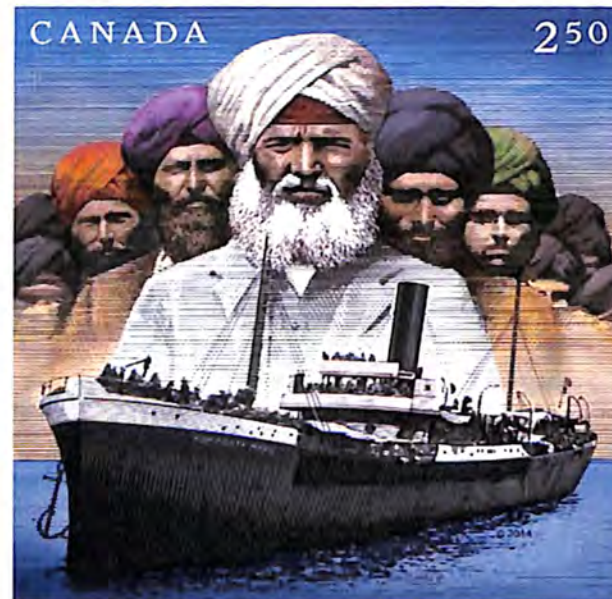


Komagata 1914 Maru 2014





INCIDENT DU KOMAGATA MARU INCIDENT
1914 – 2014

Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Komagata Maru incident

Special collection of stamp and collectibles

"Every stamp we create tells a story that's important to Canadians, to a region, to an organization, to someone. We always have to get the story right and treat the topic as something to be shared. We want all our stamp issues to contain ideas to which most Canadians can relate," says Jim Phillips, Director of Stamp Services at Canada Post. "When the story is a difficult, painful one, it's crucial that we ensure the stamp and the materials that inspire it are as authentic and credible as possible."

Such was the case with the stamp to be issued May 1, 2014, at the beginning of Asian Heritage Month to mark the 100th anniversary of the *Komagata Maru* incident.

What many Canadians don't realize is that they have an opportunity to make suggestions on topics that will eventually appear on Canadian stamps. In fact every year, Canada Post receives hundreds of suggestions from the public, and each suggestion is given serious consideration. The idea for a stamp marking the *Komagata Maru* incident came much the same way. In early 2013, Canada Post announced that a stamp commemorating the incident would be part of the 2014 Canadian Stamp Program.

The Program – of every stamp Canada Post issues in a given year – is not only influenced by suggestions from the Canadian public, it must reflect what matters to all Canadians. In addition to commemorating important events and people in our history, celebrating Canadian culture and art, and

bringing awareness to important institutions, the Program needs to represent the rich diversity of this country. It's quite the balancing act.

One of the strongest champions of the stamp is Harbhajan Gill, President of the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation. He is also Canada Post Manager of Delivery and Transportation in Vancouver. Once news of the stamp became public, he acted as a source of facts and archival photographs. Historian David R. Gray was also of great assistance.

"The Foundation has done a good job educating people in the South Asian community, but there are still many Canadians who don't know about the incident," says Gill. "I hope this stamp will prompt questions. Even though it was a sad event, Canadians should take away a happy message. We've learned from those mistakes and made positive, inspiring change in 100 years. We're a new Canada, one that treats everyone as equal."

**Framed art print –
Komagata Maru Incident**
23" x 19"
584 mm x 483 mm
342011
\$99⁹⁵



Canada Post Stamp Design Manager Alain Leduc oversaw this stamp's design and production. "All stamps must be visually compelling. Albeit small, a stamp is a visual work of art. While the incident involved human hardship and the anti-Asian sentiment of the time, we knew that the imagery would be dominated by the ship and the passengers."

The creation and production process for any stamp is exacting. A great deal of research occurs even before the concepts from two or three design firms are presented to the Stamp Advisory Committee, a group of 12 volunteers with a wide range of expertise that discuss and recommend stamp subjects and designs.

Paprika of Montréal, the chosen design team, knew the topic required sensitivity and respect.

"We were very proud to work on this stamp because it is an incident that should never have happened," says Paprika Creative Director Louis Gagnon.

Gagnon explains that the passengers, who are represented in a dignified manner, dominate the imagery. In this way, Mark Summers's illustration emphasizes the importance of the event. It is based on archival photos and shows details of clothing and the *Komagata Maru*.

The stamp issue includes one international rate stamp, available in a booklet of six stamps, two Official First Day Covers – special collectible envelopes – and a framed print of the stamp design, mounted with an actual stamp. The framed print is a limited edition offering, with only 376 available – one representing each passenger who was aboard the ship.

Official First Day Cover
413932131
\$3⁵⁰

INCIDENT DU
KOMAGATA MARU
INCIDENT



DAY OF ISSUE
CANADA POST
JOUR D'EMISSION
POSTES CANADA

Official First Day Cover
413933131
\$3⁵⁰

INCIDENT DU
KOMAGATA MARU
INCIDENT



DAY OF ISSUE
CANADA POST
JOUR D'EMISSION
POSTES CANADA

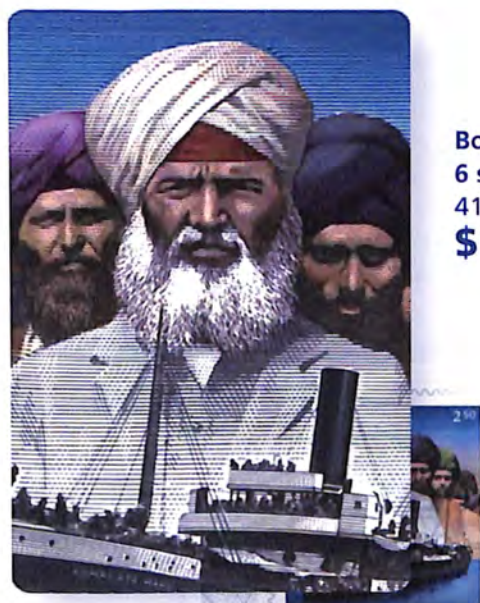
"It's unusual for us to produce two Official First Day Covers for one stamp – but this story was large and complex, so we needed a bigger canvas."

Also unique is the fact that the narrative on the booklet cover and Official First Day Covers is in Punjabi as well as in English and French.

"This is the primary language that would have been spoken on the ship," says Jim Phillips. "This stamp is to recognize the people who suffered due to the regulations of the time, so it should be in their language as well."

"Canada's stamp program reflects the country's culture and history – the important events, the people, the decisions that make Canada what it is," says Canada Post President and CEO Deepak Chopra. "By marking the *Komagata Maru* incident, we are telling an important story in the journey of becoming the far more welcoming nation Canada is today."

The **Komagata Maru** stamp and Official First Day Covers are available at post offices across Canada and online at canadapost.ca/komagatamaru. The framed print is sold in selected post offices as well as online and by telephone at the same coordinates.



Booklet of
6 stamps
412932111
\$15



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DESIGN: PAMELA ILLUSTRATION: MARK GARDNER



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PRIME MINISTER • PREMIER MINISTRE

I would like to extend greetings to everyone marking the 100th anniversary of the Komagata Maru tragedy.

In 1914, 376 South Asian men travelling on the SS Komagata Maru arrived on the shores of Vancouver seeking refuge and a better life in Canada. The government of the day denied them entry and passengers lived without adequate food and water during a 45-day standoff with authorities. Ultimately, the ship was forced to return to India, where 19 of the passengers were shot and most of the remaining passengers were imprisoned or placed under house arrest. This incident marked an unfortunate period in our nation's history.

In 2008, the House of Commons unanimously passed a motion recognizing the Komagata Maru tragedy, and I offered a public apology on behalf of the Government of Canada. We also supported numerous commemorative projects under the Community Historical Recognition Program, such as the Komagata Maru memorial in downtown Vancouver.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend the members of the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation. You can be proud of your efforts to document this incident for future generations and your commitment to building a stronger Canada.

Please accept my best wishes as you commemorate this significant event in our nation's history.

The Rt. Hon. Stephen Harper, P.C., M.P.

OTTAWA
2014



A Message from the Premier

As Premier of the Province of British Columbia, I am pleased to join with the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation in commemorating the 100th anniversary of the Komagata Maru landing on the shore of Vancouver.

The arrival of the Komagata Maru, and the mistreatment of the passengers that followed, is a dark part of our province and country's history. Three hundred and seventy-six people travelled to our province with the dream of building a better life, but they were turned away. The historic significance of this incident is great and it is so important to document what happened and ensure younger generations realize the lessons learned from the Komagata Maru's journey.

The act of turning away the passengers seeking refuge in our province is not something that can be changed, but we can make sure the important lessons learned from this incident are not lost. We must value, respect and welcome all immigrants and refugees who seek to build their lives here in our province. I am proud to know that today we recognize how our communities are enriched, and economy strengthened, by the great cultural diversity we enjoy here in BC.

On behalf of all British Columbians, I commend the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation for the work being done to document this crucial part of our province's history. We have learned a lot over these past one hundred years and this publication ensures we will never forget what the journey of the Komagata Maru has taught us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Christy Clark'.

Christy Clark
Premier



सत्यमेव जयते

प्रधान कौंसल

CONSUL GENERAL

9 May 2014

MESSAGE

The Komagata Maru incident in 1914 is a significant and very important part of Indian and Canadian History. The incident involved a Japanese steamship carrying 376 passengers from Punjab, India, that sailed from Hong Kong and reached Canada in 1914 transiting Shanghai, China and Japan. While 24 passengers were admitted to Canada, others were forced to return to India. When they arrived in Calcutta, India, the ship was stopped and redirected to Budge Budge where the police went to arrest some of the passengers. Faced with resistance, police used force killing nineteen passengers. In 1951, the Government of India erected a monument at Budge Budge to commemorate the massacre of those who fell there.

As we remember this incident after 100 years today in 2014, we pay our respects to the pioneers and freedom fighters who faced this injustice with grit and bravery. The incident is a significant chapter in the Indian Freedom Struggle. It helped the cause for Indian Freedom to gain momentum and strength all across the Globe.

I congratulate the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation for its efforts in bringing the incident to the awareness of today's generation as we pay our homage to the ones who lost their lives to police brutality in the incident. I am happy to note that Canada Post has unveiled a stamp to commemorate the centenary of the event.

(Ravi Shankar Aisola)
Consul General of India

CONSULATE GENERAL OF INDIA

201 - 325 HOWE STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C. CANADA V6C 1Z7

TEL: 604-692-0554 FAX: 604-682-3556 E-MAIL: indiacg@telus.net WEBSITE: www.cgivancouver.com

Legislative Office

New Democrat Official Opposition
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4
Phone: 250-387-3655
Fax: 250-387-4680

Vancouver-Kingsway Community Office

5022 Joyce Street
Vancouver, BC V5R 4G6
Phone: 604-660-0314
Fax: 604-660-1131



May 7, 2014
Harbhajan Gill
President
Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation
9350 -156 Street
Surrey BC
V3R 4L2

Delivery via email

Dear Mr. Gill,

I want to congratulate the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation for its outstanding series of events commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the arrival of the Komagata Maru in Vancouver.

The Komagata Maru is one of the most significant events in the history of our province and country. The actions of Canadian and British Columbian officials to the arrival of the boat and the racism it reflected cannot be forgotten. It resulted in the deaths of many passengers and the implementation of a systematic policy of South Asian exclusion from Canada.

As your work shows, the fate of the Komagata Maru is linked to national and provincial policies intended to build a "white man's province" here in BC. Some 138 racist laws and resolutions were passed by the BC Legislature to this effect between 1871-1928 affecting the economic, political and human rights of South Asian-Canadians, Chinese Canadians and Japanese Canadians.

This is our history – all residents of British Columbia – and the foundation's efforts to build understanding of it are truly remarkable. Thank you.

As you know, I have participated in a number of events already this year related to the Komagata Maru and other events that reflect the "White Man's Province" world-view that dominated BC public policy up to 1947. I look forward to reading and learning from this program and participating in the many events supported and sponsored by the Foundation this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Adrian Dix".

Adrian Dix, MLA
Vancouver-Kingsway

ni? ct xatəmətəl, tə ʔnimət, tə təməxʷ ʔi? tə kʷaʔkʷə I *
 We watch over the land and sea and in turn they watch over us.



May 1, 2014

A Message from the Mayor

100 years ago on May 23, the Komagata Maru entered local waters carrying 376 passengers, many of them hopeful migrants of diverse faiths from British Punjab. The cruel fate of those passengers denied entry to our country has become not only an important historical lesson, but a powerful symbol of racism and injustice that casts a dark shadow on our City's past.

In the century since that fateful time, Vancouver has overcome many aspects of injustice to grow into a welcoming and inclusive place for newcomers of all faiths, backgrounds and places of origin. Yet challenges remain to ensure that we continue to root out racism and discrimination where it still exists. Commemorating the Komagata Maru and all it has come to represent both past and present, is a meaningful step towards that goal.

On behalf of the City of Vancouver, I commend the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation for its tireless work to build greater understanding of this difficult history and to help realize our hopes for a better future as a diverse and inclusive city.

Yours truly,

Gregor Robertson
MAYOR

President's Message



Dear readers,

As we mark the 100th Anniversary of Komagata Maru, we are hoping that through this souvenir we will be able to preserve this historical Canadian incident by way of the articles written by many scholars and writers from all over the world. The stories that were told by the passengers to their families and friends need to be brought forward so as to add to the historical record. Most Canadians just know about this episode through a two line summary and that is what is taught to our future generations.

South Asians have achieved many high profile leadership roles in business, politics and education throughout the world. Our local pioneers faced many difficulties in their early arrival in North America. The Komagata Maru incident is not one that we Canadians are proud of but we are excited about the future.

In the rush of daily life we tend to focus on the present and near future - we think what is past is past! Yet there is good reason to cast one's gaze back towards the past. The more we learn of the intensity of a historical movement and it's trajectory, the better.

Good times and bad, triumphs and tragedies, financial crunches and great prosperity are all part of Canadian history. Our past is part of our teaching, our present is what we celebrate. Our future is what we are building with every in exhibit, every event and every program.

Once again, let me express my thanks to all who fought for their rights, sacrificed their lives for freedom and who faced uncertain futures. 352 South Asians were not allowed to set foot on Canadian land, because of the Continuous Journey Act. 90% of the South Asians living in Canada at the time of the Komagata Maru's journey were forced to return, deciding to leave Canada within six months of the incident, going back to India to fight for their ultimate freedom from colonialism.

There are those who accept things as they are and those who lead to change them. They lead by not succumbing to the status quo but rather, by thinking differently and by acting boldly. They lead not just because they want to but because they feel that they must.

I am deeply honoured and humbled to be the President of Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation as we commemorate and remember our pioneers' sacrifices.

I would like to thank Jasleen and Mohan who took on the difficult task of editing from the contents many writers whose work did not make it to the final print.

We raise our hands to the Musqueam people in thanks. It is our good fortune to be at the Musqueam Unceded Traditional Territory today. We appreciate the people of Musqueam for honouring the Komagata Maru souls 100 years later to Canada.

Sincerely,

Harbhajan S. Gill

Harbhajan S. Gill
President Komagata Maru
Heritage Foundation
www.komagatamaru.ca

Editorial

By: Mohan Gill and Jasleen Kaur



The Komagata Maru incident is a painful and dark chapter in Canada's history. Komagata Maru came to Canada as a protest to challenge a law passed in 1908 by Canadian Government called the Continuous Journey Act according to which the government stated a ship should come straight from the country of origin without stopping on the way. At the same time every passenger should have two hundred dollars. The Act was made solely to restrict immigrants coming from Asia especially India as due to the distance between the Canada and India a stopover was necessary.

Gurdit Singh, a merchant from Hong Kong was aware of the difficulties Indians were facing at the time to come to Canada. Baba Gurdit Singh started his journey from Hong Kong on April 4th 1914 with 165 passengers. They stopped at Shanghai where they picked more passengers. They set sail from Shanghai and came to Yokohama on April 14th where they picked the rest of the passengers. The Komagata Maru left Yokohama on May 3rd with 376 passengers and sailed into Burrard inlet at Vancouver on May 23rd 1914. The rest is history, a history that you will discover and rediscover in this souvenir from diverse perspectives.

This year (2014) we are celebrating hundred years of the incident. The Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation has organized numerous events over the years to commemorate the incident and honouring our pioneers who took this arduous journey. These events include annual candlelight vigils, educational seminars and workshops, food bank drives and other initiatives. In 2006 the Foundation bought the Sea Lion a significant boat in the incident as an educational tool to educate Canadians of the history of the incident. The foundation has always strived to preserve this incident in the history of Canada. We present this Souvenir as a tribute to the pioneers who fought for justice and equality in Canada. They made it possible for us to live in an inclusive and diverse Canada where everyone is equal.

We extend heartfelt thanks to the contributors who have written about this incident through their poems, articles, research papers, and stories. The contributors come from diverse backgrounds, ages and expertise but they have written with so much passion and love for the pioneers of Komagata Maru and the event, that the Souvenir has become a testament of the fact that the incident will remain alive in the hearts of our present and future generations.

This souvenir is an effort to not only preserve our past but also reflect on what it has to teach us today.

We are indebted to the visionary Gurdit Singh and our pioneers who came to Canada in 1914 aboard the Komagata Maru to challenge its exclusion laws. At the same time we also remember the South Asian community in Vancouver, the shore committee, the Khalsa Diwan Society, and our early pioneer settlers who strived day and night for the passengers and donated their hard earned wages and years of savings without a second thought to support the passengers. We pay homage to Joseph Edward Bird (1868 – 1948), the lawyer who represented the passengers of Komagata Maru. He stood for the passengers at a time when he faced opposition from majority Canadians. He put his safety and the safety of his family at risk while taking up the task.

Truly their contribution to a more inclusive and multicultural Canada is immeasurable. It is because of their dreams, struggles, and sacrifice that we enjoy freedom and equality today.

Mohan Gill

Jasleen Kaur

Subjects of the Empire

By: Lisa Smedman

A century ago, the arrival of large numbers of "Hindoos" threw Vancouver into a panic. Today, the descendants of these immigrants look back with pride at their forefathers' tenacity and triumphs.

Lisa Smedman, Vancouver Courier

Published: Wednesday, August 08, 2007

One hundred and one years ago, the "Hindu invasion" predicted for months by Vancouver newspapers came to pass. On Sept. 1, 1906, the Vancouver Daily Province reported the alarming news that 100 "Hindus"--part of a group of 300 men from India who had arrived on the steamship Tartar the day before--were roaming Vancouver's streets.

The men, the newspaper said, had set up camp "with pots, pans and various impediments" just outside Stanley Park near the Barclay Street home of Sir Charles Hibbert Tupper, a prominent lawyer and former Conservative MP. Vancouver's mayor, Frederick Buscombe, visited the squatters and ordered them to move on.

"His remonstrances were met by a storm of jabbering and, as not a man of the crowd spoke English, were futile," the Daily Province reported. "The Hindus simply squatted down and evidenced no intention of moving."

A century ago, the arrival of large numbers of "Hindoos" threw Vancouver into a panic. Today, the descendants of these immigrants look back with pride at their forefathers' tenacity and triumphs.

They eventually did move, however--to Second Beach, only to face the wrath of Superintendent of Parks George Eldon, who told the newspaper he feared their campfires would spread to the park.

"At this writing the police have rounded up this bunch, and the entire lot are decorating the immediate vicinity of the police station," the newspaper added.

Buscombe criticized the immigrants for arriving in Vancouver "without any provision as to work or food."

He told reporters he was "thoroughly disgusted" and that it was "a disgraceful state of affairs."

One year later, Vancouver erupted in a riot that saw a white mob rage through the "foreign quarter" of town. The primary targets of the Sept. 7, 1907 riot were the city's Chinese and Japanese immigrants, but the violence was inspired by a similar event, three days previously, in Bellingham, in which a mob attacked East Indian sawmill workers. The effort to "move [the Hindus] on" was successful; more than 100 East Indian workers fled north, to British Columbia.

Unfortunately, it didn't prove any safer here.



Santokh Singh Gill, grandson of Rattan Singh Gill.

Newspaper reports of "indigent" immigrants from India begging in the streets continued in the years that followed. Yet most of the immigrants--mostly Sikhs from what was then the province of the Punjab, in British-ruled India--found jobs, primarily in the logging industry.

In the early 1900s, Vancouver was a sawmill town. Mills lined Burrard Inlet and False Creek, as well as the banks of the Fraser River in New Westminster and Coquitlam. Despite the transcontinental railway, completed two decades earlier, the mills faced a severe labour shortage.

In July 1906, sawmill owner E.H. Heaps told the Vancouver Board of Trade that the head tax imposed on the Chinese--which had been raised to \$500 three years' previously, a sum equivalent to more than a year's salary as a millhand--had "crippled" the sawmill industry. Labourers needed to be "brought in from outside points," he told the board. Perhaps French-Canadians could be brought in, he suggested.

Although French-Canadians started filling the gap at sawmills in Coquitlam in 1909 (the year the first of them settled in what became known as Maillardville), most of the mills relied on East Indian labourers, who in those days were collectively referred to as Hindustanees. On Nov. 23, 1906, a Daily Province survey of local mills found "Hindus" working at Pacific Coast Mills, Rat Portage Lumber Company, Emerson Mill and E.H. Heaps & Co. as lumber pilers, shingle weavers and general labourers.

The Rat Portage manager noted that his 14 Hindu employees were "about on a par with the Japanese and the whites that could be secured for similar work..."

"On the whole," he added, "they were preferred to white unskilled labour, which it was regretted could not always be depended on, for that sort of work. The Hindus, like the Chinese and Japanese, could be depended upon to give no trouble and to stay at their [jobs]."

While white labourers--and a few of the Chinese--were paid \$2.50 a day at Rat Portage, Hindus were paid \$1.50 a day "for the same labour."

Despite the discrepancy, it was an attractive wage. On Oct. 1, 1906, the Daily Province interviewed Henry N. Gladstone, a Britisher who had lived for 15 years in India. He explained that the Sikhs were willing to do "coolie labour" in Canada because they could earn far more than they could in India.

"At home they get about 10 shillings a month and save money on it. If they get \$1.50 a day here they will soon make a fortune, and go home again. A couple of hundred dollars is a fortune to them and living as they do they can save in a very short time."

The exchange rate of British shillings to Canadian

dollars (as listed in an immigration handbook published in 1900) meant that a \$1.50 per day wage, combined with the mills' six-day work week, resulted in a monthly salary equivalent to 148 shillings per month--15 times the average monthly wage in India.

Tarakanath Das, a "local leader of the Hindus," told a Daily Province reporter on Sept. 14, 1907 that it was difficult to find housing for new arrivals.

"Personally, he had tried to secure houses for them, but the owners would not rent them to Hindus," the paper reported. "At present 150 are living in a 10-room house on Second Avenue, 250 at the Maple Leaf boarding house, and 150 in tents."

The problem wasn't a new one. A year earlier, on Nov. 23, 1906, the Daily Province reported that 100 Hindus who'd been living in a home on the "cemetery road" (Fraser Street) had been "thrown into the street."

According to the paper, Attam Singh, a "respectable Hindu" had rented a house from W.H. Mason & Co., agents for the New Westminster owner. After nearly 100 immigrants crowded into the house, stables and renovated "chicken houses," neighbours complained. The owner, at the urging of South Vancouver's municipal council, ordered her agents to repudiate the lease and refund the rent. The municipality sent a constable to evict the men.

Realtor H.B.A. Vogel lived just down the road, near the municipal hall at what is today modern 41st Avenue and Fraser Street. He complained to the Daily Province that it was "inhuman and disgraceful" for the immigrants to be tossed out into the cold.

"When I came home last evening I saw the Hindus all camped along the road, shivering in the frosty night air," Vogel told the newspaper. "I took action at once by arranging to house a number of them for the night. Today we fixed up temporary shelter for the poor fellows, and they will stay at my place until they find some better housing. I do not care what the members of the council think about it."

Vogel, however, was a man of his times. He added, "I am against the Hindus being allowed in the vicinity at all, but in the name of humanity we must keep them from freezing to death."

Barely two weeks after the eviction, the Daily Province of Dec. 7 reported that a barn in which Vogel had quartered 15 of the men had been torched. The fire was set around 10 a.m., while the immigrants were at work, and destroyed all of their possessions. An outraged Vogel offered a reward of \$100 for information leading to the arrest of the arsonist.

In the early 1900s, immigrants from a variety of countries formed organizations to help others from their homeland. Vancouver's Sikhs were no exception. In 1906, they founded the Khalsa Diwan Society. Its members started a Gurdwara (temple) in a rented

house in Vancouver's Fairview.

By 1908 a permanent Gurdwara had been built at 1866 West Second Ave. in Fairview. It became the community hub not just for Sikhs, but for East Indian immigrants of all faiths.

In December 1908, members of the temple formed the Guru Nanak Mining and Trust Company, named after the founder of the Sikh religion. Its stated aims included buying land that unemployed members could farm, setting up a hostel for students, opening a market to import Indian goods, and investing in the mining industry.

The photocopied names of the company's original 251 members are preserved in the book *Canadian Sikhs (Part One) and Komagata Maru Massacre*, by Kesar Singh. They lived in Vancouver, New Westminster, Victoria, Nanaimo, Portland and California--as well as a host of smaller towns in B.C., including Millside (in Coquitlam), Eburne (modern Marpole), Barnet (for which the Barnet Highway is named), North Vancouver, Abbotsford, Harrison Mills, Haney, Revelstoke and Golden.

Wherever a sawmill, mine, land clearing or track laying project needed labourers, the Sikhs could be found.

According to a much-repeated tale, East Indians first developed an interest in Canada when a Sikh regiment passed through this country by train after participating in Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebration in 1897. An early telling of this story can be found in the December 1911 edition of the magazine *The Aryan*, published in Victoria.

"They spoke of the great prairies, which were like the plains of the Punjab, and the immigration commenced," editor Sunder Singh wrote. "The Sikhs were farmers and their intention was to get on the land."

Most of the early Sikh immigrants, however, settled west of the Rockies.

Other accounts place the first arrivals much earlier. According to Ajit Gharlay, president of the Golden Sikh Cultural Society, Sikh immigrants were working at a sawmill in Golden as early as the 1880s, and built a Gurdwara there.

Immigrants from India came to Canada by steamship, typically after connecting with the Canadian Pacific Railway's Yokohama-to-Vancouver line. They were firm in their belief that, as subjects of the British Empire, they had the right to travel its dominions without restriction. They soon learned that North American customs officials didn't see it that way.

A taste of the struggles that lay ahead came as early as 1899, when two "Hindoos" hoping to connect in Victoria to a boat for the United States were delayed after American customs officials "classed them as

immigrants such as Chinese or Japanese," and refused them entry, the *Victoria Daily Colonist* of May 14 reported. The two men, originally from northwestern India but travelling for the previous two years, argued that they were "well provided with money" and furthermore, that they were British subjects. Their arguments fell on deaf ears.

Events in Britain's other dominions helped nudge East Indian immigrants toward Canada. In 1901, Australia passed its Immigration Restriction Act, which required would-be immigrants to prove their literacy by writing out a 50-word dictation in a "European language." Many of those from the Punjab were illiterate. If any were fluent in English, the immigration officer could deny him entry by choosing another language for the dictation test.

Immigration to Canada increased steadily in the years that followed, with 2,100 East Indians arriving in 1906 and more than 2,600 arriving in 1907.

Canada, however, soon came up with legislation equally as devious as the Australian act. In 1908, Canada introduced the "continuous journey" regulation, which required immigrants to arrive via tickets booked in their homelands. The government then pressured steamship companies to stop selling through tickets from Calcutta.

On paper, the continuous journey regulation also applied to immigrants from Europe, but it was only put into practice when immigrants from India tried to enter Canada.

A second regulation was more blatantly race-based. Immigrants from India were required to arrive with a minimum of \$200 in their pockets--four times the \$50 minimum for immigrants from Europe.

In October 1913, 39 immigrants from India successfully challenged the continuous journey regulation in B.C.'s Supreme Court. Emboldened by this legal decision, businessman Gurdit Singh chartered a ship named the *Komagata Maru* to carry 376 would-be immigrants, most of them Sikh, to Canada from Hong Kong, Shanghai and Yokohama. The ship arrived at Vancouver on May 23, 1914.

Only 22 of those on board--men who could prove they'd previously immigrated to Canada, and were returning--were allowed to disembark. Immigration officials refused to let the rest land, despite passengers' protests they were British subjects.

For two long months, the *Komagata Maru* sat in Burrard Inlet. Indian immigrants on shore raised thousands of dollars to maintain the ships' charter and purchase food for those on board. A legal battle, using one of the passengers as a test case, was fought and lost.

Enraged passengers eventually seized the ship from its Japanese crew. In response, the Canadian

government sent 150 armed police aboard a tug named the Sea Lion to board the ship and force it out to sea. The passengers responded by hurling lumps of coal, and drove the Sea Lion away.

Finally, the Canadian warship HMCS Rainbow was sent in. Despite being threatened by its guns, the passengers refused to sail until the Canadian government provided them with provisions for the return voyage. The ship at last departed Vancouver on July 23.

Upon arrival in India, the Komagata Maru was met by a British gunboat. Those on board had been deemed dangerous political agitators. After the ship docked, a scuffle with police left 20 of the passengers dead and nine wounded.

More than 90 years after the Komagata Maru was forced out of the harbour, Harbhajan Gill stands in the wheelhouse of the Sea Lion, looking out at the bow of the 130-foot-long, wooden-hulled vessel that was launched in 1905. As president of the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation dedicated to keeping the memory of the 1914 incident alive, Gill purchased the tug last October for \$752,000--a figure the foundation came up with because it represents \$2,000 for each of the 376 passengers from the ill-fated journey.

How does it feel to own one of the vessels that forced immigrants like his grandfather from entering Canada?

"It's good to be giving something back to the community," says Gill, who plans to turn the Sea Lion into a floating display once it's returned to its berth at the Vancouver Maritime Museum. "The story [of the Komagata Maru] is so interesting. It's something that needs to be put out to the public."

Gill has no direct connection to the Komagata Maru. His grandfather was in Vancouver in 1914, but wasn't part of the "shore committee" that raised money to help the passengers. Yet he's passionate about preserving a physical legacy--a place where future generations can "feel the history." That's just as valuable, he says, than any formal apologies the Canadian government might offer.

"Apology comes and goes," he says. "We want to teach the kids for the future generations."

Gill's grandfather, Rattan Singh, came to Canada in 1906 at the age of 25. He left two younger brothers--Kirpal and Mehar--to look after the family farm. He also left a wife (Mahon Kaur) and three-year-old daughter (Namo Kaur) behind in India.

Rattan Singh originally resided in Vancouver. "He was only two blocks away, in 1907, when the Vancouver Chinatown riots happened," said Gill.

The middle brother, Kirpal, died in 1908. Gill's grandfather wanted to return to India for the funeral, but couldn't. Around 1908 or 1909 he purchased a

truck, and began selling firewood in North Vancouver. He returned to Jhingran, the village of his birth, in 1915. He and his wife had three more children. He came back to Canada in 1930, and brought his oldest son (Gill's uncle, Naranhan Singh) to this country in 1932. They worked in a mill at Honeymoon Bay, on Vancouver Island.

Gill's uncle returned to India in 1936. Gill's own father came to Canada in 1960. He worked in a sawmill in Avola, near Kamloops.

"[The immigrants from India] sacrificed a lot," said Gill, 52, who was born in India. "When my father came, in 1960, he left three kids back home. He was running a good farm, he could survive in India at that time, he had a house built by his father [and] he had land. There wasn't really reason to come here, but he wanted to give [his children an] education."

Despite the rhetoric that East Indians would never "assimilate," it was the whites who threw up barriers. On Nov. 19, 1906, the Daily Province reported that "Hindus" who had formerly served with British infantry or cavalry units in India hoped to join New Westminster's militia. White soldiers responded by threatening to quit if the "swarthy newcomers" were admitted to their unit. The Sikhs of Millside told the newspaper they would be forced to apply to Ottawa to form their own company.

Indian immigrants wanted to vote, but in March of 1907, B.C. passed legislation to disenfranchise them. (Chinese, Japanese and native Indians had earlier been disenfranchised.) Any registrar who inserted the name of an East Indian on a voters' list faced a fine of up to \$50.

In December of 1910, G.D. Kumar, secretary of the local Hindustani Association, wrote to Vancouver's city council, demanding the right to vote.

"Hindus are British subjects most of whom have fought side by side with the best and bravest for the England's good old flag of Justice and Liberty, and to deny them this constitutional right of suffrage is a menace to the Empire of which the Hindus form the prepondering (sic) part," he wrote.

Hindus, he added, held nearly \$1 million worth of property in B.C., and were taxpayers. What's more, they were allowed to vote in England. "To deny a man the right of suffrage who has the same right in England is absurd," he concluded.

City councillors received the correspondence and filed it. Not until 1947 did East Indians receive the right to vote.

Like the Chinese, early immigrants from India wound up in "bachelor societies." Although many were married, few brought their wives to B.C. It made more sense, economically, to bring over a son who

could earn a wage. By the time of the 1911 census, the imbalance was massive--2,289 men to just three women.

Dr. Kaishoram Davischand, a Brahmin, was an exception. He came to B.C. at least as early as 1904. The Daily Province of July 9, 1907, described his wife as "the only Hindu woman in Canada, if not in [North] America." By then the couple also had a child, named Yojie.

By the 1910s, immigrants from India began to buy property and settle down--and to think about bringing their families to Canada. The continuous journey requirement thwarted their plans.

The December 1911 edition of The Aryan featured a full-page ad showing Teja Singh, Rajah Singh and Dr. Sunder Singh, who had gone to Ottawa to plead for their families to be admitted, together with supporter Reverend L.W. Hall of the Presbyterian church.

"When the Canadian missionary goes to India, he is allowed to take with him his wife and children," the text explained. "The Canadian being a British subject he has that right and privilege. When the Hindu comes to Canada he is not allowed to bring his wife and children. He is a British subject, and he may be a Christian, but these matters count for naught with the Canadian government..."

Bhag Singh and Balwant Singh challenged the regulation by bringing their wives and children to Vancouver in January 1912. Hakim Singh tried to do the same, but his four sons and his mother (who cared for the boys since he was a widower) were detained in Hong Kong. They spent months in limbo, until immigration agent Malcolm J.R. Reid recommended they be allowed to enter Canada "purely as an act of grace, and not as a precedent." They were admitted in July 1913.

As a result of these challenges, Henry Herbert Stevens, the MP for Vancouver City, met with East Indian immigrants in Vancouver and Victoria in January of 1912. He estimated there were about 2,500 East Indians in B.C., one-third of whom were married.

"Assuming that there are 800 men with wives in India, I think that not more than 500 of these could show that they are in a financial position to bring their wives or their wives and families to Canada," he wrote in a Jan. 26, 1912 memorandum.

The Canadian government didn't allow Indian immigrants to sponsor their families to Canada until 1919.

Stevens didn't approve of non-white immigration. He wrote that Vancouver's medical health officer had told him East Indians were "uncleanly in their habits, are afflicted with tuberculosis, [and] are addicted to drink..."

"I saw these conditions personally and frequently

found from four to 10 men living in one room, cooking, eating and sleeping in the same quarters," he added.

In August 1913, Stevens wrote to William James Roche, Canada's minister of the interior, warning that a steamship line offering direct service from Calcutta to Vancouver was imminent. "I am also informed upon good authority that 100,000 Hindoos are ready to immigrate to Canada," he added. "I desire to impress upon the Government the seriousness of this threatened influx and to urge that the strongest possible measures be adopted to stop the same."

The steamship service didn't materialize, nor did the "Hindu hordes." The First World War intervened, Indians hoping to overthrow the British regime while it was weakened by war flocked back to India, and immigration from India to Canada slowed to a trickle. By the 1921 census, there were only 1,016 South Asians in all of Canada.

It wasn't until 1967, when the last race-based policies in Canada's immigration act were removed, that immigrants from India and Pakistan began to arrive in any numbers. Prior to 1967, only about 500 immigrants came to Canada from India and Pakistan each year. Between 1968 and 1972, that number increased to more than 56,000, an estimated two-thirds of them Punjabis.

Back in 1906, when Vancouverites were up in arms about the "Hindu invasion," Vancouver's total population--then overwhelmingly white--was less than 60,000. By the time of the 2001 census, the city's South Asian "visible minority" was estimated at 164,340.

The Vancouver of 1906 could be filled three times over with descendants of those whose arrival caused such fear and outrage a century ago.



Image from SFU Digital Library.

Creating the character of the Sikh Woman aboard Komagata Maru on Stage

By: Sharon Pollock

In writing "The Komagata Maru Incident" I had two major (out of many minor) concerns. The majority of Canadians had never heard of the Komagata Maru and the events surrounding its arrival in Vancouver Harbour. How could I convey the key historical events to an audience in a theatrical way so that they, while apprehending the context of the play, could engage with its characters and story?

This concern was more or less resolved by my impression of the general atmosphere, media coverage, and political commentary at the time, as gleaned from my research. It reminded me of a racist circus. Crowds on the Harbour docks, hawkers selling balloons and cotton candy, politicians fanning racist fires with bombastic speeches, with media adding a note of hysterical excitement and incitement.

A circus must have a master of ceremonies thus the character T.S. came into being to provide what we needed to know historically. The histrionic aspects of a circus ringmaster also gave me a sense of T.S.' style of delivery. The idea of a three ring circus meant three principal playing areas: T.S.' outer ring or area that surrounds the second ring of the brothel, and the third ring that invades or is set within the brothel area. That third ring is reminiscent both of the superstructure of a ship and the bars of a cage, for a circus must have a cage, and that leads me to a second concern.

Could I create a credible and truthful (within the play) characterization of a Sikh, when their life experience, spiritual beliefs and national history of courage, struggle and triumph was so different from my own? The Sikh religion is a beautiful one and Sikh history compelling. My research, both formal and personal, told me that my knowledge, instinct, compassion and empathy were not enough. I should leave a play set on the ship, or peopled with Sikh characters, to a Sikh playwright.

I had a problem. For me it was impossible to think of writing a play capturing the events surrounding the Komagata Maru if that play was to have no characters whose story it essentially was. However, and it was a big however, there was a woman and child on the ship. I couldn't write a male Sikh character but, rightly

or wrongly, I felt that I did have certain important, what I would call entry points to a female Sikh character.

I am female, I'm a daughter, have been a wife, am a mother, have been raised in a paternalistic society. If I were very careful about what I presumed, or assumed, perhaps knowledge, instinct, compassion, and empathy, might be enough to enable me to create a Sikh woman. And so the character of the Sikh Woman entered the play. I created her as honestly as I could.

Now I come back to that third ring in my three ring circus structure of setting, character of T.S., and content. If the three ring circus has a cage, as suggested by the minimalist superstructure of the ship, who occupies the cage, and for what reason? In a circus it's a wild animal who is feared, confined, and perceived as a threat. In the play it's the Sikh Woman, with an invisible child, who is behind the cage-like minimalist superstructure of the ship, and always a presence in the play. She represents all that is feared, confined and perceived as a threat by those on the dock, the politicians, the media, and by implication the majority of Canadians. The Woman is radicalized by events, and develops from a somewhat passive to an active character.

In the mid 70's when "The Komagata Maru Incident" was first produced, director Larry Lillo and I were working with an ensemble of six Caucasian actors - to say nothing of Larry and me, all white Canadians. The ensemble was the ensemble; neither Larry nor I could change that, for they were contracted for a season of plays other than mine, and colour-blind casting was far in the future - as it still is to a large degree. The Woman would be played by a Caucasian actor. That was something we had to accept, and ensemble member Diane Belshaw delivered a fine performance as The Woman.

Nevertheless since that first production, and so far as I know, the role has always been played by other than a Caucasian actor. In productions I've seen, that choice has brought an authenticity and insight to the characters' realization than cannot be achieved otherwise.

"As a Canadian, I feel that much of our history has been misrepresented and even hidden from us. Until we recognise our past, we cannot change our future." ~Sharon Pollock

Sikh Pioneers in Canada and Their Legacy

By: Hugh J.M. Johnston

One cannot say with certainty when the first Sikhs came to Canada. The census of 1901 shows over 1,000 residents who had been born in India.¹ It would be reasonable to wonder if some of these were Sikhs or other Indians from India. But nearly all of these India-born residents counted in the Canadian census at the beginning of the twentieth century were people of British origin. They were British from India, civil servants and military people who had resettled in Canada in their retirement years. Only around 1904 did Sikh immigration begin; and even then, the numbers were very small. In 1904-5, which was the initial year that the Canadian immigration department reported immigrants from India, the number was only 45.² The movement that left its mark on the history of Sikhs in Canada came immediately after that, in 1906 and 1907. Among Sikhs in Canada today, most of the oldest families trace their start in this country to the arrival of a grandfather or great grandfather or distant uncle in those two years. These families have shared an experience that distinguishes them from the immigrants of the past thirty-five years.

The early immigration was remarkably concentrated in time, not just in two twelve-month periods, but in a few months and days within that. Sixty percent of the pioneers arrived on one of seven dates (August 22, September 1, September 18 and November 15, 1906; and May 31, September 12, and October 10, 1907).³ They travelled by steerage on Canadian Pacific steamships operating between Hong Kong and Vancouver; and on those dates they disembarked in the hundreds. The largest number came on the Monteagle which docked with 901 passengers on

September 12, 1907. The size of these contingents was memorable; and, years later, when officials asked men when they had first come, rather than give a day or month they would say they had come on the 900 ship or the 700 ship or the 500 ship. On October 10, 1907, the Tartar, with 547, brought the last large group. By January of 1908, immigration officials were refusing entry to all immigrants from India, and the first phase of the Sikh experience in Canada was over. This was an immigration with potential for great growth that was choked off by Canadian policy.

