

## Sharing Knowledge: May is Asian Heritage Month

Humber College and the University of Guelph-Humber (the College) is committed to providing an accessible learning, working, and living environment for the Humber community. It is the College's goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and supports all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the College aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth of all persons.

### May: Asian Heritage Month

#### Asian Heritage Month 2021 Theme: Recognition, Resilience, and Resolve<sup>1</sup>

Asian Heritage Month is an opportunity for all Canadians to learn more about the many achievements and contributions of Canadians of Asian descent who, throughout our history, have done so much to make Canada the amazing country we share today.

The theme for Asian Heritage Month 2021, "Recognition, Resilience, and Resolve", embodies the myriad of sentiments that peoples of Asian descent in Canada have experienced and honours their contributions and their diverse stories which are rooted in resilience and perseverance. It is also a call to action for all Canadians to come together to combat all forms of anti-Asian racism and discrimination. Let us celebrate the incredible diversity that is our strength and be resolute in our stand against all forms of anti-Asian racism and discrimination.

#### About Asian Heritage Month: Official Declaration of Asian Heritage Month<sup>2</sup>

##### About Asian Heritage Month

Asian Heritage Month has been celebrated across Canada since the 1990s. In December 2001, the Senate of Canada adopted a motion proposed by Senator Vivienne Poy to officially designate May as Asian Heritage Month in Canada. In May 2002, the Government of Canada signed an official declaration to designate May as Asian Heritage Month.

##### Official Declaration of Asian Heritage Month

Diversity represents one of Canada's greatest strengths, and we strive to ensure that all Canadians have the opportunity to reach their full potential and participate in Canada's civic life.

Over the last two centuries, immigrants have journeyed to Canada from East Asia, Southern Asia, Western, Central and Southeast Asia, bringing our society a rich cultural heritage representing many languages, ethnicities and religious traditions.

The people of this diverse, vibrant and growing community have contributed to every aspect of life in Canada — from the arts and science to sport, business, and government.

Asian Heritage Month offers all Canadians an opportunity to learn more about the history of Canadians of Asian descent and to celebrate their contributions to the growth and prosperity of Canada.

Thereby, we declare May as Asian Heritage Month in Canada.

### Who is of Asian Decent?<sup>3</sup>

The definition of "Asian" may be inclusive and broad, and applies to people who come from or whose ancestors come from:

**East Asia**- China, Hong Kong S.A.R., Japan, Mongolia, North Korea, South Korea, Taiwan.

**South Asia** - Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka.

**Central Asia** - Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan.

**Southeast Asia** - Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam.

**Western Asia** - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Cyprus, Georgia, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemen.

### Highlighted Events: Asian Canadian History<sup>4</sup>

The following is a list of some of the important events that have taken place across Asian Canadian history:

Legislation targeting Chinese immigrants after completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway

Japanese internment during the Second World War

Denial of the right to vote

The Continuous Journey Regulation and the Komagata Maru

### National Collaboration of Data Collection on Anti-Asian Racism (Sep 2020)<sup>5</sup>

Asian communities have reported an increase in racism and discrimination since the beginning of the pandemic. These experiences are also layered with misogyny and sexism. According to data analyzed by the grassroots Asian community group [project1907.org](http://project1907.org), women have been most impacted by the spike in anti-Asian racism in Canada, reporting 60% of incidents.

Racism and violence against Asian people are not new to Canada and incidents of anti-Asian violence have increased across the country in the last year. We must continue to condemn these incidents of violence and senseless loss of life, along with the hate and discrimination that underlies it.

### Resources:

1. Heritage, C. (2021, April 30). *Government of Canada*. Canada.ca. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/asian-heritage-month.html>
2. Heritage, C. (2021, April 30). *Government of Canada*. Canada.ca. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/asian-heritage-month/about.html>.
3. *Asian and South Asian Heritage Month - May*. ETFO. (n.d.). <https://etfo.ca/buildingajustsociety/equityresources/pages/asianheritagemonth.aspx>
4. Heritage, C. (2021, April 30). *Government of Canada*. Events in Asian Canadian history - Canada.ca. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/campaigns/asian-heritage-month/important-events.html>.
5. *National Collaboration of Data Collection on Anti-Asian Racism (Sep 2020)*. project 1907. (n.d.). <https://www.project1907.org/reportingcentre>