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A Tribute to Iris S. Chang

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**HONORABLE MICHAEL M. HONDA
OF CALIFORNIA**

Mr. Speaker, today I rise in memory of Iris Chang, a courageous historian, author and champion of Asian and Asian American history, human rights and historical redress. During her brief yet remarkable professional career, Iris touched the lives of countless people, shedding light on past injustices and atrocities that had been forgotten or ignored. In her personal life, she was a loving wife and mother, a close friend and an inspiration to many. Iris is survived by her husband, Dr. Brett Douglas, her son, Christopher Douglas, her parents, Shau-Jin and Ying-Ying Chang, and her brother, Michael Chang.

Iris Shun-Ru Chang was born on March 28, 1968 in Princeton, New Jersey. She studied journalism at the University of Illinois, and received her Master's in Science Writing from Johns Hopkins University. While at Johns

Hopkins, Iris was commissioned to research the life of Tsien Hsue-Shen, a Chinese American scientist who was deported to China during the Communist scare of the 1960s and subsequently founded China's ballistics program. Her research led to her critically acclaimed debut, *The Thread of the Silkworm*, which addressed the paranoia and racism of the McCarthy era.

As a historian and an activist, Iris fought passionately for historical justice and reconciliation. Her book, *The Rape of Nanking*, chronicled the horrific capture of Nanking during Japan's invasion of China in 1937, and was instrumental in educating the international community about Japanese military atrocities during World War II—human rights violations that had gone unwritten and unacknowledged for decades. Her efforts to seek redress for the crimes at Nanking brought her in

conflict with the Japanese government and communities worldwide, but Iris was unwavering in her commitment to justice and truth.

Her most recent book, *The Chinese in America: A Narrative History*, is a nonfiction work that captures the sentiment, perspective, and feelings of the Chinese American community. Several weeks ago, East/West Bank presented 420 copies of the book to schools throughout California to spread understanding of the historic challenges faced by Chinese Americans.

In addition to her books, which decried social and historical injustices against the Asian and Asian American communities in the United States and internationally, Iris was also a member of the Committee of 100, a national nonpartisan organization of Chinese-American leaders who work to address issues important to

the Chinese-American community. For her work, she earned the Peace and International Cooperation Award from John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and was named “Woman of the Year” by the Organization of Chinese-American Women.

Iris will be remembered for her work and service to the community. Certainly, the millions of people whom she touched through her writings and her activism will not forget the moral vision she brought on past injustices to the international community and the public impact of her work in promoting peace between peoples of differing races and backgrounds. Her fierce pride of her Chinese-American heritage empowered others with the certainty that they were truly Americans despite their ancestry. Our community has lost a role model and close friend; the world has lost one of its finest and most passionate advocates of social and historical justice.

Michael M. Honda