The Sikhs who reached Canada in these early years were, with few exceptions, young men between the ages of eighteen and thirty.⁴ A majority of them were married, and they had left their wives and families in India while they traversed half the globe in search of work. Most of them came from families with property—farming families with three or four acres or more who employed the services and labour of the sub-caste members of their villages. Overseas, these men did unskilled work that they would not have done at home, because they could earn wages that acquired ten times the value when taken back. They came initially to work and not to settle, but they were prepared to stay for years at a time, living as bachelors, with only letters or the word of compatriots who went back and forth to connect them with their families. Emigration was a strategy for improving their welfare and status in their birthplace villages; and they saved money to pay off mortgages, to acquire more land and, eventually to build big brick houses to distinguish themselves from their village neighbours. This behavior was not peculiar to Punjabi Sikhs. It was been characteristic of trans-

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"Living as bachelors, with only letters or the word of compatriots who went back and forth to connect them with their families."

oceanic emigrants of that period from rural Greece, Italy, Portugal, China and elsewhere. What was unusual, in the case of the Sikhs in Canada, was that they remained transient for so long. Rarely did any of the pioneers learn to think of Canada as home; many lived the bulk of their lives in this country, yet were reluctant—when they could—to bring their families to join them.

Very few of the earliest pioneers went east of the Rocky Mountains, although by coming to Canada they had already shown their willingness to travel great distances in search of high wages. Within months of arrival in British Columbia, more than 2,000 crossed the American border and penetrated south through Washington and Oregon to California, leaving behind a population of about 2,500 in Canada.⁵ This population remained much the same size over the next few years despite a constant movement of men to and from India. But, while Sikhs spread up and down the Pacific coast, they found little to attract them to the east. In British Columbia they found employment as saw mill labourers, as railway construction workers, as farm labourers, and, in a few cases, as cultivators of their own land. A survey in 1910, reported a number working in the interior south-eastern part of the province; but most were on the coast.⁶ The census of 1911, showed only 50 people of Indian origin residing in any province or territory other than British Columbia: one in the Yukon, three in Calgary, eleven in Winnipeg, six in Toronto, four in Kingston, nine in Montreal, one in Saint John, and the remainder in various localities in Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick. If jobs had been available, more Sikhs would have gone east; but they faced an effective barrier in the hostility of Canadian workers. Except in British Columbia, where Chinese labour had once been indispensable, employers were constrained by the attitude of their own white workers not to use Asian labour. The geographical range of opportunity for Sikh pioneers in Canada was extremely limited.

Nearly two-thirds of the Sikhs who came to Canada and who settled permanently, were from the Doaba districts of Jullundur and Hoshiarpur.⁷ About a fifth were from the Malwa districts of Ludhiana and Ferozepore; while comparatively few were from the Manja districts of Amritsar and Lahore. At that time, although many Sikhs resided in the newly colonized canal tracts of west Punjab in what is now Pakistan, a majority of them were concentrated in the central region of the province. Within this central region, the largest numbers lived in the Majha area, between the Beas and Ravi Rivers and in the Malwa area, between the Sutlej and Jumna Rivers. The numbers of Sikhs in the Doaba area, between the Beas and Sutlej Rivers, were much smaller. The predominance of emigrants to Canada from a very localized part of



The first group of immigrants in Vancouver camped in front of Stark's Glasgow House on Hastings Street. Photo provided by SFU Digital Library.

Punjab has never been satisfactorily explained, but it has had lasting importance in the evolution of the Sikh community in Canada.

Although most of the early immigrants were Sikhs from farming families in Hoshiarpur and Jullundur, some Hindus and Muslims from the same villages came with them. They were all Punjabis, and they naturally travelled, worked and roomed together. Late in 1907, when the Sikhs in Vancouver built a Gurdwara on Second Ave., not far from the lumber mills of False Creek where so many of the men worked, it became a focal point and meeting place for all Punjabis. This Gurdwara was a two-story wooden structure with a large carpeted and curtained hall for religious assemblies and meetings on the second floor, and a dining hall and kitchen on the ground floor; and it contained accommodation for visitors from out of town. Because a Sikh Gurdwara is open to people of all backgrounds and faiths, and because the Punjabi Hindus and Muslims were not numerous enough to have their own centres, they naturally gravitated to the Sikh place of worship. On occasion, the few Bengalis and other non-Punjabi South Asians in Vancouver attended meetings there as well.

For many of the Sikh pioneers, an immensely important part of their experience in Canada was the rediscovery of their own faith. They arrived as nominal or apostate Sikhs, and became amritdhari or baptized Sikhs within a few years. Many accepted the Sikh discipline through the missionary work of Sant Teja Singh. Teja Singh was an educated Sikh, the son of a surgeon from Gujranwala city in west Punjab. His upbringing had not been religious, but when he was in his twenties and serving as vice-principal of Khalsa College in Amritsar he had become a profoundly religious Sikh and a disciple of Sant Atar Singh of Patiala. He was also a critic of the British regime in India, a perspective that he attributed to his experience as a very young man as an assistant superintendent in the Northern India Salt Revenue Service. Following



*The first group of immigrants in Vancouver doing unskilled work.
Photo provided by SFU Digital Library.*

his father's death, Teja Singh went to Britain to study; in 1908, after five terms at Cambridge, he decided to attend summer school at Columbia University in New York. While he was there, he gave a lecture on India, and a newspaper report of that lecture came to the attention of Sikhs in Vancouver.⁸ They wrote to him and he came out that October on a tour of Sikh communities on the Pacific Coast of Canada and the United States. Over the next five years, while he completed an A.M. degree at Harvard, and until he finally went back to India, he offered religious, political and community leadership to Sikhs in North America. When Sikhs in Victoria and in Stockton, California, began to erect Gurdwaras in 1912, Teja Singh laid the foundation stones.

A recession that began in 1907 and continued well into 1908 had helped to persuade the Canadian government to curb immigration from India. But deep-seated hostility in the white population towards immigration from Asia was the main cause; and when the economy recovered later on, there was no easing of restrictions. The government acted by employing an order in council, first issued in January, 1908, requiring immigrants from India to come by continuous journey from an Indian port. When Sikh immigrants challenged this regulation, the courts struck it down; but the government redrafted it and reissued it in May 1908. At the same time, the Canadian and Indian governments told steamship companies not to book through passages from India, so it was impossible for any Indian to comply with Canadian immigration rules.⁹ Moreover, a second order-in-council required immigrants from India to have \$200 in their possession on arrival (when, typically, they carried less than \$50). As a consequence, Sikh immigration came to a complete halt in 1908; and, in the years that followed, only the exceptional few gained entry.

During the recession that had begun in 1907 and that continued through the first half of 1908, Canadian officials looked for ways to get rid of the Sikh

immigrants already in the country. This produced a suggestion that they be encouraged to go to the West Indies to work under contract as coolies. Both the Canadian and British government gave the suggestion serious consideration. The Governor of British Honduras, Col. E.J.E. Swayne, happened to be in London at the time, and the British Colonial Secretary asked him for his opinion. Swayne had served in the British Indian army for fifteen years, including six years with intelligence branch headquarters, and he had some understanding of the Sikhs. He did not think that they would work under contract as coolies; but he did think that they might come to British Honduras as independent settlers. As a result, the Canadian government decided to pursue the idea by sending a delegation of two immigrant Punjabis—one Sikh and one Hindu—to Honduras to see what it was like.¹⁰ This delegation was to report back to the Sikhs and other South Asians in Canada so they could decide whether they wanted to go. But, when officials raised the idea with Sikhs in Vancouver, they also implied that the alternative was deportation back to India. Immigration officials did have the power to deport any immigrant who applied to government agencies for relief. J.B. Harkin, the private secretary to the Minister of the Interior, came to Vancouver and obtained the two delegates, who were chosen at a meeting at the Vancouver Sikh Gurdwara. Then he accompanied them to Honduras, taking along a former Calcutta policeman, W.C. Hopkinson, as an interpreter.

As long as the recession lasted, the threat of deportation hung over the whole Sikh community in Canada. Teja Singh came back to Vancouver to organize a mutual help society or union, so that no unemployed Sikhs would be on the streets or in need of government relief. And he led a determined opposition to the Honduras scheme. When the two delegates came back from Honduras, they gave a dismal report: wages were much lower than in British Columbia and conditions were miserable. The British Columbia economy picked up in the second half of the year; lumber mills began to hire again, and to take on Sikh labourers, and the immediate threat of unemployment and deportation evaporated. Under these circumstances, Sikhs in Canada had no reason whatsoever to accept employment in Honduras. Because Honduras had been offered as an alternative to deportation, the community associated it with a threat, and as a result, the idea died in an atmosphere of recrimination and ill feeling.

Most white Canadians of that generation regarded Sikhs and other Asians as aliens who could never be integrated into Canadian society. The provincial and federal governments acted under the pressure of public opinion; and the immigration regulations that prevented immigration from India after 1908 were a

result. Moreover, the men who had already established themselves in Canada, were denied the possibility of ever becoming full Canadian citizens as long as they stayed in British Columbia. In March of 1907, the British Columbia legislature passed a bill disenfranchising all natives of India except those of Anglo-Saxon parents. (The Chinese had been disenfranchised in British Columbia in 1875 and the Japanese in 1895.) In the beginning, disenfranchisement had only symbolic importance for immigrant workers who intended to go back to Punjab in any case; but, as they persisted in Canada as a community, it meant continuing exclusion from the Canadian mainstream. Disenfranchisement also had economic implications, because, as non-voting residents of British Columbia, Sikhs could not obtain work in the public sector either from municipal governments or from the provincial government or from contractors on public works projects or even from timber cutters if they were cutting on crown lands.

By 1908, Sikhs in Canada had organized themselves to contest the open prejudice and discrimination of the host Canadian society. Here, Teja Singh played a leading role in drafting petitions and making representations to Canadian officials. But those officials looked at this activity as essentially seditious because they saw that the same men who were demanding rights of full British citizenship in Canada were also voicing bitter criticism of the British regime in India. In that age, most Canadians took the propriety of British rule in India for granted. For the Sikhs, the treatment that they received in Canada simply proved the fundamental injustice of the British Empire. And it happened that they had arrived in Canada at a moment in which a great deal of anti-British feeling had surfaced in Punjab.¹¹ The quiescence that characterized the rural population of Punjab for more than two generations disappeared in 1907 when the government introduced a bill designed to alter terms of tenure in a part of the Lyallpur district of west Punjab that had been developed through irrigation and colonized by Sikhs. An agitation that began in west Punjab spread to the central districts; and the anti-British feelings that this agitation engendered reached all the way to the Sikh communities in North America. When Canadian officials became aware of the political outlook of Sikh immigrants, and interpreted it in a threatening way, they simply saw further reason to stop immigration from India.¹²

In Vancouver, Teja Singh worked closely with Balwant Singh from the village of Khurdpur in the Jullundur district, and Bhag Singh from the village of Bhikhiwind in the Lahore district. In 1908 Bhag Singh was secretary of the Gurdwara management committee and Balwant Singh was the granthi or the priest. The two of them had immigrated in 1906. Bhag Singh was then 34 and Balwant Singh ten years

younger. The former was a literate Sikh with a middle school (grade eight) education who had served for several years in the Indian army. The latter was also an army veteran who had served with the police in Hong Kong and in Shanghai as well. As the years passed the two of them became increasingly open in their opposition to British rule in India.

In 1912, Bhag Singh and Balwant Singh challenged Canada's immigration law by dramatizing the issue of family reunification. The two men had gone to India for extended visits, and, on return, they brought their wives and children with them. Their movements were well publicized among Sikhs all up and down the Pacific coast, and when their ship finally reached Vancouver, 700 Sikhs were on the dock to greet them. As established residents of Canada, the two men were admissible; but their wives and children were new immigrants and not admissible because they had not come by continuous journey. They had, in fact, broken their trip in Hong Kong out of necessity because had been impossible to buy a through ticket from Calcutta. On that technicality, the immigration department was prepared to land the men and refuse entry to their wives and children. After some consideration, however, the department decided to cool the issue by letting these families in, while making it clear that their cases were exceptional and that other men could not expect the same result.¹³ The Sikh community in Canada continued to agitate for the general right to bring over wives, but obtained neither sympathy nor support from the general Canadian public, and had no impact on the Canadian government in the years before the First World War.

For the Sikhs their most notable and encouraging victory over the immigration department came in 1913 with the landing of 35 passengers who had arrived on a Japanese liner, the *Panama Maru*. Immigration officials would allow Sikhs to re-enter Canada, even if they had been away for more than a year, as long as they could provide some proof of previous



The Panama Maru in Victoria. Passengers in the background, community leaders in the foreground. Photo provided by SFU Digital Library.

residence. The officials acted on this basis because any order to deport a returnee would likely have been overturned by the courts anyway. Whenever Sikhs went home to Punjab to visit their families, the immigration department refused to issue them with any official documents, simply to make it more difficult for them to prove their case when they came back. On the other hand, if a returning resident had plausible evidence, it had to be accepted. Ironically, the immigration department's policy of withholding of official documents made immigration fraud somewhat easier for those who were determined to get into the country. In Hong Kong, homeward bound Sikhs from Canada would sell old steamship tickets or tax receipts to their countrymen who would use them to convince Canadian immigration officials that they were returning residents. When the Panama Maru docked with 56 Punjabis on board, all claiming to be returnees, the officials discovered that 39 were, in fact, new immigrants and held them for deportation. The case went to court and the immigration department lost, not because the officials were wrong in their deduction, but because the court decided that the orders in council that excluded South Asians were invalid. The reasons given by the court were technical rather than fundamental; and the government solved the problem by reissuing the orders with the wording slightly changed. But the victory gave Sikhs momentary encouragement and led directly to the most famous incident in their early history in Canada.

In the spring of 1914, a committee of Sikhs in Hong Kong chartered a Japanese freighter to carry immigrants to Canada. They did so with some understanding of the discriminatory Canadian immigration regulations they would encounter. But they calculated that they could challenge these regulations in court - as the passengers of the Panama Maru had done - and either win or succeed in focusing attention on the prejudice inherent in the Canadian law. Like Bhag Singh and Balwant Singh in 1912, they sought publicity to advance their case. Their ship, the Komagata Maru, took on passengers at Hong Kong, Shanghai, and Yokohama and arrived in Vancouver on May 23, 1914, with 376 Punjabis plus a Japanese crew. Among the passengers were a number of Muslims and Hindus, but most were Sikhs; and except for two women and four children, all were men. Some had been in the Far East for many months, looking for ways to get to North America, but most had come directly from Punjab after notices of the voyage had been circulated in their villages. Twenty of the passengers were returning residents; and the immigration officials let them disembark. The rest remained on the ship; and although they stayed there for two months, looking at Vancouver from an anchorage a few hundred yards from shore, they were never allowed to put their feet on



The Komagata Maru, 1914. Photo provided by SFU Digital Library.

Canadian soil.

Given the views of most Canadians at that time, it was unlikely that the government, under any circumstances, would have willingly allowed those men to land. The political dimensions of the voyage of the Komagata Maru made the Canadian officials all the more determined to keep these passengers out. By the fall of 1914, British authorities in India were looking at the political ferment among the Sikhs in North America with great apprehension. The Director of Criminal Intelligence in Delhi described the discontent of the Sikhs and other Punjabis on the Pacific coast as 'one of the worst features in the present political situation in India.'¹⁴ The first issues of the revolutionary Ghadar paper were published in San Francisco in Panjabi and Urdu in 1913 and circulated through Sikh colonies in North America and the Far East. The paper was the organ of the now-famous Ghadar revolutionary organization, which was based in California and supported by Sikhs in Vancouver and Victoria. Canadian and Indian officials suspected that the organizers of the Komagata Maru had a connection with the Ghadar party and, for that reason, looked on them as dangerous men who had taken a provocative course of action deliberately to inflame opinion in India. There was more than an element of truth in this assessment, because the organizers of the Komagata Maru did bring Ghadar party literature on board in Yokohama, and, when they spoke to the press and to officials, they held out the spectre of trouble in India if they were not allowed to land in Canada.¹⁵ But most of the passengers were simply looking for an opportunity to work.

Throughout the summer, negotiations between the immigration officials and the men on the ship, as well as their friends on shore, went on in an atmosphere of profound suspicion. For the first month the officials did everything that they could to stall to avoid a court case. They prolonged their proceedings as much

as they could in the expectation that the men on the ship would run out of money and be forced to leave of their own accord. In response, Bhag Singh, Balwant Singh and other leaders of the Canadian Sikh community, already organized as a shore committee working for the passengers, raised funds to maintain and to hire a lawyer. When the passengers exhausted their provisions, the Canadian government denied any responsibility for their welfare and told them that they would have to look to the ship's owners, or to their friends on shore for help. Several times, the passengers went without food or water for as much as twenty-four hours, before the officials grudgingly sent out a launch with supplies. A month passed without any movement towards resolution. Then the officials allowed the lawyer for the passengers to take a test case to court. He lost that case, and the passengers agreed to go; yet it took another month to negotiate the conditions of their return. Towards the end of the summer the police made an abortive attempt to board the ship, only to be driven off by passengers throwing coal, fire bricks and scrap metal. At the very end, the government brought in the cruiser *Rainbow* to intimidate the men of the *Komagata Maru*, but it was only when these men were satisfied that they would have sufficient provisions that they began the return voyage across the Pacific.

For Sikhs in Canada, the *Komagata Maru* represented everything that was wrong with the way they were treated in India and abroad. The story did not end in Canada. The well-known, final, tragic conclusion came at Budge Budge, twenty-seven kilometers downstream from Calcutta where the ship ended its voyage. In an exchange of fire, only hours after the passengers disembarked, troops shot and killed nineteen of them. Of the remainder, most were arrested and held in prison or sent to Punjab and detained in their villages until 1918. The whole affair did not evoke the immediate emotional response in India that the organizers of the *Komagata Maru* expected.¹⁶ Here, timing made all the difference. The war in Europe had begun while the *Komagata Maru* was retracing its passage across the Pacific. In the early stages of the war, nationalists in India, both moderates and so-called extremists, declared their support for the British war effort, expecting Indian independence as the eventual reward. With censorship and wartime control, the government effectively pushed the *Komagata Maru* out of sight. It was only in the aftermath of the war, during the agitation led by Mahatma Gandhi in 1920, that the men of the *Komagata Maru* gained the recognition from their countrymen that they had looked for in 1914.

The war had immense repercussions for the small Sikh community in Canada. The opening months coincided with a recession in British Columbia. And

the war encouraged Indian revolutionaries in North America to shift from propaganda to action by signaling that the time for revolt against the British in India had come. When the Ghadar party leadership called for volunteers, hundreds of Sikhs, who were jobless in any case, left Canada on ships bound for Asia. During the summer of 1915, an immigration official conducted a survey and reported that half of the Sikh colony in British Columbia had gone.¹⁷ That left about 1,100 behind. Canadian immigration officials sent the Indian police lists of the names of departing Sikhs and many of these men were arrested as soon as they arrived in Calcutta. Among the men who returned was Balwant Singh, the granthi from the Vancouver Gurdwara. He left Vancouver in December 1914, only to be arrested seven months later in Bangkok by the Siamese who turned him over to the British.¹⁸ They took him to Lahore where he was tried on conspiracy charges and hanged in 1917.

The tensions that surfaced in the Canadian Sikh community during the early months of the war proved extremely explosive. In September of 1914 a Sikh named Bela Singh, who had been employed as an interpreter and informant by the immigration department, walked into the Vancouver Gurdwara with two revolver and shot and killed two men while wounding six or seven more. One of the men that he murdered in this outburst was Bhag Singh, president and former secretary of the Gurdwara management committee. Retaliation came a month later in the shooting of an immigration inspector, William C. Hopkinson. The assassin was Mewa Singh who was from the village of Lapoke in the vicinity of Tarn Taran in the Amritsar district of Punjab. He had immigrated to Canada in 1906 and had worked in lumber mills and served as granthi in the Vancouver Gurdwara. When he attacked Hopkinson, he did it publicly, in the Vancouver courthouse; and after the shooting he made no attempt to escape or to resist arrest. His target was a man who had been employed by the immigration department from 1909, not just as an interpreter and immigration inspector, but as an intelligence agent responsible for the political surveillance of the Sikhs. Mewa Singh and his countrymen blamed Hopkinson for most of their troubles. In shooting him, Mewa Singh openly sought martyrdom. At his trial Mewa Singh said that he was giving his life to show that his people could not get justice in Canada.¹⁹ This message struck no resonance with white Canadians in 1914, who saw Hopkinson as the victim. But to Sikhs, Mewa Singh was a hero, and his execution at the provincial jail in New Westminster on January 11, 1915, has been remembered annually in Gurdwaras in Canada and the United States ever since.

The Ghadar exodus of 1914 stripped the Sikh community in Canada of its most radical leadership.

Surveillance continued throughout the war and for years afterwards, but the men who remained were mostly committed to quiet survival as workers in Canada. The men who had left for India, and who were identified as political activists, were not allowed to return. Others, however, did manage to re-enter the country. According to official figures, there were only 547 immigrants from India employed in lumber mills and other industrial jobs in British Columbia in 1918, the last year of the war. The total population, including those who were engaged in agriculture, could not have been much over 700. After the war, some men returned from India; some from the United States; and few, perhaps, from Mexico, which was also a destination for Sikh emigrants. The numbers rose steadily until 1923 when there were 500 or 600 more men in the province than their had been at the end of the war.²⁰

The pioneers came without women; and, after 1908, they couldn't have wives and families with them whether they wanted to or not. Only in five cases, did the immigration department make exceptions. In 1910, they let Uday Ram Joshi, a labour contractor and interpreter from the village of Rai Kot in the Ludhiana district, bring in his wife. Unfortunately, he died the next year, and she went back to India. In 1911, a Sikh named Hira Singh returned to Canada after a long visit to India accompanied by his wife and daughter. The immigration officials initially refused entry to the mother and daughter, but when Hira Singh's lawyers began

habeas corpus proceedings, the department decided not to fight the case and allowed them to land as an act of grace. Then, in 1912, the department sought to avoid controversy by landing Kartar Kaur and Harnam Kaur, the wives of Balwant Singh and Bhag Singh, and their three children. (Harnam Kaur died in January 1914 following the birth of a daughter.) Finally, in 1913, the department made one more concession. Hakim Singh, a former trooper in the 19th Bengal lancers, whose mother and four sons had been waiting in Hong Kong for two years, was given permission to bring them to Canada.²¹ Besides these women and children, no others managed to gain entry in these years.

When the Sikhs agitated for a change in policy to allow their wives to join them, they left Canadian officials unaffected, but they did make an impression on the India Office in London. The India Office saw this as an issue that could affect the morale of Sikh troops and urged the Canadian government to take that into account. During the war, the Canadians listened; and, while they did not move with haste, they did, after three years of negotiation, agree to change the regulations. The change came into effect in 1919; and after that, Sikh men in Canada were able to sponsor their wives and their children (if they were under eighteen) as immigrants. What is remarkable is that few of the pioneers ever took advantage of the opportunity. Two women arrived in 1921, four in 1922, five in 1923, and in the whole period of the 1920s and 1930s a total



of only 241.²² Most of these women were young; and most of them came out as the wives of the young men of the second generation of Sikh immigrant workers. After 1919, the pioneers began to sponsor their sons, who had grown up in India, and they would generally would try do that as soon as they were old enough to work, and before they turned eighteen and became ineligible for immigration. Sooner or later, at least half of the men of this second generation brought out wives. Only about five percent of the pioneers, however, ever took that step.

Among the wives who arrived in Canada in the early 1920s was Mrs Dhan Kaur Johl. What she remembers, after nearly seventy years, gives us a glimpse of the experience of the small group of women who made their homes in Canada in the years between the wars.²³ Mrs Johl's husband had immigrated to Canada in 1906 when he was eighteen years of age. He came with an older brother; and a third brother joined them the following year. In 1919, he went back to India to get married. (He had been married previously, but his first wife had died in India in 1907.) Through relatives, her father met her husband and she was married in March of 1921. She was eighteen and her husband, by then, was thirty-three. It was a beautiful wedding, she says; and her husband was very handsome. He and his relatives came to her village of Bajwa riding in a bullock carts with a domed canopies, something the people of Bajwa had never seen before, something done only for queens and princes. It was seventeen miles from Bajwa to her husbands village of Jandiala. Going to Jandiala, after the wedding, her aunt went in a cart with her husband; and Mrs. Johl rode the whole distance on a sedan chair carried by four men.

Two years later, her husband brought her to Canada with their six month old daughter. The journey took six months, beginning with a rail trip from Punjab to Calcutta, where they stayed for a week in the Gurdwara before sailing to Hong Kong. On the boat from Calcutta to Hong Kong they slept on charpois on the open deck, except that her husband slept on the surface of the deck against the charpoi that she shared with their infant daughter, because he was afraid that it would slide off. For the nineteen day crossing from Hong Kong to Canada they had a cabin. (The steamship company would not allow women to travel steerage). During the crossing, her husband ate in the dining room, but she was a vegetarian and could not stomach the smell of fish and meat; so he brought fruit, rice and milk to the cabin for her.

Her husband's elder brother met them when they disembarked at Vancouver at about 10:00 or 11:00 in the morning. He had a taxi and took them straight to a store to buy clothes. 'Buy some things,' he said. 'Look,' she said, 'there is nothing here.' Nothing was familiar. Her husband and his brothers had already

decided that she should wear western clothes; and with the help of the saleslady they picked out a coat and two dresses and a lot of baby clothes. For some time after she arrived, she persisted in wearing her Punjabi clothes. Finally, her brother-in-law took all of her Punjabi suits and burned them in the stove, one by one. They were beautiful suits, she says; and she was devastated.

Her husband and his brothers had a business with fifteen trucks and twenty-five men working for them. They had money and they sent a lot of it back to Punjab to accumulate property there, while they lived in a sawmill bunkhouse in Vancouver. On the day that Mrs. Johl arrived the brothers rented a house for her and for her husband and bought all of the furniture, including a brass bed, which she did not like. They had made an arrangement with a Japanese girl from across the street, who would come over for the day to cook and look after the baby. At the end of the day, the elder brother would ask the Japanese girl how Mrs. Johl was doing and she would say, 'I don't know. All day she is crying.' Three days after Mrs. Johl arrived in Canada the brothers bought a car, a 1923 Chevrolet; and the day after that, her brother-in-law taught her how to drive. From then on, she would drive the car ten blocks to the saw mill to take the men their lunch; and, at first, she was so upset, she would sleep in the car at the mill site all afternoon, until 4:00 p.m. when she had to go home to cook dinner. After a while, she made friends with four of the women who had come to Canada a year or two before she did. She would pick them up in her car and they would go to beach with the children, or sit in each other's houses; or, if there was a sale, they would go to Woodward's department store and buy shoes, socks and clothes or sometimes just look.

By the early 1920s, a number of Sikhs, like the Johls, had gone into business for themselves. Altogether, in British Columbia in 1922, there were six lumber companies, seven logging camps, two shingle mills, two grocery stores, fifty firewood operations and twenty-five farms owned by immigrants from India.²⁴ These entrepreneurs were the men who could most easily afford to maintain families in Canada. By this time, the Sikhs in Canada was looking like a two-tiered society, with a few wealthy men and 750 to 1,000 labourers. In reality, nearly everyone had ambitions to go into business as farmers, fuel suppliers, mill owners, truckers, or contractors, and a great many did. Ninety or ninety-five percent of the labourers worked in the lumber industry and a good many worked for Sikh employers. The principal shareholders of the largest Sikh operation in those years were Mayo Singh and Kapur Singh from the villages Paldi and Kharaudi in Hoshiarpur. They operated two mills on Vancouver Island, and in the mill-site village of Paldi (called after

Mayo Singh's birthplace), near Duncan they had the largest single Sikh community in the country.²⁵ These were men of great influence, not only among Sikhs in Canada, but also in Punjab in their own villages and they and a few other were able to live with their families while the majority of their employees lived the life of the bunkhouse.

The determination of Mrs. Johl's brother-in-law that she should wear skirts and dresses, was characteristic of Sikhs in Canada for more than two generations. Many Sikhs figured that they would get along better if they adopted western appearances; and the men insisted that the women conform in their dress so that they would be less conspicuous when they were out of their homes. Bearded Sikhs also came under pressure to shave and to cut their hair from members of their own families. One must remember how small and isolated the Sikh community was in those years and how limited most whites were in their understanding of other cultures. Anti-Asian sentiment was, if anything, on the rise in the 1920s and 1930s. Asians remained excluded from the political culture of their adopted land, and the government continued to treat them as aliens. The law discriminated against them; and white society ostracized them in many subtle and not so subtle ways. Turbaned Sikhs were commonly excluded from cinema theatres in British Columbia.²⁶ In small towns with large Sikh populations, the local barbers would refuse their services to South Asians, not necessarily by ordering them out of their shops, but, just as effectively, by ignoring their presence if they came in. Sikhs who grew up in Canada when discrimination was at its worst don't dwell on it when they talk about it now. They managed to keep it in the background of their daily lives, but it was a factor that shaped their whole world.

All through the interwar period the government of British Columbia kept track of the number of foreigners employed in industry and the number of their children enrolled in schools. This concern with counting sprang from apprehension about the Asian presence in the province. The figures collected, however, are useful in measuring the growth of the second generation of Sikhs. In 1929 - ten years after the immigration of women and children began - the school population among the Sikhs (and their Hindu and Muslim countrymen) was 67 of whom seven were in high school and the rest in elementary school. In 1939, the number was 264, of whom 40 were in junior or senior high schools or their equivalents. The immigration of women and children was arrested in the ten years from 1936 to 1946 (the latter part of the depression and the war years). As a consequence, the number of children in the population fell throughout most of the 1940s. The school population peaked at 646 in 1948 and then declined to 372 over the next four years.²⁷ Altogether, in

the thirty years between 1920 and 1950, about 800 or 900 South Asians attended school in British Columbia. Of these perhaps one-third reached high school and a select few eventually went on to university. But the community entered the post war period with scarcely a spokesman with a Canadian education.²⁸

Nonetheless, Sikhs were breaking out of their isolation. Until the 1930s, they had few allies in their struggle for the rights of full citizenship. But, in 1935, the C.C.F. opposition members in the British Columbia legislative assembly began raising the question of the franchise; and they continued to do so at every session until 1947 when the legislature unanimously struck from the election act the section that denied the vote to Asians. Public opinion had shifted during the war against Nazi Germany as Canadians became more conscious of the implications of racism. The human rights provisions of the United Nations charter, the example of the United States, which had given South Asians the rights of citizenship in 1946, and the emergence of the newly independent countries of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, all created a positive environment for change. But Sikhs did not gain the right to vote without an effort; and victory came only after their spokesmen had repeatedly approached provincial and municipal politicians and publicized their case on the radio, in the press and in addresses to church groups and service clubs and other audiences.²⁹ The Vancouver and Victoria Gurdwara committees organized this campaign with the assistance of the mill owners, Mayo Singh and Kapur Singh, and under the direction and leadership of Dr. Durai Pal Pandia, who had previously worked on behalf of South Asians in the United States and the Caribbean. When Sikhs gained the vote, they secured the right to work in any sector of the economy, public or private; and, for the first time, young Sikhs could think of going into law or pharmacy in British Columbia. These professions in British Columbia had excluded Asians by restricting entry to voting citizens.

Over the course of the next twenty years, Sikhs and other South Asians won increasingly improved rights of entry into Canada. Between 1951 and 1957, about 200 were able to immigrate each year. Of these, a maximum of 150 came as independent immigrants under a quota established in 1951 in negotiations with the Indian government, and the rest came as sponsored relatives—husbands, wives, and children under twenty-one.³⁰ Between 1957 and 1962, the annual immigration averaged about 500 and the greater number reflected an increase in the quota to 300 and a broadening of the range of relatives who could come as sponsored immigrants. In 1962, the Canadian government abandoned the quota system, and, for the next five years, annual immigration averaged about 2,000. Finally, in 1967, the government

gave South Asian Canadians the same rights of sponsorship as all other Canadians; and, in the ten years that followed, immigration from India averaged nearly 7,000.³¹ That was an extraordinarily high figure when compared with the past, although small in comparison with the present.

This history is a reminder of difficult facts from the past that may not be obvious to everyone today. On the positive side, the lowering of Canada's race-based immigration barriers since the 1950s has allowed the growth of far larger population of Sikhs—a population that now is distributed across the country and employed in every sector of the economy. This development of the second half of the twentieth century was an evolving one in which British Columbia's Sikhs—with their small but historic community—followed a distinctive pattern. A majority of the immigrants of the late 1960s or early 1970s were professional people or members of professional families, and they dispersed across the country, following economic and career possibilities. British Columbia continued to attract a high percentage of labouring men who had Canadian relatives to sponsor them. The other nine provinces, by contrast, drew mainly professional or managerial people who entered as independent immigrants. These professional and managerial people were themselves pioneers when they went into occupations and settled in neighbourhoods where Canadians had not seen Sikhs before. Many came to Canada simply because the opportunity was there and not because they were following family. But, conscious of it or not, they owed their opportunity to the small and isolated community that had persisted—and prospered—although kept for years on the margins of Canadian society.



The photo from the Vancouver City Archives of the Sikh fisherman.

Endnotes

1. Notes

- These individuals were distributed across the country with nearly forty percent living in Ontario and about twenty percent in British Columbia.
2. National Archives of Canada (NAC), R.G. 76, v. 384, file 536999, pt. 2, Minister of the Interior to Governor General, Oct. 29, 1907.
3. Daily News Advertiser, Vancouver, shipping columns for 1906 and 1907.
4. The manifests of the passenger vessels arriving at Canadian ports in these years give information on the name, age, sex, marital status, literacy and occupation of the immigrants they carried. These manifests can be seen on microfilm at the NAC.
5. NAC, RG 76, v. 384, file 536999, pt. 2, Superintendent of Immigration, memorandum, Oct. 23, 1907; RG 7, G21, v. 200, file 332, 3(b), Governor British Honduras to Administrator, Dec. 20, 1908.
6. NAC, RG 7, G21, v. 200, file 332, 3(b), Copy of Diary by W.C. Hopkinson, Nov. 1909-Dec. 1910.
7. See NAC RG 76, v. 387, file 536999, pts. 14, 16 & 17 for lists of immigration cases citing village and district of origin of nearly 500 men resident in Canada in the inter-war period.
8. Teja Singh, Jivan Katha; Sant Attar Singh Maharaj (Patiala, Punjab: Director, Language Department, 4th edition, 1981), pp. 286-387.
9. W.L. Mackenzie King, Report on Mission to England in Connection with the Immigration of Asiatics to Canada (London, England: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1908), p. 6.
10. J.B. Harkin, The East Indians in British Columbia. A Report regarding the proposal to provide work in British Honduras for the indigent unemployed among them (Ottawa: Minister of the Interior, 1909), pp. 1-37.
11. Gerald N. Barner, 'The Punjab Disturbances of 1907: the response of the British Government in India to Agrarian Unrest,' Modern Asian Studies, 1, 4 (1967), 353-83.
12. NAC, RG 2/1, v. 703, file 21, W.L. Mackenzie King to Minister of Labour, July, 1908.
13. NAC, RG 2/1, v. 703, file 21, W.L. Mackenzie King to Minister of Labour, July, 1908.
14. NAC, RG 7, G21, v. 205, File 332, Copy of Criminal Intelligence Office (Simla) Circular, May 20, 1914.
15. China Press, Shanghai, April 12, 1914.
16. Gurdit Singh, Voyage of Komagatamaru or India's Slavery Abroad (Calcutta, n.d.), pt. 2, p. 90.
17. NAC, Borden Papers, M.R.J. Reid to R. Clogstoun, Sept. 11, 1915.
18. National Archives of India, Lahore Conspiracy Case III (Second Supplementary Case, Judgement dated Jan. 4, 1917), accused no. 3, pp. 56-67.
19. NAC, RG 13, v. 1467, transcript of Mewa Singh's trial on 30 Oct., 1914.
20. Annual reports of the Deputy Minister of Labour, British Columbia Sessional Papers.
21. NAC, RG 76, v. 384, file 536999, pt. 4, Individual cases re East Indian Immigration to Canada; NAC RG7, G21, v. 208, W.C. Hopkinson to W.W. Cory, Feb. 1910; Vancouver City Archives, H.H. Stevens Papers, Copy of memorandum dated, 26 January 1912; Public Record Office, London, C.O. 42/985, copy of petition to the Viceroy regarding grievances of Indians in Canada.
22. Figures from the annual reports of the Department of Immigration and Colonization, Canada Sessional Papers.
23. Taped interviews with Mrs. Johl in Vancouver on March 14 and May 19, 1988.
24. R.K. Das, Hindustanee Workers on the Pacific Coast (Berlin and Leipzig: Walter de Gruyter, 1923), p. 27.
25. Mahinder Singh Dhillon, A History Book of the Sikhs in Canada and California (Vancouver: Shromani Akali Dal Association of Canada, 1981), pp. 284-5.
26. Sadhu Singh Dhami mentions this in his autobiographical novel Maluka, which was first published in English in 1976 and republished in 1988 in Punjabi and English by Balraj Sahni Yadgar Prakashan, Amritsar.
27. Reports of the Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia, British Columbia Sessional Papers.
28. A notable exception, at least until 1942, was Sadhu Singh Dhami. He had immigrated in 1923 at the age of seventeen and had worked in a sawmill on the Fraser river before completing his high school education in Vancouver. He went on to complete a Ph.D. at the University of Toronto and left Toronto in 1942 to work for the International Labour Office in Geneva.
29. Khalsa Diwan Society, Report on Dominion, Provincial, and Municipal Franchise for Hindus in British Columbia (Victoria, 1947).
30. PAC, RG 76 file 3-33-16 pt 2, Memo: Information on Canada-India Immigration Agreement signed by Deputy Minister, Citizenship and Immigration, Aug., 1957.
31. Canada, Manpower and Immigration, Canadian Immigration and Population Study, Immigration and Population Statistics (Ottawa: Information Canada, 1974); Employment and Immigration, Canada: Immigration Statistics (Ottawa, 1984).

Perspective of a Passenger's Journey: Puran Singh Janetpura

By: Raj Singh Toor and Jas Singh Toor

We are remembering the 100 year anniversary of the Komagata Maru. The Komagata Maru came in May 23, 1914 with 376 passenger including my grandfather. His name was Baba Puran Singh Janetpura. He was a student in that ship. He was already well educated, having studied at an English Language High School in Ludhiana Punjab and had studied telecommunication at the University of Amethi. He was coming to Canada for higher education. He was told at the time that any Indian was part of the British Commonwealth and would be welcome to study further in Canada. They were British subjects and they also had British passports. They were not illegal immigrants. He told us the Canadian government denied entry and did not treat them very well. No food, water and medication was provided by the government. Only the local Sikh community provided them with food, water and medication. The Mayor of Vancouver and other leaders were making racist comments and the Vancouver Sun and other media were making racist comments as well.

The Komagata Maru was sent back to India after 2 months forcefully under the shadow of military ship by discriminatory law. The British were ruling India at that time, when Komagata Maru arrived in India. British troops shot them, 20 were killed on the spot, many were injured and the rest of them were put in jail for long period of time. My grandfather served about 5 years jail term, when he was released, the government put him on restriction so he could not go out from his village. In protest most of the passengers joined the freedom movement including my grandfather. Finally India got free in 1947. Komagata Maru was the turning point in the India freedom movement. My grandfather Baba Puran Singh Janetpura was recognized by the Punjab, India government for his services and he played an active role in the India freedom movement.

Around 1968 my uncle (Gurcharan Singh) sponsored my grandfather to come to Canada, but he refused. He said that he had a painful, bitter memory of Canada. He said that he would not go there, but the South Asian community would go there and would be very successful there, and live happily and peacefully there. His word came true. Today the South Asian community is living very successfully, happily, and peacefully here.

The BC government did apologize in the B.C. legislature building. Everyone accepted the apology. The Federal government promised the descendants and the community they were going to apologize in the parliament, but they changed their decision, they

did apologize in Bear Creek Park in Surrey B.C. The descendants and the community are not seeking any compensations but we want a more meaningful, respectful and formal apology from the federal government in the parliament in the same fashion they apologized to the Chinese, Japanese, Natives and the other communities.

The Komagata Maru and the South Asian Community's history is 100 year old Canadian history, this history should be taught in the schools, universities and museums. The Government should give enough funding to the schools, universities and museums so they can teach the history properly.

We cannot undo the past but we can move forward and leave a legacy for the future generations by educating them about the past. They are going to be future ministers and prime ministers, they will learn from the history and will not repeat the history again. My grandfather used to say one day you could be rich, the next day you could be poor. You could lose everything, but the one thing that no one can take away is your education. My grandfather said, the more education you give to society the less discrimination there will be.

He passed away in 1974. In 1976 for his legacy and his memory the Punjab government and family built a hospital in his village Janetpura. 50% was paid by the government of Punjab and the other 50% was paid by the family. About 6 villages near this hospital use their medical services.



*Puran Singh Janetpura,
Komagata Maru
Passenger.*

Komagata Maru: Life of Early Pioneers

These photos were provided by SFU Digital Library



Cremating remains of Hasanam Koor, February 2nd, 1914



Group photo in front of Old Gurdwara, Victoria 1924



Welcome to Revd. C. F. Andrews at G. N. R. Station by Khalsa Diwan Society, April 5, 1929



Sikh Temple Victoria, BC November 5, 1939. Final visit of Dr. D. P. Pandia before departure from Canada.



Pandit Nehru India's Prime Minister visit to Vancouver, BC Nov. 2, 1949



Photo postcard of Attar Singh and Mehr Singh.



