

カナダ日系のコミュニティ・歴史・文化の月刊誌



THE Bulletin

20
NOVEMBER
16

a journal of Japanese Canadian community, history + culture

Alejandro Yoshizawa

crossing oceans
+ cultures in
*All Our Father's
Relations*



Nisei Games | geppogram・げっぽーぐらむ | 悠也のエコつぶやき
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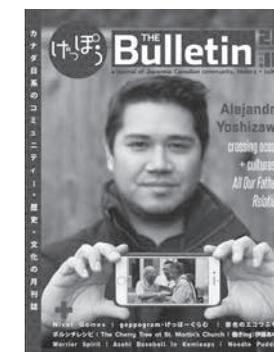


Japanese Poets North of the 49th, Poems for Powell Street. Photo: Noriko Tidball

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Alejandro Yoshizawa
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THE CHERRY TREE AT ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH

by Judy Hanazawa, with written contributions from Esther and Wendy Matsubuchi, Paul and Bev Sunohara

The matter of the cherry tree at St. Martin's Church came to the attention of our Japanese Canadian Working Group in 2014. At that time, the group was working with representatives of the Diocese of New Westminster on the content of the Church apology regarding Mr. Nakayama's sexual abuse of Japanese Canadian boys from the 1930's through the 1980's. Mr. Nakayama passed in 1995 after writing a confession in 1994 to the Calgary Diocese about the many children he had sexually abused.

We learned the St. Martin's cherry tree originated from Mr. Nakayama's home, Kogawa House, the childhood home of his daughter, author Joy Kogawa. The planting and dedication of the tree at St. Martin's Church was intended as a reconciliation between the Church and Japanese Canadians regarding the wartime incarceration and losses suffered by Japanese Canadians. Holy Cross Church (where Mr. Nakayama had ministered in past) participated in the dedication.

The following information is given with the consent and agreement of the Matsubuchi/ Sunohara Families.

What was not addressed at the time of the planting was that the Matsubuchi family, long term, active members of St. Martin's Church, were also survivors of Mr. Nakayama's sexual abuse. Esther Matsubuchi was a Sunohara by birth and her brothers had been abused as young boys by Mr. Nakayama. Although daughter Wendy was a St. Martin's Church Council member, Wendy had no prior information about the "reconciliation" planting. The family learned about it through the weekly church bulletin. Wendy writes, "What made matters more delicate is the fact that our family had ties with Holy Cross, dating back from no later than the early 1970s when Mom's parents attended regularly. My grandfather was Rector's Warden there for years, so we know many faces and/or names, including the sharing of some history besides the abuse which dates back to the WW2 Internment."

By 2014, the family communicated with working group members expressing their deep grief and anger about the abuse. Upon learning that year about the Church's work on the Apology, Esther's brother Paul, contacted the working group, to disclose and seek answers about Mr. Nakayama's abuse of at least 4 Sunohara boys. Esther and Paul and Paul's wife Bev believed it was important to expose Mr. Nakayama's heinous acts so that survivors would find peace knowing his crimes were openly acknowledged.

Paul shared his recommendations regarding what the Apology should include. Paul and Bev Sunohara state, "Early on in the process – prior to the apology – we

asked that any tributes that honoured him be removed. GG was revered by many Japanese Canadians for his work in the community. The families may not have known that he used his position to gain access to his youthful victims. We felt that any tributes would be a painful reminder to any surviving victims and their families."

These recommendations were addressed as the working group met with the Diocese to draft Apology terms.

Esther and family found it extremely disturbing that a tree originating from Mr. Nakayama's home grew as a symbol of goodwill on the grounds of St. Martin's Church. Since its planting in 2009, the family learned in 2014 about the open community process for addressing Mr. Nakayama's abuse. Understandably they expressed the wish for the tree to be removed and destroyed as it was a painful reminder of the sexual abuse the Sunohara brothers had endured. The working group discussed this matter with the Diocese during and after the church's apology of June 15, 2015 and received Diocese commitment to look into the matter. Wendy Matsubuchi made the family's position about the tree very clear:

1. The Sunoharas are the solitary family of survivors willing to speak publicly about Mr. Nakayama's fifty year old, self-confessed pedophilia molesting young Japanese Canadian and White boys.
2. It is extremely offensive for us as the family of survivors, to walk past the cherry tree on a weekly basis, in order to worship at our church.
3. Nothing short of destruction of this tree will satisfy the survivors and their families.
4. We are strongly moved by reconciliation between St. Martin's and Holy Cross. However, there are any number of ways that our two parishes can reach out toward each other...The family will gladly work with anyone interested in pursuing any possibility which does not include an artifact from Mr. Nakayama.

