



**Japanese Canadians Deliver BC
Government Essential Actions
for Rebuilding Community
following Historic Wrongs of
Internment**



A delegation from the National Association of Japanese Canadians met with the BC Government on Friday, November 15 to hand-deliver a report recommending key actions to address the historic wrongs committed against Japanese Canadians. The report, Recommendations for Redressing Historical Wrongs Against Japanese Canadians in BC, presents the results of months of community consultations with hundreds of Japanese Canadians about initiatives government could undertake as meaningful follow up to a 2012 Motion of Apology in the BC legislature.

“The Japanese Canadian community recognizes and appreciates the symbolic apology made by the B.C. government in 2012”, said Oikawa. “However, no meaningful action followed that apology. This report examines what is needed to rebuild the Japanese Canadian community, including

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reclaiming a physical presence in the cities in which we were erased, and ensure what happened to us never happens again to Canadians of any ethnicity or orientation. This is an opportunity for us to foster positive changes that not only pay tribute to Japanese Canadians but benefit BC society as a whole.”

As early as the late 1800s, BC’s provincial government conducted a campaign to discriminate against, harass, and deny the rights of Japanese Canadians. The provincial government used WW2 as an excuse to uproot and dispossess Canadian citizens of Japanese descent of their homes, property, and livelihoods, erase them from their communities, and force them into internment camps and deny them an education. In contrast with US policy, the BC provincial government forced Japanese Canadians to endure internment and exile until 1949, a full four years after the war had ended. Not one Japanese Canadian was ever charged with an act of disloyalty.



Left to right: Mary Kitagawa; NAJC President Lorene Oikawa; The Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture; Judge Maryka Omatsu. Photo by Tosh Kitagawa.

The consultation process provided an opportunity for Japanese Canadians to share family stories and reflect on the history of internment and the lasting impact on individuals, families across generations, and the Japanese Canadian community.

The report makes five key recommendations:

1. Deliver a formal apology from the BC Premier acknowledging the full extent of the BC Government’s role for the historical record. We are asking the Premier of BC to deliver a formal acknowledgement of the wrongs committed by former BC governments that led to the injustices faced by Japanese Canadians and deliver a sincere apology to those surviving Japanese Canadians directly affected by the injustices of incarceration, forced displacement, dispossession and exile. The apology should be delivered in the Provincial Legislature and consult the Japanese Canadian community regarding wording.
2. Restoration or reclamation of cultural and community spaces. Provide funding for operation of new and existing museums, historic sites and monuments; and restore and reclaim historic community spaces (e.g., historic Japantown). Establish physical memorials and an official day to commemorate the franchise and free movement granted to Japanese Canadians in 1949.
3. Create a Japanese Canadian Community Legacy Endowment Fund. Establish an endowment fund administered by the Japanese Canadian community to support community development activities and needs, such as seniors’ care and housing, community wellness and healing programs, community gathering programs to rebuild fragile communities, post-secondary scholarships for students of Japanese Canadian descent, and anti-hate initiatives.
4. Develop and embed Japanese Canadian history permanently in the B.C. curriculum. Include Japanese Canadian history in mandatory school curricula; offer effective



professional development training for teachers; create grants for teaching tools and create a digital library of Japanese Canadian history; present the events of the 1940s in the broader context of colonization and the politics of discrimination.

5. Take concrete steps to combat hate and racial discrimination. Create an independent body to assess B.C.'s strategy, as well as research, develop, and implement BC-based anti-hate programs and policies to counter growing incidents of hate-motivated actions and speech in communities and society.

The National Association of Japanese Canadians is seeking swift action and partnership from the BC government to implement the measures recommended in the report. Implementation of the redress measures are fundamental steps in the reconciliation process with Japanese Canadians and will assist the province to move forward as a welcoming and inclusive society.

The Report was prepared by the National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC), a Canada-wide organization that represents Japanese Canadians and Japanese Canadian member organizations. NAJC was founded in 1947 to provide community development to people scattered by the internment policies, to promote and develop a strong Japanese Canadian identity and to strengthen local communities and the national organization. We strive for equal rights and liberties for all persons, in particular for racial and ethnic minorities and to ensure the wrongdoing and harm inflicted on our grandparents and families does not occur to any other Canadian.