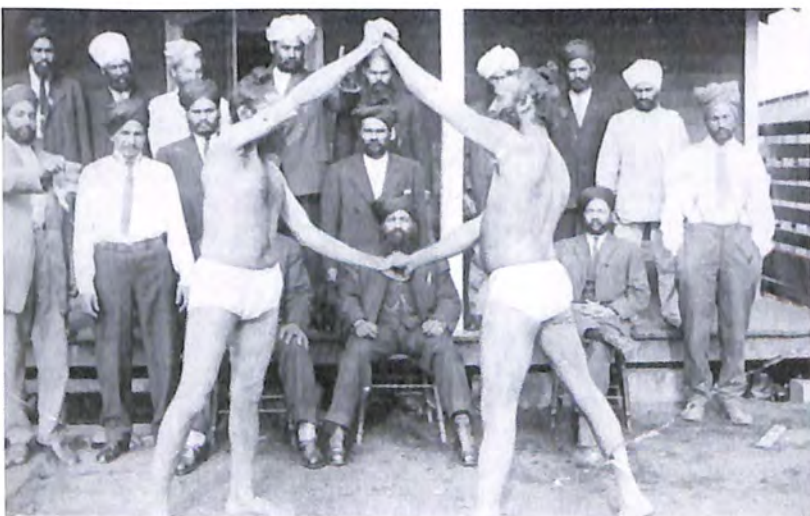
K. K. Singh, Student Union of Canada, with C. F. Andrews and Kartar Singh Hundal



Group of Sikh men in the rain on the waterfront.



View of the 400 block Granville Street from West Hastings Street.



Two men engaged in kushti (traditional wrestling).



Photo postcard of C. F. Andrews and Nana Swami, disciples of Gandhi, in India



Arjan Singh, Naginder Singh Gill and Dedar Singh, officers of the Khalsa Diwan Society.



Group in front of 2nd Avenue Temple, Vancouver, with men in military dress.



Entrance to the Khalsa Diwan Society Sikh Temple.



Exterior of Sikh Temple at night - 1866 West 2nd Avenue.



Market Life, Friday



Interior of Sikh Temple at 1866 West 2nd Avenue.



Jawaharlal Nehru speaking in 2nd Avenue Temple, Vancouver



Men in military dress in front of 2nd Avenue Temple, Vancouver



The shrine in the Sikh Temple at 1866 West 2nd Avenue.



Group in front of New Westminster Temple celebrating Indian independence.



Welcome to Lakshmi Pandit, Khalsa Diwan Society.



Mayo lumber workers.



Khalsa Diwan Organizers with Ravindra Nath Tagore.



Wives and children of Mayo Lumber workers



Loading lumber onto a Western Red Cedar Mills truck.



Five Sikh men and an immigration official during the Komagata Maru incident



Group of families on the steps of 2nd Avenue Temple, Vancouver.



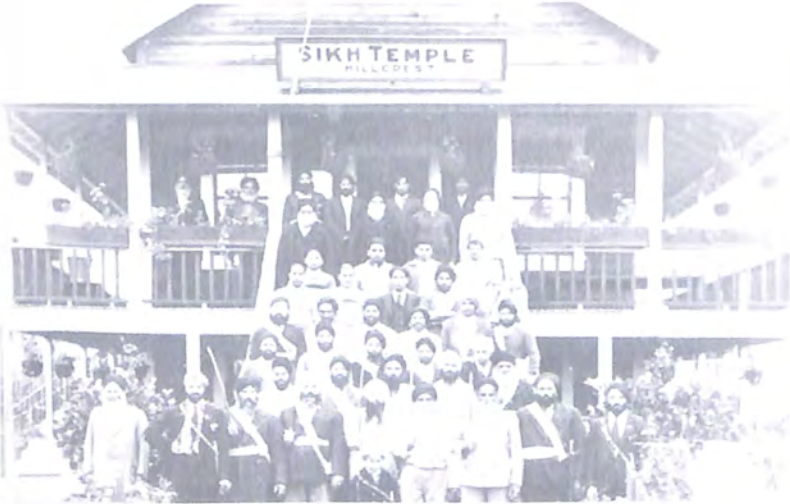
Family portrait of four men



Sikh Temple Ocean Falls, BC.



Group in front of Sikh temple.



Sikh Temple Hillcrest.

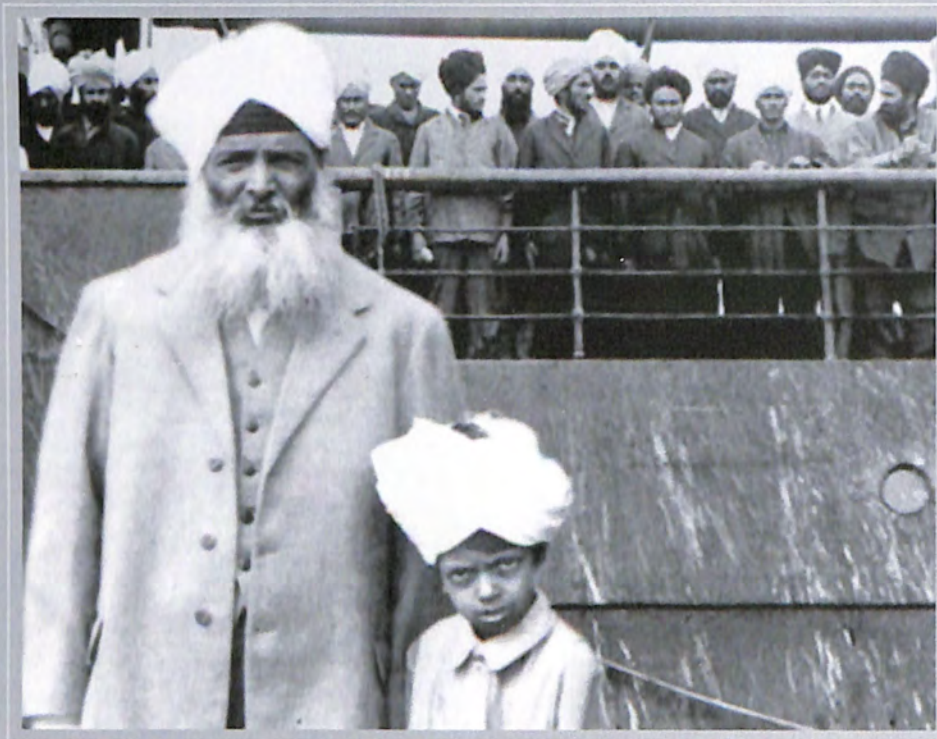


Large group on temple steps.

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Music & Direction by: Gurdip Bhullar

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100th Anniversary of the Komagata Maru from Dr. Gurdeep Bhangu and family.

As we mark the 100th Anniversary of the Komagata Maru, it is of particular importance to his family. With strong roots amongst the earliest Indo-Canadian settlers in British Columbia, the arrival of his earliest relatives in British Columbia goes back to 1906. Raised in Quesnel, BC, Gurdeep Bhangu graduated from Correlieu Secondary School and ranked as one of the top students in BC. Having an entrance scholarship to the University of British Columbia, he went on to complete a B.Sc. in Pharmacy from the University of British Columbia. After having worked as a Pharmacist for eight years, he entered the four year Dentistry program at the University of Manitoba and earned the degree of Doctor of Dental Medicine with honours.

During his Dentistry training at The University of Manitoba, Gurdeep was the recipient of countless awards and recognitions based on academic merit. These included: Graduation with Honours, Dean's Honours; Endowment Fund Award in Dentistry; American Association of Endodontists Award; Waterpik Technologies Canada Prize in Dentistry; Sophie Kanee Memorial Prize, Mary Jane Ego Scholarship; American Academy of Oral Medicine; American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology Award; completion of the National Dental Examining Board of Canada (NDEB) Written Examination with a result of 93%; University of Manitoba Student's Union (UMSU) Scholarship; Ross McIntyre Scholarship; Manitoba Dental Association Scholarship; Central Dental Supply Scholarship, Isbister Scholarship in Dentistry for highest standing; Dr. A.W. Hogg Undergraduate Scholarship for highest standing in the Faculty of Dentistry; Dr. A.V. Johnson Memorial Book Prize; Dr. Edgar N. Cole Memorial Scholarship; Dr. M.H. Garvin Prize; Dr. J.B. Rumberg Memorial Prize for highest standing in Radiology; Faculty of Dentistry Bronze Medal for highest standing in Structure and Function of Major Organ Systems; Manitoba Blue Cross Dental Scholarship.

The office is conveniently located in the York Business Centre at Unit #203 – 7928 128th Street. Dr. Bhangu's professional affiliations include membership in the Canadian Dental Association, the BC Dental Association, College of Dental Surgeons of BC, and Fellowship in the International Congress of Oral Implantologists.

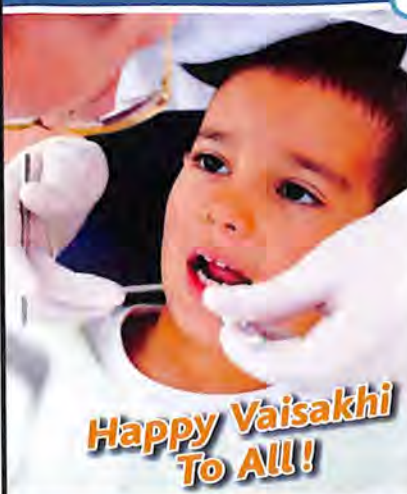
The office provides comprehensive dental care services including children's dentistry, hospital dentistry, orthodontics/Invisalign, teeth whitening, bonding/veneers, complete implant surgery and restoration, mercury free restorations, smile makeovers, gum treatments and surgery, and root canal treatments. In addition to all extractions being done in office, even the most complex of wisdom teeth surgeries are performed by Dr. Bhangu.

With a strong academic and clinical background, as well as an ongoing commitment to countless hours of continuing education, Dr. Gurdeep Bhangu has established himself as being a premier provider of dental services in BC. It is the aim of the office to provide the highest standard of professional care.

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100 YEARS

Komagata Maru: 1914–2014



COMMEMORATING THE CENTENNIAL OF THE KOMAGATA MARU

In 1914, 376 passengers of South Asian descent landed on BC shores in the hopes of building their lives. They came by abiding the restrictive immigration policies at that time. For two months these hopeful immigrants were forced to stay on their boat, the Komagata Maru, during which they were denied all of their basic rights and provisions. Ultimately, only a handful of returning migrants were allowed to come to shore, while the rest were forced to return back only to be shot at by British Indian troops in Budge Budge, Calcutta. Many of these men were killed, injured, or imprisoned, while others were forced into exile. One hundred years later, we as a community commemorate this tragic Canadian event by reflecting on the past and looking towards reconciling our future.

The University of the Fraser Valley's Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies and the BC Regional Innovation Chair in Canada-India Business and Economic Development are pleased to be a part of such efforts of commemoration:

- Jan–Dec 2014:** The Sikh Heritage Museum located in the National Historic Site Gur Sikh Temple presents the exhibition: Challenge and Denial: Komagata Maru 100 Years Later 1914-2014
- May 15–16, 2014:** Charting Imperial Itineraries Workshop in partnership with UFV, the University of Victoria, University of British Columbia, and Trent University: www.chartingimperialitineraries.ca
- Nov 1–2, 2014:** Gala and presentation of new play commissioned by the CICS on the Komagata Maru



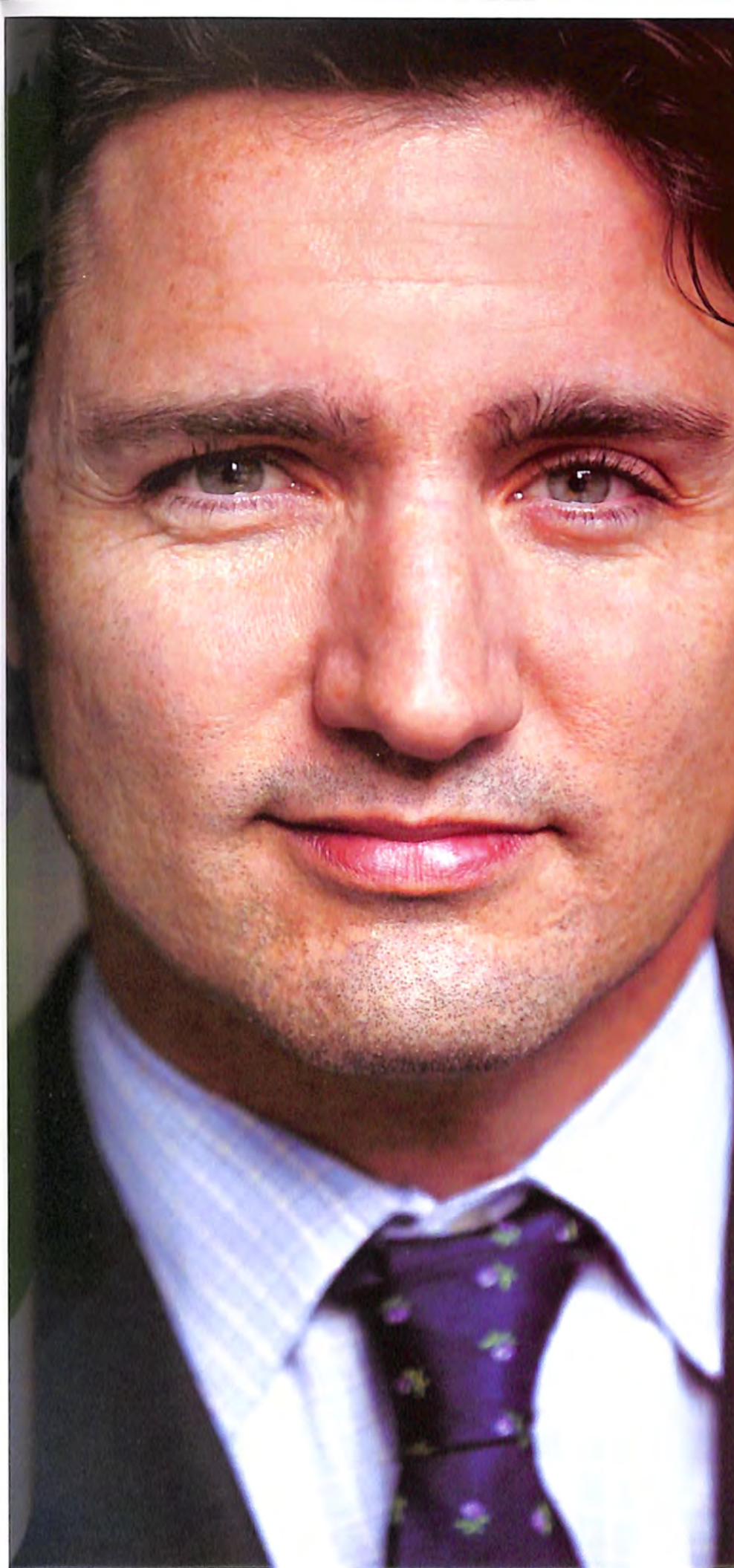
For information on these events, please visit
ufv.ca/cics or contact 604-851-6325



CENTRE FOR INDO-CANADIAN STUDIES
UNIVERSITY of the FRASER VALLEY

UNIVERSITY
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BC REGIONAL INNOVATION CHAIR
IN CANADA-INDIA BUSINESS AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**Statement by
LIBERAL LEADER
JUSTIN TRUDEAU
on the Centennial
Anniversary of
the Komagata
Maru Incident.**

2014 marks the 100th anniversary of the Komagata Maru incident, a dark period in Canadian history when 376 passengers were denied entry into the country based solely on a discriminatory immigration policy.

One-hundred years later, we as Canadians recognize the historical challenges that Canada's Sikh community has overcome, and the many contributions they have made, and continue to make, to our country's rich, multi-cultural landscape. The Liberal Party of Canada believes that the strength of our communities and our economy stems in no small part from our rich diversity, and we are blessed to have hundreds of thousands of Sikhs who contribute to, and strengthen the national fabric of our country.

Let us join together to reinforce and reiterate our commitment to a diverse, inclusive Canada.


Liberal



"Be it resolved that this Legislature apologizes for the events of May 23, 1914, when 376 passengers of the Komagata Maru, stationed off the Vancouver harbour, were denied entry by Canada. The House deeply regrets that the passengers who sought refuge in our country and our province were turned away without benefit of the fair and impartial treatment befitting a society where people of all cultures are welcomed and accepted."

**Official Apology of the Province of
British Columbia, May 23, 2008**

**Premier Christy Clark and Today's BC Liberals join
British Columbia's Indo-Canadian community in
marking this solemn occasion.**



Today's BC Liberals

www.bcliberals.com  [@christyclarkbc](https://twitter.com/christyclarkbc)  [/ChristyClarkforBC](https://www.facebook.com/ChristyClarkforBC)

Drifting Away

By: Rishma Johal

Through the passage of time, Canadian nationalist discourses have erased the memory of the vivid racial discrimination that once reigned supreme over racialized groups. Speaking as an Indo-Canadian woman, born and raised in Canada, I believed that my country represented a mosaic of many peoples. I grew up taking pride of the way that my nation accepted people's multi-ethnic identities. Interestingly, I had never heard about the state's disposition towards the first Indian immigrants. In fact, after completing 13 years of schooling in British Columbia, I never learnt about the Komagata Maru incident of 1914. The SS Komagata Maru represents a blemish on the state's reputation, depicting its brutally discriminatory attitude towards racialized groups in the past (Thobani, 2007). Then again, a state does not flaunt this type of act when it is trying to portray itself as a benevolent nation to its citizens and the entire world. Thus, as time drifted away just like the 354 passengers on the Komagata Maru, the Canadian government hoped that the memory of this incident would drift away as well. Nevertheless, a small Indian community continued to reside in Canada that kept this affair's memory alive. Consequently, this paper is a personal exploration of the Komagata Maru's significance and an analysis of what it may mean for Canadians today. The Komagata Maru will always remain a disturbing reminder of the state's historically racialized disposition but it is also an example of a community's strength, courage, and perseverance.

I was raised oblivious to Canada's legally sanctioned discrimination, besides selective accounts of Japanese internment and the imposition of Chinese head tax, which were briefly discussed in high school social studies. Moreover, these events were undermined by horrific stories of the German Holocaust and the Soviet Union's communist experiment. I first heard about the Komagata Maru when I was 19 years old at an Indo-Canadian event. I was shocked because I had never heard anything about this disastrous affair when I was a top history student. My understanding of Canada's racist past advanced when I learned about the subjugation of Aboriginal peoples in university. I was horrified by the ruthless manner in which the British colonized Canada through deceiving Aboriginal peoples into signing treaties, spreading smallpox among the Iroquois, inducing alcohol dependence, and enforcing the residential school system on Aboriginal children (Bannerji, 2000; Nayar, 2012; Thobani, 2007). I finally began to recognize the historically racist character of the state and re-evaluate my understanding of

multiculturalism. One day, my professor recommended that I watch a film on the Komagata Maru titled *Continuous Journey*. This is when I learned about every aspect of the 1914 incident. The Komagata Maru affair struck me with a deep sense of indignation and I realized that the rhetoric of diversity acted as a blanket, concealing the state's historical subordination of ethnic groups.

The Komagata Maru episode is a shameful example of systemic racism and it depicts an inhumane way of resolving a conflict. Passengers on the Komagata Maru represented opposition and resistance to the Continuous Journey Policy of 1908, which sought to deviate racialized migrants away from Canada's shores (Basran & Bolaria, 2003). This policy stipulated that anyone who arrived on an uninterrupted voyage from their country of origin was prohibited from entering Canada (Agnew, 2003; Sharma, 1997). There was no way for Indians to come to Canada other than travelling on a ship from another country (Buchignani, Doreen, & Srivastava, 1985; Sharma, 1997). Thus, some courageous Indians followed Gurdit Singh's lead and decided to test the government's benevolence by coming to Vancouver from Hong Kong; however, they were stopped at the port (Kazimi, 2004). The Indo-Canadian community formed the shore committee to fight the case on behalf of the passengers (Kazimi, 2004). Johnston explains, "The leaders of the South Asian community in British Columbia encouraged the Komagata Maru and its passengers to test Canada's immigration regulations, and they also spoke, petitioned, and organized against the subordination, or the second-class citizenship, of Indians in their own country" (Johnston, 2013, p. 9). Nevertheless, the community's efforts ended in vain and the ship was sent to India two months later (Buchignani, Doreen, & Srivastava, 1985; Sharma, 1997). Furthermore, after the passengers returned to Budge Budge, British officers tried to force them to take a train to Punjab (Johnston, 2013). The skirmish culminated with 20 people's death and the arrest of many others (Kazimi, 2004). These acts of repression did not frighten the Indo-Canadian community and their activism intensified. This event's culmination increased the community's support for the Ghadar movement (the Indian independence struggle). In addition, Mewa Singh sought revenge for this occurrence by assassinating Hopkinson, the officer largely responsible for the ship's return to India (Sharma, 1997). The authorities hanged him for this act and Mewa Singh became a martyr (Johnston, 2013). Hence, the Indo-Canadian community held

the Komagata Maru incident close to their hearts and passed its memory on to future generations.

After learning about these events, I began to ask others if they had heard about the Komagata Maru incident in school; most indicated that they had not. One of my friends explained that he read about it in a textbook but his teacher never covered the topic in class. In our education system, social studies is a mandatory subject until grade 11. Although, the social studies 11 textbook includes a small section on the Komagata Maru, it is not a required component of the curriculum. For a teacher who must complete mandatory sections to prepare students for the provincial exam, it is unlikely that they will cover the affair. This pays lip service to the Indo-Canadian community by including a component on the Komagata Maru, yet ensuring that few students will learn about the incident. This simple fact determines that most students will not learn about the affair unless their particular school chooses to discuss the event, or they learn about it from Indo-Canadians. The education system represents the state's apparatus and aims to fulfill its agenda. Unfortunately, teaching youth about the state's discriminatory character and cruel treatment of racialized groups fails to meet its number one prerogative.

Most youth today do not learn about the Komagata Maru through the education system. However, recent community efforts will likely impact Indo-Canadian youth; this collection forms one such endeavour to retain the memory of this tragic event. The construction of a monument commemorating the Komagata Maru, the preservation of Canada's official apology letter at the Sikh Heritage Museum, and efforts by emerging Indo-Canadian scholars to present information will continue to disperse knowledge (SFU Library, 2011). Nevertheless, people of other ethnicities, including the Anglo-Canadian population will likely remain oblivious to the history of the Komagata Maru, unless it is incorporated as a mandatory component of our education curriculum. Unfortunately, those outside of the Indo-Canadian population only hear about this event in relation to specific cases such as the Caucasian man who was caught urinating on the memorial earlier this year, or some Indo-Canadians' refusal to accept the government's apology in 2008 (CBC News, 2008; CTV News, 2014). My concern is that Canadian society has drifted away from the Komagata Maru incident and forgotten about the nation's discriminatory past but it is imperative to remember this because history could repeat itself. The arrival of the MV Sun Sea to Vancouver in 2010 with over 500 Tamil refugees instigated a similar pandemonium as 1914 when the Komagata Maru arrived (Wallace, 2013). Therefore, it is essential to educate everyone about the Komagata Maru to avoid

repeating the same mistakes.

The Indo-Canadian community has shown remarkable strength and it has established itself as a considerable force. I would like to see this group move beyond cultural barriers, which isolate their concerns from those of other racialized groups (Dua, 1999). Multicultural policies have instituted ethnic pockets that separate the politics and interests of each racial group (Bannerji, 2000; Gupta, 1999; Thobani, 2007). I fear that multicultural policies will only serve to expand differences among racialized groups and distort their vision, so that they fail to act collectively. If the story of the Komagata Maru, a narrative of injustice can still bring tears to our eyes, then we should also be able to extend our politics to include other groups who suffer from discrimination today. If we have become a well-settled community in British Columbia, then we should ally ourselves with other communities who are desperately looking for justice. For example, I began by stating that the Komagata Maru is a symbol of courage because it denotes an act of resistance against racial discrimination. This singular event mobilized a community of Indians who remained active after the ship was deported. This community has succeeded in challenging prejudicial policies from achieving the right to wear turbans on motorcycles and in the RCMP to opposing the Quebec Soccer Federation's ban on turbans (Huffman, 2008; Lurie, 2013). Overall, the Indo-Canadian community has shown solidarity in the face of extensive racism and the Komagata Maru remains symptomatic of this strength but this group should also expand this activism to assist others.

In the future, I hope that the high school curriculum will include the Komagata Maru as a mandatory component and acknowledge the contributions of Indo-Canadian labourers. All Canadians, regardless of race, should be aware of the historical processes that led to the formation of this state. I have faith that Canada will continue to address many of its past wrongs as it has done through a number of official apologies. However, I hope that the state will move beyond apologies to genuinely assist groups who have faced extensive subordination such as the Aboriginal peoples. I also envision an Indo-Canadian community that reaches out to the racialized community at large and continues to oppose injustice. Thus, as a society we must never drift away from the Komagata Maru and always keep its memory alive, so that we do not repeat past mistakes and continue to resist all forms of discrimination.

"The best we can do to heal our wounded memory is to acknowledge the reality of the incident. And learn to avoid its recurrence."

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Diversity Makes Canada Strong

By: Harpreet Johal, David Suzuki Foundation

"Interconnectedness" is one of the David Suzuki Foundation's overarching principles. Most of the time we're referring to humans being inseparable from this thing we call nature—we are nature, and nature is us. But human beings are also interconnected with one another. Our moral responsibility is to recognize that we're all—in one way or another—connected to each other.

Today, the idea of human interconnectedness isn't terribly controversial. Ask almost anyone in Canada whether people from different places and backgrounds are equal and have skills, talents and experiences everyone can benefit from, and you'll probably get no argument. This openness is a hallmark of modern, multicultural Canadian society.

But it's a relatively new attitude. Mere decades ago, our nation interned thousands of Japanese-Canadians, seizing their property and businesses. A few years before that, exclusion laws forbade Chinese immigration. And not long before that, another exclusion law led to the Komagata Maru being turned away from our shores.

At the heart of all of these—and other—incidents is the inability to accept and include those who are different from "us." Instead of sharing our various points of views and backgrounds, pushing "others" away leads to bitterness, isolation and stagnation.

All those decades later, despite grave challenges here at home and around the world, the interconnected

human spirit is largely celebrated. We live in a different world. We know that diversity makes us stronger and more resilient. And we know that experiences of those who've come from places far different than Canada can bring perspective and wisdom.

Many people come to Canada believing they'll have a better quality of life than if they stayed in their country of birth. Leaving a familiar place and way of being for a new society and a more promising future for our children and their children is an extremely courageous act. New Canadians understand that the amazing quality of life we enjoy here is fragile and must be protected—something more established Canadians sometimes forget.

Because humans are deeply connected to nature, at the David Suzuki Foundation, we believe that every single Canadian deserves the right to live in a healthy environment—to breathe clean air, drink clean water and live in a healthy community. Our diversity and interconnectedness with each other and with the world around also makes us stronger, healthier and more resilient.

The lessons of our past teach us the cost of ignoring these connections. As we all move forward, connected with one another and with the world around us, it's important that we keep these lessons in mind as we build a world that our children and their children will thrive in and be proud of.

Soul-Journ

By: Phinder Dulai

"I would like four Christian Clergymen to talk to me, and I will show them from my holy book that the action I have taken to right this wrong is in that book..."
(Court Proceedings, Testimony of Mewa Singh, New Westminster, 1915)

to the four clergy

i walk the four corners of life
where there are 3 places of absence
my name is wrought in the language of solitude
where the dawn meets king edward
the smell of cedar and sawdust are my comforts

the touch of my cotton is a half centimeter away
from the cloth of your lord

each day i walk the path of meaning
each day i write my life in the margins of my faith
each sunday I enter the walls of my gurus
each day i hear the cackle of judgment
amidst the close quarters of each day's work

*these hours of back and forths
is this the nowhere spot
the absent place
the cavernous quiet eye
as the distant crackling light stabs
across the sky
while the thunder moans around us*

*what bleeds into the confluence of
these interests*

to the four clergy
i am a man between friends
my teacher returns to ash
the architect was draped with a flag last week
your city mourns him
and i await the gallows
the knot of my destiny awaits me
my pinched esophagus constricts without
mourning

***"I shall gladly have the rope put around my
neck thinking it to be a rosary of God's name..."***

my dead hands will carry my burdens in hulled
silence

as this town carries its sadness when the rain
comes

am i a murderer in your eyes... i walk with intention

"I can only surmise that the instructions from the
Department at Ottawa to the Immigration authorities
here was to delay matters and procrastinate and delay
until such time as these people were starved back to
their original port from when they sailed." (J.E Bird,
June, 1914)

the redness of things

six hands with scarlet fingers

dusk, shape shifting and turning crimson at night

a martyr chooses the ruddy path to the gallows

sanguinary and precise

the horizon steeped in a rust-filled sunset
bleeding vermilion into the quiet waters

today will be yesterday and the world has not
changed

tomorrow will be the future without my hand

the hull is bright with an orange swath of pocked
skin

scabbed flakes trail in the cliffed ridges of the after
wave

Acknowledgement Note:

These poems are from a forthcoming collection of poems entitled soul/journ written
by Phinder Dulai and printed with permission from Talonbooks.

Komagata Maru Incident - One Chapter in a Continuing, Longer Narrative

By: Naveen Girn

Husain Rahim arrived in Burrard Inlet on board the SS *Moana* in 1909. He looked out from the bow of the ship, saw the snow on Grouse Mountain and the lush forest of Stanley Park and fell in love with the city.

Rahim was a prominent businessman, newspaper editor, and also a member of the Komagata Maru Shore Committee in 1914. From his arrival he quickly became a leader with the local Indian community centered at the first Sikh Temple in North America that was located at 1866 West Second Avenue in Vancouver. From 1913, the basement of the Sikh Temple was used as meeting place for the Gadhar Party, a political organization based along the Pacific Coast of North America that advocated for the freedom of India from British Imperialism and used revolutionary poetry and the printing press to spread its message. Rahim edited one of these presses, *The Hindustanee* newspaper that was based in Vancouver's Chinatown. In it he spoke about the injustices of imperialism but also kept a record of his experiences through a series of monthly articles. It records meetings, a local wrestling match between an Irish and Punjabi champion and the everyday nature of life in Vancouver.

One telling statement occurs in the first issue of the paper when Rahim describes his love and preference for Chinese restaurants. For an extensive traveler like Rahim, he could appreciate that these restaurants near his office served great food but more importantly, he emphasizes that unlike their counterparts in Gastown, these were the only restaurants that did not actively discriminate against Indians. This statement illuminates the everyday discriminations that the community faced but also the friendships, dialogues and intercultural connections that created solidarity amongst diverse communities.

A common misperception exists that if one knows about the Komagata Maru, then one knows the entire history of the South Asian community in Vancouver. The underlying sentiment is that the Komagata Maru is the only "valuable" and "important" event that has taken place in the history of the community. Through my work, I have instead focused on the fact that the story of the Komagata Maru is indeed an iconic moment, but that it also intersects with other major moments of South Asian history. These threads that weave themselves through the Komagata Maru story include the creation of the Second Avenue Sikh Temple, the formation of the Gadhar Party, the fight to regain the right to vote, women's experiences, labour



Naginder Singh Gill, who helped secure the right to vote.
Photo provided by SFU Digital Library.

movements, intercultural dialogue, and many more. These are all threads in a continuous journey that extends until today. When we examine one thread, new voices, new characters and new contexts arise that illuminate our collective past.

Other stories like these can be found. There is Nagindar Singh writing to groups across North America to help secure the right to vote (which was eventually granted in 1947). There is the visit of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to Vancouver in 1949 where he encourages Indians to take an active role in Canadian life. There are also the early writings of Sadhu Singh Dhami who recorded the history of Sikh soldiers fighting for Canada in World War Two with *The Sikhs and Their Religion: A Struggle for Democracy* and some of his own experiences with the semi-autobiographical *Maluka*. Likewise the poetry of Sadhu Binning, Phinder Dulai and Renee Saklikar has provided a fresh perspective and alternative voices on the Komagata Maru while Ail Kazimi's stellar documentary *Continuous Journey* and book *Undesirables* have been welcome additions to Hugh Johnston's landmark text *Voyage of the Komagata Maru* – which remains the definitive book of the ship's journey.

However, more work still needs to be done. There are gaps and silences in the official archive of libraries and institutions that is missing the voices of South Asians. Our story has been intentionally and ignorantly neglected and our present challenge is to help fill in that gap through collecting oral histories with pioneers and community elders, digitizing old photographs, documents, and records that are in danger of being lost, and making these sources available online and in schools so that future generations of scholars can learn about these important moments in Canadian history. These endeavours will take years to complete. But slowly, item by item, we will be able to provide a space for our community's voice to be heard.

The Komagata Maru is not just an "incident." It is one chapter, one episode, in a longer narrative that continues to today. These living legacies are important reminders of the journey over the past one hundred years and the important work that still needs to be done.

Remembering Komagata Maru: A Passage to Canada

By: Gary Thandi

It was early morning in late February, 1985, when the plane finally set down. It had been over 25 years since that visit, but now that I was back, it felt like it was just yesterday. I remember the big sign as we got off the plane that said, "Welcome to India," but I had no interest in feeling welcomed. I wanted to be half a world away, back in Vancouver, my comfort zone.

I looked over at the grumpy ten-year old sitting on the patio chair beside me, and, although she couldn't fathom it, I knew exactly how she felt – like me so many years ago, she wanted to be anywhere but here. And I hoped that she would soon change her mind, just like I had. "This is it, Jassi, the place your great-grandfather and I used to sit and talk."

She just nodded her head, ever so slightly – she was clearly underwhelmed by that fact.

I had been meaning to come back for years, but unfortunately got caught up in life – I figured I'd wait until I graduated high school, but then college started ... so I thought I'd wait until college ended ... but then I got married ... I thought I'd go sometime after I got married ... then the kids came along ... I'm sorry grandfather, for taking so long.

I remember the 10-year old me pouting all the way to the customs booth. I also remember mom turning to dad as we waited, saying, "Oh, Balwant, the airport is just the way I remember it." Then, after looking around, she added quietly (doing her best to keep it from her kids, but I still managed to hear it), "Except there's much more security than there used to be."

I had been too preoccupied with the heat and my deep self-pity to notice all the armed guards scattered throughout the airport. I suppose I would have been just as nervous as my parents if I knew what it meant to be a Sikh in India at the time. Tensions were high in 1985, but none of that mattered – once grandfather called, the family had to drop everything and get on the first plane out. I couldn't understand why at the time; I hadn't never even met him prior to then. Sure, he was the one that named me, but that didn't mean anything to me. In fact, I probably held that against him.

That's because he had named me Hassan. I couldn't figure out for the life of me how my Sikh grandfather had given me a Muslim name. Not only was it the wrong religion, but it was hard to pronounce to boot. Substitute teachers called me "Hay-sin" and "Hay-san" and one even called me Jose – I'd wait for them to go down the classroom roll call, and just when they'd come to my name, I'd say preemptively, "Call me Harry." My little brother got off a little easier –

"Sohan" was much easier to say.

When we arrived at the village, we were greeted by my dad's older brother, Gurdit, and his whole family. And after many hugs and kisses, it was time to meet this man who had such great influence over my family. I slowly walked up to this frail looking old man sitting quietly in chair and said, in the most respectful tone I could muster, "Sat Sri Akal."

Grandfather reached his hand out to mine, and I took a seat beside him – on the very same spot my daughter was now sitting. "Tell me, young Hassan, are you tired after your long flight?" he asked.

"Um, yes," I replied.

Luckily, I was able to head straight up to the guest room and go to bed. But in the morning, Grandfather was there again, waiting for me.

"Hello Hassan," he said. "Please have a seat." I walked over and sat down beside him. "So how are you this morning?"

"I'm fine, thank you," I replied. "But it's so hot."

He laughed. "You must be used to the Canadian weather."

"Yeah," I replied.

"So Hassan, what's it like?" grandfather asked.

"What is what like?" I asked.

"Vancouver," he replied. "It has been seventy years, but I still remember looking out and seeing those beautiful snow-capped mountains off in the distance. It seemed so close, and I wanted nothing more than to set foot on them."

"You were in Vancouver?" I asked.

"Baba Gurdit Singh had organized the sailing," he said. "Until my last breath I will remember the smell



Passengers aboard the Komagata Maru, 1914.

Photo provided by SFU Digital Library



The Komagata Maru denied entry into Canada. Photo provided by SFU Digital Library.

of that coal. The ship reeked of it. There were nearly 400 of us on that ship – they were all like my family.” His tone then turned somber. “But the people didn’t want us there, and they were ready to shoot anyone who tried to set foot on the land. I was just a child and was very afraid, but thankfully there were many people around me that were not afraid – people like Gurdit, Balwant, Sohan and Hassan.”

My ears shot up when I heard those names. And it wasn’t just the last name that rang a bell - Balwant was my dad’s name, Gurdit was his older brother, my uncle’s name, and Sohan was my little brother’s name. All of those names had been chosen by my grandfather. “Hassan?” I asked.

“Yes. I named you after him. And God rest his soul, he would be very proud, knowing you are carrying on his name.”

Grandfather proceeded to talk about these men, as well as the others that were on the ship or helping out from the shore.

Now, all these years later, I did my best to explain all this to Jassi, knowing there was no way I’d come close to Grandfather’s account of what had happened back then. At least I had the benefit of books, videos and the internet to rely on for information about that ship to at least do it some justice.

“Why did the people act like that?” both Jassi and I, 25 years earlier, asked.

“Basically they were afraid of anyone different than them,” both Grandfather and I replied.

I tried asking more questions about his time aboard the ship, but he was more interested in hearing me talk about Canada. That was the highlight of my three weeks. My grandfather spent time with my dad, mom and little brother too, but the porch conversations were ours and ours alone.

“Babaji,” I asked, “Why haven’t you ever come to visit?”

“Your grandmother, God rest her soul, would say ‘Jaspreet, why don’t you just go and visit Canada?’ But I couldn’t. Back when I was your age, Canada gave me the greatest dream I have ever dreamed, but it shattered those dreams just when I thought they were about to come true. I couldn’t go back after that.” But he refused to dwell upon those stories, and would always shift the conversation back to me and my home. “Now, tell me more about Canada.”

I sometimes wonder if Grandfather had summoned the family to India just so he could talk to me: a ten-year old kid telling an eighty-year old man about a place the latter had seen back when he was a

ten-year old kid. I don't know if that would make sense to anyone else, but it made perfect sense to me. And as I explained to Jassi, it seemed to make sense to her.

"So was he happy hearing you describe Canada to him?" Jassi asked.

"Yes, but I decided that it wasn't good enough to describe it," I explained. "I wanted him to see that Canada was no longer the way he remembered it. So I asked him to come back with us."

"What did he say?"

I looked at my daughter and wondered if I hung onto grandfather's every word just like she was hanging onto mine. "He couldn't say 'no' to his grandson," I replied.

After the airplane landed, we got off and picked up our bags – this time there was a "Welcome to Canada" sign to greet him instead of an angry mob. The first thing he said when he stepped outside was "It's so cold."

I laughed. "You must be used to the Indian weather."

Grandfather's health continued to deteriorate during the time he was with us, and he eventually requested to go home. He died a few months after returning to India. Although I wanted to go to the funeral, only dad went – tensions had become much too high there to risk all of us going.

"He was a great man," Jassi said.

I leaned over and gave Jassi a big hug. "God rest Grandfather's soul, he would be very proud, knowing you are carrying on his name."

Grandfather's final request was that his ashes be spread out over the most important places he had been to in his life. Some had been spread out in places

in India that he had visited as a young man, and of course, some had been spread out in the village – and one place in particular – around the porch where Jassi and I were sitting – and where Grandfather had spent so much of his days.

"Here," my Uncle Gurdit said, handing me an urn. "Your grandfather gave us clear directions that only you could pick these up."

"But," I said, my voice trembling slightly. I didn't know that some of Grandfather's ashes had yet to be spread. "If I had known, I would have come earlier."

Uncle Gurdit laughed. "You were supposed to come at this moment, no sooner no later. Your grandfather told us you would only come when the time was right."

I suppose he was right - I had come at the right time. I looked over at my ten-year old child, and smiled. I knew exactly what I was supposed to do with the urn. Grandfather was coming back to Canada, one last time.

Important dates in Canadian history:

April 4th, 1914: the Komagata Maru departs from Hong Kong.

May 23, 1914: the Komagata Maru anchored in Burrard Inlet.

July 23, 1914: the ship is forced from the Harbour, with few passengers allowed to remain in Canada.

On September 26, 1914: A British gunship stopped the Komagata Maru as it approached Calcutta. Passengers were taken prisoner and told they would be sent by train to the Punjab. However, many of the passengers had other matters to tend to in Calcutta, and wanted to go there. The British refused, and a violent clash that took the lives of 20 passengers ensued.



