

## **Japanese Canadian Historical Timeline | 1833-2000**

1833 | First recorded Japanese shipwreck off the west coast of British Columbia.

1877 | Nagano Manzo of Yokohama abandons ship in New Westminster and takes up permanent residence in Canada, as the first recognized Issei (first-generation Japanese person). He subsequently runs a gift shop, a Japanese food store and a hotel in Victoria, B.C.

1887 | Kuno Gihei, a Japanese, visits Canada and returns to recruit fellow villagers to settle in the village of Steveston at the mouth of the Fraser River. Until the Second World War, Steveston had the second largest Japanese Canadian settlement in Canada.

Shishido Yo becomes the first Japanese woman to settle in Canada. She takes up residence on Powell Street with her husband, Oya Washiji, a store proprietor.

1889 | The first nisei (second-generation Japanese person), Katsuji, is born to Yo and Washiji Oya.

1895 | The Japanese are denied the right to vote in B.C., regardless of their citizenship.

1907 | The B.C. legislature passes an act preventing Asians from entering professions, and buying property in parts of Vancouver.

On 9 September 1907, a protest rally staged by Vancouver's Asiatic Exclusion League at Vancouver's old city hall at Main and Hasting turns into a riot through Chinatown and Japantown. The riot was immediately followed by a general strike of Vancouver's Asian workers. The city's timber industry, hotels and private homes suffer from the withdrawal of so many of its workers. W.L. Mackenzie King, then Deputy Minister of Labour, is appointed to head a Royal Commission to assess the damages claimed by Chinese and Japanese merchants. The Chinese are awarded \$3,000 in property damage and over \$20,000 for business losses; \$9,000 is awarded to the Japanese.

1908 | The Japanese and Canadian governments enter into the Hayashi-Lemieux "Gentleman's Agreement." Japan agrees to voluntarily restrict the number of passports issued to Japanese male workers and domestic servants to annual maximum of 400.

1914 | The Asahi Baseball League is formed in Vancouver, B.C. From their home grounds in Oppenheimer Park on Powell Street, they compete at all levels with teams from throughout the city and toured Japan until 1941.

1916 | After being rejected for volunteer military service in the First World War, approximately 200 Japanese British Columbians travel to Alberta to join Canadian battalions of the British Army and are shipped to Europe. Fifty-four are killed and 92 are wounded.

Uchida Chitose is the first Japanese Canadian to graduate from a Canadian university. She would later become a schoolteacher.

1919 | Japanese fishermen control nearly half of the fishing licenses in Canada. The Department of Fisheries subsequently reduces the number of licenses issued to "other than white residents of British subjects and Canadian Indians." By 1925, close to 1,000 licenses are stripped from Japanese Canadians.

1923 | The Gentleman's Agreement between Canada and Japan is re-activated following intense pressure from the B.C. government on the federal government and further immigration is limited to 150 per year. British Columbia passes a resolution proposing to limit the activities of all "Orientals" in the province.

1931 | The B.C. provincial franchise is only extended to Japanese veterans of the First World War.

1936 | A delegation from the Japanese Canadian Citizen's League goes to Ottawa to plead for the right to vote. They are unsuccessful.

1941 | Despite citizenship, Japanese Canadians are excluded from military service. All Japanese Canadians are required to report and register with the Register of Enemy Aliens.

1942 | In January, the Canadian Government begins to remove Japanese men from coastal areas as a 'protective' measure. During April and May, Japanese Canadian women and children begin arriving at 'ghost town' detention camps (Greenwood, Kaslo, New Denver, Slocan, Sandon and Tashme) in the British Columbia interior.

1945 | One hundred fifty Japanese Canadians volunteer for service with the Canadian Armed Forces in the Far East. At the same time, a campaign begins to intimidate Japanese Canadians living in British Columbia into moving to Eastern Canada or be deported to Japan.

1946 | Thomas K. Shoyama is appointed economic advisor to Saskatchewan's pioneer Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) government and Tommy Douglas, future leader of the federal New Democratic Party.

1947 | Asian Canadians earn the right to vote provincially and federally. They are also allowed to work as pharmacists, lawyers and accountants. The franchise is not extended to Japanese Canadians until 1948.

The federal cabinet order-in-council on the deportation of Japanese Canadians is repealed following protests by churches, academics, journalists and politicians. The national Japanese Canadian Citizens Association is established at a conference in Toronto.

1949 | Asian Canadians participate in the B.C. provincial election and in the federal election.

Japanese Canadians are free to move anywhere in Canada. This is the last of the restrictions originally imposed on Japanese Canadians during the Second World War.

1967 | Canadian immigration laws are changed to a points system and all restrictions specifically directed against Asian immigration are lifted. The universal points system was created to encourage professionals and skilled workers from all over the world to immigrate to Canada. As a result, a new, increasingly diverse immigrant population is created.

1971 | The Liberal Government under Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau makes 'multiculturalism' an official government policy. This recognizes the diversity of the Canadian population and was designed to preserve and promote cultural pluralism.

1977 | Japanese Canadians commemorate the centennial of the first Japanese person to immigrate to Canada, Manzo Nagano. The centennial celebrations are closely followed by the organization of informal groups to discuss seeking redress. In Vancouver, the Japanese Canadian community celebrates the centennial with the Powell Street Festival. The festival continues today and, in 2001, celebrates its 25th anniversary.

1979 | ‘The Nature of Things’, a CBC science television series, goes on the air with its host Dr. David Suzuki, a Japanese Canadian scientist and environmental activist. An internationally respected geneticist, Dr. Suzuki has received numerous awards for his work, including a UNESCO prize for science, a United Nations Environment Program medal and the Order of Canada. In 1990, he establishes the David Suzuki Foundation to “find and communicate ways in which we can achieve a balance between social, economic, and ecological needs.”

1981 | *Obasan* by Joy Kogawa is published. A fictional account of the internment told from the perspective of a young girl, the novel significantly raises awareness of the Japanese Canadian internment experience. For *Obasan*, Kogawa wins the First Novel Award (Books in Canada) and the Book of the Year (Canadian Authors’ Association).

1984 | Art Miki becomes President of the National Association of Japanese Canadians and begins a concerted campaign for redress. A brief entitled *Democracy Betrayed: the Case for Redress* is presented to the government.

1988 | Prime Minister Brian Mulroney announces the Canadian government’s formal apology for the wrongful incarceration, seizure of property and the disenfranchisement of thousands of Japanese Canadians.

1993 | After playing college hockey at the University of Maine, Paul Tetsuhiko Kariya was drafted fourth overall in the first round of the National Hockey League draft by the Anaheim Mighty Ducks. Kariya was born in Vancouver, B.C., on 16 October 1974 to a Japanese Canadian father and a Caucasian mother. Kariya has firmly established himself as one of the most skillful athletes of the NHL, having won Hockey East Player of the Year (1993), Hockey East Rookie of the Year (1993), Hobey Baker Memorial Award (1993), a silver medal with the Canadian Olympic team (1994), and the Lady Byng Memorial Trophy (1997). He led the NHL with 429 shots during the 2000 season, shooting 86 more times than anybody else in the league.

1999 | Steve Kariya is signed by the Vancouver Canucks. Steve, along with his brother Paul Kariya of the Anaheim Mighty Ducks, became the first Asian Canadian siblings playing in the National Hockey League.

2000 | The National Nikkei Heritage Centre and the Japanese Canadian National Museum officially open their doors in their new facility in Nikkei Place, Burnaby, B.C.

Vancouver Asian Heritage Month Society