To view the video of the event or to read the full report, Recommendations for Redressing Historical Wrongs Against Japanese Canadians in BC Community, as well as the complete appendices, visit the NAJC website (www.najc.ca)



Greater Vancouver JCCA Circle of Friends Meeting

Invitation from the Greater Vancouver JCCA to Our Circle of Friends in Support of BC Redress for Japanese Canadians

Come to a meeting to review the Community Consultations Report given to Lisa Beare, BC Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, on November 15, 2019 and work with us on ways to support BC Redress for Japanese Canadians

BC Redress for Japanese Canadians needs you to stand with us as we engage with the BC Government to achieve a just and meaningful Redress. Our work has just begun.

Please come on December 14 to learn more

Date and Time: Sat, 14 December 2019

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM PST

Location

Tonari Gumi

42 West 8th Avenue, #101

Vancouver, BC V5Y 1M7.

Register via Eventbrite at:

<https://gvjcca.eventbrite.ca>



Minister's statement on the National Association of Japanese Canadians' report



The Honourable Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture. Photo by Tosh Kitagawa.

Source:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2019TAC0117-002207>

Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture has issued the following statement after receiving the National Association of Japanese Canadians' report, Recommendations for Redressing Historical Wrongs Against Japanese Canadians in BC: Community Consultation:

"We recognize the significant harm that came to Japanese Canadians as a result of provincial government actions before, during and after the Second World War.

"That's why we provided \$30,000 to support the National Association of Japanese Canadians in holding a series of meetings that would provide a forum for community members to offer their recommendations for legacy initiatives.

"I want to thank the National Association of Japanese Canadians, as well as everyone who took part in the meetings, for their contributions in these consultations. This is important work, and I was pleased to formally receive the report today.

"The report includes detailed recommendations on how we can move forward together and properly acknowledge the hardship people suffered as a result of government actions.

"We are now taking the time to carefully review the recommendations. Once this is completed, I look forward to continuing to work with the association on a plan for legacy initiatives that bring awareness to these historic wrongs and make sure they never happen again."

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NAJC President's Message

By Lorene Oikawa

Members of the Japanese Canadian community, from children to seniors, and honoured guests were gathered together in a government boardroom in the afternoon of Friday, November 15, 2019. The group was witnessing a delegation from the National Association of Japanese Canadians who were hand-delivering a report, Recommendations for Redressing Historical Wrongs Against Japanese Canadians in BC. The key actions recommended in the report are about initiatives the government could undertake as meaningful follow up to a 2012 Motion of Apology in the BC Legislature.

As we have been reporting in our e-news and messages in the Nikkei Voice, and The Bulletin, there has been a lot of work happening to prepare, organize, and carry out months of community consultations with hundreds of Japanese Canadians, and then collect the findings. This report is the result.

During the community consultations, we heard from members of our community who experienced the discrimination, the uprooting, dispossession, and internment. At the live event, we heard from two from our community, Mary Kitagawa and Judy Hanazawa. This is deeply personal for our community. Many Japanese Canadian families were long-time settlers in BC, like my family who came from Japan in the 1800s, and were denied their rights, denied education, and forced to endure internment until four years after the end of the

Second World War. The Canadian military and the RCMP told the government there was no need to take action against Japanese Canadians, but they were ignored. Not one Japanese Canadian was ever charged with an act of disloyalty.

We appreciate the BC government's support for the community consultations to determine meaningful measures to redress the violation of rights and losses. This report examines what is needed to rebuild the Japanese Canadian community, and ensure what happened to Japanese Canadians never happens again to Canadians of any ethnicity or orientation. This is an opportunity for us to foster positive changes that not only pay tribute to Japanese Canadians, but benefit BC society as a whole.

Lisa Beare, BC Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture, acknowledged "the significant harm that came to Japanese Canadians as a result of provincial government action before, during and after the Second World War."

I was honoured to present the report to the minister. I could feel the support of our community in the room, those watching through the live streaming, and my thoughts went to those 22,000 Japanese Canadians in 1942 including my own family.

Minister Beare said, "We are now taking the time to carefully review the recommendations. Once this is completed, I look forward to continuing to work with the association on a plan for legacy initiatives that bring awareness to those historic wrongs and make sure they never happen again."

The NAJC looks forward to partnership with the BC government to implement the measures recommended in the report. These are fundamental steps in the reconciliation process

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with Japanese Canadians and will assist the province to move forward as a welcoming and inclusive society.

A special note of thanks to NAJC Board Director Susanne Tabata who put in a tremendous amount of work to ensure we had this successful event for our community.

