

**Speech for Commemoration of the 64th Anniversary of
the End of WWII in Asia at UBC Robson Square Theatre
on August 15, 2009**

*By Thekla Lit, President of B.C. ALPHA (Association for Learning & Preserving
the History of WWII in Asia)*

Saluting the Veterans

We are here to commemorate and honour the Canadian and Allied veterans who fought in the Asia-Pacific theatre of the Second World War. They made a lot of sacrifices and some even lost their lives in order to liberate and save tens of millions of innocent people of the Asia-Pacific countries from the invading Imperial Japanese forces. With us today are members of the Army, Navy, Air Force Veterans in Canada, Pacific Unit 280 and some members of the Burma Star Association. The Burma Star was a campaign medal of the British Commonwealth. It was awarded for service in the Burma campaign (1941-45) in World War II to men and women in the army, air force, navy, and merchant navy. To all the veterans, we express our deepest gratitude.

We are here to remember the 35 million victims of the Asian Holocaust committed by the Japanese invaders.

We are here to remember the women and children who suffered and died in the Asian Holocaust.

We are here to mourn in anguish the rape victims of the imperial Japanese soldiers and to remember the 400,000 victims of Japanese military sexual slavery, the so-called "comfort women".

We are here to remember the victims of massacres, including the 300,000 victims of the Rape of Nanking.

We are here to remember the devastating stories of how the Japanese army spread cholera, bubonic plague, anthrax and other agents causing the deaths of hundreds of thousands of innocent victims. The Japanese Unit 731 conducted vivisection on human beings and used them for biological and chemical warfare experimentations. The Japanese army left behind in China over 700,000 chemical weapons which are still causing sickness and deaths today.

We are here to remember the many millions of victims of forced labour, including Allied POWs, Canadian Hong Kong veterans, civilians and even children.

We are here to remember victims of A-bombs. They are the direct victims of Japanese militarism. This nuclear horror brought Hirohito, the Japanese emperor and the militaristic Japanese government to its sense. Japan surrendered 64 years ago today.

We are here to remember that the postwar Japanese government, unlike Germany, has never charged the Japanese war criminals, never passed an apology resolution in the Japanese Parliament and never redressed victims of the Asian Holocaust.

We are here to remember how peace is the deep desire of all humanity and that peace comes from justice and reconciliation.

As we remember these atrocities of the Asian Holocaust, we remember the importance for postwar generations to learn lessons of humanity, justice, global citizenship and peace from this painful chapter of history.

We once again remember that many of the veterans present here today made the great sacrifices in fighting fascism and in stopping the Japanese imperial forces from committing further atrocities. We salute you. Thank you.