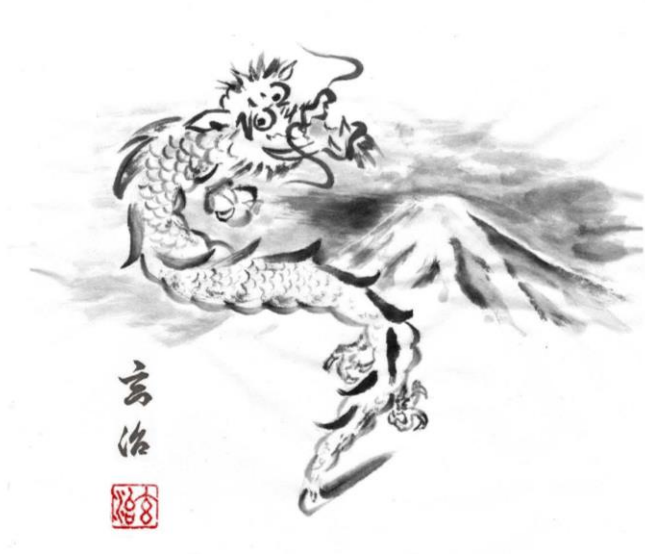


Happy New Year



VNCS Heritage Committee 2023 Annual Report

The highlight of the year for the VNCS Heritage Committee was the Mayne Island JC History Tour held on a beautiful sunny day on April 29, 2023. We were able to accommodate 31 people on the tour. I encourage you to read the article again in the May/June newsletter which featured comments and insights from many of the tour participants.

The Heritage Committee continued to provide historical walking tours of the Esquimalt Gorge Park including a tour for visiting members from throughout Vancouver Island for a live session of the Komorebi book club in April. The event also featured a historical talk on the Nikkei history in Victoria by Ann-Lee and Gordon Switzer. That day was also significant in that it saw the introduction of the replica Japanese Ball Game at the VNCS Udon Luncheon that was a popular attraction at the Takata Japanese Garden in yesteryear. The Japanese Ball Game was also used at the VNCS Cultural Fair. The tours continued throughout the year, including two tours at the Fair. A downtown walking tour was conducted on a few occasions with plans to offer it to VNCS members in 2024.

On Friday morning, June 16, a welcome event for 160 visiting Japanese Navy Cadets was held at the Esquimalt Gorge Park Pavilion. The program for the event was a presentation on Japanese immigration to Canada. Mike Abe (VNCS) covered the history of Japanese immigration and Tomoko Okada (JFS) related her personal story of immigrating to Canada.

Although not an initiative of the VNCS Heritage Committee, the committee helped raise awareness and assisted VNCS members to access and update their family names in the JC Legacies Monument database for inclusion on the proposed monument to be erected in Victoria at St. Ann's Academy later in 2025. Check out updates on this initiative at [Monument - Japanese Canadian Legacies \(jclegacies.com\)](http://jclegacies.com)

The VNCS Heritage Committee held their annual Obon Walking Tour at Ross Bay Cemetery in August with 18 participants, mostly from the Old Cemeteries Society, which concluded with the observation of the Obon Cemetery by Reverend Grant Ikuta of the Steveston Buddhist Temple. The committee also worked on a grant application with Grant to create a Vancouver Island JC Historical Tour August 10-14, 2024. Results will be announced on February 15, 2024. The tour will be in Victoria on Aug. 10 and 11, with next year's Obon ceremony to be held on Saturday, August 10th. The tour will also include Duncan, Paldi, Chemainus, Nanaimo, Port Alberni and the Cumberland/Comox area. Capacity is 50 attendees and will include healing circles and counsellors organized by Patti Ayukawa. Presentations, activities and cemetery visitations will be incorporated in the bus tour. Pricing and registration package will be announced after February 15, interested parties can contact the heritage committee for preliminary information now nikkeiheritage@vnsc.ca

The VNCS Heritage Committee would like to thank Natsuki Abe for her work as the VNCS liaison in her role as director since its inception. We are always looking for more people to join the committee to assist in planning and execution of future events. We look forward to hearing from you.