Baba Balwant Singh with the Captain and owner of the Komagata Maru. Photo provided by SFU Digital Library

कोमागातामारू शहीदों की अमर गाथा

आचार्य श्रीनाथ प्रसाद द्विवेदी

समय वह दरिया है
जो अपने साथ बहा
ले जाता है
ऐतिहासिक घटनाओं के
बेशुमार झाड़ झंखाड़
और छोड़ जाता है
यादों के पहाड़।
कोमागातामारू से जुड़ी
है सत्य महाकथा
असहनीय व्यथा
कैनेडियन अंग्रजों की
पाशविक बर्बरता, नैतिक जड़ता
और रंगभेद नीति
का है दस्तावेज़
जो न्याय परक समता
स्वतंत्रता के सिद्धान्तों का
करता है पर्दाफाश
अत्यधिक निराश।
जनवरी १९१४ में
नये अवसरों की तलाश में
अपने सामान्य लिबास में
पंजाब-भारत से
१६५ लोगों का
कलकत्ता से
चला काफिला
उत्साह उमंगों में पला
उम्मीदों का दिया जला।
हॉगकॉग में
आज़ादी के दीवाने
मर मिटने वाले परवाने
गुरदीत सिंह संधू मिले
नई आशा के गुलाब खिले
उनके दिमाग में

भारत की आज़ादी का
दावानल धधक रहा था
उत्सर्ग के लिये दिल
मचल रहा था
वे आज़ादी के आन्दोलन को
भारतीय सीमा से उठाकर
विश्वमंच में लाने के हिमायती थे
फिरंगियों के लिये मात्र
खुराफ़ाती थे
वे आज़ादी को समर्थन देनेवाली
उत्तरी अमेरिका की
'गदर पार्टी' की गतिविधियों से
भलीभाँति परिचित थे
उसके प्रबल समर्थक थे।
उन्होंने कोमागातामारू
जापानी जहाज को
किराये में लिया
जो दिल में आया सही किया
शंघाई (चीन) में
२११ और भारतीय
८ अप्रैल में काफिले से जुड़े
कैनेडा की ओर मुड़े
१४ अप्रैल को पहुँचा
जहाज योकोहामा (जापान)
लोग चल पड़े खरामा-खरामा
मई ३ को यात्रा पुनः
प्रारम्भ हुई
जहाज में यात्रा के दौरान
बैठकें आयोजित हुईं
जिनमें गदर के पर्चे
वितरित किये गये
लोग आज़ादी के लिये प्रेरित
एवम् प्रोत्साहित किये गये

बरतानिया हुकूमत के खिलाफ़
भड़काई गई आग
गाये आज़ादी के राग।
२३मई को जहाज इनलेट बरार्ड
वैंकुअर आया
लोगों ने अपनी यात्रा की
सफलता के लिये
जप, भजन और नमाज़ का
किया था पाठ
दिलों में मज़हबी भेदभाव की
कोई नहीं थी गॉठ
लोगों के दिलों में पलते सपने
अनबुझी बात
सुलगती सुबह धधकती रात।
कैनेडियन हुक्मरानों का
शुरू हुआ भयंकर षड़यंत्र
कूरता का नंगा नाच
इतिहास के पन्नों को
बाँच रे बाँच।
प्रान्तीय तथा केन्द्रीय सरकार
के मंत्री कानून के संतरी
तमाशा देखते रहे
अपने चरित्र के पिलपिलेपन
की ठंडक को
काफी पीकर दूर करते रहे
भारतीय बी सी के नागरिकों ने
यात्रियों की सहायता के लिये
एक कमेटी स्थापित किया
उनके रहने और रोजगार की
व्यवस्था का आश्वासन दिया
कानून के दरवाजे खटखटये
लेकिन अंधे-बहरे अफसर
नहीं रहम खाये।

यात्रियों के साथ अमानुसिक व्यवहार हुआ
 उन्हें अपमानित और प्रताड़ित किया
 फिर भी उनका स्वाभिमान
 आत्मविश्वास पस्त नहीं हुआ।
 उन्होंने १९ जुलाई को
 अपना आक्रोश व्यक्त किया
 सरकार ने फिर भी
 कुछ भी नहीं किया
 केवल २० यात्रियों को
 कैंनेडा में प्रवेश दिया
 २३ जुलाई को नवसेना
 तथा फौजी सिपाहियों के
 घेरेबंदी के साथ कोमागातानारू

को गहरे समुद्र में ढकेल दिया
 उनकी किस्मत में जीने -मरने
 के लिये छोड़ दिया।
 यात्रियों की परेशानियों का
 यहीं नहीं हुआ अंत
 उनकी चित्कार फैली दिग-दिगन्त
 २७ सितम्बर को जब जहाज
 कलकत्ता पहुँचा
 उन्हें विद्रोही, क्रान्कारी घोषित
 कर दिया
 निहत्थे लोगों पर बरसी गोलियाँ
 चीखते-चिल्लाते लोगों की टोलियाँ
 जसमें १९ लोगों की हुई
 निर्मम हत्या

कुछ लोगों को बंदी बनाया
 कुछ को जेल का रास्ता दिखाया
 उन शहीदों के लिये आज़ादी के
 बाद
 भारत सरकार ने कुछ भी नहीं
 किया
 कैंनेडियन सरकार ने अलबत्ता
 अधर सहानुभूति दिखाई
 स्मृति स्मारक, म्यूज़ियम और
 पार्लियामेंट में क्षमा माँग ली
 और अपनी सियासती रोटी सेंक ली।



The Pacific Canada Heritage Centre – Museum of Migration (PCHC - MoM) Society is a non-profit society established in 2011 to build a wider and improved understanding of Canada's history and development through intercultural explorations of historic and current trans-Pacific immigration

Its mission is to establish a Museum of Migration at a site of historical significance for Canadians whose families first arrived in Canada through its western portals, and create a supporting national research network for interdisciplinary and more inclusive interpretation of Canada's history

The PCHC is to be a hub where Canadians can engage with each other to understand past and current relationship between immigrants and host communities including their interaction with First Nations peoples, and where families will be able to research their family history and share their stories.

The PCHC Inaugural Symposium in 2013 brought together diverse cultural groups and representatives from universities, libraries and museums for consultation and collaboration in realizing this vision. The dream of having a Museum of Migration on the West Coast has been enthusiastically embraced. Further discussions are now taking place among stakeholders and funders to concretize the development plan

Please visit www.pchc-mom.ca to see how you can participate in this exciting project, and learn about some of the exciting stories emerging from grass-roots efforts to document our diverse migration stories that have been absent from the official narrative of nation building.

Website: www.pchc-mom.ca
 Email: pchc.mom@gmail.com

Contact persons:

Winnie I Cheung: 604-836-8838
 Harbhajan Gill: 604-763-1735

प्रशांत महासागर- एक मुहाफ़िज़ माधवी कटारीया

बीत गए हैं
बरसों बरस... बरसों बरस

पर हूँ मुहाफ़िज़
आज भी मैं
खुशहाली के सपनों, दृढ़ इरादों,
सघर्षों और मायूसी की
उस गाथा का.
भुला नहीं पाया मैं अब तक
सन् 1914 के वो अनन्त
महीने...

हुए बुलंद और पस्त होंसले
लाखों लाखों बार
मेरी पनीली छाती पर
जद्दो जेहद के भूचालों
विलाप के उफानों में
वाहेगुरु, ईश्वर, अल्लाह को
तलाशती प्रार्थनाएं
लगातार लगातार ...

मई का महीना :
झूमते मेरी लहरों पर
तुम्हारी आशाओं के गीत
सपनों में भी कहते थे तुम
कट जायेंगे दिन गर्दिश के बस
अब
पर था किस को ये मालूम
पुतेगी कालिख सफ़ेदी की
इसानियत की सूरत पर

आकाश, मैं और तारे
होते शर्मिंदा, शोक मनाते दिन
और रात
कब छोड़ेगी अहंकार ज़मीं ये?
मिटेंगी आखिर कब ये हटें
नक्शों, नस्लों और रंगों की?

कब होगा बनना आसान
फ़क़त इक सच्चा इंसान?
आकाश, तारे और मैं
रोए थे ज़ार ज़ार
देख कर इंसान का इंसान से
दुर्व्यवहार
उन महीनों लगातार लगातार...
आये थे जीवन के विस्तार की
खातिर
बना दिया पर तुम को
महज़ द्वीप इक
सिमट कर ही रह गए थे तुम
मेरे विस्तृत पानियों पर
देख के मज़र भेद-भाव के
कांपी थी तब रूह मेरी
परम-उत्सुक थीं मेरी लहरें
ले जाने बुराई इनलेट पे तुमको
आज भी अपने अन्तस पर वो
ढोतीं
पार न लगा पाने की
गहरी और हताश थकान.

जून से जुलाई:
मुझ जैसे महासागर को
करना था जो तुमने पार
मैंने तब की थी ये अरदास
कहा एक ओंकार से कि
सोख लो मेरा सारा पानी
बस... बन जाऊं मैं वही ज़मीं
पैर रखने जिस पर वो सब
छोड़ आये थे दूर बहुत
अपने गाँव के छप्पर.
और करता प्रभु से याचना
बहा दो मुझको फैला दो
वैकूवर की इस धरती पर
कर दो प्रलय
कि न फिर तड़पे कभी भी कोई

रंग और नस्ल की खातिर.
मांगी थी दुआ अल्लाह से
बसने दे यहाँ अब उन को
कर लेने दे दसों नाखूनों से
मेहनत
वो भी ले लें सुख के सांस
हैं ये सब उस देश के बाशिंदे
जहाँ गए हैं दुनिया भर से
हर मुल्क, नस्ल और रंग के
बंदे.
एक ईश्वर, एक धरती
क्यों हों भला हुक्मरान इंकारी ?

सौ बरस होने को आये
बना रहा मैं सदा मुहाफ़िज़
मांग, अनुरोध, तकाज़ा, नालिश
सब दौरों से गुज़रे तुम हम
दिन-दिन झरती दिल से टीस
आँखें डब-डबातीं रात-रात
नमक तुम्हारे आंसुओं का
सहेजता मेरा खारा पानी
दिन और रात ... दिन और रात

मुहाफ़िज़ है
मेरा ठंडा खारा पानी
तुम्हारे गर्म आंसुओं का तब से
अब तक
तब भी था और अब भी हूँ मैं
शर्मसार.... बेहद शर्मसार
लगा न पाया क्यूँ मैं तुमको
छोर के इस पार... इस पार.....

Reflections

By: Balbinder Sangha

As Canada prepares to mark the 100th anniversary commemoration of the Komagata Maru incident next month, I find myself reflecting on my own journey, over 50 years ago, to this country. My personal journey began with my father, Dan Singh Sangha, who immigrated to Canada in 1959. Already a family man, my father left my mother, my siblings and myself, 1 year old at the time, in our small village in Punjab, India, so he could establish a home for us in Canada. Those early years were a time of hard physical labour as my father worked alongside other new immigrants in the sawmill industry of B.C. The hours were long and living conditions were difficult with many men sharing cramped living quarters, and yet my father persevered knowing that his steady paycheque meant he could not only send money back to India to support his family, but could also make in-roads to establishing a life in this new country with the hope that one day he would have the means to bring the family together for a better life in Canada. Eight years after coming to Canada himself, my father was finally able to re-unite his family. On August 1, 1967, I, Balbinder (Bob) Sangha, along with my mother Charan Kaur and my brother and two sisters, landed at Vancouver International Airport. I was nine years old.

My very first impression of Canada was the visual image looking out of the airplane as we prepared to land. From my vantage point, it appeared that there were hundreds of houses 'floating' on the water and I was amazed that people were actually living in these floating homes! Of course, it was the municipalities of Richmond, Delta and Ladner that I was looking at, their proximity to the coastline creating the illusion of 'floating' houses in my nine-year-old mind. I quickly adapted to Canadian life in terms of going to school and even getting a part-time job delivering newspapers in our neighborhood; however, being the youngest in a new-immigrant family, I was also firmly rooted in my cultural heritage. As a family, we all worked hard, pooled our money and lived in a very humble home. Our small, three bedroom, one bathroom house often had 10-12 people living in it at the same time. My siblings were significantly older than me and as they married and began their own families, they often had to live under the same roof for a short time before setting out on their own. Nevertheless, we all worked together, by this time in the berry farm business. We began by picking berries to earn money for the family and very quickly began to buy berry farms and established a berry picking contract business as well. When other children and teenagers were travelling or relaxing during summer vacations, my siblings and

I were on the various farms, with extended family members, picking berries.

As is common with many immigrant families, higher education is impressed upon the children and my family was no exception. I, being the youngest, benefited the most from the educational opportunities available at the time. I entered University and completed a degree in Biochemistry before being accepted into the Pharmacy program at UBC and graduated with my Pharmacy degree in 1984. A further advantage of attending university was the opportunity it gave me to meet my future wife who was also pursuing her own educational goals at the time. Unlike my siblings, I knew I did not want a traditional arranged marriage and was eager to meet someone who respected our cultural heritage but embraced the Canadian lifestyle. I was fortunate to have met my wife, Nimi, and together we have worked hard to bridge the cultural gap between our Indian traditions and the Canadian lifestyle opportunities surrounding us.

During the first three years of our marriage we lived with my parents while I finished my education. Living in a 'joint' family situation gave my wife the unique opportunity to immerse herself in both the language and culture of a traditional Indian family. As soon as I graduated, I accepted a full-time pharmacy position in Victoria, B.C. and viewed this as a chance to set out on our own and begin a life separate from my family, this in itself a very Canadian way of thinking. The following years were spent building my career, raising a family and maintaining close ties to both of our extended families. We quickly realized that as much as we loved living in Victoria, it was important for our children to develop strong relationships with their grandparents and cousins on the mainland, so in 1993 we made the decision to move back to Vancouver and eventually settled in the Township of Langley. Today, my wife and I are proud to say that our children have developed into strong, independent thinking individuals who value the freedom they have to choose the direction of their lives.

I had accumulated a number of years experience in the corporate world of retail pharmacy at London Drugs, when I decided to go into business for myself in 1993. After buying, renovating and successfully running existing retail pharmacies in Richmond, Squamish and Port Coquitlam, I had the opportunity to go out on my own and build a pharmacy from the ground up. For the past eight years, my wife and I have been running Surlang Medicine Centre Pharmacy on Fraser Highway in Surrey, B.C. We have developed

a niche market for specialty compounding within the pharmacy and have clients all across the province. We were awarded the Kidney contract and are now a designated provincial pharmacy for dispensing medications to pre-dialysis, peritoneal, and hemo dialysis patients. We offer blister packing of meds, free delivery, and an excellent, knowledgeable staff who speak Punjabi, English and Hindi. Furthermore, we have the support of PCCA (Professional Compounding Centre of America) as well as specialized products such as vitamin B12 injectables readily available.

As an Indian businessman, now in my fifties, I often reflect on the choices I've made to arrive at where I am today. Though I respect my cultural heritage immensely, I have chosen not to fixate on the religious symbolism that is so prevalent in our community, but rather embrace and extend the three tenets of Sikhism that form the basis of the formal teachings for all humanity. Firstly, naam japo, which I interpret as to always remember my roots and spirit on a daily basis. Secondly, band shukoh, meaning to share with others and help my fellow human beings. And thirdly, kirt karo, to make an honest living by working hard

with integrity. This simple philosophy of a life well lived began with my paternal grandfather, Ujjagar Singh, who spent most of his life in the village of Chahalpur, Punjab, India, giving away his wealth to help others less fortunate. My own father, Dan Singh Sangha, continued with his commitment to offer assistance to many fellow immigrants as he established himself in Canada. And today I am always eager to help those individuals who are struggling to make a better life for themselves. Whether it is a reference letter that is needed, work experience opportunities, money, career counselling or just a sympathetic ear, I am committed to "lift as I climb" in my own journey.

Whether it is helping my customers, offering advice to my young adult children or interacting with the neighbors in my community, my philosophy remains that we are all the same – we are all one. To live a life full of compassion and empathy while serving others is to observe the highest calling of all. And to do this, while never forgetting those pioneers before us who persevered through unthinkable hardships just to be given a chance for a better life, has always been my ultimate goal.





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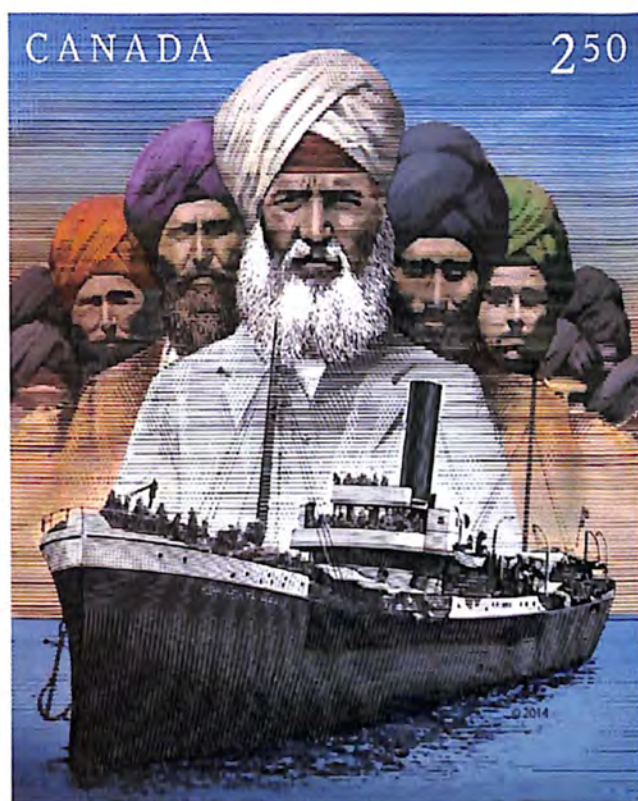
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Sukhi Bath Group of Companies congratulates Canada Post for commemorating this important event by issuing a stamp on the 100 year Anniversary of Komagata Maru, a historic incident apart of Canadian History.



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As a championship-winning athlete, Rajni Sharma is disciplined, determined and has a competitive edge. All these traits have led to a successful 22-year career as a Financial/Insurance Advisor with Sun Life Financial, a Canadian insurance company with a strong and solid brand since 1865.

Growing up in Jalandhar, Rajni played competitive field hockey in high school through college (Lyalpur Khalsa College for Women), while getting her Masters degree in English from D.A.V. College. She represented Punjab in national tournaments, and took home the national championships for 12 consecutive years. This positioned her very well to participate in international tournaments, and she represented India in three World Cups.

She married in 1980 and immigrated to Prince Rupert in 1981. After raising three children, she joined Sun Life in 1990. At that time, managers often went on sales calls with advisors, and after visiting her first two clients, Rajni was told "you're a natural - you have all the tools it takes to be a great financial advisor!" In her first year with the company, she was the number one advisor (rookie) in Canada.

Her message to women in business and all walks of life is "first and foremost, believe in yourself. I'm a person with that frame of mind, where I believe I can do anything, if it wasn't insurance, and I was doing something else, I would have done it equally well. So, believe in yourself and choose the field that you would like to excel in," she says with a smile.

In terms of investments, Rajni says "If you're going to invest your money somewhere, an insurance company is your best option."

"I want to urge people to educate themselves on how to buy insurance. Look for the strong brand, the longevity of the company, what kind of company the broker is suggesting? Research that company yourself, what's their claims paying rating? These are all very important pieces of information every prospective buyer should have. Then comes the second most important question, does the agent have the knowledge, experience and education to properly guide clients to make the right decision about their insurance?"

Her passion is estate and financial planning and she advises individuals/business entrepreneurs especially from the South Asian community, who have worked hard to build their wealth to be wise in terms of tax planning. "I take pride in providing insurance solutions to the estate tax problem," she says adding it's a great feeling to educate clients about financial and insurance solutions. She is fluent in English, Punjabi and Hindi.

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ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਿੰਡਾੜ s/o ਸ.ਸ਼ਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਿੰਡ ਭਿੰਡਾੜਾ ਤਹਿਸੀਲ ਬੰਗਾ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਸਹੀਦ ਭਗਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਗਰ ਦੇ ਜੰਮ ਪਲ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਕਾਮਾ-ਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਵਾਰ ਹੋ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ 376 ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਸਵਾਰ ਸਨ। ਜਿਹੜੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਰੋਟੀ ਰੋਜ਼ੀ ਦੀ ਖਾਤਰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਕਾਮਾ-ਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਰੋਕ ਲਿਆ ਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਾਖਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਣ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਲੱਗ ਭਗ ਦੇ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਕਾਮਾ-ਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੀ ਰੁਕਿਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਰਲ ਕੇ ਕਸਮ ਖਾਈ ਜੇਕਰ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਾਖਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਣ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਵੀ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਲਈ ਬਿਗਲ ਵਜਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਾਮਾ ਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਜਦੋਂ ਵਾਪਸ ਕੈਲਕੱਤਾ ਬਜ-ਬਜ ਘਾਟ ਵਿਖੇ ਪਹੁੰਚਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਨੇ ਬਾਂਤ ਮਈ ਅੰਦੋਲਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ 19 ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਿੰਡਾੜ ਪਿੰਡ ਭਿੰਡਾੜਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਨ ਇਹ ਬੜਾ ਫਕਰ ਤੇ ਮਾਣ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਦੇਸ਼ ਹਰ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਪਿੰਡ ਭਿੰਡਾੜਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੱਡਾ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਪਾਇਆ।

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ਉਦਘਾਟਨ ਅੱਜ ਮਿਤੀ 20-12-2011 ਨੂੰ

ਮਾਣਯੋਗ ਚੌਧਰੀ ਸਵਰਨਾ ਜੀ ਸਾਬਕਾ ਕੈਬਨਿਟ ਮੰਤਰੀ

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ਮਾਣਯੋਗ ਸ.ਮੋਹਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਐਮ.ਐਲ.ਏ. ਹਲਕਾ ਬੰਗਾ ਨੇ

ਆਪਣੇ ਸ਼ੁਭ ਕਰ-ਕਾਮਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤਾ।

ਜੱਥੇਦਾਰ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਿੰਡਾੜ

ਸ਼੍ਰੀਮਤੀ ਜਿਮਰਨ ਕੌਰ ਸਰਪੰਚ

ਜਨਰਲ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਬਾਦਲ

ਸਮੂਹ ਗ੍ਰਾਮ ਪੰਚਾਇਤ ਅਤੇ ਨਗਰ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਭਿੰਡਾੜਾਂ

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According to this plaque, was one of the passengers who was killed at Budge Budge



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ਡਾ. ਗੁਰੂਮੇਲ ਸਿੱਧੂ

20ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਾ ਨਾਲ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਵਾਸੀ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਆਉਣੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਏ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੱਧਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਕੈਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਸ਼ਹਿਰੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਤੇ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਪਾਕੇ ਇਸ "ਭੂਰੀ ਚਮੜੀ ਦੇ ਧਾਵਾ" (Brown invasion) ਨੂੰ ਠੱਲ੍ਹ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਰੋਲਾ ਪਾਇਆ। ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਵਸਨੀਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫਿਕਰ ਲੱਗ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਲੋਕ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਲੱਕੜ-ਮਿਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਰਖਾਨਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਕੰਮਕਾਰ ਖੋਹ ਲੈਣਗੇ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਕੈਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਹੇਠਲੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਬਣਾਏ।

1. ਆਪਣੀ ਜੰਮਣ-ਭੋਂ ਤੋਂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਜਾਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੁਲਕ ਚੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਟਿਕਟ ਖਰੀਦ ਕੇ ਆਉਣ।

2. ਜੇਬ ਵਿਚ 200 ਡਾਲਰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਤੁਰਨ।

ਇਹ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਗ਼ੈਰਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ, ਨਿਰਦਈ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਖਪਾਤੀ ਸਨ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ, 1. ਤਕਨੀਕੀ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ, ਕੈਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਸ਼ਹਿਰੀਆਂ ਵਾਂਗ, ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਦੀ ਪਰਜਾ ਸਨ, 2. ਉਹ ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਵਿਚ ਕੇਵਲ 10 ਸੈਂਟ ਕਮਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ, ਅਤੇ 3. ਚੀਨੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਜਪਾਨੀਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਅਜੇਹੀਆਂ ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸ਼ਰਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਲਾਵਾ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਨੇ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰ ਬੰਧਨ ਵੀ ਦਾਇਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਿਵੇਂ, ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ 1907 ਵਿਚ ਵੋਟ ਪਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਹੱਕ ਖੋਹਣਾ, ਕਿਸੇ ਪਬਲਿਕ ਦਫਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੰਮ ਨਾ ਕਰ ਸਕਣਾ, ਕਿਸੇ ਜਿਉਰੀ ਦਾ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਨਾ ਚੁਣਿਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਵਕੀਲ, ਅਕਾਉਂਟੈਂਟ ਅਤੇ ਫਾਰਮਾਸਿਸਟ ਨਾ ਬਣ ਸਕਣਾ। ਕੈਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਨੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਟਿਕਟ ਨਾ ਵੇਚਣ। ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਕੁਲੰਬੀਆ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਘਟਨਾ, ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਪੱਖਪਾਤੀ ਕਾਨੂੰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਚਣਾਉਤੀ ਸੀ। ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਪਾਨੀ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਉਪਾਰੀ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਅਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਭਾੜੇ ਤੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਦਸੰਬਰ, 1913 ਵਿਚ ਸਿੰਗਾਪੁਰ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ,

ਪਰ ਉਥੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਾਥੀ, ਮੂਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਦੇ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਉਸ ਦੇ 1200 ਡਾਲਰ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਹੌਂਗ ਕੌਂਗ ਤੋਂ ਭੱਜ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਹੌਂਗ ਕੌਂਗ ਦੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ "ਗਦਰ" ਮਚਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਣ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜੋ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉੱਲਵੱਟੇ ਭੰਨ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਉਥੇ ਉਹ ਕਈ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਜੋ ਪਿੰਡ ਤੋਂ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਵਗੈਰਾ ਵੇਚ ਕੇ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਦੀ ਆਸ ਨਾਲੇ ਹੌਂਗ ਕੌਂਗ ਅਟਕੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਵਿਚਾਰੇ ਦੋ ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਢੰਗ ਦਾ ਕੰਮਕਾਰ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਈ ਤੰਗੀ-ਤੁਰਸ਼ੀ ਤੋਂ ਤੰਗ ਆਏ ਹੋਏ ਲੋਕ ਸਨ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਧ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਿਹਾ। ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਕਦਮ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੁਲਕ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤੀ ਦਿਖਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਹੌਂਗ ਕੌਂਗ ਵਿਚ ਫਸੇ ਹੋਏ ਆਪਣੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸੁਨੈਹਰਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕੋਈ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਾਲਾ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਕਰਾਏ ਤੇ ਲੈਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੋਚ ਲਿਆ।

ਹੌਂਗ ਕੌਂਗ ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਦੋ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥੀ, ਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਮਿਲੇ ਜੋ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਲਈ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਦਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋ ਅਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਵਿਚ "ਖਾਲਸਾ ਐਡਵੋਕੇਟ" ਪੇਪਰ ਦਾ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਸੰਪਾਦਕ ਸੀ, ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਸੈਕਟਰੀ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਯਾਤਰਾ-ਕਮੇਟੀ ਬਣਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਤੇ, ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਦੀ "ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ" ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ ਦੇ ਮੈਂਬਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਪੱਖਪਾਤੀ ਕਾਨੂੰਨਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਤਾ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਉਹ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਉਕਸਾਉਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਤੋੜੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸਕੀਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕੋਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਲਕੱਤੇ ਤੋਂ ਕਰਾਏ ਤੇ ਲੈਣਾ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਗੱਲ ਨਾ ਬਨਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੌਂਗ ਕੌਂਗ ਤੋਂ ਲੈਣਾ ਪਿਆ। ਬੜੇ ਉਪਰਾਲੇ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਕ ਜਰਮਨ ਸ਼ਿਪਿੰਗ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਾਸ ਕੋਲੇ ਵਾਲ "ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ"

ਸ਼ਿੱਪ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਇਕ ਜਪਾਨੀ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੇਚ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਜਪਾਨੀ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਨਾਲ 11,000 ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਹੋਂਗ ਕੌਂਗ ਡਾਲਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਤੇ ਛੇ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਲਈ ਕਰਾਏ ਤੇ ਲੈਣ ਦਾ ਸੌਦਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਕੰਪਨੀ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਿੱਪ ਦਾ ਕਪਤਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਅਮਲਾ ਮੁਹੱਯਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਮੰਨ ਲਿਆ, ਪਰ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਇਰਲਿਸ ਟੈਲੀਫ਼ੂਨ ਵਗ਼ੈਰਾ ਦਾ ਇੰਤਜ਼ਾਮ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਖਰਚਾ ਇਸ ਇਰਾਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਚੱਕਣਾ ਮੰਨ ਲਿਆ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਗਰਾਹ ਲਵੇਗਾ। ਇਸ ਆਸ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸੈਕਟਰੀ ਦਿਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ 210 ਡਾਲਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਯਾਤਰੀ ਟਿਕਟ ਵੇਚ ਕੇ 10,000 ਡਾਲਰ ਜਮ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਇਕ ਆਦਮੀ ਲਈ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਆਉਣ ਜਾਣ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਕਰਾਇਆ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਲੋੜਮੰਦਾਂ ਨੇ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਸ ਦੀ ਸੂਹ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਗ ਕੌਂਗ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਲੱਗ ਗਈ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਫੋਲਾ-ਫਾਲੀ ਕੀਤੀ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਦੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਗ਼ੈਰਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਲਈ ਟਿਕਟ ਵੇਚਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਹਿਰਾਸਤ ਵਿਚ ਲੈ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਕਨੇਡਾ ਨੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਨਵੇਂ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਬਣਾਏ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਲੋਕ, ਭਾਰਤ ਤੋਂ ਟਿਕਟ ਖਰੀਦ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਆਉਣ ਨਾ ਕਿ ਰਾਹ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਟਿਕਟ ਖਰੀਦ ਕੇ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਆਰੰਭ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਾਸ 200 ਡਾਲਰ ਨਕਦ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਕੁੰਟ੍ਰਿਕਟ ਤੇ ਅਜੇ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਹੀ ਦਸਤਖਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਛਾਪਾ ਪੈਣ ਵੇਲੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਕਮਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਮੇਜਿਸਟ੍ਰੇਟ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ, ਪਰ ਕੋਈ ਸਬੂਤ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਛੱਡ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦੀ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਹੋਈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਰ ਗਏ। ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਿਚ 500 ਬੰਦੇ ਦੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਉਸ ਪਾਸ ਕੇਵਲ 165 ਯਾਤਰੀ ਰਹਿ ਗਏ।

ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੇ ਹੋਂਗ ਕੌਂਗ ਤੋਂ ਮਾਰਚ, 1914 ਵਿਚ ਤੁਰਨਾ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਓਥੇ ਦੀ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਵਲੋਂ ਦਖਲਅੰਦਾਜ਼ੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਅਪਰੈਲ 14, 1914 ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਈ। ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ 165 ਯਾਤਰੀ ਸਨ, ਪਰ 111 ਸਿੰਗਾਈ ਤੋਂ, 86 ਮੋਰੀ ਪੋਰਟ ਤੋਂ ਅਤੇ 14 ਯੋਕੋਹਾਮਾ ਤੋਂ ਰਲਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਕੁੱਲ 376 ਯਾਤਰੀ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਰਾਹੇ ਪੈ ਗਏ। ਜਦ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ

ਸਿੰਗਾਈ ਪਹੁੰਚਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਜਰਮਨ ਦੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਨੇ ਜਰਮਨ ਪ੍ਰੈਸ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਕਿ ਸਿੰਗਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ, ਅਪਰੈਲ 14, 1914 ਨੂੰ "400 ਯਾਤਰੀ ਲੈਕੇ", ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਰਵਾਨਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਖਬਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰੈਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੂਹ ਲੱਗ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਦੇ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਅਖਬਾਰ, "ਪ੍ਰੋਵਿੰਸ" ਨੇ ਭੇਜ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਪ੍ਰੋਵਿੰਸ ਨੇ ਭੜਕੀਲੀ ਖਬਰ ਛਾਪੀ: "ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਭਰਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਨੂੰ ਆ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ"। ਹੋਰ ਅਖਬਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਖਬਰ ਚਮਕਾ ਕੇ ਲਾਈ: "ਕਨੇਡਾ 'ਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਦਾ ਧਾਵਾ"। ਕਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ "ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਕਤਈ ਉਤਰਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ"। ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਦੇ ਆਲੇ-ਦੁਆਲੇ ਵਸੇ ਹੋਏ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਝਣ ਲਈ, ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਮੀਟਿੰਗਾਂ ਕਰਨੀਆਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ। ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਿੰਨੀ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ ਮੱਦਦ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪੈਸੇ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਚੀਜ਼ਾਂ-ਵਸਤਾਂ ਦਾ ਇੰਤਜ਼ਾਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਕਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਦਾ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਸਾਰਾ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਭਾਈਚਾਰਾ ਇਕਮੁੱਠ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ।

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਪਾਨ ਤੋਂ ਮਈ 3, 1914 ਨੂੰ ਰਵਾਨਾ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਮਈ 23, 1914, ਨੂੰ ਸਾਜਰੇ ਸਨਿੱਚਰਵਾਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ, ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਪੁੱਜ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਪੈਸੇਫਿਕ ਮਹਾਂ ਸਾਗਰ ਦੀ ਬੁਰਾਰਡ ਖਾੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਲੱਗਾ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ 376 ਯਾਤਰੀ ਵਿਚ 340 ਸਿੱਖ, 12 ਹਿੰਦੂ ਅਤੇ 24 ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ਸਨ। ਯਾਤਰੀ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਤੋਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਉਤਰਨ ਦੀ ਆਸ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣਾ ਬੋਰੀਆਂ ਬਿਸਤਰਾ ਬੰਨ ਕੇ ਤਿਆਰ ਬੈਠੇ ਸਨ। ਐਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਮੀਗ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਇਨਸਪੈਕਟਰ, ਕਸਟਮ ਅਫਸਰ ਅਤੇ ਇਕ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਸਮੇਤ ਆ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੋਹਰੀ ਰੀਝ ਸਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਨਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਨਾ ਆਉਣ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਉਤਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਮਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰੈਸ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਆਨ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਪਕਿੰਨ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਖਾਤਬ ਹੁੰਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ: "We are British citizens and we consider we have a right to visit any part of the Empire. We are determined to make this a test case and if

we are refused entrance into your country, the matter will not end here. What is done with this shipload of people will determine whether we shall have peace in all parts of British Empire."

ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਮੋੜ ਕੇ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਵਲ ਬੁਰਾਰਤ ਸੜਕ ਦੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਇੰਮੀਗ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਦਫਤਰ ਦੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਕਿਨਾਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਰ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ। ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਦੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਕਿਨਾਰੇ ਤੇ ਖੜ੍ਹੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਉਡੀਕ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਪਰ ਇੰਮੀਗ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਪੁਲਸ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਿੱਪ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਨਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਨਾ ਆਉਣ ਦਿੱਤਾ, ਫਲਸਰੂਪ, ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਯਾਤਰੀ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਨਾ ਉਤਰ ਸਕਿਆ। ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਇਕ ਵਿਉਪਾਰੀ ਹਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਉਤਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਬਿਜਨਸ ਦੇ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਰੋਕ ਸਕਦਾ, ਪਰ ਰੀਡ ਦੇ ਕੰਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਜੂੰ ਨਾ ਸਰਕੀ।

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦਾ ਅਜੇ 15,000 ਡਾਲਰ ਬਕਾਇਆ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ ਜੋ 11 ਜੂਨ ਤਕ ਚੁਕਤਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ। ਰੀਡ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਗੱਲ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਦੇ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੁਮਾਇੰਦੇ, ਸੀ. ਗਾਰਡਨਰ, ਨੂੰ ਕਰਾਇਆਂ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਮਗਰ ਪਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਉਤਰਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਕਿ ਕਿਤੇ ਉਹ ਕਰਾਇਆ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਿਰ ਵਾਪਸ ਨਾ ਕਰ ਦੇਵੇ। ਇਹ ਰੀਡ ਦੀ ਚਾਲ ਸੀ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਿਰ ਕਰਾਇਆ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਨੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਜਪਾਨ ਲੈ ਜਾਣਾ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰੈਸ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ। ਪਰ ਰੀਡ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਗੱਲ ਨਾ ਸੁਣੀ। ਇੰਮੀਗ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਅਫਸਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਿੱਪ ਨੂੰ ਹਥਿਆਰਬੰਦ ਸਿਪਾਹੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਘੇਰਾ ਪਾ ਲਿਆ। ਫਲਸਰੂਪ, ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਿੱਪ ਤੇ ਕੈਦੀ ਬਣਾ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਤੇ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਡਾਕਟਰੀ ਤਫਦੀਸ਼ ਕਰਾਈ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ 77 ਯਾਤਰੀ "ਟ੍ਰੈਕੋਮਾ" ਦੇ ਮਰੀਜ਼ ਨਿਕਲੇ ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਵਤ ਸਕਦੇ ਸਨ। ਫੇਰ ਸਾਰੇ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਡਾਕਟਰੀ ਤਫਤੀਸ਼ ਲਈ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਜੋ ਕਈ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਚੱਲ ਸਕਦੀ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਢਕਵੰਜ ਸ਼ਿੱਪ

ਨੂੰ ਚਿਰ ਤਕ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ ਤਾਕਿ ਯਾਤਰੀ ਤੰਗ ਆਕੇ ਆਪੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਮੁੜ ਜਾਣ। ਦੋ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਕਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਕੁਲੰਬੀਆ ਦੇ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਜੱਦੋਜਹਿਦ ਚਲਦੀ ਰਹੀ। ਲੰਬੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ, ਕੇਵਲ 24 ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਤੋਂ ਉਤਰਨ ਦੀ ਇਜਾਜ਼ਤ ਮਿਲੀ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਦੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਸਮੇਤ, ਕੁਝ ਭਾਰਤ ਤੋਂ ਵਾਪਸ ਮੁੜ ਰਹੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਸਨ। ਬਾਕੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੋ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਤਾੜੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ। ਜਦ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਾਪਸ ਰਵਾਨਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਨਾ ਦਿਸਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਕਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਧੱਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਾਬੂ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹਿਆ, ਪਰ ਕਾਮਯਾਬ ਨਾ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ। ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਨੇ ਬੰਦੂਕਾਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੇਵੀ-ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਾਕੇ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਬੰਦੂਕਾਂ ਤਾਣ ਲਈਆਂ।

ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ ਅਤੇ ਯੂਨਾਇਟਿਡ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਲੀਗ ਨੇ ਰਲ ਕੇ 21 ਜੂਨ ਨੂੰ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਬੁਲਾਈ ਤਾਕਿ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ। 400 ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ 125 ਗੋਰਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਗ ਲਿਆ। ਹੋਪਕਿੰਨ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਟਾਈਪਰਾਈਟਰ ਸਮੇਤ ਓਥੇ ਸੀ। ਹਸਨ ਰਹੀਮ ਨੇ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨਗੀ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਮੁਕੱਦਮਾ ਲੜਨ ਲਈ ਵਕੀਲ ਜੇ. ਐਡਵਰਡ ਬਰਡ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਵਕੀਲ ਨੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਤਪਦੀਸ਼ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਇੰਮੀਗ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਜਾਣ ਬੁੱਝ ਕੇ ਦੇਰੀ ਲਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਕਿ ਯਾਤਰੀ ਭੁੱਖੇ ਪਿਆਸ ਤੋਂ ਤੰਗ ਆਕੇ ਖੁਦ ਹੀ ਮੁੜ ਜਾਣ। ਪਰ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਵਲ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਾ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਇੰਮੀਗ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਇਹ ਚਾਲਾਂ ਕੰਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨਗੀਆਂ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਚਿਤਾਵਨੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਕਿ ਯਾਤਰੀ ਵਾਪਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਣਗੇ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕੇਸ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੀ ਸੁਪਰੀਮ ਕੋਰਟ ਤਕ ਵੀ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਾ ਲੜਨਾ ਪਵੇ। ਪਰ ਕਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਗੌਰਮਿੰਟ ਆਪਣੇ ਬਣਾਏ ਹੋਏ ਕਾਨੂੰਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਹਟਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੀ। ਮੁਕੱਦਮੇਬਾਜ਼ੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸ਼ਿੱਪ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਮੌਕੇ ਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਾਕਤ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਂਪਦਿਆਂ, ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਲਾਹ ਕਰਕੇ, ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਲਿਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ। ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਤਹਿ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਕਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਜਹਾਜ਼

ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਲਿਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਯੋਗ ਰਸਦ-ਪਾਣੀ ਮਹੱਈਆ ਕਰੇਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਤੇਲ ਤੇ ਗੈਸ ਵਗੈਰਾ ਨਾਲ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰਾਂ ਭਰੇਗੀ।

ਭਾਰਤ ਵਲ ਰਵਾਨਗੀ

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜੁਲਾਈ 23, 1914 ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਵਲ ਮੁੜ ਪਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਸਤੰਬਰ 27, 1914 ਨੂੰ ਕਲਕੱਤੇ ਦੇ ਬਜ ਬਜ ਘਾਟ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਜਾ ਲੱਗਾ। ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਗਨ-ਵੋਟ ਨੇ ਡੱਕ ਲਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਘੇਰਾ ਪਾ ਲਿਆ। ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣ-ਬੁੱਝ ਕੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਭੰਗ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ, ਖਤਰਨਾਕ ਧਾੜਵੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਕ ਕਰਾਰ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਜਦ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਕਨਾਰੇ ਤੇ ਲੱਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਿਰਾਸਤ ਵਿਚ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਤਸੀਹੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ, ਕੁੱਝ ਨੂੰ ਮੌਤ ਦੇ ਘਾਟ ਉਤਾਰਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਕੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ, ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਮੁਕੱਦਮੇ ਦੇ, ਕੈਦ ਵਿਚ ਸੁੱਟ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਲੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਭੇਜ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ 20 ਹੋਰ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੇ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੀਡਰ ਕਰਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ, ਗ੍ਰਿਫਤਾਰੀ ਦੇਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ, ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਿੰਗੋਜ਼ੋਰੀ ਫੜ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਇਕ ਯਾਤਰੀ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਵਾਲੇ ਦੀ ਕੁੱਟ-ਮਾਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਤਾਂ ਦੰਗਾ ਫਸਾਦ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਗੋਲੀ ਚਲਾਈ ਗਈ ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ 19 ਬੰਦੇ ਮਾਰੇ ਗਏ ਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਬੱਚ ਕੇ ਨਿਕਲ ਗਏ, ਪਰ ਬਾਕੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਜਾਂ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜ ਕੇ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਜੰਗ ਦੇ ਖਤਮ ਹੋਣ ਤੱਕ ਘਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕਰ ਛੱਡੇ। ਇਹ ਘਟਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਬੱਜ ਬੱਜ ਫਸਾਦ (Budge Budge Riot) ਕਰਕੇ ਜਾਣੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਓਥੇ ਬਚ ਕੇ ਨਿਕਲਣ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਮਯਾਬ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ 1922 ਤੱਕ ਲੁਕਿਆ ਰਿਹਾ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਮਹਾਤਮਾ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਨੇ, ਇਕ ਸੱਚੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤ ਵਾਂਗ, ਗਿਰਫਤਾਰੀ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਮਨਾ ਲਿਆ। ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਅਜੇਹਾ ਹੀ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜ ਸਾਲ ਲਈ ਕੈਦ ਵਿਚ ਡੱਕ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ।



Baba Balwant Singh

ਸਾਕਾ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਤੇ ਮੈਂ

ਕੁਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਦੀਮ ਪਰਮਾਰ

ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, “ਦੁਖਾਂਤ ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਵਾਲਾ ਵਾਕਿਆ, ਘਟਨਾ ਤੇ ਕਥਾ, ਦਿਲਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਛਾਪ ਛੱਡ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ।”

‘ਕੁਮਾਕਾਤਾ ਮਾਰੂ’ ਦਾ ਸਾਕਾ, ਜੋ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਚੱਲਤ ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਹੈ, ਇਸੇ ਸ਼ਰੇਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਜਿੰਨਾ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਦੇ, ਸੁਣਦੇ ਜਾਂ ਮੂਵੀਆਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਉੱਨਾ ਹੀ ਦਿਲ ਪਸੀਜਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਤਾਂ ਦਿਲ ਐਨਾ ਗਮਗੀਨ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੁਛ ਕਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਜੀਅ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ। ਇੱਦਾਂ ਵੀ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਜਿਵੇਂ, ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਅੰਤ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ।

ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕਹੋਂਗੇ ਕਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕਰਮ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ, ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਏ ਨਸਲਵਾਦੀ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ। ਨਹੀਂ! ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਇਕ, ਇਨਸਾਨੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ, ਨਸਲੀ ਵਿਤਕਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਇਕ ਦਿਖਦਾ ਜਾਂ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ ਸੀ। ਪਰ, ਜੋ ਅਣਦਿੱਖ, ਦੁੱਖ, ਪੀੜਾ ਤੇ ਮਲੂਲਤਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਿਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਉਹ ਨਿਰਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੇ ਉਦਾਸੀ ਭਰੇ ਚਿਹਰੇ, ਵਲੂੰਦਰ ਹਿਰਦੇ, ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ, ਮੇਜ਼ਬਾਨ ਵੱਡੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਗੋਰੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਿਖਾਈ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹੋਣਗੇ। ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ, ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲਈ ‘ਸਰਕਸ’ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਤਮਾਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਸਨ। ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਿਰਫ਼, ਕਿਆਸ ਹੀ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ, ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਖੜ੍ਹੇ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਦੇਖਣ ਤੇ ਸੋਚਣ ਨਾਲ, ਜੋ ਕਿਸੇ ਕੋਲ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਦੋ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ।

ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਦੂਜੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਜਦੋਂ, ਜਪਾਨ ਨੇ ਬਰਮਾ ਨਾਲ ਲਗਦੀ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨੀ ਸਰਹੱਦ ਅਤੇ ਸੂਬਾ ਆਸਾਮ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਸ਼ੀਲੌਂਗ ‘ਤੇ ਬੰਬਾਰੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੀ ਤਾਂ ਫੌਜੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਵਲ ਇੰਜਨੀਅਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਟੱਬਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਿੰਡੀਂ ਭੇਜ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਾਤਾ ਤੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਭਰਾ ਨਾਲ ਆਪਣੇ ਜੱਦੀ ਪਿੰਡ ਪਾਂਛਟ ਆ ਗਿਆ। ਪਿੰਡ ਆ ਕੇ, ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀ ਲਾਲ ਲਕੀਰ ਦੇ ਗਾਡੀ ਰਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਅਸੀਂ ਖੇਡਦੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਢੇਰੀ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਲੱਗੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ (ਉਦੋਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਪਤਾ) ਸਾਨੂੰ ਖੇਡਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਖਦੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਹ ਲੰਗੜਾ ਕੇ ਤੁਰਦੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੰਗੜਾ ਕੇ ਤੁਰਦੇ ਦੇਖਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਮੇਰੀ ਉਤਸੁਕਤਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਲੰਗੜਾ ਕੇ ਤੁਰਨ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ, ‘ਉਹ ਲੰਗੜੇ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਹੋਏ?’ ਵਿਚ ਵੱਧ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਅੰਤ ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਦਾਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੁੱਛ ਹੀ ਲਿਆ, ਜੋ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਤੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਭਰਾ ਨੂੰ, ਖੇਡਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੈਣ ਆਏ ਸੀ, “ਮਾਂ ਜੀ, ਆਹ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਲੰਗੜਾ ਕੇ ਕਿਉਂ ਤੁਰਦੇ ਆ?”

“ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਲੱਗੀਆਂ।”

“ਗੋਲੀਆਂ!”

“ਹਾਂ ਪੁੱਤ! ਗੋਲੀਆਂ। ਇਹ ਖੱਟੀ ਕਰਨ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਗਏ ਸੀ। ਉੱਥੋਂ ਇਹ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ। ਉੱਥੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਤਰਨ ਨਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਹ ਵਾਪਸ ਕਲਕੱਤੇ ਆ ਗਏ। ਕਲਕੱਤੇ ਪੁਲਸ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗਦਰੀ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ‘ਤੇ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਚਲਾਈਆਂ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਲੱਗੀਆਂ। ਇਹ ਹਰ ਹਰ ਦੀ ਵਾੜ ਵਿਚ ਡਿੱਗ ਪਏ। ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਲਾਪਤੇ ਦੀ ਤੇ ਫੇਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਰਨ ਦੀ ਤਾਰ ਭੇਜ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਤਾਰ ਆਉਣ ਦੇ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਕੁਸਾਲੀ ਨੂੰ ਬੁਰਾ ਪਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ।”

“ਤਿੰਨਾਂ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਕਲਕੱਤੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਾਸ਼ਾਂ ਕੱਠੀਆਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਤਾਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਰਦਾ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਚੁੱਕਣ ਲੱਗੇ। ਇਹ ਜਿਉਂਦੇ ਨਿਕਲੇ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੱਥ ਕੜੀ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਹਸਪਤਾਲ ਲੈ ਗਏ। ਰਾਜੀ ਹੋਣ ਤੇ ਕੈਦੀ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਦੇਸ (ਪੰਜਾਬ) ਲਿਆਂਦਾ। ਕੈਦੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਜੂਹ ਬੰਦੀ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਭੇਜ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਜਦੋਂ ਇਹ ਪਿੰਡ ਆਏ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਪਿੰਡ ‘ਚ ਰੌਲਾ ਪੈ ਗਿਆ, ‘ਹਜਾਰੇ ਦਾ ਭੂਤ ਆ ਗਿਆ। ਹਜਾਰੇ ਦਾ ਭੂਤ ਆ ਗਿਆ।’ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਾਮ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਸੁਣਾਈ ਤਾਂ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੌਡੀ ਟਕਾਣੇ ਆਈ। ਆਹ ਜਿਹੜੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਭੂਆ ਬਚਨੀ ਆ ਨਾ! ਲਸ਼ਕਰ ਤੇ ਰਾਓ ਤੋਂ ਛੋਟੀ, ਇਹ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਉਣ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ।”

ਕਹਾਣੀ ਸੁਣੀ ਤੇ ਮੈਂ ਚੁੱਪ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ।

ਕੁਝ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਨਾ ਜੀ, ਸਾਡੇ ਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਬਾਰੋਂ ਦੇਸ (ਦੁਆਬਾ) ਆਏ ਤੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ, ਸਮੁੰਦਰੀ ਲਾਗੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਜਨਮ ਦੇ ਪਿੰਡ, ਚੱਕ ਨੰਬਰ 138 ਗਾਫ. ਬੇ. ਰਸਿਆਣਾ ਲੈ ਗਏ।

ਰੌਲਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਕੁ ਸਾਲ ਬਾਅਦ ਸਾਡੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਨੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਫਗਵਾੜੇ ਕਰ ਲਈ। ਸਾਡਾ ਘਰ, ਅਕਾਲੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਸਰਾਏ ਰੋਡ ‘ਤੇ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਰੇਲਵੇ ਰੋਡ ‘ਤੇ ਮੁਨਸ਼ਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੁਖੀ ਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਸ਼ਖਸ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਕਵੀ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਬੜੀ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਤੇ ਚੁੱਪ-ਚਾਪ ਤਬੀਅਤ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਸਨ। ਹਰ ਗੁਰਪੁਰਬ ‘ਤੇ ਕਵੀ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਜੁਸ਼ੀਲੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਇਨਕਲਾਬੀ ਕਵਿਤਾਵਾਂ ਸੁਣਾਉਂਦੇ। ਉਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਰਾਮਗੜੀਆ ਕਾਲਿਜ ਵਿਚ ਐੱਫ. ਐੱਸ ਸੀ. ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ।

1961-62 ਵਿਚ ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਰਾਮਗੜੀਆ ਟਰੇਨਿੰਗ ਕਾਲਿਜ ਵਿਚ ਬੀ.ਟੀ. ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਆਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਉੱਥੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਕ, “ਕੌਮੀ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼” ਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਰਚਾ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਰਾਮਗੜੀਆ ਕਾਲਿਜ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਛਾਪਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ

ਦੇ ਐਡੀਟਰ ਮੁਨਸ਼ਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੁਖੀ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਨਿਰੋਲ ਸਾਹਿਤਕ, ਇਨਕਲਾਬੀ ਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਵਿਤਾਵਾਂ ਛਾਪਦੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ।

1963 ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਸਕੂਲ ਦੇ ਮਿੱਤਰ ਤੇ ਯੋਗਾ ਦੇ ਗੁਰਭਾਈ ਸੋਹਣ ਕਾਦਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਗਿਆ ਜੋ ਟਰੇਨਿੰਗ ਕਾਲਜ ਵਿਚ ਫਾਈਨ ਆਰਟ ਸਿਖਾਉਂਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਰਸਾਲਾ ਬੰਦ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਸੋਹਣ ਦੇ ਦੱਸਣ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ, ਦੁਖੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਕਾਲਿਜ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਇਨਕਲਾਬੀ, ਸਾਂਝੀਵਾਲਤਾ ਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਜੁਸ਼ੀਲੀਆਂ ਕਵਿਤਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਝਗੜਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ, “ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਬਰਾਦਰੀ ਦੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਗੇ ਰਾਹ ਪਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਤੂੰ ਆਹ ਕੀ! ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਨਕਲਾਬੀ, ਕੌਮਨਿਸਟ ਤੇ ਗਦਰੀ ਬਣਾਈ ਜਾਂਦਾ?” ਤਾਂ ਦੁਖੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਦੁਖੀ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਕਿਹਾ, “ਚੱਕ ਆਪਣਾ ਰਸਾਲਾ, ਮੈਂ ਚੱਲਿਆਂ।” ਤੇ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ।

ਇਹ ਦੁੱਖੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਣ ਹਨ? ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕੀਤਾ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਤਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਹਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਬੇਟੀ ਮਨਰਾਜ ਤੋਂ, ਜੋ ਸਾਡੇ ਘਰ ਦੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਹੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ, ਪੁੱਛਣ ਤੇ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਨੈਰੋਬੀ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ।

1956 ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਤਾਇਆ ਜੀ ਜੋ ਡਾਕਟਰ ਅਤੇ ਰੈਂਕ ਦੇ ਮੇਜਰ ਸਨ, ਆਰਮੀ ਮੈਡੀਕਲ ਕੋਰ ‘ਚੋਂ ਰਿਟਾਇਰ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਫਗਵਾੜੇ ਆ ਕੇ ਡਾਕਟਰੀ ਦੀ ਦੁਕਾਨ ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਲਈ। ਉੱਥੇ, ਫਗਵਾੜੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਮਹਿਲੀ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗ, ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਆ ਬੈਠਦੇ। ਉਹ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ ਕਹਿ ਕੇ ਬੁਲਾਉਂਦੇ। ਮੇਰੇ ਤਾਇਆ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ ਉਹ ਆਈ. ਐਨ. ਏ. ਤੇ ਜੱਲਿਆਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਬਾਗ ਦੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਰਦੇ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਿ ਮੇਰੇ ਤਾਈ ਜੀ ਆਈ. ਐਨ.ਏ. ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਜੱਲਿਆਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਬਾਗ ਦੇ ਸਾਕੇ ਵਿਚ,

ਗੰਦੇ ਨਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਲੁੱਕ ਕੇ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਵੱਜਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਚੇ ਸਨ। ਮੇਰੇ ਤਾਇਆ ਜੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬੜੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਨਾਲ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਡਾਕਟਰੀ ਮੁਆਇਨਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਤੇ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਦਵਾਈ ਦੇ ਦਿੰਦੇ। ਇਹ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ ਕੌਣ ਹਨ? ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਦੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਕੋਈ ਗੱਲ ਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ।

1969 ਵਿਚ ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਕਵੈਂਟਰੀ ਦੇ ਪੌਲੀਟੈਕਨੀਕਲ ਕਾਲਿਜ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਮਿਯੂਨੀਕੇਸ਼ਨ ਇੰਜਨੀਅਰਿੰਗ ਦੇ ਤੀਜੇ ਸਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਫੌਜਲ ਰੋਡ 'ਤੇ ਸਥਿਤ ਰਾਮਗੜੀਆ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਨਸ਼ਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੁੱਖੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਸੁਣਿਆ। ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣਨ ਜਾਣ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਰੁਚੀ ਨਾ ਹੋਈ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਸਿਰ 'ਤੇ ਇਮਤਿਹਾਨ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਰਾਮਗੜੀਆ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਮੇਰੇ ਘਰ ਤੋਂ ਤੁਰ ਕੇ 15 ਮਿੰਟ ਦੀ ਦੂਰੀ 'ਤੇ ਸੀ।

1979 ਵਿਚ ਭੂਆ ਜੀ ਬਚਨੀ, ਪੂਰਾ ਨਾਂ ਗੁਰਬਚਨ ਕੌਰ ਇੱਥੇ ਬੀ.ਸੀ. ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੇਟੇ ਤੇ ਬੇਟੀਆਂ ਕੋਲ ਆ ਗਏ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੱਸਣ 'ਤੇ ਪਤਾ ਚੱਲਿਆ ਕੀ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਇੱਥੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਸਨ। ਗੱਲ ਸੁਣੀ, ਆਈ ਗਈ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਣੇ ਨੇ, ਸਾਕਾ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਵਿਚ, ਕੋਈ ਦਿਲਚਸਪੀ ਪੈਦਾ ਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਵੇਂ ਹੀ ਮੁਨਸ਼ਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੁੱਖੀ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੀ. ਬੀ. ਸੀ. ਦੀ ਡਾਕੂਮੈਂਟਰੀ 'ਦੀ ਸਿੱਖ' ਵਿਚ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਤੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨਾਲ, "ਦਾਅ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਸਨ" ਵਿਚ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ ਹਿਊ ਜੌਨਸਟਨ ਨਾਲ ਛਪੀ ਫੋਟੋ 'ਤੇ ਇਨਟਰਵਿਊ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਵੀ।

2010 ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਤੇ 2011 ਦੇ ਅਰੰਭ ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ, ਆਪਣੇ ਸਹੁਰੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਪਾਲਦੀ ਬੀ.ਸੀ. ਬਾਰੇ, ਜੋ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਆਈਲੈਂਡ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਡੰਕਨ ਤੋਂ 14 ਕਿਲੋਮੀਟਰ ਪੱਛਮ ਵਿਚ ਹੈ, ਖੋਜ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਵਿਕਟੋਰੀਆ ਮਿਊਜ਼ੀਅਮ ਤੇ ਆਰਕਾਈਵਜ਼

ਵਿਚ ਗਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਉੱਥੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਬਾਰੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਮਿਲੀ। ਮੇਰਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਵੱਲ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ, ਖਾਸ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ, ਉਚਾਰਣ ਤੇ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵੱਲ।

ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਪ੍ਰੋ: ਬਰਾਇਨ ਬਰਚ, ਜੋ ਸਾਈਮਨ ਫਰੇਜ਼ਰ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਕ੍ਰਿਮਨੌਲੋਜੀ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰੋਫੈਸਰ ਹੈ, ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਰਾਬਤਾ ਆਪਣੀ ਇਕ ਵਿਦਿਆਰਥਣ ਕਾਈਯੋਕੋ ਕਾਈਸ਼ੀਮੋ, ਜੋ ਟੋਕੀਓ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਿਚ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਨਾਲ ਕਰਵਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ 'ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ' 'ਮੂਲ ਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਉਚਾਰਣ' ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ। ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਈ ਮੇਲ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਦੱਸਿਆ-

ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਚੱਲਤ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂਕ, ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੋੜ "KOMAGATA MARU" ਤੇ ਅਧਾਰਤ ਹੈ।

ਪਰ, ਜਾਪਾਨੀ ਲੋਕ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਉਚਾਰਦੇ। ਉਹ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਉਚਾਰਣ 'ਕੋਮਾਕਾਤਾ ਮਰੂ' ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕੋਮਾ = ਘੋੜਾ; ਕਾਤਾ = ਸ਼ਕਲ ਤੇ ਮਰੂ = ਪੂਰਨ ਤੇ ਠੋਸ ਚੱਕਰ ਜਾਂ ਘੇਰਾ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ, 'ਕੋਮਾਕਾਤਾ ਮਰੂ' ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਹੋਏ, "ਘੋੜੇ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਵਰਗਾ ਜਹਾਜ਼। ਜਾਪਾਨ ਵਿਚ, ਕੋਮਾਕਾਤਾ ਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਦੋ ਬਹੁਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਹਨ।

- 1: ਟੋਕੀਓ ਵਿਚ 'ਕੋਮਾਕਾਤਾ' ਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ।
- 2: ਸਿਨਸੋਜੀ ਮੰਦਰ ਦਾ ਕੋਮਾਕਾਤਾ-ਦੂ ਹਾਲ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਆਲੇ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਦਾ ਇਲਾਕਾ।

ਉਸਦੀ ਇਸ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਤੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਇਹ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਕੱਢਿਆ- "ਇਸ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ, ਸਿਨਸੋਜੀ ਮੰਦਰ ਦੇ 'ਕੋਮਾਕਾਤਾ-ਦੂ' ਹਾਲ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਹੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ, 19ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਤੇ 20ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਢਲੇ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਭਰ ਵਿਚ, ਹਰ ਗੱਲ ਤੇ ਹਰ ਕੰਮ ਵਿਚ ਧਰਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਦਖਲ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਤੇ

ਇੱਕੀਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਘੱਟ ਨਹੀਂ।”

ਹੁਣ ਮੇਰਾ ਧਿਆਨ ਸਾਕਾ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਾਲ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ, ਅਮਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਰਾੜ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੁਰਮੁੱਖੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖੀ ਫਹਿਰਿਸਤ ਮਿਲੀ ਜੋ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ, ਸ: ਅਰਜਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੰਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੇ ਇੱਮੀਗ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਮਹਿਕਮੇ ਦੀ ਲਿਸਟ ਦੀ ਨਕਲ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ, ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਸੁਸਾਇਟੀ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਦੇ ਸਕੱਤਰ, ਖਜ਼ਾਨਚੀ ਜਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸਨ। ਇਸ

ਫਹਿਰਿਸਤ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਤੇ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇਦਾਰੀ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ, ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਡਰੋਲੀ, ਬੇਅੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਲੋਂ, ਇੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਿੰਜੋਂ ਆਦਿ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਿਆ।

ਹੁਣ ਮੈਂ ਸੋਚਦਾਂ, “ਹੁਣ ਜਿਉਂ ਮੈਂ, ਸਾਕਾ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਅਤੇ ਉਸਦੇ ਸ਼ੁਰਬੀਰ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਮਾੜੀ ਮਾੜੀ ਗੱਲ ਜਾਨਣ ਤੇ ਲੱਭਣ ਵਿਚ ਬੜੀ ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਚੁੱਝਿਆ ਹੋਇਆਂ, ਉਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਕੋਹਾਂ ਦੂਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹ ਮੇਰੇ ਲਾਗੇ ਸਨ। ਕਿਉਂ?”

ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਹਸਤੀਆਂ

ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਜਾਨਾਂ ਵਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੇਸ ਤੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਸਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੋ
ਉੱਚੇ ਉੱਠ ਕੇ ਧਰਮ ਤੇ ਭੇਸ ਤੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਸਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੋ
ਦਿਓ ਖੂਨ ਦਿਆਂਗੇ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀਆਂ ਖੁਸ਼ ਬਾਸ਼ ਸ਼ਾਦ ਆਬਾਦੀਆਂ
ਪੂਰੇ ਉਤਰੇ ਕੌਲ ਜੋ ਏਸ ‘ਤੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਸਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੋ
ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੀਨੇ ਖਾਧੀਆਂ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਗਏ ਮਕਤਲੀਂ ਬੰਨ੍ਹ ਟੋਲੀਆਂ
ਨਾ ਡਰੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਉਹ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਸਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੋ
ਹੈ ਸੀ ਲਕਸ਼ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਨਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਜ ਭਾਗ ਬਰਾਦਰੀ
ਜੋ ਨਾ ਥਿੜਕੇ ਏਸ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਸਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੋ
ਨਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਉਹ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਨੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਯੋਧੇ ਨਾ ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤ
ਰਹੇ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਵੇਸ਼ ਤੋਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਹਸਤੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰੋ

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਗਾਥਾ ਚਿਤਰਦਿਆਂ - ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਦੇ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਜਰਨੈਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਰਟਿਸਟ

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ! ਇਹ ਲਫਜ਼ ਮੈਂ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ,ਸ਼ਾਇਦ, ਜੇ ਮੈਂ ਭੁਲਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ, 1974-75 ਦੇ ਲਗਭਗ ਸੁਣਿਆ। ਮੇਰੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ , ਸਿਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਚਿਤਰਕਾਰ ਸ: ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਕੋਲ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਆਏ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਦੋਸਤ ਅਪਣੀ ਅਮਰੀਕਨ ਪਤਨੀ ਸਮੇਤ ਅਕਸਰ ਮਿਲਣ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਤੇ ਗਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਤੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਵਡੀ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ ਤੇ ਅਜਾਇਬਘਰ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਾਂ ਕਰਦੇ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਿਤਾਬਾਂ , ਸਮਗਰੀ ਆਦਿ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਇਕੱਤਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਗਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ, ਗਦਰੀ ਬਾਬਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਿਤਾਬਾਂ, ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ, ਇਹ ਸਾਰੀ ਸਮਗਰੀ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਵਟਾਂਦਰੇ ਬਾਦ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਵਡ ਆਕਾਰੀ ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ, ਚਾਰ ਫੁਟ ਛੇ ਫੁਟ ਸਾਈਜ਼ ,ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਤੇ ਗਦਰ ਲਹਿਰ ਬਾਰੇ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਭਾਈ ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਬਤਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਬੇਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਲੋਂ ਕਤਲ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼, ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਬਾ ਹਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੂਢ , ਇੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੁਰਾਰੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਬੇਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਕਤਲ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼, ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਚਿਤਰ,ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਬੰਦਰਗਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਪੁਲੀਸ ਕਿਸ਼ਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਘਿਰਿਆ ਖੜਾ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਦਿਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ, ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਬਜਬਜ ਘਾਟ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਪੋਲੀਸ ਵਲੋਂ ਫਾਇਰਿੰਗ ਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਗਦਰੀ ਬਾਬਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਚਿਤਰ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਗਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਬਾਬਾ ਸੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਕਨਾ,ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਰਾਭਾ, ਬਾਬਾ ਵਿਸਾਖਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਦੇਹਰ, ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਭਾਈ ਮੇਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਲੋਪੋਕੇ ਆਦਿ ਬਨਾਉਣੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿਤੇ। ਇਹ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਲਾਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਅਧਿਆਇ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣੇ ਬੁਰਸ ਤੇ ਰੰਗਾਂ ਦੀ ਛੋਹ ਦਿਤੀ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਚਿਤਰ ਬਣ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ

ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਗੁਰ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਚਿਤਰ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਪੈਂਦੇ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਇਸ ਲਹਿਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਨਹੀਂ। ਉਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਇਕ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਤੇ ਸਿਖਾਂਦਰੂ ਵਜੋਂ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਹੜੇ ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ , ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਵਸੀਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਅਣਹੋਂਦ ਕਾਰਨ, ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਾਜੈਕਟ ਸਿਰੇ ਨਾ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆ, ਤੇ ਉਹ ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਟੂਡਿਓ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਅਧੂਰੀਆਂ ਪਈਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ। ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਗੇੜ ਨਾਲ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਤੋਂ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ।

ਮੈਂ ਅਪਣੇ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਤੇ ਕਲਾ ਦੇ ਸਫਰ ਤੇ ਤੁਰਦਾ ਤੁਰਦਾ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਆ ਗਿਆ। ਇਥੇ ਆ ਕੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਦੋਸਤਾਂ ਮਿਤਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੇਲ ਜੋਲ ਹੋਇਆ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਜਮੇਰ ਰੋਡੇ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਸੀ। ਅਜਮੇਰ ਰੋਡੇ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਸੁਣ ਚੁਕਾ ਸੀ, ਦੂਰੋਂ ਨੇੜਿਓਂ ਰਿਸ਼ਤੇ ਦਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਅੰਗਲੀਆਂ ਸੰਗਲੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਮਿਲਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਮੇਰੇ, ਇਕ ਵਿਆਹ ਤੇ , ਮੈਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਭੈਣ ਜੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਮਾਨ ਨੇ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਅਜਮੇਰ ਅਜਕਲ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਬਾਰੇ ਨਾਟਕ ਤੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਥੇ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕੇ ਅਜਮੇਰ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਂਝ ਵਧੀ ਤੇ ਸਲਾਹ ਬਣੀ ਕਿ ਲੇਖਣੀ ਤੇ ਚਿਤਰਕਲਾ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਸਾਂਝਾ ਪ੍ਰੋਜੈਕਟ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰੀਏ। ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਤੇ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਇਤਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਦਾ ਕਾਂਡ ਅਹਿਮ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਨਾਟਕ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਲਿਖ ਹੀ ਚੁਕੇ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸੋਚਿਆ ਕਿ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਾਂਡ ਨੂੰ , ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਹਾਂਗਕਾਂਗ ਰਵਾਨਾ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਵਿਚ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੁਲੀਸ ਤੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੱਦੋ ਜਹਿਦ ਤੇ ਅਖੀਰ ਵਾਪਸ ਬਜ ਬਜ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਗੋਲੀ ਚਲਣ ਦੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਦੇ ਦੁਖਦਾਈ ਅੰਤ ਤਕ, ਛੋਟੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਚਿਤਰਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ। ਅਜਮੇਰ ਨੇ ਲਗਭਗ 30 ਛੋਟੀਆਂ ਛੋਟੀਆਂ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਤੇ ਇਸਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਾਥਾ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤੀ। ਮੂਲ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਸਭ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਅਜਮੇਰ ਨੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਸਿਰਜਣਾਤਮਕ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਰੀ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ

ਅਹਿਮ ਸਵੇਂਦਨਸ਼ੀਲ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਬਣਾ ਦਿਤਾ ਜੋ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਹਾਲਾਤ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਖੁਸ਼ੀਆਂ ਗਮੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਫਿਕਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਜਾਗਰ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਲਗਭਗ 6-7 ਸਾਲ ਦੇ ਅਰਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਸਾਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਾਜੈਕਟ ਤੇ ਕੰਮ ਚਲਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ। ਕਦੇ ਅਜਮੇਰ ਅਪਣੇ ਕੰਮਾ ਕਾਜਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰੁਝਿਆ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਕਦੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੁਝੇਵੇਂ ਹੁੰਦੇ।

ਇਸੇ ਹੀ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਪਿਕਸ ਸੋਸਾਇਟੀ ਦੇ ਕਰਤਾ ਧਰਤਾ ਚਰਨਪਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੁਝ ਕੰਮ ਕਰੀਏ। ਮੈਂ ਸਲਾਹ ਦਿਤੀ ਕਿ ਪਿਕਸ ਵਲੋਂ ਬਜ਼ੁਰਗਾਂ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਬਣਾਏ ਸੀਨੀਅਰ ਹੋਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਵਾਸ ਦੀ ਬਾਹਰਲੀ ਕੰਧ ਉਪਰ ਇਕ ਵਿਸ਼ਾਲ ਕੰਧ ਚਿਤਰ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਸ ਸਾਕੇ ਦੀ ਸਦੀਵੀ ਯਾਦ ਬਣਾਈ ਜਾਵੇ। ਚਿਤਰਕਾਰੀ ਦੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਕੰਧ ਚਿਤਰ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਨਵੀਂ ਵਿਧਾ ਤੇ ਮੈਂ ਨਵੀਂ ਨਵੀਂ ਹਥ ਅਜ਼ਮਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਸਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਚਿਤਰ ਕੇ ਕਰ ਚੁਕਾ ਸੀ। ਜਿਹੜੇ ਕੰਧ ਚਿਤਰ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਵਿਚ ਬਣਾਏ ਸਨ ਉਹ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰਲੀਆਂ ਕੰਧਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਸਨ। ਪਰ ਜੋ ਕੰਮ ਪਿਕਸ ਦੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਵਾਸ ਇਮਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ ਉਹ ਬਾਹਰਲੀ ਕੰਧ ਉਪਰ ਸੀ। ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਦੇ ਮੌਸਮ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਮੀਂਹ ਕਣੀ ਤਾਂ ਰੋਜ਼ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਕੰਮ ਸੀ। ਸੋ ਇਹ ਕੰਮ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਪੈੜਾਂ (scaffold) ਬੰਨ ਕੇ ਤੇ ਉਪਰ ਵੱਡੀ ਤਰਪਾਲ ਸਿਟ ਕੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਤੇਜ਼ ਹਵਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਮੀਂਹ ਕਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਇਕ ਵਖਰਾ ਤਜਰਬਾ ਸੀ। ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਜਿਹਨਾਂ 2 ਮਹੀਨੇ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਭੁਖੇ ਪਿਆਸੇ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਨਸਲਵਾਦੀ ਕੈਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਧੀਕੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਮਣਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਕੁਝ ਚਿਤਵ ਕੇ ਅੱਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਮੁਹਾਰੇ ਹੰਝੂ ਉਮੜ ਆਉਂਦੇ। ਕੰਧ ਚਿਤਰ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਇਸ ਉਪਰ ਕੁਝ ਰੰਗ ਡੋਲਕੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਬਣਨ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ। ਖੈਰ ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਣਾ ਹੀ ਸੀ। ਕੰਧ ਚਿਤਰ ਦੋ ਹਿੱਸਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ। ਉਪਰਲੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਦਾ ਚਿਤਰ, ਗੁਰਦਿਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਫੋਟੋਗਰਾਫ ਉਪਰ ਆਧਾਰਤ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਹੇਠਲੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ

ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦਾ ਚਿਤਰ ਸੀ। ਕੰਧ ਚਿਤਰ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਮੁਕੰਮਲ ਹੋਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਹੇਠ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਬਾਰਤ ਲਿਖੀ 'ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ-1914, ਵੁਈ ਰਿਮੈਂਬਰ!' (Komagata Maru - 1914 We Remember !)

ਉਦਘਾਟਨੀ ਸਮਾਰੋਹ ਨਿਸਚਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਸੋਚਦੇ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਵੁਈ ਰਿਮੈਂਬਰ ਦੇ ਪਿਛੇ ਲਿਖੇ ! ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਤੇ ਸਿਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਇਤਾਂ ਜਾਣ ਲਗ ਪਈਆਂ। ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਇਤਰਾਜ਼ਯੋਗ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਵੰਗਾਰ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਲੋਕ ਕਹਿਣ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਮਿਟਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ। ਇਸ ਤੇ ਵਿਵਾਦ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਕੰਧ ਚਿਤਰ ਬਣਾਏ ਜਾਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਮਨਜ਼ੂਰੀ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਰੌਲਾ ਪਿਆ, ਕਿ ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਕੰਧ ਚਿਤਰ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਬਾਰੇ। ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਕਈ ਦੋਸਤਾਂ ਮਿਤਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਗਲ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਕੀਤੀ। ਉਹ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ 100 ਸਾਲ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਵੀ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਤਕਰਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ..ਹੁਣ ਲਾਈਏ ਮੋਰਚਾ ਫਿਰ! ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਸਿਟੀ ਹਾਲ ਅਗੇ ਮੁਜ਼ਾਹਰਾ। ਇਕ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਵਿਚ ਕੌਂਸਲਰ ਜੂਡੀ ਵਿਲੇਨਿਊ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਹੋਈ, ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਜੂਡੀ ਕਾਹਦਾ ਰੌਲਾ ਹੈ, ਪਿਕਸ ਦੀ ਅਪਣੀ ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ, ਜਰਨੈਲ ਤੈਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਆਪ ਸਿਟੀ ਦੀ ਪਬਲਿਕ ਆਰਟ ਐਡਵਾਈਜ਼ਰੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦਾ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਹੈਂ! ਪਬਲਿਕ ਆਰਟ ਬਾਰੇ ਮਨਜ਼ੂਰੀ ਤਾਂ ਲੈਣੀ ਬਣਦੀ ਸੀ। ਸੀ ਬੀ ਸੀ ਰੇਡੀਓ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਇੰਟਰਵਿਊ ਹੋਈ, ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਅਪਣੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਯਾਦ ਰਖਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਸਾਰੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ਼ ਸਵੇਰੇ ਸ਼ਾਮ ਜੋ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ 500 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਤੇ ਅੰਤ ਵਿਚ ਸਰਬਤ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਮੰਗਣ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਖੈਰ ਮੁਕਦੀ ਗਲ ਇਥੇ ਕਿ ਸਿਟੀ ਨਾਲ ਮੀਟਿੰਗਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਿ ਵੁਈ ਰਿਮੈਂਬਰ! ਦੀ ਪਿਛਲੀ ਡੰਡੀ ਬਿੰਦੀ ਬਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਹਟਾ ਦਿਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਚਰਨਪਾਲ ਗਿਲ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਦਘਾਟਨੀ ਸਮਾਰੋਹ ਸਮੇਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਦੋਂ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਉਤਰਨ ਦਿਤਾ ਗਿਆ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਸੀਂ ਪੱਕੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਦਿਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਗਾਥਾ ਚਿਤਰਦਿਆਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਸੋਚਿਆ ਕਿ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ

ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ, ਸਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਗਾਈਏ। ਨਵੇਂ ਬਣੇ ਨਿਊਟਨ ਕਲਚਰਲ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਵਿਚ ਲਗੀ ਇਸ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਵਿਚ 11 ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ। ਉਦਘਾਟਨੀ ਸਮਾਰੋਹ ਵਿਚ ਵੱਡੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਸ਼ਕ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਸਨ। ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦੇ ਲੇਖਕ ਡਾ: ਹਿਊ ਜਾਹਨਸਟਨ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਬੋਲਦਿਆਂ ਦਸਿਆਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਸਵਾਰ ਇਕ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲੇ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਵਾਪਸ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਦ ਫਿਰ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਚਰਨਪਾਲ ਗਿਲ ਨੇ ਪਿਕਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੰਧ ਚਿਤਰ ਬਣਾਏ ਜਾਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਿਸਥਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਦੱਸਿਆ। ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਦਰਸਾਉਂਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਲਗਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਸਾਰਥਕਤਾ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਦਰਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਹੁੰਗਾਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਲਗਦਾ ਸੀ। ਸਰੀ ਆਰਟਸ ਕੌਂਸਲ ਦੇ ਨਿਊਜ਼ ਲੈਟਰ ਦੀ ਐਡੀਟਰ ਜੈਨੀਫਰ ਵਿਅਟ ਨੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਲ ਕਹਾਣੀਆਂ ਪੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਚਿਤਰ ਦੇਖੇ ਤਾਂ ਹੈਰਾਨੀ ਭਰਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਵਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ 'ਸਾਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਪਤਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਨਸਲਵਾਦ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਪਰ ਚੁਕਾ ਹੈ। ਅਸੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਨਸਲਵਾਦ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਜਿਹੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਯੂਰਪ ਜਾਂ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਪਰਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ।'

ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਜੈਨੀਫਰ ਅਜ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਲਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਮਕਸਦ ਇਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਕੁਝ ਵਾਪਰਿਆ, ਇਸ ਦੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਦਸਣਾ ਸਾਡਾ ਫਰਜ਼ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਬੀਤੇ ਤੋਂ ਸਬਕ ਸਿਖੀਏ ਤੇ ਯਕੀਨੀ ਬਣਾਈਏ ਕਿ ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹਾ ਨਸਲਵਾਦ ਤੇ ਵਿਤਕਰਾ ਮੁੜ ਨਾ ਵਾਪਰੇ।

ਇਸ ਲੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਦੂਸਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਵਿਚ ਕੈਰੀਟਨ ਆਰਟ ਗੈਲਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਗਾਈ ਗਈ।

'ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਗਾਥਾ' ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਲੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਤੀਸਰੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਫਾਇਰਹਾਲ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਫਾਰ ਆਰਟਸ ਵਿਚ 2013 ਵਿਚ ਲਗਾਈ ਗਈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਨਵੇਂ ਚਿਤਰ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ, ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਪੁਲੀਸ ਬੋਟ ਸੀ ਲਾਇਨ ਉਪਰ ਕੋਲੇ ਇਟਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਹਮਲਾ, ਬਜ ਬਜ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਉਪਰ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨਰ ਮਿਸਟਰ ਕਮਿਨਜ਼ ਨਾਲ ਤਕਰਾਰ, ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਲਈ ਬਣੀ ਸ਼ੋਰ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ

ਭਾਈ ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ, ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਸ਼ਨ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਏ ਜਾਣ ਆਦਿ ਦੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਚਿਤਰ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਸਨ। ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਵਿਚ 21 ਚਿਤਰ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਜਿਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਫਾਇਰਹਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਿਤ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਦੇ ਹਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਮੇਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਰੇ ਗੁਰਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਲੋਂ ਲਿਖੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ, 'ਮੇਵਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਹਾਪਕਿਨਸਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਉਂ ਮਾਰਿਆ' ਦਾ ਰੀਲੀਜ਼ ਸਮਾਰੋਹ ਵੀ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਿਸ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਹੁੰਗਾਰਾ ਮਿਲਿਆ।

ਇਹਨੀਂ ਦਿਨੀਂ ਹੀ ਫਰੇਜ਼ਰ ਵੈਲੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਦੇ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਫਾਰ ਇੰਡੋ ਕੈਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਸਟਡੀਜ਼ ਦੀ ਡਾਇਰੈਕਟਰ ਤੇ ਸਾਡੀ ਪੁਰਾਣੀ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਕ ਜਾਣਕਾਰ ਭੈਣ ਜੀ ਸਤਵਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ ਬੈਂਸ ਦਾ ਫੋਨ ਆਇਆ ਕਿ ਵੀਰ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਵੀ ਲਗਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹੋ? ਅਸੀਂ ਅਪਣੇ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਮੌਕੇ ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਲਗਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ। ਮੈਂ ਸਹਿਮਤੀ ਦੇ ਦਿਤੀ।

2014 ਵਿਚ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ 100 ਵੀ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਰਪਿਤ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ੁਰੂਆਤ ਐਬਟਸਫੋਰਡ ਵਿਚ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਹੈਰੀਟੇਜ ਮਿਊਜ਼ੀਅਮ ਵਿਚ ਫਰੇਜ਼ਰ ਵੈਲੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਈ। ਕੈਨੇਡੀਅਨ ਹੈਰੀਟੇਜ ਸਾਈਟ ਵਜੋਂ ਸੁਰਖਿਅਤ ਉਤਰੀ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖ ਟੈਂਪਲ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਵੱਡੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਦੇ ਉਦਘਾਟਨੀ ਸਮਾਰੋਹ ਸਮੇਂ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਸੀ।

ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਹੀ ਸਰੀ ਆਰਟ ਗੈਲਰੀ ਦੇਂ ਨੁਮਾਇਸ਼ਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਿਊਰੇਟਰ ਜਾਰਡਨ ਸਟੋਰਮ, ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮੈਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸਰੀ ਆਰਟ ਗੈਲਰੀ ਵਾਸਤੇ " ਫਰੌਮ ਦ ਲੈਂਡ ਆਫ ਫਾਇਵ ਰਿਵਰਜ਼ " ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਚੁਕਾ ਸੀ, ਵਲੋਂ ਵੀ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਜੌਰਡਨ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਸਾਲ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਸਰੀ ਆਰਟ ਗੈਲਰੀ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਵੱਡੀ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀ ਆਯੋਜਿਤ ਕਰਨ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਸ਼ਮੂਲੀਅਤ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਵੇ। ਮੈਂ ਹਾਂ ਕਰ ਦਿਤੀ। ਮੀਟਿੰਗਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਹਨੇ ਪੁਛਣਾ ਕੀ ਬਨਾਉਣਾ ਹੈ, ਕੋਈ ਸਕੈਚ ਵਗੈਰਾ ਬਣਾਏ, ਕੀ

ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਇਸ ਚਿਤਰ ਵਿਚ ? ਮੈਂ ਹੱਸ ਕੇ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਜ਼ੋਰਡਨ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਮੇਰੇ ਦਿਮਾਗ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਸਕੈਚ ਵਗੈਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣਾਇਆ। ਉਦੋਂ ਹੀ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਰ ਪੈਨਲ 4 ਫੁਟ 8 ਫੁਟ ਸਾਈਜ਼ , ਜੋ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਵਡੀ 8 ਫੁਟ 16 ਫੁਟ ਦੀ ਵਡੀ ਤਸਵੀਰ , ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਗਾਥਾ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਨੇ ਨਕਸ਼ ਉਘੇੜਨੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿਤੇ। 2014 ਵਿਚ 12 ਅਪਰੈਲ ਨੂੰ ਸਰੀ ਆਰਟ ਗੈਲਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਲਗਾ ਇਹ ਚਿਤਰ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੇਰੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਂਜਲੀ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ, ਤੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਜੱਦੋ ਜਹਿਦ ਤੇ ਸਿਦਕ, ਸਥਾਨਕ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਤੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਦੀ ਗਾਥਾ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰੇਗਾ।

ਇਹਨਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਦਰਸ਼ਨੀਆਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਦਰਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਹੁੰਗਾਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੀ ਸੀ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਕੁਝ ਦਿਲਚਸਪ ਸਵਾਲ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਮਿਸਾਲ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਕਿ ਕੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਕੋਈ ਗਰਾਂਟ ਵਗੈਰਾ ਮਿਲੀ ਹੈ, ਕੋਈ ਫੰਡਿੰਗ ਹੋਈ, ਕਿਨੇ ਪੈਸੇ ਮਿਲੇ, ਕਿਹੜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਾ ਇਹ ਬਣਵਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਹੱਸ ਕੇ ਜਵਾਬ ਦੇਣਾ ਸਾਨੂੰ

ਗਰਾਂਟ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਤਾਂ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਜਦੋਂ ਦੇਣੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਦੇ ਦੇਵੇਗਾ। ਦਰਅਸਲ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਮੁਆਫੀ ਮੰਗੇ ਜਾਣ , ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ ਬਨਾਉਣ ਜਾਂ ਮੁਆਵਜ਼ਾ ਦਿਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਾਦ ਵਿਵਾਦ ਮੀਡੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਗਰਮ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਹਰ ਕੋਈ ਇਹੀ ਸੋਚਦਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਕੁਝ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਸਵਾਲ ਤੇ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਬਾਤਾਂ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਕਈ ਵਾਰੀ ਸੋਚਣਾ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੀ ਸੋਚ ਸਿਰਫ ਪੈਸੇ ਤਕ ਸੀਮਤ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਕਿਉਂ ਰਹਿ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਕੀ ਜਿਹਨਾਂ ਮਹਾਨ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਘਾਲਣਾ ਤੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਜਹਿਦ ਸਦਕਾ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਥੇ ਮਾਣ ਮਤਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਬਤੀਤ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ, ਕੀ ਸਿਰਫ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਕਰਕੇ "ਪਿਦਰਨ ਸੁਲਤਾਨ ਬੂਦ" (ਸਾਡੇ ਵਡੇਰੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਸਨ) ਦਾ ਨਾਹਰਾ ਲਾਈ ਜਾਵਾਂਗੇ। ਸਾਡਾ ਅਪਣਾ ਕਿਰਦਾਰ ਕੀ ਹੈ, ਸੋਚ ਕੀ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਵੀ ਕੀ ਕਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਅਪਣੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਝਾਤੀ ਮਾਰਨ ਦੀ ਤੇ ਆਤਮ ਚਿੰਤਨ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਖੋਚਲ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ ?



