



Letter # 3

ARRIVAL IN CANADA

Friday, September 21st, 7:30 am. Our friend Julie drops us at the airport with a truck that we rented. And yes, we can't take the metro nor the taxi with our 2 bikes packed in boxes. After 10 hours of flight, we arrive in Vancouver, Canada.



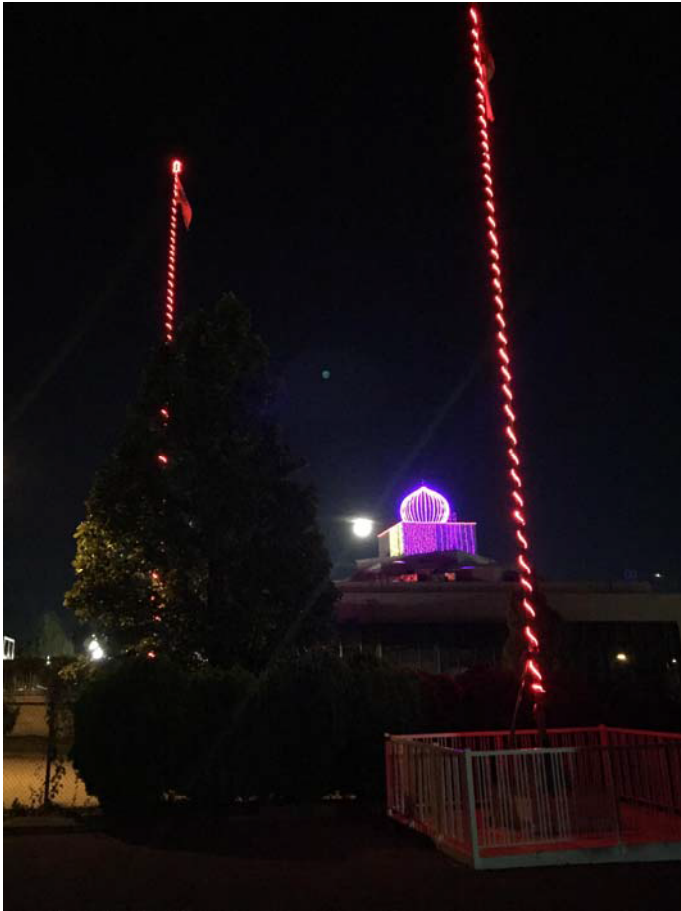
We are welcomed by a family that we contacted on the network "WarmShower". It is an international community of cyclists that offers a hot shower (and sometimes much more) to passing bikers.

After 2 days at Lis and Ian, where we recover from the 10 hours time difference, we are hosted by other people of the Warm Shower network but this time in a place a little more unexpected ...



It is a Sikh temple that opens us its doors. But do you know the Sikh religion?

On our side we did not know this religion very well before meeting Pall Beesla who welcomes us and tells us a little more about this religion.



Fifth largest religion in the world with more than 20 million devout, Sikhism was founded in the sixteenth century by the Indian Gurû Nânak who aspired to overcome Hinduism and Islam.

Inspired by the Hindu theories of karma and the transmigration of souls, Sikhism invites us to live a life of integrity and honesty, in particular renouncing the consumption of meat, alcohol, tobacco and games of chance.

Sikhism invites us to seek union with God, considering that there is no difference between those who love God and God. Unlike Hinduism, Sikhs do not know the caste system and advocate equality between all human beings (man, woman, rich, poor etc ...)

In every Sikh temple, there is a free canteen open to all. Students, families, homeless people and passing travelers (like us), everyone ends up eating together. Beware, the Indian cuisine is delicious but very spicy!!



We are housed in the temple museum, which tells the story of Sikh immigration to Canada.

"Sikhs have been in Canada since 1897, but the first influx of Sikhs to Vancouver dates back to 1903-1904. There were then 5,000 South Asian immigrants, 90% of whom were Sikhs, mostly rural people who worked in agriculture and forestry.

This Indian immigration was seen as not assimilable by the federal government which would ban it in 1907. What would lead, in 1914, to the tragedy of Komagata Maru, this Japanese ship returned from Canadian waters.

It carried 376 Asian immigrants, mostly Sikhs. Many died of sickness and hunger aboard the ship, others were arrested and imprisoned on their return to Calcutta in September 1914."

This story strangely reminds us of the fate of current migrants stuck on the "Aquarius" ship in the Mediterranean Sea.

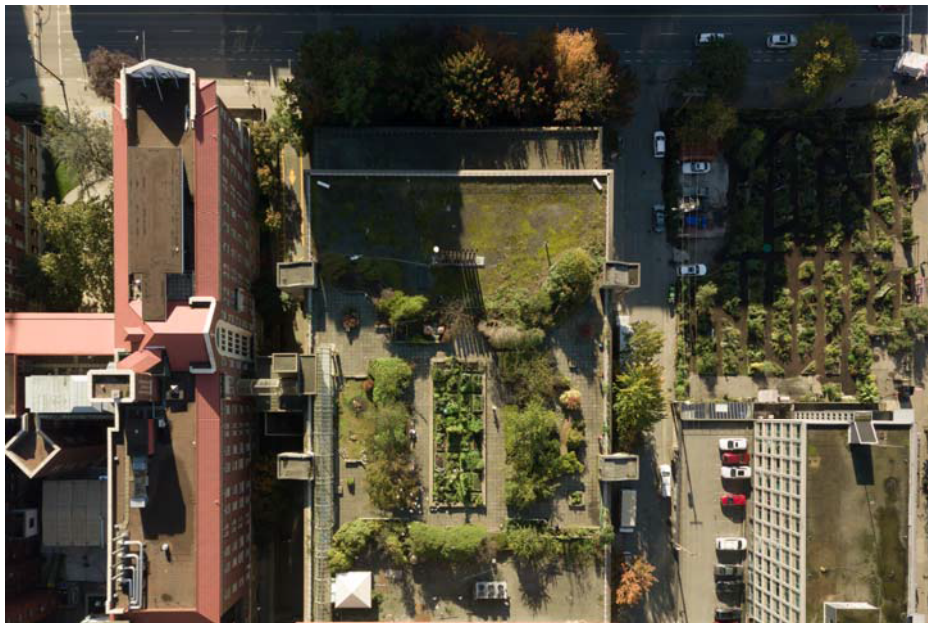


We took advantage of these 4 days in Vancouver to shoot the first episode of our documentary on Community Gardens. There are more than 110 shared gardens in this large city in western Canada. They can be on private property (in front of houses for example), on public land (in the garden of the town hall), or in schoolyards. These are spaces where people in the neighborhood can grow some fruits and vegetables and meet easily.



Since the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics, the city has strongly encouraged the development of these community gardens. Real estate developers normally have to pay taxes on land waiting for construction (which can sometimes take several months or years), if during this time they install a shared garden on their land, they are then exempt from taxes. What allows the inhabitants of the district paying a very reduced subscription by year to be able to cultivate a small parcel on these gardens.

We met a dozen of these gardeners, happy to have access to a small vegetable garden in a city where many live in apartments and to be able to eat the fruit of their work.



Now go on to the USA, passing through Vancouver Island, to get as far south as possible before it gets too cold.

See you soon!

Sylvain and Kalima