As the weeks and months went by and information about the family's wishes became known, the Church received communication from parties who opposed the tree's destruction. The working group was not contacted although we continued to advocate for the family and volunteered to assist in a resolution process about the tree. On May 29, during a St. Martin's forum to address what will be done about the tree, Esther and Wendy Matsubuchi participated in the information sharing with little forewarning and opportunity for preparation. Written information was distributed in advance within the parish about the tree's bridge building purpose in 2009, but no prior information was issued about Mr. Nakayama and the experience of the Matsubuchi/Sunohara Family. In the end, the Matsubuchi's stood essentially alone, with no support from those in their Church who knew their history. They were compelled to recount the pedophilia of Mr. Nakayama and his decades of sexual assaults upon Japanese Canadian boys, then disclose their personal family sexual abuse trauma, so that fellow St. Martin's parishioners would be convinced why the tree should be destroyed.

The meeting resulted in most of the parishioners voting after hearing from the family, in favour of cutting the tree down and replacing it with an alternative symbol.

The working group wrote a letter to Bishop Melissa Skelton on June 2 expressing our serious concerns about the Matsubuchi family's experience.

We were disturbed that the process was insensitive to their vulnerability as a survivor family and clearly did not support survivor family healing and reconciliation as the June 15, 2015 Apology intended. During a follow up meeting between the working group and Bishop Melissa and Archdeacon Lynne McNaughton, Bishop Skelton and Archdeacon McNaughton apologized for the unintended consequences of the format of the parish forum and any experience of re-traumatization for members of the Matsubuchi family.

On June 29, 2016 the tree was destroyed during a Matsubuchi family gathering with St. Martin's Father Robin Ruder-Celiz and Archdeacon Lynne McNaughton in attendance. In time, as Bishop Melissa has written, a ceremony will be created to give shape to the issues and feelings surrounding the cutting down of the tree. The Bishop will be working in consultation with Father Ruder-Celiz and Archdeacon McNaughton on this. The working group continues to advocate for the Matsubuchi/Sunohara Family as their input is essential in planning a concluding ceremonial event about the tree.

The Matsubuchi/Sunohara Family have been articulate, open, purposeful, strong and courageous in using their voice to expose the criminal actions of Mr. Nakayama, and diminish the power of secrecy and shame which is often present regarding sexual abuse. They have been passionate advocates for other survivors and their families. It has been a gratifying experience for the working group to work closely with them.

The working group continues to recognize the critical importance of supporting survivor families. If other families wish to raise their voices, Church representatives must gain knowledge about and be sensitized to sexual abuse trauma, take care, respect, genuinely listen and work proactively with them. Families should be supported to address and express their needs and concerns related to their abuse experience. This will honour the intended purpose of the June 15, 2015 Apology.

The working group continues to dialogue with Bishop Skelton and seek feedback from the community regarding ways the June 15, 2015 apology will achieve meaningful reconciliation and resolution with survivors, families, friends and the Japanese Canadian community.

A community workshop about Intergenerational effects of sexual abuse and clergy abuse is being planned for early 2017. More information will be provided in the December 2016 and January 2017 editions of the bulletin. The Japanese Canadian Working Group invites anyone who would like to make contact, to write to us c/o our email address which is jcworkinggroup@gmail.com. ❖

Dear People of the Japanese Canadian Community,

Greetings from the Diocese of New Westminster. I write to comment on the recent events surrounding the Liturgy of Lament and the removal of the cherry tree at St. Martin's Church in North Vancouver. Though the process ended up being quite painful both for the Matsubuchi/Sunohara family (a fact that I and others deeply regret), I'm gratified that the process did result in an action that relieved the Matsubuchi/Sunohara family and their friends of a reminder of the trauma visited on them by the actions of Gordon Nakayama.

Please know that I and other leaders in our diocese remain committed to walking with the Japanese Canadian community as it continues to live with the aftermath of Gordon Nakayama's acts of sexual abuse. To that end, Archdeacon Lynne McNaughton and I will continue to meet with the Japanese Canadian Working Group on a regular basis and will participate in a day in early 2017 dedicated to offering resources to second generation survivors of sexual abuse.

With sincere best wishes to all of you,

+Melissa

Bishop Melissa Skelton

The Diocese of New Westminster

JCCA continued

existing laws to protect our security, and the former Bill C51 is not needed or wanted. There is limited in-person contact for the consultations, but everyone can and should voice their opinion online. More information is on the BC Civil Liberties Association website: bccla.org. Links on how to participate are on their page, Updated: Our National Security Consultation series – A Different Shade of Green Paper

While we seek to preserve and protect our rights and freedoms, we should also give thanks to those who fought, and remember those who died, for our country, Canada. This is the 100th anniversary of the Issei, first generation Japanese Canadians, who served with the Canadian Army in the First World War. Remembrance Day ceremonies will take place at the Japanese Canadian War Memorial in Stanley Park in Vancouver, and if you get a chance, go and see the *Warrior Spirit* exhibit at the Nikkei National Museum.

Another upcoming event is Tonari Gumi's Spirits of Japan fundraiser on October 29th. If you are sampling all the sake, brews, and spirits, please do not drive home. Be safe.

Thanks to everyone who participates in the GJVCCA and other Japanese Canadian organizations' events. The support ensures our community thrives and you have a great experience connecting with our community. ❖

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