Photo from the 96th Anniversary at Bear Creek Park, Surrey.

THE KOMAGATA MARU TRAGEDY
IS AN UNFORTUNATE BLACK MARK
IN CANADA'S HISTORY.

WE REMEMBER AND WE WILL
CONTINUE TO KEEP CANADA
THE MOST DIVERSE
COUNTRY IN THE WORLD

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

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Remembering the Komagata Maru 100 years on

This year marks a century since the SS Komagata Maru arrived in Vancouver carrying 376 South Asian passengers who sought a better life in Canada. Because of racist immigration policies, the ship was sent back along with its passengers.

As we look back on this sad chapter in our country's history, we salute these pioneers and the local South Asian community, along with other progressive Canadians who stood against the discriminatory policies of the Canadian government.

From the BC New Democrats



Raj Chouhan, MLA
Burnaby-Edmonds
604-660-7301



Judy Darcy, MLA
New Westminster
604-775-2101



Adrian Dix, MLA
Vancouver-Kingsway
604-660-0314



Mike Farnworth, MLA
Port Coquitlam
604-927-2088



Rob Fleming, MLA
Victoria-Swan Lake
250-360-2023



Sue Hammell, MLA
Surrey-Green Timbers
604-590-5868



George Heyman, MLA
Vancouver-Fairview
604-775-2453



Leonard Krog, MLA
Nanaimo
250-714-0630



Bruce Ralston, MLA
Surrey-Whalley
604-586-2740



Jane Shin, MLA
Burnaby-Lougheed
604-660-5058



ALOO TIKKI



dairy



Gulabjamun



Veggie Cutlets

PANEER



Rasmalai



So Good, So Pure... It's Nanak!



Spinach Rolls



Malai PANEER

Rasogolla



Pure Desi Ghee



appetizers

desserts



Vancity congratulates Canada Post for commemorating this important event by issuing a stamp on the 100 year Anniversary of Komagata Maru, a historic incident apart of Canadian History.



ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਖਲਨਾਇਕ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ (ਸਮੁੰਦਰੀ ਸ਼ੇਰ)

ਮੋਹਨ ਗਿੱਲ

ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ (ਸਮੁੰਦਰੀ ਸ਼ੇਰ) ਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਹਾਜ਼, ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਐਸਾ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀਆਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੜੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜ ਕੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ। ਅੱਜ ਮੈਂ ਇਸ ਬਹੁਤ ਘੱਟ ਜਾਣੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਖਲਨਾਇਕ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਕਰਾਂਗਾ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਇਕ ਦੋ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਫਿਰ ਇਸ ਸੰਦਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ।

ਜਦ 1908 ਵਿਚ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦਾ ਕੰਟੀਨਿਊਸ ਜਰਨੀ ਵਾਲਾ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਪਾਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਮਤਲਬ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਲੋਕ ਹੀ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਦਾਖਲ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਸਨ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਤੋਂ, ਬਿਨਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਬੰਦਰਗਾਹ 'ਤੇ ਰੁਕੇ, ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਤੱਟ 'ਤੇ ਪਹੁੰਚਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਏਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਦਾਖਲ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਣ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਯਤਨ ਸੀ। ਸ. ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਇਸ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਨੂੰ ਚਨੌਤੀ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਭਾਰਤੀ ਲੋਕ ਬਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਸਬਜੈਕਟ ਸਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਜੰਗ ਬਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਖਾਤਰ ਹੀ ਲੜੀ ਸੀ। ਸ. ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਹਾਂਗ ਕਾਂਗ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਵਪਾਰੀ ਸੀ, ਨੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਮੁੰਦਰੀ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਲੀਜ਼ ਉਪਰ ਲਿਆ। ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕੋਲਾ ਭਰਿਆ ਅਤੇ 376 ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਸਮੇਤ 4 ਅਪ੍ਰੈਲ 1914 ਨੂੰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਲ ਨੂੰ ਯਾਤਰਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤੀ। ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ 340 ਸਿੱਖ, 24 ਇਸਲਾਮ ਅਤੇ 12 ਹਿੰਦੂ ਧਰਮ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਸਨ। 50 ਦਿਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਮੁੰਦਰੀ ਸਫਰ ਤਹਿ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ 23 ਮਈ 1914 ਨੂੰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਿਆ, ਜਿੱਥੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੀ ਬੰਦਰਗਾਹ ਵਿਚ ਵੜਨ ਦੀ ਇਜਾਜ਼ਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ। ਦੋ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਰਹਿਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼ 23 ਜੁਲਾਈ 1914 ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਮੋੜ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। 24 ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਏਥੇ ਉਤਰਨ ਦੀ ਇਜਾਜ਼ਤ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ। 353 ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਜਦ ਇਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼

ਕਲਕੱਤਾ ਦੇ ਬਜ ਬਜ ਘਾਟ 'ਤੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਪਹੁੰਚਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਥੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਉਪਰ ਗੋਲੀ ਚਲਾਈ ਗਈ। 19 ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਉਸੇ ਥਾਂ ਮੌਤ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਤੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਫੜ ਕੇ ਜੇਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਡੱਕ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ। ਕੁਝ, ਜੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਗਏ ਸਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਘਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਜ਼ਰਬੰਦੀ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ। ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾ ਨੇ ਗਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੇ ਉਭਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਬੜੀ ਮੱਦਦ ਕੀਤੀ।

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ 11 ਫਰਵਰੀ 1926 ਵਿਚ ਜਪਾਨ ਵਿਖੇ ਪੁਰਜਾ ਪੁਰਜਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਨਸ਼ਟ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਉਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਤਾਂ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਪਰ ਉਸ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ ਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਸਮੁੰਦਰੀ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਹੀ ਸਲਾਮਤ ਹੈ।

ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ 1904 ਵਿਚ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਇਕ ਬੜਾ ਹੀ ਖੂਬਸੂਰਤ ਸਮੁੰਦਰੀ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ 120 ਫੁੱਟ ਲੰਮੀਆਂ ਫਰ ਲੱਕੜ ਦੀਆਂ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਬਣਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਬੀ. ਸੀ. ਦਾ ਐਸਾ ਟੱਗ ਬੋਟ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ



ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਤੋਂ ਤੱਟ ਰੇਡੀਉ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਚ ਲਾਈਟ ਦੀ ਸੁਵਿਧਾ ਸੀ।

ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦਾ ਜਿਸ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨਾਲ ਸਿੱਧਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਹੋਇਆ, ਉਹ ਸੀ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ ਸਮੁੰਦਰੀ ਜਹਾਜ਼। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਖਲਨਾਇਕ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਉਭਰਿਆ। ਇਹ ਦੋਨੋਂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਵੱਖਰੇ ਕੋਨਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਦੇ ਤੱਟ 'ਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਸਮਤ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜ ਗਈ। ਜਦ 1914 ਵਿਚ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਕਹਿਣਾ ਨਾ ਮੰਨਦਿਆਂ ਵਾਪਸ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਮੋੜਨ ਲਈ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ।

19 ਜੁਲਾਈ 1914 ਦੀ ਸਵੇਰ 35 ਸਪੈਸ਼ਲ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਇਮੀਗ੍ਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਅਫਸਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ 125 ਹਥਿਆਰਬੰਦ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਅਫਸਰਾਂ ਸਮੇਤ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਕੱਢਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਲਈ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਸਵਾਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਬਰ ਤਿਆਰ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਬੰਦੇ ਇਕ ਗਰੁਪ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੀ ਰਾਖੀ ਲਈ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਡੈਕ 'ਤੇ ਇਕ ਲਾਈਨ ਬਣਾਈ ਖੜ੍ਹੇ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਰਨਿੰਗ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਦਾ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਪਾਸ ਆਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਉਪਰ ਆ ਕੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਕਰ ਦੇਣਗੇ। ਜਦ

ਪੁਲਿਸ ਨੇ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ ਨੂੰ ਲਿਆ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਲਾਈਨ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਨਾਲ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਇਕ ਯਾਤਰੀ ਨੇ ਕੁਹਾੜੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਲਾਈਨ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਢ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਫਿਰ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਨੇ ਅੱਗ ਬੁਝਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਨਾਲੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਠੰਢੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਫੁਆਰੇ ਛੱਡੇ। ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਬਚਾਅ ਲਈ ਕੋਲਾ, ਬਲਦੇ ਕੋਲੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਇੱਟਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਹੇ ਦੇ ਟੁਕੜਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ 'ਤੇ ਹੱਲਾ ਬੋਲ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਟੁਕੜਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੀਸ਼ੇ ਟੁੱਟ ਗਏ ਤੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਕੈਪਟਨ ਸਮੇਤ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ, ਸ਼ੀਸ਼ੇ ਅਤੇ ਕੋਲੇ ਦੇ ਟੁਕੜਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ, ਜ਼ਖਮ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਜਦ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਅੱਗੇ ਵਧੀ ਤਾਂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਸਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲਲਕਾਰਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਲੈ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਚਿਤਾਵਨੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਸਵਾਰ ਨੇ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ ਉਪਰ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਵੀ ਚਲਾਈਆਂ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੀ ਲਾਈਨ ਕੱਟੀ ਗਈ ਤੇ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਖ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਇਹ ਇਕ ਪੂਰਾ ਯੁੱਧ ਦਾ ਮੈਦਾਨ ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਯਾਤਰੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਹਾਰ ਖਾ ਕੇ, ਉਸ ਦਿਨ ਇਸ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਮੁੜਨਾ ਪਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦਾ ਦੂਜਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਨਾਲ 23 ਜੁਲਾਈ 1914 ਨੂੰ ਹੋਇਆ ਜਦ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ ਅਤੇ ਰੇਨਬੋਅ ਜਹਾਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੇ ਰਲ ਕੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੱਢ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਜਦ 2005 ਵਿਚ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ ਵੇਚਣ ਲਈ ਲਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਇਕੋ ਇਕ ਬਚਦੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨੀ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਹੈਰੀਟੇਜ ਫਾਊਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਖਰੀਦ ਲਿਆ। ਇਹ ਸਾਊਥ ਏਸ਼ੀਅਨ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਟੀ ਅਤੇ ਹੈਰੀਟੇਜ ਫਾਊਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਫਖਰ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਸੀ। ਤਿੰਨ ਸਾਲ ਤਕ ਇਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਮੈਰੀਟਾਈਮ ਮਿਊਜ਼ੀਅਮ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਬਣਿਆ ਰਿਹਾ। ਇਸ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਮਿਊਜ਼ੀਅਮ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਬਣਨ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਊਜ਼ੀਅਮ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਰਸ਼ਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ 15 ਪਰਸੈਂਟ ਵਧ ਗਈ। ਜਦ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਮੈਰੀਟਾਈਮ ਮਿਊਜ਼ੀਅਮ ਉਥੋਂ ਬਦਲ ਕੇ ਨਵੀਂ ਥਾਂ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਇਸ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਠਹਿਰਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਜਗ੍ਹਾ ਤੇ ਸੁਵਿਧਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਇਕ



ਵਾਰ ਫਿਰ ਇਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵੇਚਣ ਲਈ ਲਾਉਣਾ ਪਿਆ। ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਹੈਰੀਟੇਜ ਫਾਊਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ ਹਾਲੇ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਰੱਖਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਿਨੀਪੈਗ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਧਨਾਢ ਜੋਅ ਕਾਰਬਲ ਨੇ ਖਰੀਦ ਲਿਆ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਥੋੜੇ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਫਾਊਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਹਰਭਜਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਿੱਲ ਨੂੰ ਫੋਨ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਯਕੀਨ ਦਿਵਾਇਆ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਬੜੀ ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਕੇ ਰੱਖੇਗਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਮਹੱਤਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਜਦ ਜੋਅ ਕਾਰਬਲ ਨਾਲ ਫੋਨ 'ਤੇ ਗੱਲ ਹੋਈ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਪਾਸ ਇਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਪੰਜ ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਮੁਤਾਬਕ ਉਹ ਪੁਰਤਗੇਜ਼ੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਜਦ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਾ ਕਿ ਸੀ-ਲਾਇਨ ਵੇਚਣ ਲਈ ਲਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਗਲਤ ਹੱਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਵੇ ਤੇ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਤਬਾਹ ਕਰ ਦੇਣ। ਇਸ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੀ ਵਿਕਟੋਰੀਆ ਵਿਚ, ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਪੂਰੀ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਜਦ ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਸ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੁੱਛਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਇਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਵਕਤ ਹੀ ਦੇਵੇਗਾ ਜੇ ਉਹ ਯਕੀਨ ਦਿਵਾਉਣਗੇ ਕਿ ਉਹ

ਇਸ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਂਭ ਕੇ ਰੱਖਣਗੇ। ਅੱਜ ਇਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਿਕਟੋਰੀਆ ਦੀ ਬੰਦਰਗਾਹ 'ਤੇ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਦੇਖ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਇਹ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਆਪਣੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਯਾਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਬੈਠਾ ਹੈ। ਮੇਰਾ ਇਹ ਲੇਖ ਲਿਖਣ ਦਾ ਮੰਤਵ ਇਸ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਬਾਰੇ ਪਾਠਕਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ।

ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਾਠ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਰਮਨ ਹੋਲੋਕੋਸਟ ਅਤੇ ਸੋਵੀਅਤ ਯੂਨੀਅਨ ਦੇ ਕਮਿਊਨਿਸਟ ਤਜਰਬੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਤਾਂ ਬੜਾ ਕੁਝ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਇਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਚੀਨੀ, ਜਪਾਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ, ਚਾਈਨੀਜ਼ ਹੈਡ ਟੈਕਸ ਦੇ ਕਾਲੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ। ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਖੇਪ ਜਿਹਾ ਵਰਨਣ ਤਾਂ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਲਾਜ਼ਮੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਅੱਜ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਸੌ ਸਾਲਾ ਦਿਵਸ 'ਤੇ ਆਉ ਰਲ ਕੇ ਹੰਭਲਾ ਮਾਰੀਏ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਸਕੂਲਾਂ ਤੇ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਾਠ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲਾਜ਼ਮੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਬਣਾਈਏ।



ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਅਣਗੌਲੇ ਸੰਗਰਾਮੀਏ

ਜਰਨੈਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੇਖਾ

ਸਰਹੰਦ ਨਹਿਰ ਉਨ੍ਹੀਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਅੱਠਵੇਂ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਵਿਚ ਨਿਕਲੀ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਵੀਹਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਢ ਤੋਂ ਸਿੰਜਾਈ ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ ਬਣਨਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਮਾਲਵੇ ਦੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਫਸਲਾਂ ਮੀਂਹ ਦੇ ਆਸਰੇ ਹੀ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਜੇ ਮੀਂਹ ਨਾ ਪੈਣਾ ਤਾਂ ਕਾਲ ਪੈਣ ਵਰਗੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਬਣ ਜਾਂਦੀ। ਉਂਨੀਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਅੰਤਲੇ ਦਹਾਕੇ ਲੰਮੀ ਔੜ ਲੱਗ ਜਾਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੱਖੜੇ ਦੇ ਬੀਜ ਤੇ ਤਾਂਦਲਾ ਖਾਣ ਤਕ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਹੋਣਾ ਪਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਤੋਂ ਸਿਤਮ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਮੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਲੀਆ ਨਕਦੀ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਮਜਬੂਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਉਹ ਕਰਜ਼ਾਈ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਮੀਨਾਂ ਭੰਗ ਦੇ ਭਾੜੇ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਭੱਜ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਿਰ ਆਈ ਇਸ ਸਾੜ੍ਹਸਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਟਾਲਣ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਗਭਰੂ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਫੌਜ ਵਿਚ ਭਰਤੀ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਤੇ ਕਈ ਘਰ ਦੇ ਗਹਿਣੇ ਗੱਟੇ ਵੇਚ ਕੇ ਰੋਜ਼ਗਾਰ ਦੀ ਭਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਬਰੂਮਾ, ਮਲਾਇਆ, ਚੀਨ ਆਦਿ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਨਿਕਲ ਗਏ। ਉਥੋਂ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਲਈ ਹੋਰ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ, ਕੈਨੇਡਾ, ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵੱਲ ਜਾਣ ਦੇ ਵਸੀਲੇ ਬਣਦੇ ਗਏ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਹੋਰ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵੱਲ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਮੰਤਵ ਆਪਣੀ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਹਾਲਤ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਧਾਰਨਾ ਹੀ ਸੀ। ਚੰਗੇ ਭਵਿੱਖਤ ਦੀ ਆਸ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਵੱਲ ਤੁਰੇ ਸਾਊ ਕਾਮੇ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਾਂਤ ਚਿੱਤ ਗਭਰੂ ਘੋਰ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਹੋਏ।

ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ੀ ਕੰਪਨੀਆਂ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ, ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਲੈ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਆਪ ਉਤਸਾਹਤ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਜਦੋਂ ਬੀ. ਸੀ. ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਧੇ ਸਫਰ ਦਾ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਹੋ ਕੰਪਨੀਆਂ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਲੈ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰੀ ਹੋ ਗਈਆਂ ਸਨ। ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਕਰਾਏ ਉਪਰ ਲੈਣ ਦਾ ਹੁਲਾ ਫੱਕਣਾ ਪਿਆ ਸੀ। ਜਿਹੋ ਜਿਹੇ ਸੰਤਾਪ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਹਾਰਨੇ ਪਏ, ਦੁਨੀਆ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਉਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਮਿਸਾਲ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਹੀ ਕੋਈ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਭੁੱਖੇ ਤਿਹਾਇਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੋ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਬੰਦੂਕ ਦੀ ਨੋਕ 'ਤੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਡੱਕੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਵਾਪਸੀ 'ਤੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਰਨ ਨਾ

ਮਿਲੀ। ਆਪਣੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਧਰਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਪੈਰ ਧਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਵੀ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੁਆਗਤ ਹੋਇਆ। ਕਈਆਂ ਨੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦੀਆਂ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੇਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਜੂਹਬੰਦੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਮਿਲੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਉਪਰੋਂ ਬਦਸ਼ਾਂ ਚੁੱਕ ਵੀ ਲਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਗੋਰੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਕਾਂ ਅੱਖ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਰਹੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਅਣਗੌਲੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਹ ਗੁਮਨਾਮੀ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਬਸਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਅਲਵਿਦਾ ਕਹਿ ਗਏ।

ਅਜੇਹੇ ਅਣਗੌਲੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਸੰਘਰਾਮੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਪਿੰਡ, ਸੇਖਾ ਕਲਾਂ ਥਾਨਾ ਬਾਘਾ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ, ਤਹਿਸੀਲ ਮੋਗਾ ਦੇ ਚਾਰ ਬੰਦੇ, ਦੋ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਕੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਮੱਲੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੀ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਆ ਕੇ ਮਿਲੀ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਇਕ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਰਤ ਸੰਭਾਲਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਤੋਂ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਸਾਂ।

ਜਦੋਂ ਮੈਂ ਸੰਨ 1994 ਵਿਚ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਸ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਰਹਿੰਦਿਆਂ ਆਪਣਾ ਨਾਵਲ 'ਵਿਗੋਚਾ' ਲਿਖਣ ਲਈ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਆਮਦ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਜਹਿਦ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਾ ਕਿ ਸੇਖਾ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਬੰਦੇ ਸੰਨ 1908 ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਦੇ ਸੂਬੇ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਕੁਲੰਬੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਸਨ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਬੀ. ਸੀ. ਵਿਚ 29 ਨਵੰਬਰ 1908 ਨੂੰ 'ਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਮਾਈਨਿੰਗ ਐਂਡ ਟਰਸਟ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਲਿਮਟਡ' ਬਣਾ ਲਈ, ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਅਸਾਸਾ ਡੇਢ ਲੱਖ ਡਾਲਰ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਜਿਹੜਾ ਛੇਤੀ ਹੀ ਵਧਾ ਕੇ ਦੁਗਣਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਦੇ 251 ਹਿੱਸੇਦਾਰ ਸਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ 251 ਹਿੱਸੇਦਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਦਾ ਸਾਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੀ ਸੀ। ਇੰਝ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰ ਬੰਦੇ ਵੀ ਹੋਣਗੇ। ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਕ ਹਿੱਸੇਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਘੱਟ ਤੋਂ ਘੱਟ ਇਕ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਡਾਲਰ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਪਾਉਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਕੱਲੇ ਅਕਹਿਰੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਬਹੁਤ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਜਿਹੜੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਉਰੋਕਤ ਚਾਰ ਬੰਦੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼

ਵਿਚ ਹਾਂਗਕਾਂਗ ਤੇ ਸ਼ੰਘਈ ਤੋਂ ਚੜ੍ਹੇ ਸਨ। ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਾਡੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਬੰਦਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਹੀ ਸੱਦਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ ਜਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਇੱਥੇ ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਆਏ ਹੋਣ। ਮੱਲੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਬਜ ਬਜ ਘਾਟ ਤੋਂ ਪੁਲੀਸ ਦੀ ਨਿਗਰਾਨੀ ਹੇਠ ਸਪੈਸਲ ਰੇਲ ਗੱਡੀ ਵਿਚ ਬੰਦ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਕਲਕੱਤੇ ਤੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਲਿਆ ਕੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਵਿਚ ਪੁੱਛ ਪੜਤਾਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਹੋਰ ਜੇਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਭੇਜ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਮੱਲੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੇਰੇ ਸੁਰਤ ਸੰਭਾਲਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਗ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਕੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਕੀ ਵਾਪਰੀ, ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਹਾਸਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕੀ। ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਖੜ੍ਹੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਹੜੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ ਸਨ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਹੱਥ ਨਾਲ ਲਿਖੀ ਹੋਈ ਲਿਸਟ ਮੈਂ ਦੇਖੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਟਾਈਪ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਵੀ। ਦੋਵਾਂ ਲਿਸਟਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਰੇ ਨਾਮ ਹਨ ਪਰ ਬਜ ਬਜ ਘਾਟ 'ਤੇ ਗੋਲੀ ਚੱਲਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਗ੍ਰਿਫਤਾਰ ਕੀਤੇ, ਜ਼ਖਮੀ ਹੋਏ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਹੋਏ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਣੀਆਂ ਲਿਸਟਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਭ ਸਕਿਆ। ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਭਗੋੜੇ ਕਰਾਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਹੋਣ। ਬਜ ਬਜ ਘਾਟ 'ਤੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਹੋਏ ਦੋ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਨਾਖਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਹੋ ਸਕੀ, ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਕੇਹਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਹੀ ਹੋਣ। ਇਹ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਤਿੰਨਾਂ ਲਿਸਟਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਲਿਸਟ ਵਿਚ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਪਿੰਡ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ ਗਲਤ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਖੈਰ! ਜਿਹੜੇ ਭਾਈ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਮੈਂ ਦੇਖਿਆ, ਉਹ ਸਾਡੇ ਅਗਵਾੜ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਵੀਹਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਢ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੇ ਕੁਝ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ੰਘਈ (ਚੀਨ) ਚਲਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਥੇ ਕਈ ਸਾਲ ਜਾਗੇ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਕੀਤਾ। ਆਪਣੇ ਪੇਂਡੂਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਸਵਾਰ ਹੋਇਆ। ਭਾਈ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪਣੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਭਰਾ ਜਿਉਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਜਿਉਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਮੁੰਡਾ, ਗੁਰਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੇਰਾ ਹਾਣੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਲ ਚੌਥੀ ਜਮਾਤ ਤੱਕ ਪੜ੍ਹਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਮੈਂ ਕਈ ਵਾਰ ਗੁਰਦਿਆਲ ਨਾਲ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਜਾਂ ਪਸ਼ੂਆਂ ਵਾਲੇ

ਵਾੜੇ ਵਿਚ ਚਲਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਉਹ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਸਿਰ ਉਤਾਂਹ ਚੁੱਕ ਕੇ ਦੇਖਦਾ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਨੀਵੀਂ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਕੰਮ ਲੱਗ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਉਹਦਾ ਦਰਮਿਆਨਾ ਕੱਦ ਤੇ ਭਰਵੀਂ ਚਿੱਟੀ ਦਾਹੜੀ ਸੀ। ਗੋਡਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਤਕ ਖੱਦਰ ਦਾ ਕੁਰਤਾ, ਤੇੜ ਗੋਡਿਆਂ ਤਕ ਪਾਇਆ ਕਛਹਿਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਰ ਉਪਰ ਛੋਟੀ ਜਿਹੀ ਨੀਲੀ ਦਸਤਾਰ ਉਹਦਾ ਪਹਿਰਾਵਾ ਸੀ। ਉਹਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਸੱਤਰ ਬਹੱਤਰ ਸਾਲ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਮੈਂ ਸਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਹੀ ਦੇਖਦਾ। ਕਦੇ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਾੜੇ ਵਿਚ ਪਸ਼ੂਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ, ਕਦੇ ਮੰਜੇ ਉਪਰ ਬੈਠਾ ਹੀ ਸਣ ਦਾ ਪਿੰਨਾ ਵੱਟ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ। ਸਿਆਲ ਵਿਚ ਪੁੱਪੇ ਬੈਠਾ ਗਰੁਨੇ ਕੱਢਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ। (ਸਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਤੀਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਣ ਵੱਖ ਕਰਨੀ) ਮੈਂ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਹੀ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਚੁੱਪ ਚਾਪ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਹੀ ਦੇਖਿਆ। ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾਲ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਗੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਰਦਾ। ਉਹ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਖੇਤ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਉਸ ਦਾ ਟਿਕਾਣਾ ਘਰ ਜਾਂ ਪਸ਼ੂਆਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਵਾੜਾ ਸੀ। ਸੱਥ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਇਕੱਠ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਉਹ ਬਹੁਤ ਘੱਟ ਜਾਂਦਾ। ਉਹ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਿਛਲੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾਲ ਗੱਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਰਦਾ। ਹਾਂ! ਉਹ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰੇ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਲੱਗਿਆ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ। ਸੰਗਰਾਂਦ ਵਾਲੇ ਦਿਨ ਜਾਂ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਪਾਠ ਦਾ ਭੋਗ ਪੈਣਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਤਾਂ ਦੇਗ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਦੇਗ ਵਰਤਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਉਸੇ ਦੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਉਹ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੱਥ ਘੁੱਟ ਕੇ ਦੇਗ ਵਰਤਾਉਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਜੇ ਦੋ ਜਣੇ ਦੇਗ ਵੰਡ ਰਹੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਪਾਸਾ ਵੱਟ ਕੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਭਾਈ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਦੇਗ ਲੈਣੀ। ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਇੰਨਾ ਹੀ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਸਾਂ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਗੁਰਦਿਆਲ ਦਾ ਤਾਇਆ ਹੈ। ਆਪਣੇ ਤਾਏ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਗੁਰਦਿਆਲ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਕੁਝ ਦੱਸਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਗਿਆ। ਪਰ ਕਦੀ ਕਦਾਈਂ ਘਰ ਵਿਚ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਇੰਨਾ ਕੁ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ "ਉਹ ਮਿਰਕਣ ਤੋਂ ਮੁੜ ਕੇ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਉਤਰਦਾ ਹੀ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਨੇ ਫੜ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਕਈ ਸਾਲ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਵਿਚ ਰਿਹਾ। ਫੇਰ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਈ ਸਾਲ ਪਿੰਡੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਜਾਣ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਖੇਤ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਗੁਆਂਢੀ ਨੰਬਰਦਾਰ ਅਨੋਖ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਦੱਸ ਕੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਪੈਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਜਦੋਂ ਜੈਤੋ ਦੇ ਮੋਰਚੇ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਜੱਥਾ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਦੀ ਲੰਘਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਵੀ ਜੱਥੇ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਉਹਦੇ ਬਾਪੂ ਤੇ ਨੰਬਰਦਾਰ ਅਨੋਖ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਜਾਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਦਿੱਤਾ।" (ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਦੇ ਨੰਬਰਦਾਰ, ਸਫੈਦਪੋਸ਼ ਜਾਂ ਜ਼ੈਲਦਾਰ

ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਉ (ਪਿਆਰ), ਭੈਅ, ਲਾਲਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਅਸਰ ਰਸੂਖ ਵਰਤ ਕੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਪੱਖੀ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਯਤਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਭਾਈ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਭਰਾ ਦੇ ਤਰਲਿਆਂ ਤੇ ਨੰਬਰਦਾਰ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਹੇਠ ਆ ਕੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਸੁਲਗਦੀ ਚੰਗਿਆਈ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਸੀਨੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਦਫਨ ਕਰ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਚੁੱਪ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਬਸਰ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ।)

ਪਿੰਡ ਦੀ ਸੱਥ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਭਾਈ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਜਾਂ ਉਹਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਦੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਛਿੜਿਆ। ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਹਰ ਸਾਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜਨਮ ਦਿਨ 'ਤੇ ਨਗਰ ਕੀਰਤਨ ਨਿਕਲਦਾ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਭਾਈ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੂਹਰੇ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਪਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਟੇਜ 'ਤੇ ਨਾ ਕਦੀ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਬਾਰੇ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਬੁਲਾਰੇ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਉਹਦੀ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਸੀ। ਨਗਰ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਭਾਈ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰੇ ਦਾ ਭਾਈ ਹੀ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਸਨ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਨਗਰ ਨਿਵਾਸੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਨਗਰ ਦੇ ਚਾਰ ਯੋਧੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਘੁਲਾਟੀਏ ਵੀ ਸਨ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਉਹ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਹੋਣੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੀ ਨਾ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹੋਣ। ਇਉਂ ਉਹ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਗੁੰਮਨਾਮ ਹੀ ਰਹੇ। ਦੇਸ ਅਜ਼ਾਦ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਭਾਈ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਕਾਲ ਚਲਾਣਾ ਕਰ ਗਿਆ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਆਮ ਇਨਸਾਨਾਂ ਵਾਂਗ ਸਿਵਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਫੂਕ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਕੋਈ ਸ਼ੋਕ ਸਭਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਈ, ਕੋਈ ਲੀਡਰ ਉਥੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਂਜਲੀ ਦੇਣ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਇਆ। ਭਾਈ ਜੈਮਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਭਰਾ ਜਿਉਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਚਲ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦਾ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਤੇ ਪੋਤਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਫੌਤ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਦੋ ਪੜ-ਪੋਤਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਖੇਤੀ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਗੁਜ਼ਾਰਾ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਜੀਅ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਨਾ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਵੱਡ ਵਡੇਰਾ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਘੁਲਾਟੀਆ ਵੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ, ਜਿਹੜਾ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੇ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਆਪਣੀ ਜਵਾਨੀ ਕੁਰਬਾਨ ਕਰ ਗਿਆ।

ਸਾਡੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਘੁਲਾਟੀਆ ਬਾਬਾ ਹਰਨਾਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦਾ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਆਇਆ ਪਰ ਉਹ ਵੀ ਹੋਰ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਰਾਹੀਂ

1914 ਵਿਚ ਸੰਘਣੀ (ਚੀਨ) ਤੋਂ ਵਾਪਸ ਦੇਸ ਪਰਤਦਿਆਂ ਕਲਕੱਤਾ ਬੰਦਰਗਾਹ 'ਤੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ੋਂ ਉਤਰਦਾ ਹੀ ਪੁਲੀਸ ਨੇ ਗ੍ਰਿਫਤਾਰ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਨ ਵਿਚੋਂ 'ਗਦਰ' ਅਖਬਾਰ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਪਰਚੇ ਮਿਲੇ ਸਨ। ਪੁਲੀਸ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਬੰਦਾ ਗਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦਾ ਮੈਂਬਰ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਪੁੱਛ ਪੜਤਾਲ ਕਰਨ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਲਿਆ ਕੇ ਕਈ ਸਾਲ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਵਿਚ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਜੂਹ ਬੰਦੀ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਦੇਸ ਅਜ਼ਾਦ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਸਾਲ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਪੈਨਸ਼ਨ ਤੇ ਤਾਮਰ ਪੱਤਰ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਸਨਮਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਸੌ ਸਾਲ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਭੋਗ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਵਿਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ।

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਥਾਨਾ ਬਾਘਾ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ ਦੇ ਕੋਈ ਦੋ ਦਰਜਨ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ ਸਨ। ਤਕਰੀਬਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਸਾਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਹੋਣੀ ਸੇਖਾ ਕਲਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਵਾਲੀ ਹੀ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਮੈਨੂੰ, ਸਾਡੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਸਾਲ ਪਿੰਡ ਥਰਾਜ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ, ਓਥੋਂ ਦੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ, ਭਾਈ ਮਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਚਾਹਲ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਨਣ ਦਾ ਮੌਕਾ ਮਿਲਿਆ। ਭਾਈ ਮਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਮੇਰੇ ਦੋਸਤ ਮਾਸਟਰ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਚਾਹਲ ਦਾ ਤਾਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਦਮਦਮਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਜੱਥੇਦਾਰ, ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੰਦ ਗੜ੍ਹ ਦੇ ਦਾਦੇ ਦਾ ਸਕਾ ਭਰਾ ਸੀ। (ਜੱਥੇਦਾਰ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਥਰਾਜ ਤੋਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਭੂਆ ਦੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਨੰਦ ਗੜ੍ਹ, ਜ਼ਿਲਾ ਮੁਕਤਸਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਚਲੇ ਜਾਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਨਾਲ ਨੰਦ ਗੜ੍ਹ ਜੁੜ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।) ਭਾਈ ਮਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਹੁਰੀਂ ਪੰਜ ਭਰਾ ਸਨ। ਸਾਂਝਾ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਸੀ। ਪਲੇਗ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਂਮਾਰੀ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਜੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਿਗਲ ਗਈ। ਭਾਈ ਮਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਚਾਚਾ ਚਾਚੀ ਤਾਂ ਨਿੱਕੇ ਜਿਹੇ ਬਾਲਕ (ਈਸ਼ਰ ਸਿੰਘ) ਨੂੰ ਯਤੀਮ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਪਲੇਗ ਦੀ ਭੇਟ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਗਏ। ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਭਾਈ ਮਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਗਭਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦੀ ਦੇਖ ਭਾਲ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿੰਮਾ ਓਟ ਲਿਆ। ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤ ਮਿਹਨਤ ਕੀਤੀ, ਜਦੋਂ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਤੰਗੀ ਨੇ ਕੋਈ ਪੇਸ਼ ਨਾ ਜਾਣ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਰੋਜ਼ਗਾਰ ਦੀ ਭਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਘਣੀ ਚਲਾ ਗਿਆ। ਕਈ ਸਾਲ ਓਥੇ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਚੰਗੇ ਰੁਜ਼ਗਾਰ ਦੀ ਭਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਕੈਨੇਡਾ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦਾ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ ਬਣਿਆ। ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਭਾਰਤ ਮੁੜਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਜ ਬਜ