To watch the recording of the event and for the links to the report and appendices, please go to the NAJC website najc.ca

NAJC is participating in a commemorative event on November 28, 2019, the 110th anniversary of the Great Northern Railway disaster. A Great Northern train carrying 43 railway workers plunged into a ravine in Burnaby BC and 23 died. The workers who died were of Japanese descent and were trapped in a crowded boxcar and unable to escape. A plaque commemorating the event was installed adjacent to the site of the accident. The plaque was created as part of the BC Labour Heritage Centre's Remembering Working People: Plaques around the Province project. The stories of Japanese Canadian railway workers are not well known. I hope the plaque will bring awareness to this story, and to the working conditions of Japanese Canadians and other racialized and Indigenous workers in the early 20th century.

Also, we will be participating with other community groups to mark other commemorative dates in December: December 6 - National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, December 3 - International Day of Persons with Disabilities, December 10 - Human Rights Day, and December 18 - International Migrants Day.

December is also the holiday season with many celebrations including Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, St. Lucia Day and more. On behalf of the NAJC National Executive Board, I wish you peace, joy, and time to make wonderful

memories with your family and loved ones. Enjoy good health and good food, including mochi, noodles on New Year's Eve and Japanese food on New Year's Day.

Welcome Japanese Ambassador Kawamura

By Lorene Oikawa

The NAJC welcomes Japanese Ambassador Yasuhisa Kawamura who arrived in Ottawa last week. Ambassador Kawamura was the Deputy Permanent Representative of Japan to the United Nations in New York, prior to coming to Ottawa to become Ambassador to Canada. He is passionate about contributing to enhancing bilateral relations between Canada and Japan, and working with Japanese Canadians across Canada.

We wish him well during his term and look forward to meeting with him.

https://www.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_en/Ambassador-Kawamura.html

https://www.ca.emb-japan.go.jp/itpr_ja/Amb-Kawamura_Arrival_Greetings.html



Have You Seen the News?

Six-Part Series of Articles on the Uprooting and Dispossession of Japanese Canadians

A new six-part series on the BC government responsibility for the uprooting and dispossession of Japanese Canadians, 1941-1949, is being published weekly in the Times Colonist. The articles were written by Dr. John Price in support of NAJC's work to restore the Japanese Canadian community. John has been our champion from the beginning and we thank him for putting together this informative and timely series of articles.

Part 1: Righting a Historical Wrong for Japanese Canadians.

https://www.timescolonist.com/islander/our-history-righting-a-historical-wrong-for-japanese-canadians-1.23996497?fbclid=IwAR3jhGNywg79oLte2za_ZQB-3zHIJVLGUMdnXnnRH5009wCPg0XiMadRH7o

Part 2: Our History: B.C. engineers a coup.

<https://www.timescolonist.com/islander/our-history-after-pearl-harbor-province-lobbied-for-displacement-of-japanese-canadians-1.24002530?fbclid=IwAR2Op1qrLLKQAgJ55H-4nzRiyzjSyGNdZpXAuhm3oF8ehY0kOygFBYYQGo>

Part 3: Our History: B.C. went out of its way to make life miserable for Japanese Canadians

<https://www.timescolonist.com/islander/our-history-b-c-went-out-of-its-way-to-make-life-miserable-for-japanese-canadians-1.24010519>

Part 4: Our History: Punishing the children
Young people paid a high price for the B.C. government's exile of Japanese Canadians
<https://www.timescolonist.com/islander/our-history-punishing-the-children-1.24017522>

Part 5: Dispossession: How B.C. stole the lives of 22,000 Japanese Canadians

<https://www.timescolonist.com/islander/dispossession-how-b-c-stole-the-lives-of-22-000-japanese-canadians-1.24023326>

Part 6: The final straw: Japanese Canadians offered an impossible choice

<https://www.timescolonist.com/islander/the-final-straw-japanese-canadians-offered-an-impossible-choice-1.24030068>

Righting the Wrongs Done to BC's Japanese Canadians

By Andrew MacLeod

Government urged to improve education, fight racism as steps toward redress for internment, loss of homes and possessions.

November 25, 2019 in The Tyee

<https://thetyee.ca/News/2019/11/25/Righting-Wrongs-Japanese-Canadians/>



Have You Seen the News?

