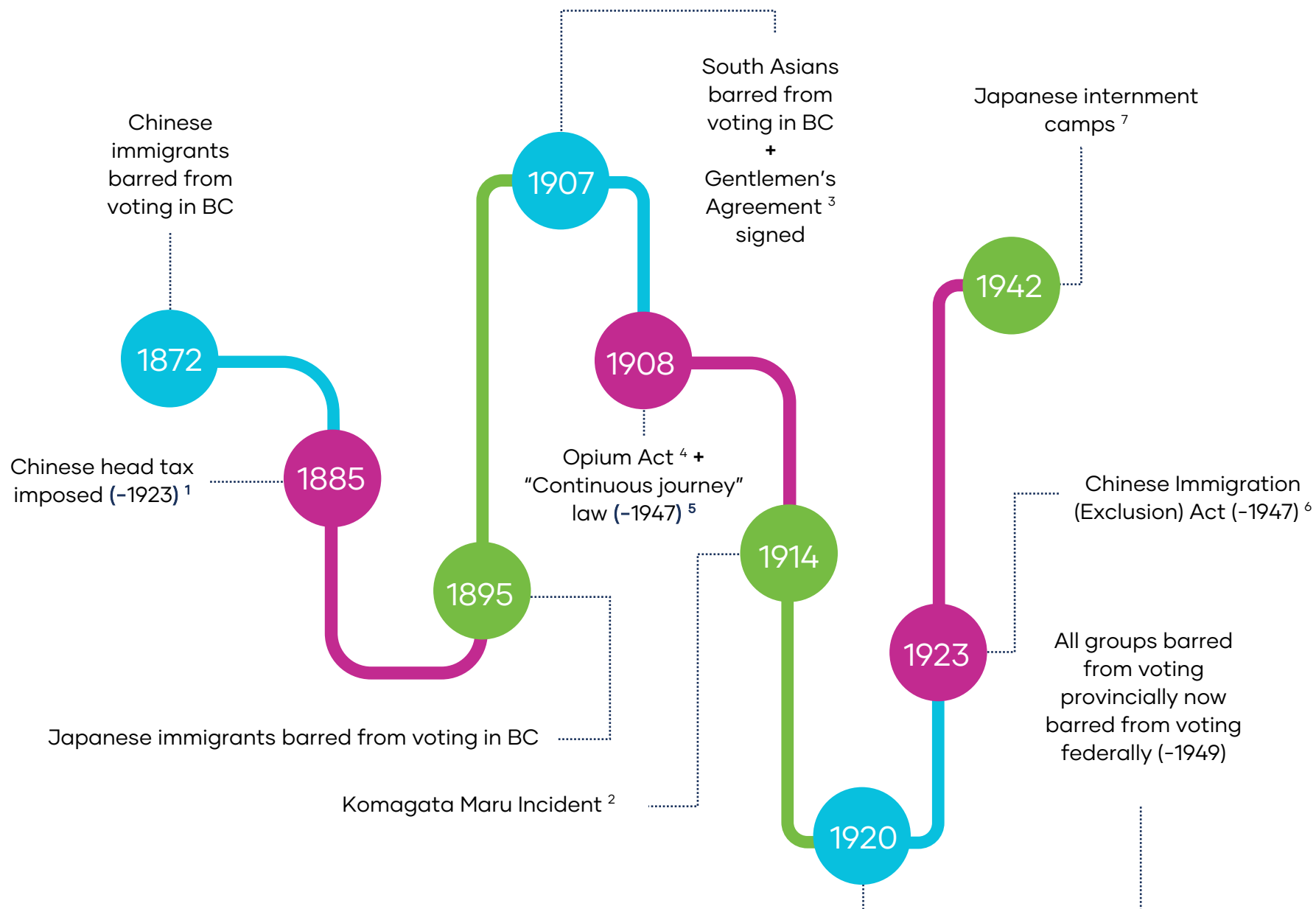


Anti-Asian Racism in Canada

Canada has a long history of racism and discrimination against East Asian, South/Southeast Asian, Central Asian and Western Asian communities. This resource outlines a timeline of historical events and policies in British Columbia and Canada that contributed to racism and inequity towards Asian communities. Impact North Shore acknowledge that each individual community holds a unique history of oppression and discrimination. We commit to continuously learning about the unjust histories that have negatively affected those in our community on the North Shore and in Canada.

Historical Events and Policies Against East Asian And South Asian Communities in Canada



1. [Chinese Head Tax \(1885-1923\)](#)

The Chinese head tax was a fee charged to immigrants coming to Canada from China. This fee was meant to discourage immigration to Canada after the Canadian Pacific Railway had been completed. The tax was raised from \$50 to \$500 across the time it was imposed.

2. [Komagata Maru Incident \(April 1914\)](#)

The SS Komagata Maru reached Vancouver carrying 376 passengers from Punjab hoping to dock and begin their life in Canada. These passengers, majority of whom were Sikh, were denied entry to Canada, and refused medical aid, food, or water. They were sent back across the Pacific and made to return to India where some of them were viewed as political agitators and were killed by the British.

3. [Gentlemen's Agreement \(1907/1908\)](#)

The Gentlemen's Agreement was signed between Japan and Canada following the Race Riots of 1907, where the White population of Vancouver and other cities on the Pacific coast held violent riots against the presence of the Asian community in their countries. The Japanese Foreign Minister agreed to limit the number of passports issued to male laborers looking to immigrate to Canada to 400.

4. [Opium Act \(1908\)](#)

With opium smoking linked to racialized men, the Opium Act of 1908 punished those who dealt with opium for non-medical reasons. The penalties and punishments of this act were disproportionately severe, and mainly affected Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities.

5. ["Continuous Journey" Law \(1908-1947\)](#)

The "continuous journey" law prohibited immigrants from entering Canada if they did not arrive directly from their country of origin. This was another attempt to limit immigration to Canada, given that it was very unlikely that folks from Asia would be able to embark on a journey to Canada with no stops in other countries along the way.

6. [Chinese Immigration \(Exclusion\) Act \(1923-1947\)](#)

This law prohibited all Chinese immigrants from entering Canada. Every person of Chinese descent was issued an identity card, regardless of whether or not they were Canadian-born.

7. [Japanese Internment Camps \(1942\)](#)

Following Japan's attack on the American naval base at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, Japanese-Canadians were exiled to isolated parts of the country and were detained in overcrowded camps. They were made to work on farms while the government sold their businesses and homes.