1995-1997, and Board of Directors, 1998-2000. Nancy C.H. Lo earned a B.A. degree in Business Administration, National Taiwan University and M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in statistics, Oregon State University. Dr Lo is the mathematics statistician, Southwest Fisheries Science Center, National Marine Fisheries Service, La Jolla, California since 1976