Plaque remembers Japanese workers who died in Burnaby rail disaster

By Chris Campbell

November 27, 2019 in Burnaby Now

<https://www.burnabynow.com/news/plaque-remembers-japanese-workers-who-died-in-burnaby-rail-disaster-1.24020500>

The Burnaby Railway Disaster that Few Remember

By Christopher Cheung

November 28, 2019 in The Tyee

<https://thetyee.ca/Analysis/2019/11/28/Burnaby-Railway-Disaster/>

In Other News:



COPANI XX
SAN FRANCISCO 2019

To All of Our Attendees and Volunteers... (COPANI XX)

THANK YOU!

By COPANI XX Organizers

COPANI XX was a memorable event of great success, and we wish to express our gratitude to all of you. We had 250 participants from Canada, Hawaii, Mexico, Dominican Republic, Chile, Colombia, Brasil, Paraguay, Argentina, Peru, Germany, France and Japan. We made new friends, learned about about the Nikkei experience across countries, and we were all left inspired by the words of our speakers such as: Senator Norman Mineta and Carlos Kasuga. We could not have done it without YOU! Thank you! Each participant made the difference in this event. Let's keep the momentum moving and move forward to COPANI 2021 in Asuncion, Paraguay! Thank you all again and see you in Paraguay!

NOTE: The NAJC expects to maintain contact with the COPANI organization and will publicize information about COPANI 2021 as it comes in. It would be great if a Canadian delegation went down to Paraguay to meet up with Nikkei from across the Americas!



In Other News:



Canadian
Race Relations
Foundation

Fondation
canadienne des
relations raciales

The latest edition of the Canadian Race Relations Foundation newsletter was recently released. One of the mentions in the newsletter was the release of the NAJC report to the BC Government.

<https://us3.campaign-archive.com/?u=6b405dbf9952e5a74b1f72fa9&id=f22e287998>

Board of Education Considers Name Change

Release from School District 70 (Alberni)

The Board of Education for School District 70 (Alberni) is considering a name change for the school district as well as for Ucluelet Secondary School and AW Neill Elementary School.

<https://www.sd70.bc.ca/apps/news/article/807220>



VANCOUVER ASIAN HERITAGE MONTH SOCIETY

We are Hiring!

Overview: This is a part time position, an opportunity to work at home most of the time. Report to the President, work with various areas from development to completion of tasks, and support to board members assigned to those areas. Confer with Chairs of various committees to come to an agreement as to the tasks for which there will be time to be performed by the Coordinator and the tasks that need to be performed by volunteers.

IMPORTANT! Application deadline: December 13, 2019.

HOW TO APPLY: Please email your resume and cover letter to kdmcateer@telus.net. We won't respond to Facebook applications.

<https://explorasian.org/2019/12/03/we-are-hiring/>



Correction – Last Month's Article NAJC-Roger Obata Prize

We apologize for incorrectly identifying the NAJC Roger Obata Prize as the NAJC-Robert Obata Prize. The background on this prize can be found here and is reproduced below:

<https://www.osgoode.yorku.ca/programs/juris-doctor/financial-services/fund-law-school/scholarships-awards-prizes/medals-awards-prizes/>

Roger Sachio Obata, C.M., B.A.Sc., P.Eng. (1915-2002), a highly respected leader in the Japanese Canadian community and former National President of the NAJC, was the founding Chairman of the Japanese Canadian Committee Democracy (JCCD) which later became the NAJC. One of the first issues tackled by the JCCD related to the racially discriminatory ban against Japanese Canadians enlisting in the Canadian Army during World War II. Once that ban was lifted, Mr. Obata served with the Canadian Army during the war. He later worked tirelessly as a human rights activist to redress the injustices experienced by Japanese Canadians, and worked to promote a more harmonious Canada in which everyone is treated equitably and fairly. Mr. Obata was an example for all Canadians who strive for justice and freedom, and was appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada on October 25, 1990.

The prize was established in his honor by the family and friends of Roger S. Obata and the NAJC, a national organization representing the Japanese-Canadian community that advocates on issues pertaining to human rights and civil liberties. It will be given annually to the student who obtains the highest standing in the course International Human Rights.



Events and Happenings:

Tsunagu: Intergenerational Conversations

February 15, 2020, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM PST

Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre

6688 Southoaks Cres, Burnaby, BC V5E 4M7

Source: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/tsunagu-intergenerational-conversations-registration-82898542773>

Tsunagu will open up a conversation between Japanese Canadian generations.

The mass incarceration of Japanese Canadians during WWII had an incalculable impact on our community and on the lives of all of those imprisoned. Most of the Issei who lost their life work are gone, but many Nisei who experienced the incarceration as children, youth and young adults are still often reluctant to share their experiences. The past is the past. Just look to the future. But what impact has this silence about their family history had on them, on Sansei, Yonsei and Gosei and on our community?