ਘਾਟ ਕਲਕੱਤਾ 'ਤੇ ਪੁਲੀਸ ਨੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੁਆਗਤ ਕੀਤਾ। ਪੁਲੀਸ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਚਲਾਈਆਂ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਕ ਗੋਲੀ ਭਾਈ ਮਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਪੱਗ ਨੂੰ ਚੀਰਦੀ ਹੋਈ ਲੰਘ ਗਈ। ਮਾਮੂਲੀ ਜਿਹਾ ਜ਼ਖਮ ਹੋਇਆ ਪਰ ਪੱਗ ਨੇ ਬਚਾਅ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਉਥੋਂ ਗ੍ਰਿਫਤਾਰ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਬੰਦ ਰੇਲ ਗੱਡੀ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਜੇਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਰੱਖਿਆ। ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੋਣ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਜੂਹਬੰਦੀ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਕੇ ਬਾਗ ਦੇ ਮੋਰਚੇ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਗ ਲੈਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਹੋਈ। ਸਜ਼ਾ ਖਤਮ ਹੋਣ ਬਾਅਦ, ਉਸ ਨੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਰਹਿ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਬਾਕੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਭਰਾਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਚਚੇਰੇ ਭਰਾ, ਈਸ਼ਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਲੇਖੇ ਲਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਭਾਈ ਮਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਦਰਮਿਆਨਾ ਕੱਦ ਅਤੇ ਲੰਮੀ ਸਫੇਦ ਦਾਹੜੀ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਸਦਾ ਚਿੱਟੇ ਖੱਦਰ ਦਾ ਪਹਿਰਾਵਾ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਰਖਦਾ। ਉਹ ਪਿੰਡ ਦੇ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਧ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਲੈਂਦਾ। ਉਹ ਪਿੰਡ ਦਾ ਮੀਰਾਬ ਵੀ ਰਿਹਾ। ਹਰ ਇਕ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਉਪਰ ਯਕੀਨ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਾਰੀ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਮਿੰਟ ਵੀ ਇਧਰ ਉਧਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਭਾਈ ਮਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਕੋਈ ਨਸ਼ਾ ਮੂੰਹ 'ਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਧਰਿਆ, ਇਥੋਂ ਤਕ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਚਾਹ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੀਤੀ। ਇਹ ਸੰਗਰਾਮੀਆ ਸੰਨ 1958 ਵਿਚ 85 ਸਾਲ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਭੋਗ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਅਲਵਿਦਾ ਕਹਿ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਵਿਦਾਇਗੀ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਆਮ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਵਰਗੀ ਹੋਈ। ਪਿੰਡ ਅਤੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਨੇਕੀ 'ਤੇ ਤਾਂ ਚਾਰ ਹੰਝੂ ਕੇਰੇ ਪਰ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ 'ਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ। ਉਸ ਦੀ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣੀ। ਉਸ ਦੀ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਵੀ ਗੁਮਨਾਮੀ ਦੀ ਗ਼ਾਰ ਵਿਚ ਦਫਨ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਈ। ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਬਰਾਜ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਗਦਰੀ ਬਾਬਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਮਾਂ ਅਣਗੌਲਿਆਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਧੂਆਂ ਧਾਰ ਭੰਡੀ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਆਮ ਜਨਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਸਿਰਜਣ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਫੀ ਸਫਲ ਰਹੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਲੋਕ ਦੇਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰੇਰੀ ਤੇ ਡਾਕੂ ਲੁਟੇਰੇ ਹਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਸਦਾ ਸਾਵਧਾਨ ਰਿਹਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਉਹ ਸਮਾਂ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਜੰਗ ਦਾ ਸੀ। ਕਾਂਗਰਸ ਵਿਚ ਮੋਹਨ ਦਾਸ ਕਰਮ ਚੰਦ ਗਾਂਧੀ ਨਵਾਂ ਲੀਡਰ ਉਭਰ ਕੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਆਇਆ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਵਰਤਨ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਅਖਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਅਜੇ ਆਮ ਜਨਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਵਿਦ੍ਰੋਹ ਦੀ ਚਿਣਗ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਭਖੀ। ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਦਬਦਬਾ ਤੇ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਇੰਨਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਅਸਲੀਅਤ ਸਹੀ ਢੰਗ ਨਾਲ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤਕ ਪੁੱਜ ਹੀ ਨਾ ਸਕੀ, ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ ਜਨਤਾ ਦੀ ਹਮਦਰਦੀ ਨਾ ਜੁਟਾ ਸਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਲ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਜੇਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੋਣ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਗਏ। ਕਈਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੂਹਬੰਦੀ ਦੀ ਸਜ਼ਾ ਹੋਈ। ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੱਕ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਅੰਦਰੋਂ ਵਿਦ੍ਰੋਹ ਦੀ ਚੰਗਿਆੜੀ ਬੁਝੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਉਪਰ ਨਿਗਰਾਨੀ ਵਧਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੁਲੀਸ ਦੇ ਗੇੜੇ ਵੱਧ ਲੱਗਣ ਲੱਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਚ ਸਹਿਮ ਫੈਲ ਗਿਆ। ਉਹ ਇਹ ਸਮਝਣ ਲੱਗੇ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਵਰਤਾਰਾ ਬਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਮੁੜਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਜਾਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਵਾਪਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ।

ਗੋਰੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਤਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ਸਮਝਦੀ ਹੀ ਸੀ। ਅਜ਼ਾਦ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਸਾਰ ਨਾ ਲਈ। ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਸਾਰ ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਲੈਣੀ ਸੀ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਘੁਲਾਟੀਏ ਵੀ ਨਾ ਮੰਨਿਆ।

ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੇ ਸਰਬਰਾਹ ਨੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀ ਪਿੱਠ ਪੂਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਖ ਮੰਨਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਹ ਵੀ ਪਰਚਾਰਿਆ ਕਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਵਰਤਨ ਨਾ ਕਰਨ। ਸਧਾਰਨ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਪਿਆ।

ਉਹ ਘਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਖੱਟੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਵਾਪਸ ਹੱਥਕੜੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਪਰਤੇ। ਉਹ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਆਸਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਪੂਰੇ ਨਾ ਉਤਰ ਸਕੇ। ਬਹੁਤੇ ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਘਰ ਦੀ ਆਰਥਿਕਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਖ ਰੱਖਿਆ।

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤਿਆਂ ਦੇ

ਵਿਆਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਹੋ ਸਕੇ। ਕਾਰਨ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹ ਘਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤੁਰੇ ਸਨ ਤਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਮੁੱਛ ਫੁਟ ਕੰਵਾਰੇ ਗਭਰੂ ਹੀ ਸਨ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਦਾ ਕੁਝ ਸਮਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਖੱਟੀ ਕਮਾਈ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਲੰਘਿਆ ਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਸਮਾਂ ਜੇਲ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੀਤ ਗਿਆ। ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹ ਧੱਕੇ ਧੋੜੇ ਖਾ ਕੇ ਕਈ ਸਾਲਾਂ ਮਗਰੋਂ ਘਰੀਂ ਪਰਤੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਵਿਆਹ ਵਾਲੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਰਹੀ। ਛੱਡੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਦੀ ਕਦਰ ਵਿਆਹੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਵਾਲੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਇਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਵੀ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਅਣਗੌਲੇ ਰਹੇ।

ਬੇਸ਼ਕ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਪਰਵਾਨਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਅਣਗੌਲੀਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਕੁਝ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਖੋਜਾਰਥੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੇ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਲੈਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਤੇ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਮੂ 'ਤੇ ਕੁਰਬਾਨ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੁਝ ਪਰਵਾਨਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਖੋਜ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਉਮੀਦ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਖੋਜਾਰਥੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ ਜੀਅ ਜਾਨ ਨਾਲ ਖੋਜਾਂ

ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਛੇਤੀ ਹੀ ਹਰ ਇਕ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਘੁਲਾਟੀਏ ਦੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਜੀਵਨੀ ਲਿਖੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਫਿਰ ਉਹ ਗੁਮਨਾਮੀ ਦੇ ਹਨੇਰੇ 'ਚੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਆ ਕੇ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਅੰਗ ਬਣ ਜਾਣਗੇ।

ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਅਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦਾ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਉਤਰੀ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀ ਧਰਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਬਰਸੀਆਂ ਮਨਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਸਿਲਸਲਾ ਵੀ ਇਥੋਂ ਹੀ ਅਰੰਭ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹਨਾਂ ਸੰਗਰਾਮੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀਆਂ ਮਨਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਉਹਨਾਂ ਦੀ ਯਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਰਪਤ ਹਰ ਸਾਲ ਸਮਾਗਮ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗੇ ਹਨ। ਪਿਛਲੇ ਸਾਲ ਗਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਮਨਾਈ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਸਾਲ ਭਾਈ ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ, ਭਾਈ ਬਦਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਤਾਬਦੀ ਮਨਾਈ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸ਼ਿਅਰ ਨੂੰ ਯਾਦ ਰੱਖਦਿਆਂ ਇਹ ਸਿਲਸਲਾ ਨਿਰੰਤਰ ਚਲਦੇ ਰਹਿਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ;

ਸ਼ਹੀਦੋਂ ਕੀ ਚਿਤਾਉਂ ਪਰ ਲਗੇਂਗੇ ਹਰ ਬਰਸ ਮੇਲੇ

ਵਤਨ ਪੇ ਮਰਨੇ ਵਾਲੇਂ ਕਾ ਯਹੀ ਬਾਕੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਂ ਹੋਗਾ



Images from the 94th Anniversary at Portal Park, Vancouver.

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ : ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਪਰਿਪੇਖ

ਡਾ.ਗੁਰਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਕੌਰ

ਉਨ੍ਹੀਵੀ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਅੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਗਰੀਬ ਅਤੇ ਮੱਧਵਰਤੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਕਰ ਦੁਆਬਾ ਖੇਤਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਹਾਲਤ ਦੇ ਨਿਘਾਰ ਕਰਕੇ ਬਰਮਾ, ਮਲਾਇਆ, ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਆਦਿ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਤੋਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਡਾ: ਸੁਰਿੰਦਰਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ, “ਵੀਹਵੀ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਆਰੰਭ ਤੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਰੁਜ਼ਗਾਰ ਦੀ ਤਲਾਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਆਰਥਕ ਵਸੀਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਖਾਤਰ ਭਿੰਨ-ਭਿੰਨ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਸੁਭਾਅ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਹਨਤੀ, ਸਿਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਸਮਰੱਥ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸਖਤ ਤੇ ਸਖਤ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਗੁਰੇਜ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਬਰਮਾ, ਸ਼ਿਆਮ, ਮਲਾਇਆ, ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਆਦਿ ਗਵਾਂਢੀ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਆਦਿ ਦੂਰ ਦੇਸ਼ਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਗਏ।”

ਵੀਹਵੀ ਸਦੀ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਉੱਜਲ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਦੇ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਕਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਮੀਨਾਂ ਵੇਚ ਕੇ ਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਕਰਜ਼ੇ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਕਾਹਲੇ ਸਨ। ਪਰ ਭਾਰਤ ਤੋਂ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਉਹ ਹਾਂਗਕਾਂਗ, ਸ਼ੰਘਾਈ ਤੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੰਦਰਗਾਹਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਅੱਧ ਵਿਚਾਲੇ ਲਟਕ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਜਹਾਜ਼ੀ ਕੰਪਨੀਆਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਟਿਕਟਾਂ ਦੇਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰੀ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੋਝੀਆਂ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਧੀਨ ਹੀ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਜਾਂ ਖਾਸ ਕਰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਕੰਮ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਸਕੇ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਬਹੁ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਨੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਪੁੱਜ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਮਿਹਨਤੀ ਸੁਭਾਅ, ਸੁਡੌਲ ਸਰੀਰ ਤੇ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਦੇ ਗੁਣਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਉਥੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰ ਲਏ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਜਾਇਦਾਦਾਂ ਵੀ ਖਰੀਦ ਲਈਆਂ ਸਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਪਛਾਣ ਨੂੰ ਬਣਾਈ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਵੀ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਿੱਤ ਦੇ ਰੁਝੇਵਿਆਂ ‘ਚ ਟਾਈਮ ਕੱਢ ਕੇ ਹਰ ਰੋਜ਼ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਲਈ ਨੀਤੀਆਂ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਇਸ

ਆਰਥਿਕ ਤਰੱਕੀ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਬਰਦਾਸ਼ਤ ਨਾ ਕਰ ਸਕੀ ਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦਾਖਲੇ ਤੇ ਰੋਕ ਲਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਜੋ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਤੇ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਚਾਲਾਂ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਪਤਨੀਆਂ ਤੇ ਬੱਚੇ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਤੇ ਰੋਕ ਲਾ ਦੇਣਾ ਆਦਿ ਚੱਲੀਆਂ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਉਹ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਵਾਪਸ ਚਲੇ ਜਾਣ। ਕਨੇਡਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਪ੍ਰੋ:ਜਸਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ‘ਜਸ’ ਨੇ ਚਰਚਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ, “ਕਨੇਡਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ 9 ਮਈ 1910 ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਨਵਾਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਿਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੇਵਲ ਉਹੋ ਹੀ ਬਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਆਪਣੇ ਦੇਸ਼ ‘ਚ ਸਿੱਧੀ ਟਿਕਟ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਆਉਣ ਅਤੇ 200 ਡਾਲਰ ਨਕਦ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਿਆਉਣ। ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਪਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਚੀਨ ਨਾਲ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਪੱਧਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਥੋਂ ਦੇ ਵਸਨੀਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੁਝ ਰਿਆਇਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਫਲਸਰੂਪ ਸੰਨ 1911 ਵਿੱਚ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਅੰਦਰ 1932 ਚੀਨੀ ਅਤੇ 2986 ਜਾਪਾਨੀ ਦਾਖਲ ਹੋਏ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੇਵਲ ਇੱਕ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਵਿਚ ਉਤਰਨ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ।”

ਕਨੇਡਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੀਤੀ ਇਸ ਵਧੀਕੀ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਹ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਏ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਦੇਸ਼ ਭਗਤੀ ਦੀ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਜਾਗ੍ਰਿਤ ਹੋਈ। ਕਨੇਡਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਲਾਗੂ ਕੀਤੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਦਾਖਲਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਅਸੰਭਵ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਲੋਕ ਕਲਕੱਤਾ, ਸਿੰਘਾਪੁਰ, ਹਾਂਗਕਾਂਗ ਆਦਿ ਬੰਦਰਗਾਹਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਰੁਲ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਲਾਲਚੀ ਏਜੰਟਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਾਰ-ਵਾਰ ਧੱਕੇ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ।

ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੋ ਕਿ ਸਿਰਤੀ ਤੇ ਮਿਹਨਤੀ ਇਨਸਾਨ ਸਨ, ਵਪਾਰੀ ਤੇ ਠੇਕੇਦਾਰ ਵਜੋਂ ਮਲਾਇਆ ਵਿਚ 1913 ਈ: ਤੋਂ ਕੰਮ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ, ਜਨਵਰੀ 1914 ਦੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਰੋਬਾਰ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਹਾਂਗਕਾਂਗ ਗਏ। ਜਦੋਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਉਥੋਂ ਦੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਗਏ ਤਾਂ

ਉਥੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੈਂਕੜਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਮਿਲੇ ਜੋ ਕੇਨੈਡਾ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਟਿਕਟਾਂ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਉਥੇ ਠਹਿਰੇ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ । ਕੇਸਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਨਾਵਲ ‘ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ’ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ , “ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਹਾਲਤ ਦੇਖ ਕੇ ਭਰਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਵਿਚ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਤ੍ਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਵਾਂਗਾ । ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਚਾਰਟਰ ਕਰਾਇਆ । ਜਦ ਆਪ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੀਆਂ ਤਿਆਰੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਨ ਤਾਂ ਪੁਲਸ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਹਟਣਾ ਪਿਆ । ਆਪ ਨੂੰ ਪਸੰਜਰ ਸਰਟੀਫਿਕੇਟ ਲੈਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਭੀ ਤਕਲੀਫਾਂ ਝਲਦਿਆਂ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਪੰਜ ਛੇ ਰੋਜ਼ ਹਾਂਗਕਾਂਗ ਠੈਹਰਨਾ ਪਿਆ । ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਹਾਂਗਕਾਂਗ ਗਵਰਨਮਿੰਟ ਨੂੰ ਵੀਹ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਡਾਲਰ ਰੋਜ਼ ਦਾ ਹਰਜ਼ਾਨੇ ਦਾ ਨੋਟਸ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਰਹੇ । ਕਲੋਨੀਅਲ ਸੈਕਰੇਟਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਲਈ ਸਰਟੀਫਿਕੇਟ ਦੇਣਾ ਹੀ ਪਿਆ । ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਤੁਰਨ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਇੱਕ ਅਜੀਬ ਨਜ਼ਾਰਾ ਸੀ । ਫੌਜੀ ਵਤਜੇ , ਸਪਾਹੀ ਤੇ ਕਈ ਫੌਜੀ ਕੰਪਨੀਆਂ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਸਨ । ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੇ ਸਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ ਤੇ ਅਲੀ ਅਲੀ ਦੇ ਨਾਹਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਲਾਮੀ ਨਾਲ ਕੂਚ ਕੀਤਾ ।” 3

ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਜਾਪਾਨੀ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਤੋਂ ਛੇ ਮਹੀਨੇ , 11 ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਡਾਲਰ ਮਹੀਨਾ ਕਿਰਾਏ ਤੇ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ । ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਿਸਦਾ ਨਾਂ ‘ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਹਾਜ਼’ ਰੱਖਿਆ, ਹਾਂਗਕਾਂਗ , ਸ਼ਾਈ , ਮੋਜੀ , ਯੋਕੋਹਾਮਾ ਆਦਿ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ ਲੈਂਦਾ ਹੋਇਆਂ 376 ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਸਹਿਤ 21 ਮਈ 1914 ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਮ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਕਟੋਰੀਆ ਦੀ ਜੂਹ ਵਿਚ ਦਾਖਲ ਹੋਇਆਂ । ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਆਉਣ ਦੀ ਖਬਰ ਕਈ ਦਿਨ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਕੇਨੈਡਾ ਤੇ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਅਖਬਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਛਪਣ ਨਾਲ ਦੂਰ ਨੇੜਿਓਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਸਵਾਗਤ ਲਈ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਪੁੱਜ ਗਏ ਸਨ , ਪਰੰਤੂ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਨਾ ਲੱਗਣ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਥੇ ਉਤਰਨ ਦਿੱਤਾ । ਕਨੇਡਾ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਬੰਦਰਗਾਹ ਉੱਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੱਗਣ ਦੇਣਾ । ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਇਮੀਗਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਐਕਟ ਦੀ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਧਾਰਾ , ਇਸ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਤੱਟ ਤੇ ਉਤਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ

ਰੋਕ ਸਕਦੀ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਦੇ ਰਖਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਹ ਨਾ ਕੀਤੀ । ਕੋਈ ਪੇਸ਼ ਨਾ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਦੇਖ ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਬ੍ਰਾਜੀਲ ਲੈ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਰਾਹਦਾਰੀ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੀਤੀ , ਉਹ ਵੀ ਠੁਕਰਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ । ਪ੍ਰੋ : ਕੁਲਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਚਰਚਾ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ , “ਕੇਨੈਡਾ ਵਾਸੀ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਵੀ ਚਿੰਤਾਤੁਰ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ, 31 ਮਈ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਵਿਖੇ ਇੱਕ ਆਮ ਜਲਸਾ ਹੋਇਆਂ । ਭਾਈ ਬਲਵੰਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਅਪੀਲ ਉੱਤੇ ਉਸੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਸੱਠ ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਡਾਲਰ ਇਕੱਠਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ । ਪੰਦਰਾਂ ਆਦਮੀਆਂ ਦੀ ‘ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਕਮੇਟੀ’ ਬਣਾਈ ਗਈ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਰਕਮ ਉਸਦੇ ਫੰਡ ਵਿਚ ਜਮ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰਵਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ । ਮਤੇ ਪਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜੇ ਗਏ ਅਤੇ ਅਨੇਕਾਂ ਪਾਸਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਰਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ । ਅਮਰੀਕਾ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ‘ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ’ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਹੇਠ ਥਾਂ-ਥਾਂ ਜਲਸੇ ਹੋਏ ਅਤੇ ਉਗਰਾਹੀਆਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ । ‘ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ’ ਅਖਬਾਰ ਨੇ ਉਚੇਚਾ ‘ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ’ ਨੰਬਰ ਛਾਪਿਆਂ।” 4

ਲਗਭਗ ਦੋ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਤੱਕ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਦੀ ਬੰਦਰਗਾਹ ਤੇ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਰਿਹਾ । ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਾਸ਼ਨ ਪਾਣੀ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਸੀ । ਇਹਨਾਂ ਮੁਸੀਬਤਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਖਬਰਾਂ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਗਈਆਂ ਸਨ ਤੇ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਰਿਸ਼ਵਤਾਂ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਤੱਕ ਰਾਸ਼ਨ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਹੁੰਚਾ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਬਚਾਇਆ । ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਰਵ ਸੰਮਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਖਰਚਾ ਦੇ ਦੇਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਚਲੇ ਜਾਣਗੇ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਕਨੇਡਾਸਰਕਾਰ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਕੋਝੀਆਂ ਹਰਕਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਜ਼ ਨਾ ਆਈ, ਉਸਨੇ ‘ਸਮੁੰਦਰੀ ਸ਼ੇਰ’ ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੰਗੀ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਡੇਢ ਦੋ ਸੌ ਹਥਿਆਰਬੰਦ ਗੋਰੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਧੱਕਣ ਲਈ ਭੇਜੇ । ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਕੋਲਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਬੁਛਾੜ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੱਜਣ ਲਈ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ । ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭਜਾ ਕੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੇ ‘ਸਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ’ ਦੇ ਨਾਹਰੇ ਲਾਉਣੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਤੇ ਉਧਰ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਵਿਚ ਰਹਿ ਰਹੇ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਚੇਤਾਵਨੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਅੱਗ ਦੀ ਭੇਟ ਕਰ ਦੇਣਗੇ । ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਡਰਦੀ

ਹੋਈ ਕਨੇਡਾ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਤੋਂ ਹਾਂਗਕਾਂਗ ਤਕ ਦਾ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਰਾਸ਼ਨ ਦੇਣਾ ਮੰਨ ਗਈ । ਅੰਤ 23 ਜੁਲਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਦੋ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਵੈਨਕੂਵਰ ਦੀ ਜੂਹ ਤੇ ਠਹਿਰ ਕੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਾਪਸ ਤੁਰ ਪਿਆ ।

ਸਾਨਫਰਾਂਸਿਸਕੋ ਵਿਚ ਜਦੋਂ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੇ ਆਗੂਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਤਾ ਲੱਗਾ ਕਿ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਾਪਸ ਦੇਸ਼ ਪਰਤ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਸੋਹਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਭਕਨਾ ਛੇਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਛੇਤੀ ਯੋਕੋਹਾਮਾ ਪੁੱਜ ਕੇ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰੋਗਰਾਮ ਸਮਝਾਉਣ । ਉਹ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਾਢੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਸੌ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਬੁਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਤੇ ਹੋਏ ਹਨ, ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਥੇਬੰਦਕ ਲੀਹਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਤੋਰਿਆਂ, ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਗ਼ਦਰ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਤਾਕਤ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ । ਸੋ ਭਕਨਾ ਹੋਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰਾ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਗੋਲੀ ਸਿੱਕਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਤੇਜ਼ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਯੋਕੋਹਾਮਾ ਭੇਜ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਚੀਜ਼ਾਂ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਗਈਆਂ ।

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਯੁੱਧ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਸੀ । ਅੱਗੇ ਪੇਸ਼ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਖਤਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਕਦਿਆਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਸਾਰਾ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਭਕਨਾ ਜੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਸਲੂ ਸਮੁੰਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਸੁੱਟਵਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ । 26 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਕਲਕੱਤੇ ਤੋਂ 70 ਮੀਲ ਦੀ ਦੂਰੀ ਤੇ ਸੀ ਤਾਂ ਇੱਕ ਅਗਨ ਬੋਟ ਨੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਆ ਰੋਕਿਆਂ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇੱਕ ਗੋਰਾ ਅਫਸਰ ਉਤਰ ਕੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆ । ਉਸ ਨੇ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੀ ਤਲਾਸ਼ੀ ਲਈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਗੈਰ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਚੀਜ਼ ਨਾ ਮਿਲੀ । ਉਹ ਅਫਸਰ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਉਤੇ ਲੱਗੇ ਝੰਡੇ ਜਿਸ ਉਤੇ ਸਤਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਕਾਲ, ਅੱਲਾ ਹੂ ਅਕਬਰ ਅਤੇ ਬੰਦੇ ਮਾਤਰਮ ਲਿਖਿਆਂ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਖਫਾ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਤੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਘੱਟ ਵੱਧ ਬੋਲਿਆ ।

29 ਸਤੰਬਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਗੇ ਤੁਰਨ ਦੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਪਰ ਕਲਕੱਤੇ ਪੁੱਜਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਬਜ ਬਜ ਘਾਟ ਉਤੇ ਰੁਕਣ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ । ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਜ ਬਜ ਘਾਟ ਤੇ ਉਤਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਨਾਂਹ ਕੀਤੀ

ਤਾਂ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਅਫਸਰਾਂ ਵਲੋਂ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਧੂਹ-ਧੂਹ ਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਉਤਾਰਿਆਂ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗਾ । ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਜੋ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਬੀੜ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰ ਉਤੇ ਚੁੱਕ ਕੇ ਤੁਰ ਪਏ । ਉਹਨਾਂ ਪਲੇਟਫਾਰਮ ਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਬੀੜ ਨੂੰ ਬਿਰਾਜਮਾਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਤੇ ਚਾਰ-ਚੁਫੇਰੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ ਬੈਠ ਗਏ । ਪੁਲਿਸ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚਿਤਾਵਨੀ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਛੇਤੀ ਤੋਂ ਛੇਤੀ ਗੱਡੀ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠ ਜਾਣ । ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਦਲੀਲਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ ਕਿ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਲਕੱਤੇ ਜਾਣਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਨੇ ਇੱਕ ਨਾ ਮੰਨੀ । ਅੰਤ ਉਹ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਹ ਨਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਕਲਕੱਤੇ ਵਾਲੀ ਸੜਕ ਪੈ ਗਏ । ਪ੍ਰੋ : ਕੁਲਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਲਿਖਿਆਂ ਹੈ ਕਿ, “ਬੰਗਾਲ ਦੇ ਚੀਫ ਸਕੱਤਰ ਨੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਭਰੋਸਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਬਜ ਬਜ ਘਾਟ ਤੇ ਚਲੇ ਜਾਣ ਤਾਂ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕੋਈ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਕੱਢਿਆਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ । ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ ਵਾਪਸ ਚਲੇ ਗਏ ਤੇ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਘਾਟ ਉਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਬੀੜ ਸੁਸ਼ੋਭਿਤ ਕੀਤੀ । ਰਹਿਰਾਸ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਗਤ ਅਜੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਹੀ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਅਫਸਰ ਡਾਂਗ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਸੰਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਵੜਿਆਂ । ਸ. ਟਹਿਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਪਾਸੇ ਡਾਂਗ ਖੋਹ ਲਈ ਤੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਹੋ ਲੈਣ ਦਿਉ ਫਿਰ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਕਰਾਂਗੇ । ਪਰ ਰੋਹ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਅਫਸਰ ਨੇ ਪਿਸਤੌਲ ਕੱਢ ਕੇ ਗੋਲੀ ਚਲਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਠਾਕਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜ਼ਖਮੀ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ । ਸ. ਮੁਨਸ਼ਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਉਸੇ ਦੀ ਪਿਸਤੌਲ ਖੋਹ ਕੇ ਪੁਲਿਸ ਅਫਸਰ ਨੂੰ ਜ਼ਖਮੀ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ । ਗੋਰੀ ਫੌਜ ਨੇ ਗੋਲੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਮੀਂਹ ਵਰ੍ਹਾਉਣਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰ ਮਾਰੇ ਗਏ । ਗੋਲੀ ਚੱਲਣ ਸਮੇਂ ਪਈ ਹਫੜਾ ਦਫੜੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਦੌੜ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਕਿਹਾ ਪਰ ਬਾਬਾ ਜੀ ਉਥੇ ਹੀ ਬਾਕੀ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਪਰੰਤੂ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਪਾਉਣ ਨਾਲ ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਉਥੇ ਭੱਜ ਨਿਕਲੇ।”

ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਦੀ ਘਟਨਾ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸਥਾਨ ਰੱਖਦੀ ਹੈ । ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾ ਨੇ ਜਿੱਥੇ ਭਾਰਤੀਆਂ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਕਰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਲਈ ਜੋਸ਼ ਤੇ ਉਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਭਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ, ਉਥੇ ਹੀ ਗ਼ਦਰੀ ਨੇਤਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਬ੍ਰਿਟਿਸ਼ ਰਾਜ ਸਮਾਪਤ ਕਰਕੇ

ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਇਰਾਦੇ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਟ ਵਾਂਗ ਪੱਕਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਰੋਲ ਅਦਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਸ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਘਟਨਾ ਦੇ ਸੌ ਸਾਲ ਪੂਰਾ ਹੋਣ ਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਾਮਾਗਾਟਾ ਮਾਰੂ ਜਹਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਮੁਸਾਫਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਗੁਰਦਿੱਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਬਹਾਦਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਲਾਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਉਹਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸੱਚੀ ਸਰਧਾਂਜਲੀ ਅਰਪਣ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ।

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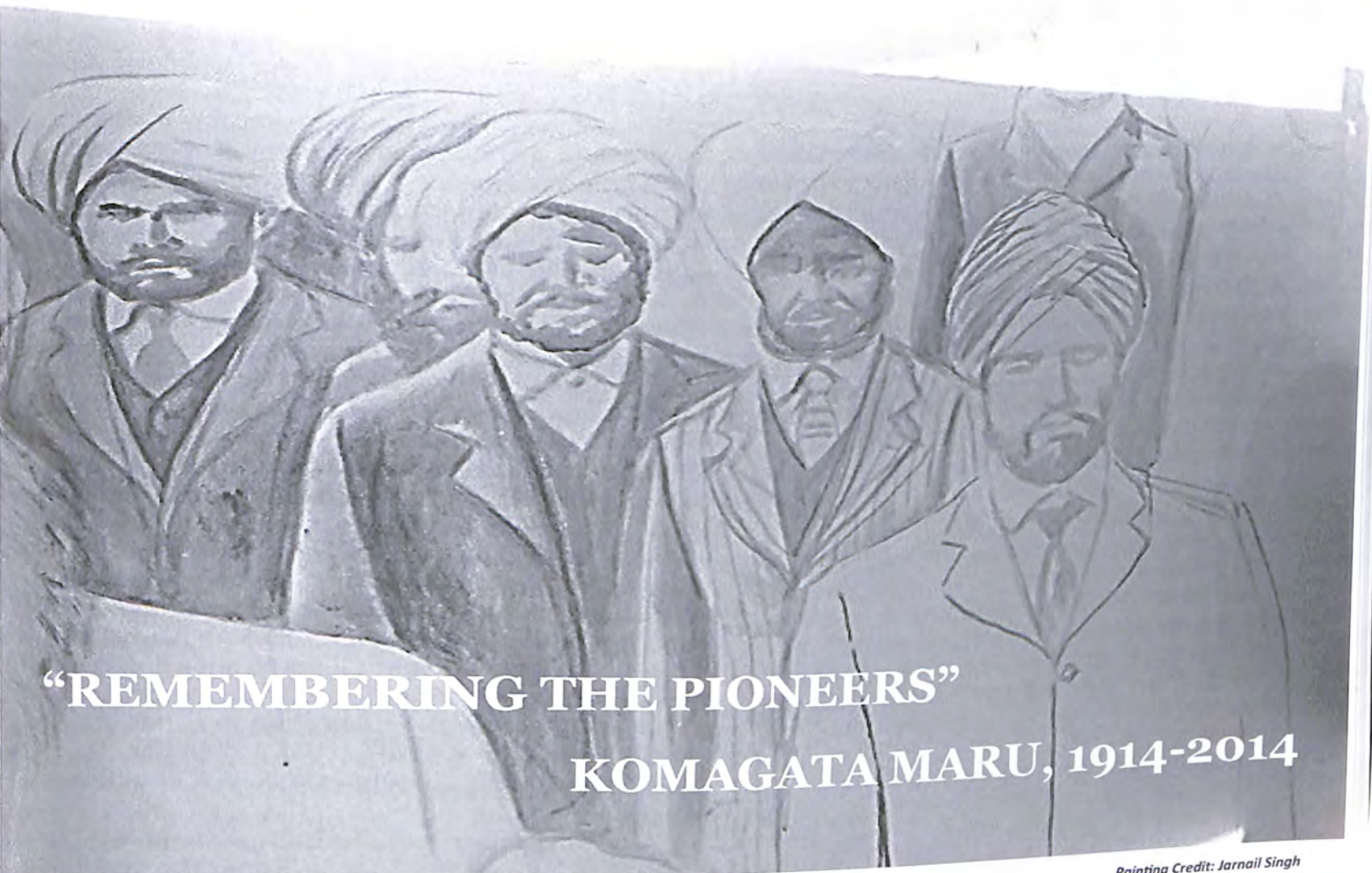
Komagata Maru 94th Anniversary Dinner, Panel Discussion.



Komagata Maru Remembrance Anniversary at the Plaque, Portal Park, Vancouver.



Komagata Maru Remembrance Walk, Stanley Park



“REMEMBERING THE PIONEERS”

KOMAGATA MARU, 1914-2014

Painting Credit: Jarnail Singh



“ON BEHALF OF THE CANADIAN FARMWORKERS UNION, WE’RE PLEASED TO SEE CANADA RECOGNIZE THOSE WHO FOUGHT FOR EQUALITY. FOR THE PAST 30 YEARS, CFU ADVOCATED FOR FARMWORKERS TO BE GRANTED EQUAL RIGHTS IN THE WORKPLACE. THROUGH LOBBYING AND GRASSROOTS ACTIVISM, WE IMPLEMENTED PRACTICAL STEPS TO IMPROVE THEIR WORKING CONDITIONS. WE WORKED TIRELESSLY TO END LEGISLATIVE DISCRIMINATION TOWARDS FARMWORKERS AND THE RACIST COLONIAL EMPIRE DURING THAT TIME.

TODAY, OUR COLLECTIVE EFFORTS HAVE COME INTO REALITY. AS A SYMBOL, CANADA POST’S STAMP HONOURS THE 376 PASSENGERS WHO WERE ON KOMAGATA MARU, AS OUR PIONEERS WHO FOUGHT FOR EQUALITY. WE HOPE THAT WE WORK TOGETHER TO CONTINUE THEIR LEGACY.”

- CHARAN GILL, SECRETARY TREASURER



A National Historic Site of Canada – The Gur Sikh Temple, Abbotsford (est. 1911)

By: Satwinder Bains

There is a unique Canadian National Historic Site, located on South Fraser Way in Abbotsford, British Columbia called The Gur Sikh Gurdwara (temple), designated as such by Prime Minister Jean Chretien on July 31, 2002. A hundred year old religious institution of the Sikhs, built by struggling South Asian pioneers (building started in 1908); this Gurdwara is a testament to the pride, vision and steadfastness of a pioneer community at the turn of the last century.

Today the grand old Gurdwara is restored to its former glory by the governing body, The Khalsa Diwan Society Abbotsford, B.C. Parks Canada's news release in 2002 stated:

The Sikh Temple is the oldest surviving example of the temples which formed the religious, social and political centre of pioneer Canadian Sikh communities. Architecturally, it is an adaptation of traditional Sikh forms to Canadian conditions which nevertheless embodies the fundamental beliefs of Sikhs and their early experience as immigrants in Canada.¹

Ninety years earlier, on Feb 26, 1912, amidst much pomp and ceremony the same Sikh Gurdwara was declared open in Abbotsford, BC., and many Sikhs and non-Sikhs from all over British Columbia came to take part in the opening ceremonies. Its outward form, a wood frame building with a false front and a gabled roof, was similar to many buildings in many Canadian frontier towns. However, its interior reflected Sikh traditions and religious beliefs. There were two floors in the Gurdwara: the second floor prayer room housed the sacred text, the Siri Guru Granth Sahib ji, and provided an open space for worshippers to sit, cross-legged on the carpet. The ground floor contained a kitchen and a dining hall where the langar (a vegetarian communal meal) was prepared by the community and eaten, affirming the equality of all those who partake of it, sitting side by side. The Abbotsford Post reported on March 1, 1912 that the members of the congregation "were much impressed with the highly intelligent address delivered by Priest (Sant) Teja Singh, who spoke in his native tongue and in English."² The newspaper reported that the non-Sikh community present also observed the requirement to remove their shoes before entering the Gurdwara and covering their head with a scarf.

The first Sikhs had arrived in the Fraser Valley in 1905 from the frontier northwest province of Punjab in India and settled in the valley by working on farms and in the forestry industry. Soon after, in 1908, local Sikhs started to build a Sikh Gurdwara displaying a true community effort, under the auspices of the Khalsa Diwan Society. It would take them four years of hard work and great commitment – both financial and physical to finish building it. The project was spearheaded by Sunder Singh Thandi, who along with Arjan Singh purchased a one acre property on a prominent hill adjacent to the mill at Mill Lake where about fifty or so Sikh men worked. These men and others who worked on the farms in the area used to carry local timber donated by the Tretheway family's Abbotsford Lumber Company on their backs up the hill from Mill Lake to the Gurdwara site. The foundation stone was laid by Bhai Balwant Singh and Bhai Ram Singh Dhuleta. Records show that in 1910 the Abbotsford Post carried advertisements calling for tenders for steam heating for the Gurdwara. The Gurdwara was completed in 1911 and officially opened in the New Year for religious services and community gatherings.

On November 16, 1918 the symbolic and significant marker the Nishan Sahib (flagpole) was erected to carry the Sikh flag - it stood 70 feet high and was trimmed from one tree. In 1957, this flagpole was removed due to the encroachment of the new road and was replaced with a metal one. This flagpole was a gift from Mrs. Hernam Kaur Thandi of Sumas Prairie. The Gurdwara fulfilled many needs of the young immigrant community – it met their religious needs, their ability to congregate, and to provide assistance, free food and shelter to those in need. At that time due to settlement hardships and discriminatory laws that severely restricted immigration from India, this was a bachelor society made up of men who worked long, hard hours to financially support themselves and family members back in India. It wouldn't be until July 30th, 1918 before the Canadian Government received word from the British Ministry of Information that the Indians already permanently domiciled in other British countries would be allowed to bring in their wives and children. However, the first wives would not arrive until 1921 and in that year the first Indo-Canadian child was born in the town. The community survived tremendous hardships because it was built on a foundation of strong kinship ties and was closely knit with many members of the community related to each other.

As the only early Sikh Gurdwara that has survived

¹ Kerry Edmonds, Officer of the Minister of Canadian Heritage. Date Modified 2013-09-26

² The Abbotsford Post Vol IV, No. 17 Opening of the Hindoo Temple Friday March 1 1912

intact in Canada and in fact, as the oldest still standing and designated Sikh Gurdwara in the Americas, the Abbotsford Gur Sikh Temple has become imbued with symbolism. For the Sikh community today the Gurdwara is a gift bestowed upon them by the visionary pioneers. It signifies their sacrifices, their perseverance against many odds and their resilience to carve out a permanent place for themselves and their families. The South Asian community members today consider it their duty to preserve the site for future generations. The Gurdwara is an important touchstone to their past; its preservation also represents one of the first steps taken in documenting the history of the Sikhs in Canada. In 2002, the Khalsa Diwan Society, Abbotsford asked the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, Canada to consider this Gurdwara for National Historic Site designation. In July 2002, the Society received notice of the official designation of the Gur Sikh Temple as a National Historic Site of Canada. On the day of the designation many community members, politicians and dignitaries from far and near Abbotsford came to the site to pay homage to the pioneering effort. A grand stage was set up outside the Gur Sikh Temple where the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Jean Chretien and Minister of Heritage Sheila Copps were joined by Mr. George Ferguson, the Mayor of Abbotsford. It was on this day, 31st July of 2002, that Prime Minister Jean Chretien declared the Gur Sikh Temple as the Canadian National Historic Site.

