



Asian Heritage Month 2026

SPEAK PEACE



Setsuko Thurlow

The words on the poster come from a speech Setsuko Thurlow gave to a graduating class at the University of Toronto in 2019, upon acceptance of an honorary doctorate. She invites the next generation to speak out to make the world a better place:

Get involved.

Take action.

Be an agent of change.

Make things happen.

Setsuko is a Canadian woman of Japanese descent. She was just 13 years old when her city, Hiroshima, was destroyed by an atomic bomb on August 6, 1945. She was one of the survivors – called *Hibakusha*. After witnessing the atrocity, Setsuko dedicated herself to abolishing nuclear weapons globally.

Setsuko joined the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a coalition of non-governmental organizations promoting adherence to and implementation of the United Nations nuclear weapon ban treaty. In 2017, ICAN received the Nobel Peace Prize. Setsuko accepted the prize on their behalf.



Paper Cranes

Sadako Sasaki was another *Hibakusha*, who succumbed to radiation disease 10 years after the bombing of Hiroshima. She is known for her goal of folding 1,000 origami paper cranes, which are believed to grant the folder a wish. Sadako's wish was for a world without war. Her story has been shared widely in many languages, including in *Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes* by Canadian author Eleanor Coerr.

Paper cranes folded in the origami style have become symbols of peace worldwide.



Speak Peace

The poster's background features the word "peace" in different Asian languages. There are over 2,000 languages and dialects spoken across Asia; those in the poster represent a sampling of some you might hear in Ontario classrooms and communities. A list of the languages featured, with notes about where they're spoken and how to pronounce in English phonetics, is available.

For more information, visit:

<https://www.etfo.ca/news-publications/publications/poster-asian-heritage-month>