

Greetings JSAC members and friends!

The Japan Studies Association of Canada (JSAC) is Canada's sole scholarly organization focusing on Japan. It has a long and illustrious history since 1988, and has developed in full partnership with the Japan Foundation.

Japan is back! After more than two decades of economic stagnation there is a sense that 'Abenomics' has thrust Japan back into the limelight. Political scientists and economists are debating whether or not Prime Minister Abe will be successful in his aim to expand the economy of Japan, still facing challenges related to the global economic recession. Other social scientists are more concerned over the socio-economic implications of the aging population and dwindling workforce. Geographers are examining the forthcoming Tokyo summer Olympics in 2020 that will put the nation's capital into the spotlight. In the northeast of Japan, communities are struggling on the road to recovery after the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear power plant disaster of 2011. The continuing popularity of Japanese 'pop culture' provides fertile ground for leading scholars in the fields of Japanese language, literature, history, and visual culture. Food studies experts are intrigued that UNESCO has added Japanese cuisine and food culture to its Intangible Cultural Heritage list. Here in Canada, there are many reasons to study Japan. Japan is our number three trading partner, and 2014 represents the 85th year of diplomatic relations with Canada.

Canadian scholars are at the forefront in understanding contemporary trends in Japan, together with important historical and cultural topics. Many of the above themes were discussed at the recent 2014 JSAC conference Ryerson University (Rai-dai!) in Ontario by Dr. Jim Tiessen on the theme of 'Designing Japan: Innovation in a post-growth society'.

Join us in our first JSAC Conference in Japan in May 2015. Details of the 2015 Annual Conference on the theme of "Culture, Identity and Citizenship in Japan and Canada" are shown on the JSAC web site. This conference will take place in conjunction with the Japan Association of Canadian Studies (JACS) and the Japan-Canada Interdisciplinary Research Network on Gender, Diversity and Tohoku Reconstruction (JCIRN).

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