Tsunagu will open up a conversation between generations. Tsunagu means to connect like a bridge to our shared history and experiences.

Tsunagu will open with a presentation by Dr. Karen Kobayashi, Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Studies in the Faculty of Social Sciences, a Professor in the Department of Sociology, and a Research Affiliate at the

Institute on Aging and Lifelong Health at the University of Victoria. She has published widely

in the areas of family and intergenerational relationships, ethnicity and immigration, dementia and personhood, and health and social care. Karen is a Sansei who was born and raised in Toronto. Her grandparents and parents were interned in Lemon Creek and Bay Farm in the Slocan Valley. Karen has volunteered and worked for several Nikkei community organizations.

Karen's presentation will be followed by three moderated intergenerational conversations. Family panelists include Mary and Landon Kitagawa, Mike and Natsuki Abe, and Kevin and Kayla Isomura.

After a lunch break, we will show a short film by Connie Kadota and Lucy Komori about the experiences of Sansei and Yonsei. We'll then divide into table groups. As this session is an intergenerational conversation, it is not so much a re-telling of family history, as it is about how each family TALKED about (or didn't talk about) their history, especially with respect to the wartime uprooting and incarceration. And how they talked about it WITHIN the family, not so much to outsiders.

Each table group will have a facilitator and note taker to capture the conversations. We'll regroup at the end and share highlights of discussions.

Tsunagu is programmed by Connie Kadota and Lucy Komori in collaboration with the Nikkei National Museum.



EVENTS ORGANIZED BY THE JOHN HUMPHREY CENTRE FOR PEACE AND HUMAN RIGHTS.

Right to Exist: Right to Resist

In honour of the International Human Rights Day and International Migrant Day, join us in conversation about critical human rights challenges we face as a global community while working to mobilize and organize across our communities.

Migration, poverty, exclusion, racism, climate, justice.

December 7, 2019 6:00 PM – 9:00 PM

St. John's Cultural Centre, 10611 110 Ave. NW.
Edmonton, AB.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/right-to-exist-right-to-resist-tickets-79582713037>

Stride Calgary: Anti-Oppression Training

Based on participant experience, identity, and struggle, this workshop aims to unveil the multi-layered concept of oppression, the many ways in which solidarity can take shape, and the practical ways in which advocates could check their location/privilege while doing advocacy work with and for marginalized communities.

December 14, 2019 12:30 PM – 4:30 PM

Calgary Central Library, R0-13 Meeting Room, 800 3 Street SE. Calgary, AB.

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/stride-calgary-anti-oppression-training-tickets-78088162797>

Human Rights Facilitator Training

Offered as a residential program at Sanctum Retreat in Caroline, Alberta, the Human Rights Facilitator program equips participants with the capacity to facilitate hard and courageous conversations on human rights issues while translating this dialogue into collective action. Costs include private accommodations and food. Subsidies are available.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/17mp06ZpmQIH_HbBh0EsiMAiNBCpqvV2T8BUAOg_GEECM/prefill

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Upcoming Dates and Meeting Enews versus Membership

Notifications:

NAJC General Membership Meeting

Via Zoom Internet Conferencing

December 18, 2019

5:30 PM PST

6:30 PM MST

7:30 PM CST

8:30 PM EST

NAJC Special General Meeting

Bylaw and Constitutional Changes

Via Zoom Internet Conferencing

March 18, 2020

5:30 PM PST

6:30 PM MST

7:30 PM CST

8:30 PM EST

NAJC Annual General Meeting and National Conference

Edmonton, Alberta

October 2020

Newsletter

This newsletter has been created to inform the official NAJC Membership about NAJC news, notifications and activities. This is different than distributions that are occurring via enews, which may include individuals and organizations that are not members of the NAJC.

If you would like to submit an article or notification to the next NAJC Membership Update, please email your submission to ed@najc.ca. We expect to publish our next edition in November 2019.

If you are not on the NAJC Enews distribution, please feel free to add yourself by going to www.najc.ca and filling out your details in the section on the bottom of the page “Subscribe to our mailing list”

NAJC and Japanese Canadian Facebook Sites

Check out the Japanese Canadian and NAJC Facebook site to keep up to date on events, happenings, stories and photos!

<https://www.facebook.com/najc.ca/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/Japanese.Canadian.FG/>

(submit member request to join)