



Edmonton Association for Learning & Preserving the History of WWII in Asia (ALPHA)

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Outstanding Teachers Offered Study Tour to Far East

Edmonton-area teachers are being given the opportunity to study in Asia this next summer.

Organized by the Association for Learning & Preserving the History of WWII in Asia (ALPHA), a non-profit group with chapters in B.C., Alberta and Ontario, teachers will join a study tour of China and Korea during the first two weeks of July.

Participating educators will enhance their knowledge and understanding of atrocities committed during WWII in Asia. Such atrocities included sexual slavery, forced labour and human experimentation.

Learning activities include examination of historical facts, education about social justice, visits to museums, meetings with survivors, and dialogues with local historians, scholars, teachers and lawyers in China and Korea.

In China, participants will visit Beijing and Shanghai as well as Nanjing. In Nanjing (formerly Nanking), participants will visit the former site of the International Safety Zone established in 1937 by 28 foreigners. The Zone, which included the Jinling Girls College, saved close to 200,000 Chinese from being massacred by Japanese soldiers.

One of the most moving experiences on the study tour will be in Korea. Teachers will visit with survivors of military sexual slavery—now in the 80s and 90s—who live together in a sanctuary built by Buddhists. Euphemistically called “Comfort Women” by the Imperial Japanese, tens of thousands of these women endured horrific suffering and died at a young age. On the final Wednesday of the study tour, participants will have the opportunity to join some of the surviving ‘Grandmas’ in their weekly demonstration in front of the Japanese Embassy.

The *2009 Peace and Reconciliation Study Tour for Educators* will be the sixth such tour organized by ALPHA. Organizers in the United States have conducted similar tours beginning two years ago.

Last summer, 38 Canadian teachers and volunteers together with a teacher from Australia participated in a two-week study tour that visited sites in China, including Shanghai, Nanjing and Harbin, as well as Seoul, Korea.

Edmonton high school teacher Cam Fahlman joined last year’s ALPHA study tour. “While textbooks, films and other materials are helpful to our teaching,” Fahlman said, “nothing compares to the learning we experienced in China and Korea.”

“The study tour cast a whole new light on the history of WWII in Asia,” said teacher Patricia Magliocco who also participated on the 2008 study tour. “The Japanese government still hasn’t

acknowledged the atrocities they committed,” Magliocco added. “The survivors, the few who remain alive, are waiting for their apology.”

For Fahlman the stories of survivors that he met were particularly moving. “The survivors and the young people in China and Korea who are advocating on their behalf are role models,” Fahlman said. “They are today’s heroes.”

Next summer’s study tour will also visit Beijing. ALPHA will offer substantial subsidies for selected applicants.

Participants are expected to make professional contributions by sharing their study tour observations and experiences with their students and colleagues in the teaching of social responsibility and global citizenship.

Canadian teachers interested in applying for the *2009 Peace and Reconciliation Study Tour for Educators* can download a registration form from http://torontoalpha.org/projects_future.html or email Edmonton ALPHA at info@edmontonalpha.org. **Application deadline: March 20, 2009.**