B.C. groups seek apology from emperor of Japan

Comments

A coalition of community groups in Vancouver is demanding an apology from the Japanese emperor for war crimes committed by Japan during the Second World War.

Spearheaded by the Association for Learning and Preserving the History of World War II in Asia, the groups have written an open letter to Emperor Akihito in advance of his visit to Vancouver on Friday.

Sent to the Japanese consulate in Vancouver, the letter says the Japanese Parliament has not yet recognized the country's role in millions of deaths.

Satoko Norimatsu of the association said an apology from the emperor for war atrocities could influence the government to do the same.

"The Japanese parliament has yet to pass a resolution that fully admits and apologizes for Japan's responsibility for the loss and suffering of the victims of the Asia Pacific war, or to pass laws to stipulate compensation to those victims," Norimatsu said.

Kevin Sung, who works with a Korean Drama Club in Vancouver, said the lack of an acknowledgment means a generation of Japanese children is growing up in the dark.

"Japanese youngsters do not know the truth of history. Not so many things included in Japanese students' social studies books, so they don't know the truth of history. It's a big problem," he said.

Emperor Akihito and Empress Michiko arrive in Vancouver Friday as part of a royal visit to Canada.

The group says it has no intention of confronting the couple or creating any kind of embarrassment for them while they are in Vancouver. In the letter, the group says it wishes them nothing but a good time during their stay.

(The follow-up discussion in the CBC site is also worth reading. Just click the link http://www.cbc.ca/canada/british-columbia/story/2009/07/09/bc-vancouver-groups-japanese-emperor-apology.html#socialcomments .)