Identifying buildings and structures of special interest lies at the heart of The Ministry Canadian Heritage, and designation consideration is always given with great care and thought. Once the Gur Sikh Temple was declared a National Historic Site of Canada in 2002, a Committee was struck to put into place the planning needed for the preservation, renovation and modernization of the structure of the Gurdwara. It took nearly five years to bring the Gurdwara to its original heritage state, requiring a significant amount of resources. The Committee went ahead and applied for support. A feasibility study and budget estimates were completed and a target of \$1,750,000 was set to be achieved. The government looked at the budget and gave their feed back to the committee by revising the budget down to \$1,250,000 with a proposal to put in 50% as a grant. In turn, the community committed to raising the other 50% in order to bring the total to \$1,250,000.00 to complete the renovations.

Meanwhile, the Committee began the uphill task of the actual renovations. As the renovations began, it was soon discovered that one side of the Gurdwara was sinking because it had been built upon a large amount of sawdust. To salvage the situation, the Committee had to hire professionals to lift the building up and remove the decaying sawdust out from

the ground underneath. In addition, it was further discovered that most of the parking lot was in a similar situation - the lot was sinking. This was due in part to the early days when on Sundays, many members of the community who had sawdust trucks brought in saw dust to fill the pond that was to become the parking lot.

Three additions to the structure of the original Gurdwara were also made over time and had to be removed. Such expansions were also built on sawdust requiring the renovators to dig for thirteen to fourteen feet, and subsequently refilling it with gravel, sand and petron. The Gur Sikh Temple was fortunate to have many members of the community who were truck owners and much work was done free of cost through the Sikh concept of seva. By the time the Gurdwara had been restored to its original glory, project costs had reached \$2,500,000, partly because of such unforeseen costs. But it had been spent for a very good cause as the site of the Gur Sikh Temple was now able to withstand the elements for another hundred years as a symbol of pride in the community.

Large scale celebrations to honor the newly restored Gurdwara were held on April 1, 2007. Community members, leaders, and dignitaries joined the Premier of British Columbia Gordon Campbell, in recognizing the newly renovated Gur Sikh Temple as a National Historic Site of Canada.

There were many who worked labouriously in order to make that historic day of April 1, 2007, a reality. One of them was Mr. Nachittar Singh Sangha, who became the elected President of the Khalsa Diwan Society, Abbotsford in 1998. With the support of the Khalsa Diwan Society, Abbotsford, Nachittar Singh and the Committee realized the community's desire to bring the Gur Sikh Temple back to its pristine glory as it had now been declared a National Historic Site of Canada.

The two horses with soldiers now displayed proudly on the Gur Sikh Temple grounds also play a significant part in the history of Sikh migration into British Columbia. The statues are symbolic in their own right as they represented the very first Sikhs who travelled to British Columbia. These soldiers were on an official trip as part of the Hong Kong army regiment, traveling through Canada on their way to England to take part in King Edward's coronation ceremony in 1902. After the celebration it appears that these Sikh soldiers came across Canada on horsebacks on their way back to Hong Kong travelling through British Columbia. Due to the historical significance of the Sikh soldiers on horses, the Gurdwara committee wanted these statues displaying our history as symbolic markers at the Gur Sikh Temple, as was earlier done at the Khalsa Diwan Society, Ross Street Gurdwara in Vancouver.

On August 28, 2011 the Honourable Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the Premier of BC Christy Clark, Abbotsford Mayor George Peary and the community

celebrated and commemorated the centennial of the Gurdwara (1911-2011). A significant day in the history of the National Historic Site was fittingly celebrated with a week-long of activities and a nagar kirtan in the city that thousands attended. A permanent marker has been erected in homage to the community effort in maintaining this site.

On this day the first Sikh Heritage Museum in Canada was officially opened by the Prime Minister. The Museum is a partnership between Khalsa Diwan Society, Abbotsford, the Centre for Indo Canadian Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley and the Reach Gallery and Museum, Abbotsford. The partners

undertook to curate exhibitions on the pioneer history of the community, religious and social events that mark the community's heritage and contemporary stories. The Museum has held six exhibitions since 2011 which have been archived and can be viewed at www.canadiansikhheritage.ca. The Museum is open to the public and has received visitors from all over the world who have shown their appreciation about the preservation of this religious site. The National Historic Site has withstood the test of time and its place in our country's history has been established.



Gur Sikh Temple, Abbotsford BC.

Remembering the Komagata Maru Incident...A Century Later

By: Kanwal Singh Neel



It is our past that informs us about the present that shapes our future. No single event in Canadian history better characterizes or symbolizes the Indo-Canadian experience of exclusion than the *Komagata Maru* Incident of 1914. It is a reminder to Canadians that we need to commit to an open society in which mutual respect and understanding are honoured, differences are respected, and traditions are cherished.

In 1989, to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the *Komagata Maru* Incident, I had the pleasure of coordinating a number of events on behalf of Khalsa Diwan Society at 8000 Ross Street, Vancouver. These events included a photo exhibition, food bank drive, unveiling of plaques at the Gurdwara and Portal Park at 1099 W Hastings Street in Vancouver. All levels of Government released proclamations to acknowledge and commemorate the Incident. Since then, there have been many events held annually by different organizations to remember the Incident.

The 1914 incident of the *Komagata Maru* (Guru Nanak Jahaz) ship is one of the most tragic and shameful events in Canadian history. Bhai Gurdit Singh had chartered a Japanese freighter (*Komagata Maru*) to fulfill the Canadian Government requirements of a "continuous voyage" and "\$200 per head". On May 23, 1914 the ship arrived in Vancouver. Obsessed with racial bigotry, determined to keep Canada all white, the government flouted every norm of social justice and kept the ship-load of 376 Indian immigrants (12 Hindus, 24 Muslims and 340 Sikhs) from landing. These immigrants, though they were British subjects, they were denied entry into Canada. For two full months the ship stood in the Burrard Inlet, its passengers suffering from hunger, thirst and humiliation. On the morning of July 23, *Komagata Maru* with 353 passengers onboard was finally pushed

out of the Canadian waters with the powerful guns of the Canadian Naval vessel H.M.C.S. Rainbow pointing at it. On return to India nineteen of the passengers were killed by gunfire upon disembarkation and many others were imprisoned.

Like the issue of the Chinese Head tax, the internment of Japanese Canadians during the Second World War, the residential experience for the Aboriginals, the *Komagata Maru* Incident needs to be recognized as a historical event for all Canadians. This recognition needs to be included as part of the Canadian History taught in the schools.

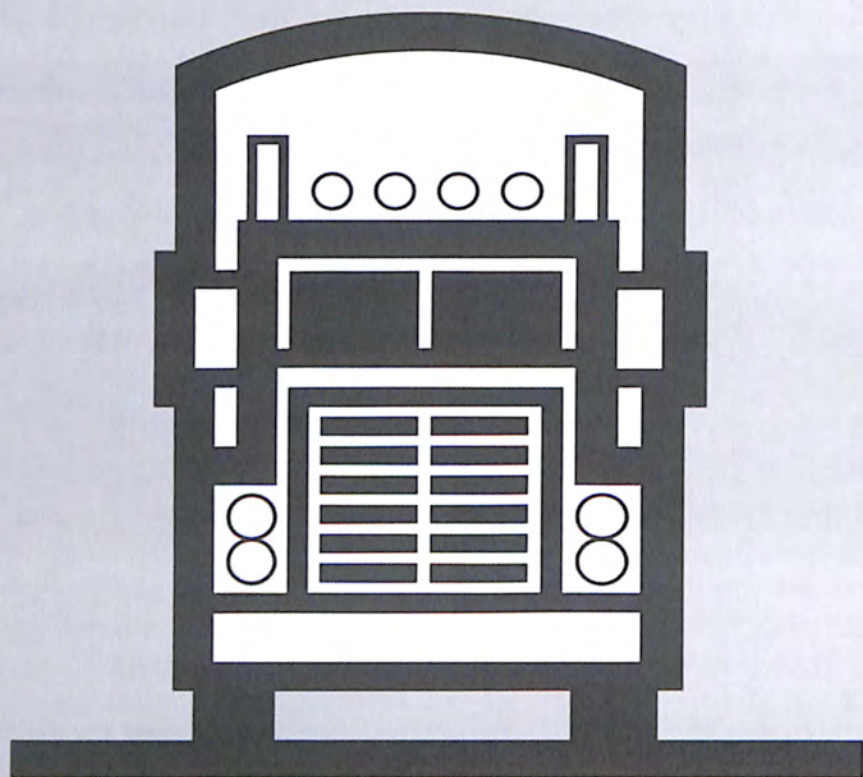
Simon Fraser University has created a comprehensive portal in the shape of a digital museum at <http://komagatamarujourney.ca> to commemorate the *Komagata Maru* Incident in a unique way. This has been done through digitized content, interviews of key scholars and community members, short videos and learning modules. As a contributor and advisor for this project I believe it is important to contextualize the *Komagata Maru* Incident through a variety of perspectives and see how the ripples of that "incident" still affect us today.

I believe it is important to look back in history and celebrate the achievements of Sikhs in Canada. It reminds the youth and new immigrants of our rich heritage and how the Sikhs helped shape the present day Canada with its Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Even today, we hear about incidents of racial discrimination, so we constantly need to remind ourselves of the past, be proactive in the present, and be vigilant so that in the future we don't re-visit a time when there was open exclusion and discrimination.



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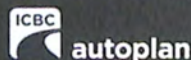
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Komagata Maru - A Significant Event in Modern Sikh History

By: Kal Dosanjh

The Sikh history is full of colorful examples of brave souls fighting for freedom, justice and equality. We forged our communal persona and cultural psyche from the innumerable sacrifices made by those who came before us. Our convictions, will and resolve became even stronger with the martyrdom of our Gurus. As a people, we learned to persevere and survive against oppression, prejudice and inequality. Centuries have passed, yet the fight continued. The rulers and tyrants changed, but the battle remained the same. This time it was the British Empire, and the story was of the Komagata Maru.

At the height of their power, the British remarked "The Sun will never set on the British Empire". Geographically and politically, they had established themselves as a global super power. Their colonialist policies and imperialist rule spread from North America to Africa, to Asia. They would assimilate the population of these new lands, and ingrain in them the doctrine of British rule. Namely, these "slaves" were there to serve their British masters. As with all fundamental human nature, the rulers sought money, power and control. India was rich with natural resources, including manpower. These resources will pillaged and distributed throughout the British Kingdom across the world, thereby securing and tightening British rule.

Part of the charm of these rulers was convincing the population it was being done for "their own

good". Little did these people know that the Sun had set on them long ago. Imagine being told of lands rich with clean flowing water, rich soils and majestic mountains, and now imagine being told that you can go there because you are under that ruler's domain. And now imagine getting there and being turned back because you come to the sober realization that you are not 'equal' to them. In addition to the clothes and basic amenities these men and boys packed into their bundle, they also packed memories, hopes and dreams. To have all of these shattered because of a largely racist belief system practicing systemic discrimination through corrupt laws and policies, was unbearable.

These individuals did not go just for themselves, but selflessly embraced the unknown for the sake of their families and future generations to come. They were pioneers willing to sacrifice themselves in building the road to a brighter future. The journey ended even before it started when their ship was turned around. For the majority of society, it's just a blip on the radar screen, and a mere sliver of history. But for those of Sikh heritage, this was a defining moment which shaped our people and put us on the road to redemption. I'm sitting here today, writing this article, only a few kilometers away from where their ship was turned around. Their dream is still alive.



Baba Gurdit Singh with Jawaharlal Nehru.

The History of: Anti-Asian Discrimination

By: Dr. Henry Yu

Anti-Asian discrimination was not a single incident. It was not a "mistake" made by a few angry racists. Laws such as the "Continuous Journey" legislation of 1908 that directly led to the Komagata Maru incident of 1914 were a deliberate part of a well organized, widespread campaign that targeted non-whites. Chinese Canadians, Japanese Canadians, Indo-Canadians, and migrants from South Asia and Asia in general, along with First Nations and aboriginal peoples upon whose territory we now live--all of these were systematically deprived of the ability to vote, to own certain pieces of land, to live in certain places, to work in certain industries. This was not the result of the work of a few people, but took concerted organization over many decades, and it left a legacy of discriminatory laws and social exclusion that we still have not completely overcome.

As we mark the 100th Anniversary of the events of 1914, we need to remember that it was only the beginning of more than half a century of systematic exclusion from Canada of migrants from India and South Asia. That long period of exclusion meant that the established community that already existed in 1914 was deliberately stunted in its growth, and that the common sense that we still have today that people from India and other parts of South Asia are "late arrivals" to Canada compared to others is actually the direct result of these policies. Canada did not need to exclude non-white immigrants. It did not do so for the first forty years of its existence as a nation. Some people chose to politically organize around the banner of white supremacy and to pass a system of laws to create the systematic deprivation of First Nations and aboriginal peoples and over half a century of racist immigration policy. We live in a better society because other people have struggled to change those laws.

Seven years ago, in 2007, I had the honour of being the Co-Chair of the Anniversaries of Change Steering Committee, a group that had representatives from Chinese Canadian, Japanese Canadian, South Asian Canadian, and First Nations and Aboriginal communities. The committee also had representatives from the labour unions that 100 years before had been the leadership of the anti-Asian riots of 1907. These riots, which are sometimes known as the "Chinatown Riot of 1907," actually began in Bellingham as a systematic attempt using violence to drive out Punjabi Sikh workers from the pulp and lumber mills. The "success" of this vigilante violence led to the organization of anti-Asian riots in Vancouver. On September 7, 1907, a large rally was organized that

led to anti-Asian violence lasting two days targeting the Chinese Canadian and Japanese Canadian communities of Vancouver.

We were fortunate in 2007 to have Bill Saunders, the President at the time of the Vancouver District Labour Council (VDLC), as one of the Co-Chairs of the Anniversaries of Change Steering Committee. The VDLC was the direct descendant of the organization of labour unions that organized the 1907 riots, and one of the primary goals of the Steering Committee was to acknowledge the role of labour unions in the creation of anti-Asian agitation, but also to recognize the importance of a century of progressive change that had occurred since then. We marked the 60th anniversary of the granting of voting again to non-whites beginning in 1947, and the 40th anniversary of the removal of racial discrimination in immigration laws in 1967, as well as the 10th anniversary of the reversion of Hong Kong to Chinese control, an event that had transformed Vancouver with the arrival of large numbers of Hong Kong Chinese migrants in the 1980s and 1990s, breaking the de facto racial segregation of many Vancouver communities. Bill Saunders, on the behalf of the labour unions of Vancouver, recognized the role of these organizations in organizing anti-Asian discrimination and exclusion a century before, and they pledged to play a key role in the reconciliation process that was still ongoing. At a banquet in Chinatown on September 7, 2007 to mark the 100th anniversary of the riots, with over 800 attendees from Asian Canadian communities, as well as First Nations and aboriginal representatives and from every labour union in Vancouver, the President of the British Columbia Teachers Federation Irene Lanziger pledged to create learning resources for teachers to use so that the anti-Asian riots of 1907, and what led to them as well as what occurred in their aftermath, would never be forgotten. These resources were created by teachers working with the BCTF and The Critical Thinking Consortium, a national non-profit network of teachers, with funding from the Law Foundation of B.C., as well as funds raised from the September 2007 banquet. Called "Pivotal Voices," these resources were completed in 2008 and immediately adopted by over 100 teachers.

We still live in the aftermath of the white supremacy that led to the anti-Asian riots of 1907. As a consequence of the riots, two pieces of legislation--the Hayashi-Lemieux "Gentlemen's Agreement" of 1908 and the Continuous Journey Act of 1908--were implemented to racially exclude migrants from Japan

and India. We mark the 100th anniversary of the voyage of the Komagata Maru in 1914, a deliberate challenge to the racism and exclusion created by the Continuous Journey legislation of 1908. We continue to struggle to overcome the legacies of racism and discrimination that were legalized over a century ago, and although great strides have been made, we can not become complacent that we live now in a world cleansed of their effects. Policies designed to systematically create a system organized around white supremacy such as Indian Residential Schooling and the reserve system--which cannot be separated from the aims of anti-Asian exclusion--continue to have long-standing effects. The struggle to overcome

anti-Asian discrimination should not be separated from other policies which worked in concert with anti-Asian laws.

There are still many who believe that Asians do not quite belong in Canada. When some people use the word "immigrant" to denigrate some people as less deserving of belonging in Canada, the picture of Canada they have in mind has been drawn by a long history of Asian exclusion. But who made our society better? Those who struggled against discrimination and forced Canada to live up to its ideals, or those who wanted to build an unfair society based upon racial hierarchies? Who should we celebrate today?



Baba Balwant Singh with Jawaharlal Nehru.

Performing the Komagata Maru: Theatre and the Work of Memory

By: Anne Murphy

The University of British Columbia joins the region-wide commemoration of the centenary of the Komagata Maru incident in multiple ways, in public, pedagogic, and scholarly terms. One major component of the University's commemoration program is a theatrical event that will be performed in May 2014 (May 3 and 4 at UBC West Point Grey and May 9 in Surrey). The production will present parts of three plays about the Komagata Maru incident by Canadian authors: Sadhu Binning and Sukhwant Hundal's "Sumuṁdarī Sher nāl Ṭakar" (1989; in Punjabi), Sharon Pollock's "The Komagata Maru Incident" (1976; in English), and Ajmer Rode's "Kāmāgāta Mārū" (1984; in Punjabi). Selections of these plays will be combined into a single program designed by UBC Asian Studies professor Anne Murphy to explore how and why we remember the Komagata Maru, and how the creative arts augment and enhance the traditional historical archive. Students in the Department of Theatre and Film at the University of British Columbia will perform short selections from Pollock's play; members of the theatre group "Rangmanch Punjabi Theatre," --led by UBC Asian Studies Ph.D. student Ranbir Johal and Surrey-based director Roopinder Sharma, will perform selections from the two Punjabi plays. The event will be entirely bilingual, in Punjabi and English, through the use of surtitling. On May 3, a scholarly symposium will be held to explore the ways in which theatre represents post-colonial subjectivities and experiences.

Students from Srishti School of Art, Design and Technology in Bangalore, working with artist and Srishti faculty member Raghavendra Rao K.V., have designed and produced multi-media sets/scenography for the plays, visualizing the complex environment for



the plays and the history that they express. They also developed individual and group artistic responses to the history of the Komagata Maru and the plays about them, culminating in an exhibition on December 10, 2013 at Rococo Gallery in downtown Bangalore, where the stage backdrops were also displayed. Srishti student Sohil Bhatia performed an intimate and emotional response to the history of the Komagata Maru at the gallery event.

These theatrical productions will be preceded on May 1 by the Department of Asian Studies' annual Harjit Kaur Sidhu Memorial Program, which brings filmmaker and York University faculty member, Ali Kazimi, to Centre Stage in the New Surrey City Hall to screen and discuss his 2004 film "Continuous Journey," which details the history of the Komagata Maru Incident.

This project emerges out of a partnership among the Departments of Asian Studies and Theatre and Film at the University of British Columbia (Vancouver, B.C.), Srishti School of Art, Design, and Technology (Bangalore), and the community theatre group, Rangmanch Punjabi Theatre (Surrey, B.C.). It is funded by a UBC Hampton Grant and, for the performance in Surrey, a Surrey Arts Grant and Kwantlen Polytechnic University Grant. Funds for the exhibition in Bangalore were provided by the Office of the Vice President for Research and International (UBC). The Harjit Kaur Sidhu Annual Program was established to celebrate the ongoing vibrant life of Punjabi language and culture in B.C., in loving memory of Harjit Kaur Sidhu (nee Gill), devoted wife, mother, and strong advocate for education, Punjabi culture and language, and women's issues. It is maintained through the ongoing generosity of the Sidhu family.



Sea Lion - A Surviving Legacy of the Komagata Maru Incident

By: Jasleen Kaur

I have often thought that the journey of ships can be compared to that of human beings; they change forms, purpose, identities, sometime evolve to a different form so much so that they cannot be identified with their original self anymore. They come in contact with other vessels that will sometimes change their course. And they die most often to be lost into oblivion but some become a part of history forever. And long after they are gone their name and history can evoke powerful emotions and memories.

The Komagata Maru and Sea Lion were two such vessels. The Komagata Maru was built to be a coal carrier but in 1914 it changed form to a different kind of carrier; a carrier of hopes, dreams, and determination of 376 passengers on board. Her passengers were no ordinary travellers for they had a greater purpose.

In 1908, Canada passed the Continuous Journey Regulation, an exclusion law specifically made to stop immigrants from Asia to come to Canada. Indians were British subjects at the time and had fought valiantly in World War I with British armies. Gurdit Singh, a business owner from Hong Kong, was aware of the problems Indians who wanted to immigrate to Canada were facing at the time. He decided to challenge the Continuous Journey Act and open the doors for immigration from India. He left for Vancouver from Hong Kong on April 4, 1914 with 375 passengers.

The ship was never allowed to dock at Vancouver. It was turned away at a time when Canada was accepting massive numbers of immigrants. In 1913 alone 400,000 people immigrated to Canada mostly from Europe. This number has never been surpassed till today.



*Sea Lion in front of Komagata Maru.
Photo provided by SFU Digital Library.*



*The Komagata Maru being escorted by the Sea Lion and HMCS Rainbow.
Photo provided by SFU Digital Library.*

In Vancouver the Komagata Maru had her first brush with another boat, The Sea Lion. In the early morning of July 19, 1914, the Sea Lion, a tug boat, with 35 specially deputized Police Officers armed with rifles and 125 Vancouver police officers, approached Komagata Maru to force the vessel out of the Vancouver Harbour.

The passengers aboard Komagata Maru were ready for a fight. An armed group manning the rail on the Komagata Maru warned to board the tug if she made contact with the Komagata Maru. Sea Lion's captain brought it in close, grappled and then tied on to Komagata Maru. Passengers and police then battled as one man with an axe chopped at Sea Lion's line. Using the tug's pumps and a fire hose, the police opened up with a cold stream of water. The passengers fought back with piles of coal, fire bricks, and scrap metal. The missiles smashed all the windows in the tug, cutting the faces of several men, including the tug's captain. As the police moved to avoid the missiles, the tug listed dangerously as men shouted for order and to pull away. Finally, as a gunman aboard the ship opened fire on the tug, the line was cut and the tug retreated.

Their second and final meeting happened when the ship finally sailed on July 23, 1914, escorted by HMCS Rainbow and Sea Lion.

The Komagata Maru incident was a painful and dark incident in Canadian history; it had powerful ripple effects both in Canada and India. The Indian freedom movement intensified all over the world. In Canada Indian immigrants were forced to question their identity and status in Canada and many left to join the freedom struggle in India. The Ghadar Movement in North America gained momentum.

As we witness the 100 year anniversary of the incident we see a multicultural Canada with a thriving immigrant community. This was a dream our pioneers saw as they set on the journey aboard the Komagata Maru.

When the Sea Lion was put on sale in 2005; the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation bought it as an educational resource about the incident. It was a proud moment for the South Asian Community in Canada. Members of the Foundation were thrilled that they could contribute to keep the incident alive for our future generations in a big way. For three years the ship was exhibited at the Vancouver Maritime Museum. It sparked the curiosity of visitors to the museum so much so that museum attendance increased by 15 percent for as long as the ship remained there.

When the museum moved to a new location the ship was put up for sale again. President Harbhajan Gill and members of the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation got ready with another bid to save history.

The ship however was bought by Joe Cabral from Winnipeg. Joe has now owned the ship for over five years. He has preserved and taken care of it. "I have a Portuguese heritage and when the Sea Lion was put on sale my first concern was that it should not go into the wrong hands that might dismantle it for profit. I understand the historical value of the ship and what it might mean to the South Asian community. It is well looked after by my family in Victoria." Joe told me.

Asked about his future plans for the ship he said he will only give it away when he knows it is safe and hopes the ship will contribute to the education about the history of the Komagata Maru incident.

The Sea Lion is perhaps the only surviving vessel of the incident after the Komagata Maru was wrecked in Japan on 11 February 1926. It has served to preserve the Komagata Maru incident and kept it alive in the hearts of Canadians.



The Sea Lion being restored, 2007.



Heritage Foundation bought the Sea Lion, October 31st 2006.

Contributors

Thank you to everyone who helped make this book.

Anne Murphy



Anne Murphy (Ph.D. Columbia) teaches in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia. Dr. Murphy is a cultural historian and her work focuses on the cultural and religious history of Punjab. She has published a monograph (*The Materiality of the Past*, Oxford, 2012), an edited volume (*Time, History, and the Religious Imaginary in South Asia*, Routledge, 2011) and numerous articles in scholarly journals and books. She is from NYC.

Harpreet Johal



Harpreet joined the David Suzuki Foundation's Climate Change and Clean Energy team in 2010. In 2012, she moved to the Public Engagement and Communications team with a focus to reach out to diverse communities and be a media spokesperson for the South Asian community on environmental issues. Harpreet holds a Bachelors of Science from the University of British Columbia and a Masters in Public Policy and Governance from the University of Toronto.

Hugh Johnston



Hugh Johnston is a professor emeritus in history at Simon Fraser University, where he taught for most of his career and where he continues to teach in the Continuing Studies Program. His major research interests include international migration, the Sikh community, BC History and the history of higher education.

Dr. Kanwal Singh Neel



Dr. Kanwal Singh Neel is a career educator and is a Project Coordinator for the Friends of Simon Tutoring Project at Simon Fraser University. He was the Coordinator for the 75th Anniversary of the Komagata Maru Incident, and served as an advisor to the Komagata Maru Incident Website Project, with the SFU Library. He believes that education is a key element in fostering social responsibility, which breaks racial and cultural barriers.

Nadeem Parmar



Nadeem Parmar is a well known poet and novelist. His ghazals have been sung by ghazal maestro, Jagjit Singh. His latest work "Rape" which is a novel has been critically acclaimed and very well received in the Punjabi Literary circle worldwide. He currently lives in Burnaby, BC.

Gary Thandi



Gary Thandi is a father, an author, a non-profit leader and a student. He has his Masters Degree in Social Work and is a team member of the innovative non-profit service agency Genesis Family Empowerment Society. He is also enrolled in a Doctor of Education Program at Simon Fraser University.

Dr. Henry Yu



Dr. Henry Yu is a professor of history at UBC. He co-chaired Vancouver's "Dialogues between First Nations, Urban Aboriginal, and Immigrant Communities" Project from 2010-2012. He was honoured as one of the Georgia Straight's "Bright Lights" of Vancouver in 2007, and received a Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012.

Kal Dosanjh



Kal Dosanjh is a veteran police officer with the Vancouver Police Department.

In addition to serving as a positive role model for youth, Kal also promotes a healthy and fit lifestyle. Kal strongly believes that engaging our youth in sports will play a significant role in diverting them away from a life in gangs and drugs.

Naveen Girin



Naveen Girin is a cultural researcher and community engagement specialist whose interests center on Vancouver's South Asian community, intercultural history and curation. Naveen is currently Project Manager for the Komagata Maru 1914-2014: Generations, Geographies and Echoes project that brings together 8 institutions across Metro Vancouver to collaboratively commemorate the centennial anniversary of the Komagata Maru.

Mohan Gill



Mohan Gill is a well known Punjabi writer. The genres of his work include poetry, fiction, and prose. He has served as the Director, Secretary, and President of the Kendri Punjabi Likhari Sabha, North America. He lives in Surrey, BC.

Contributors

Thank you to everyone who helped make this book.

Phinder Dulai



Phinder Dulai's latest collection of poetry *dream/arteries* is forthcoming from Talonbooks this Fall, 2014. *soul/journ* to the end of the pacific (a komagata maru archive), is part of this collection. Recently the series were work shopped at the In(ter)ventions Literary Residency hosted by the Banff Centre for the Arts. He is a co-founder of the Surrey-based inter-disciplinary arts group - The South Of Fraser Inter Arts Collective (SOFIA/c), and is the author of two previous poetry books: *Ragas from the Periphery* (Arsenal Pulp Press, 1995) and *Basmati Brown* (Nightwood Editions, 2000).

Satwinder Bains



Satwinder is the Director of the Centre for Indo-Canadian Studies at the University of the Fraser Valley. She is also an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Arts, Canada India Studies. Her current research interests include: cross-cultural education curriculum implementation; migration and integration; race and ethnicity; women's rights and cultural politics; Diaspora studies, Sikhism and the politics of identity. Her professional background has included serving as diversity educator, community developer and community activist in the areas of women's rights, youth development, race and anti-racism and immigrant settlement integration.

Satwinder has been featured in Canadian Literature and is currently a PhD Candidate at Simon Fraser University.

Dr. Gurpreet Kaur



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ਖਾਲਸਾ ਕਾਲਜ, ਅਨੰਦਪੁਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਰੋਪੜ(ਪੰਜਾਬ)
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ਪੀ.ਐਚ.ਡੀ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨਾਵਾਂ - 'ਪਗਲੀ' ਕਹਾਣੀ ਅੰਤਰਰਾਸ਼ਟਰੀ
ਮੈਗਜ਼ੀਨ 'ਸਬਦ' ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਹੋਈ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਮਨੋਰੰਜਨ
ਦਾ ਸਾਧਨ: 'ਕਲੀ ਕਾਵਿ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ', 'ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਡਾਇਸਪੋਰਾ:
ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਤਣਾਅ', 'ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ: ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਸਰੋਕਾਰ'
ਆਦਿ ਵਿਸ਼ੇ ਤੇ ਖੋਜ ਪੱਤਰ ਵੱਖ-ਵੱਖ ਮੈਗਜ਼ੀਨ ਅਤੇ ਸੈਮੀਨਾਰ
ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਿਤ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਛਪੇ।

Madhvi Dhamya



Madhvi K. Dhamya is currently in the rank of Special Secretary to the Government of Punjab. Her professional qualifications include Masters in Public Affairs, Masters in Social Work, and Masters in Business Administration. Madhvi is proficient in Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu and English. Her passions include reading, writing, theatre, film and travelling.

Jasleen Kaur



Jasleen Kaur is passionate about writing and is a contributing writer to many publications in Vancouver. Her writing style is very journalistic and investigative. She has interviewed and written about many notable artists and prominent personalities. Her passion includes modern media arts with a focus on theatre and visual media. She recently graduated from the Business Communications and Professional Writing Program at Simon Fraser University.

Rishma Johal



Rishma Johal is an MA student at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in the Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Department. She completed her BA at SFU in 2011. Her volunteer experience as well as her participation in the Punjabi media as a radio and television show host, exposed her to vital issues within this community.

Sharon Pollock



Sharon Pollock's works for the stage have been produced both nationally and internationally. She is the recipient of numerous awards recognizing excellence in drama, is a two-time winner of the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama and was recently made an Officer of The Order of Canada.

Jarnail Singh



Jarnail Singh is an experienced illustrator and designer, his works has been showcased all over the world. His paintings are in many prominent public and private collections worldwide. He has painted the lives and culture of native Punjab and Sikh history. He has produced extensive art work on the Komagata Maru incident.

Jarnail Singh Sekha



Jarnail Singh Sekha is a well known Punjabi writer. His work includes novels, poems, and short stories. His prominent works include the novels: *Vigocha*, *Bhagoda*, and *Duniya Kaisi Hoyee*. He lives in Surrey, BC.





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In Remembrance of Jagat (Jack) Singh Uppal

By: Jasleen Kaur

In Remembrance

Jagat (Jack) Singh Uppal

February 27, 1925 to May 4, 1014

Jack Uppal, South Asian community leader and businessman of Indian descent will always be known for giving back to the community. Jack's father Dalip Singh migrated to Canada in 1906. The heritage and legacy of Jack and his family mirrors the lives of our early pioneers. Although Dalip Singh was married, he was unable to bring his wife to Canada due to strict immigration racial policies. He was separated from his wife for sixteen years. He could not leave Canada in case he was not allowed to return.

It was not until the law changed in 1921 that his wife and brother could come to Canada. They arrived in Vancouver on May 5, 1926. Jack lost his father to an automobile incident when he was 13. He was only in Grade 9.

In the 30's when it was hard to find work, even harder for an East Indian Jack, his brother, and mother, too proud to ask for assistance. They worked hard to

put bread and butter on the table. They persevered, Jack attended night school and went on to become one of the most successful businessman in the BC.

He was recognized as a leader, receiving a British Columbia Community Achievement Award in 2010 and an honorary doctorate from Simon Fraser University in 2012.

Jack always supported the Komagata Maru Heritage Foundation and kept in close touch with President Harbhajan S. Gill. In his last communication with Harbhajan, Jack said, "You are doing great work for the community; please keep doing what you are doing."

Gill has many fond memories of Jack, "He was very proud of the achievements of the South Asian community in Canada. His support and encouragement for the work at the foundation was invaluable. On behalf of the Foundation and the community we remember the pioneer and the pillar for the Sikh Canadian Community."



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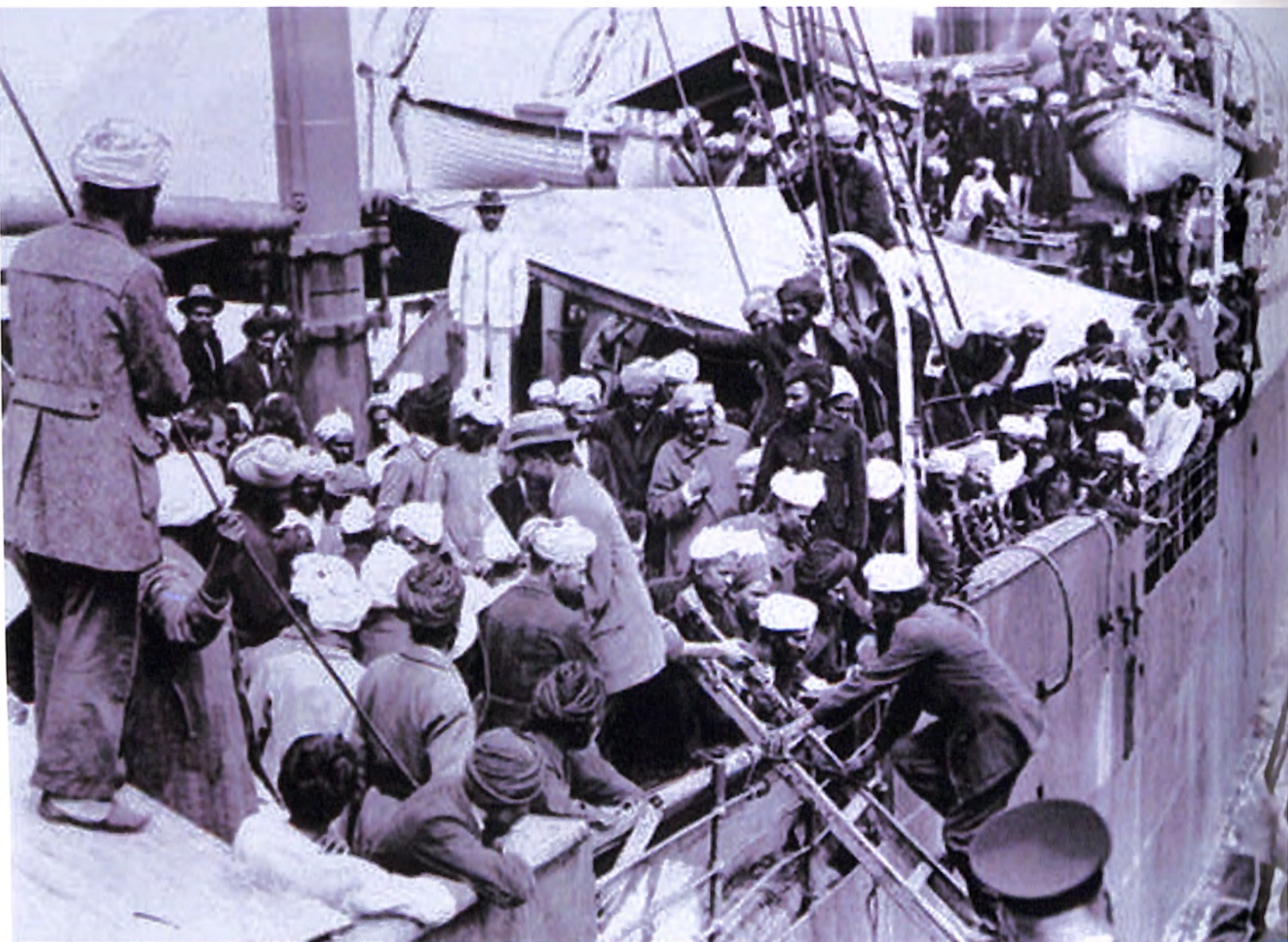
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1914 — KOMAGATA MARU 2014

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Hunger affects us all; it knows no age, it knows no race and it knows no season.

In 1981, in response to a downturn in the economy, a coalition of churches opened a food cupboard in Surrey. Two years later, in June 1983, the Surrey Food Bank Society was formed and opened up in a dilapidated building on King George Highway. The location and the Society itself were deemed to be temporary measures until the economy turned around and people could get back on their feet.

What began as a temporary solution to a temporary problem has now grown to a 7,000 sq. ft. warehouse in Whalley, a fleet of four vehicles, two lift trucks, over 400 active volunteers and a staff core of thirteen. The Surrey Food Bank currently distributes approximately 2,500 food hampers every two weeks and has expanded support to many other internal programs that assist low income individuals and families who live in Surrey and North Delta. All funding comes directly from the community as the Surrey Food bank does not receive any core government funding.



Photo: Komagata Maru, 1914 (Vancouver Public Library)

United in remembrance

"On this 100th anniversary of the *Komagata Maru*, let's commit to building an inclusive Canada—together."

Jasbir Sandhu

MP, Surrey North
jasbirsandhu.ndp.ca
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Jinny Sims

MP, Newton-North Delta
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Grandpa Sull's Journey

By: Cindy Bhatti

The village Palahi next door to the city of Phagwara was where our grandfather, Jarnail Singh Sull started his journey at the age of 21 in 1931. He was accompanied by 5 other young men from his village. They were courageous enough to set out on their arduous journey to Calcutta by rail. From Calcutta via ship to Hong Kong and then on to San Francisco and from there to Vancouver.

Hong Kong was the main stop where they received their immigration clearance to proceed. The Gurdwara in Hong Kong welcomed them for the duration of their stay.

When they arrived in Vancouver, there was an established Sikh community but these men like all their peers endured tough times living in tents, room & board, living off potatoes in the 1st year, and taking shifts sleeping in make shift beds and working for non parity wages.

But as they were Survivors, through hard work, and

perseverance, they also started achieving success through risk and opportunities, and shared their rewards and give back to the community and those in need, formed alliances and associations like the EIWA (east Indian welfare association)

The Vancouver Sikh Temple on West 2nd Avenue was built in 1908 and it played an important role in helping newcomers. Our grandfather, Jarnail S. Sull worked hard like the other Sikhs in the community and then helped his sons Tara Singh (arrived in 1948) and Surain Singh (arrived in 1951) immigrate here. Later he assisted his brothers and sisters children to immigrate here as well.

In 1951 Jarnail S. Sull was instrumental in establishing the 2nd Gurdwara in Vancouver at 467 East 11th Ave., which is now the Akali Singh Sikh Temple at 1900 Skeena Ave. Vancouver.



Bottom Row, L-R Children: David S Sundher, Daljeet Sull Davies, Mohinder S Sull, Geri K Basi
Middle Row Seated, L-R: Gurbachan K Sundher, Gango K Sull, Parkash K Sull, Paulo Sundher Sull, Mindo K Basran, Mr Gian S Basran, Surinder 'Cindy' K Bhatti
Back Row Men, L-R: Tara S Sull, Takhar S Sull, Jarnail S Sull, Mala S Sull, Nand S Sall, Pritam S Sull, Jagat S Sull, Surain S Sull



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The Department of Asian Studies at UBC has offered advanced study in Punjabi language, culture, and history, and in Sikh Studies, for more than two decades. The Department now offers four years of Punjabi language training, and new courses on Punjabi cultural history, literature, film, and theatre. The Department is a multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary humanities department, and is the premier unit at UBC for teaching and research on Asia at the BA, MA and PhD levels.



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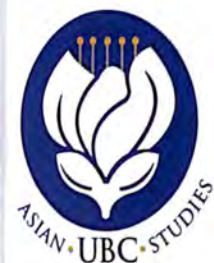
UBC Senate approves new Asian Canadian and Asian Migration Studies program

The UBC Senate has approved the creation of a new multidisciplinary minor program in the Faculty of Arts that explores the history, culture, and contemporary development of Asian communities in Canada, and Asian migrations outside of Asia. This program was one of three measures announced by the UBC Senate in November 2011 to acknowledge and recognize the 76 Japanese Canadian UBC students who were unable to complete their studies because they were forced to leave the West Coast during the Second World War.

The program will bring together teaching faculty from multiple departments in the Faculty of Arts, and feature innovative interdisciplinary courses that will equip students to participate in community engagement initiatives involving Asian Canadian communities.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.calendar.ubc.ca/vancouver/index.cfm?tree=12,197,282,1528>



The Department's bilingual English/Punjabi theatrical production, "Performing the Komagata Maru: Theatre and the Work of Memory," produced in May 2014 in collaboration with UBC's Department of Theatre and Film and Rangmanch Punjabi Theatre, highlighted the ways the arts and literature engage creatively with our past and present.

Please join us every year for our annual Harjit Kaur Sidhu Memorial Program, which celebrates the vibrant life of Punjabi in BC, and for other exciting talks and programs. For more information, see <http://www.asia.ubc.ca> and <http://blogs.ubc.ca/punjabisikhstudies>



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Komagata Maru Centennial Souvenir

