

## **SECOND CALL FOR PAPERS: Japan Studies Association of Canada (JSAC)**

2015 Annual Conference in Japan – May 20th (Wed) to May 23<sup>rd</sup> (Sat), 2015  
*“Culture, Identity and Citizenship in Japan and Canada”*

*This conference will take place in conjunction with the Japanese Association for Canadian Studies (JACS) and the Japan-Canada Interdisciplinary Research Network on Gender, Diversity and Tohoku Reconstruction (JCIRN).*

**Locations:** Embassy of Canada in Tokyo, Japan (20-22 May); Chuo University, Ichigaya campus Tokyo, Japan (23 May).

**Deadline for submissions:** January 31, 2015.

JSAC is Canada’s sole scholarly Japan studies organization and this is the first time that our Annual JSAC meeting will take place in Japan. The joint conference gives Canadian scholars a chance to collaborate with colleagues of JACS and JCIRN, and also other academics who are in Tokyo and other Japanese cities. The intent is to have a true international conference, with the Canadian Embassy, JACS, Chuo University, Tokyo University and JCIRN as co-sponsors.

It is hoped that Canadian conference delegates will be able to participate as part of their Japanese field-work in early summer after the academic year finishes in Canada. Air fares across the Pacific are at their lowest in May. Graduate students are especially welcome to attend this Conference and will receive priority for funding and a discount on Conference registration.

The Conference theme, outlined in more detail below, will attract interesting and substantial contributions in the forms of individual papers or panels. The best relevant papers will be selected, edited and combined in a scholarly monograph.

Besides theme-related work, we of course welcome papers from a broad range of disciplines – the humanities, arts and social sciences – but in the case of JSAC members linked by a focus on Japan. It is expected that JACS delegates will address their Canadian research interests and JCIRN delegates their own themes related to diversity and disasters.

This Call for Papers is made simultaneously in Canada and Japan.

**Conference Language:** The language of the Conference will be English.

**Selection of Papers and Organization of Conference Sessions:** There will be single, integrated Program for the combined conference of JSAC, JACS and JCIRN, and hence a single vetting procedure by a combined Conference Academic Committee drawn from the three Associations.

**Preliminary schedule:** The Conference starts Wednesday May 20<sup>th</sup> 2015 at the Canadian Embassy with a mix of panels, speakers and plenary sessions and a public keynote lecture in the evening together with a reception. Panels and speakers will continue at the Canadian Embassy on Thursday May 21<sup>st</sup> to Friday May 22<sup>nd</sup>. There will be a banquet at the Embassy on Thursday May 21<sup>st</sup>. On Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> May, we move to Chuo University, Ichigaya campus, for special panels relating to theme of the Conference.

Further details, including the names of speakers and other activities will be announced as they are confirmed.

### **Submissions:**

Panels: Ideas for special panels are welcome and should be sent directly to [David.Edgington@ubc.ca](mailto:David.Edgington@ubc.ca).

Note: Dr. Jackie Steel, JCIRN Convener, is especially interested in organizing the following 3 x Panels. If you are interested in participating in any of these panels then please let Jackie Steel know (copy to me) at: [jfsteeleresearch@gmail.com](mailto:jfsteeleresearch@gmail.com).

Panel 1. "Citizenship, Diversity and Immigration Policy: Lessons from the Japanese, Canadian and Québécois Approaches"  
Co-chair (Junichiro Koji, Hokkaido).

Panel 2. "Gender, Diversity, and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy: Lessons from Japan, Canada, and the new UN-ISDR Multilateral Agreement"  
Former Governor of Chiba Prefecture, Mrs. Akiko Domoto will co-chair this Panel.

Panel 3. "Diversifying Democratic Institutions: Designing for Gender, Ethnocultural and Intergenerational Balance"

Papers: Please submit your Abstracts (200 words maximum, Word doc or PDF), directly to the Conference Web Site on the JSAC Home Page (<http://www.jsac.ca/index.html>) by January 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

**Conference Costs:** We are hoping to keep the cost of this four-day event to around CAD\$200 per person, with a reduction for graduate students (say CAD\$50 per person).

**Support:** The Japan Foundation Toronto (JFT) has been informed of our intention to hold the annual JSAC meeting in Japan and supports this initiative. In December 2014 JSAC applied for funding to the Japan Foundation for the Conference. As with our usual applications to the Japan Foundation the results will not be known until April 2015. However, discussions with the Japan Foundation Toronto indicates that a grant would be forthcoming, and this will be used primarily to support international air fares for JSAC delegates (including graduate students) from Canada to travel to Japan.

**Travel and Accommodations:** The Conference sessions will be held at the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo and Chuo University, Ichigaya Campus. The Canadian Embassy is close to the Aoyama 1-Chome subway station (Tokyo Metro Ginza Line, Hanzomon Line & Toei Oedo Line); and the Chuo University Ichigaya Campus is close to the Akebonobashi Station on the Shinjuku Subway Line.

Conference delegates are asked to make their own arrangements for accommodation. A popular Hotel close to the Canadian Embassy in Tokyo is the Hotel Asia Center of Japan, 107-0052 Tokyo Prefecture, Minato-ku, Akasaka 8-10-32 (close to the Nogizaka Subway Station, Tokyo Metro Chiyoda Line) with single rooms about CAD\$150 per night, including breakfast.

### **Theme - “Culture, Identity and Citizenship in Japan and Canada”**

In light of the participation by both scholars interested in Japan and Canada, the theme has been chosen to encourage dialogue on issues of importance in both countries. Demographic evidence in Japan showing the declining and aging population together with a shrinking workforce many politicians and commentators are saying ‘only immigration can save Japan’. Some propose bringing in 10 million migrants over 50 years. Others, however, argue that Japan should retain its ‘no-immigration principle’. Indeed, a central tenet of Nihonjin-ron — a popular genre of writing on national identity — is that the Japanese are a homogeneous people (*tan’itsu minzoku*) who constitute a racially unified nation. While Nihonjin-ron has been thoroughly discredited in academic writing, it remains deeply rooted in popular discourse. The official report of the Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission, for example, described a disaster that was “made in Japan,” and identified its major causes as groupism, insularity and a reluctance to question authority. The fact that Japan is relatively homogeneous — it is one of the few industrialized countries not to have experienced a tremendous inflow of international migrants in the postwar period — adds a veneer of believability to the discourse of ‘one culture, one civilization, one race’.

Canada was the first country in the world to adopt multiculturalism as an official policy. Proponents of multiculturalism in Canada argue that all citizens can keep their identities, can take pride in their ancestry and have a sense of belonging. Acceptance of multicultural policies gives Canadians a feeling of security and self-confidence, making them more open to, and accepting of, diverse cultures. Recently, however, critics argue that multiculturalism promotes ghettoization and balkanization, encouraging members of ethnic groups to look inward, and emphasizing the differences between groups rather than their shared rights or identities as Canadian citizens. Some argue that many Canadians no longer feel a strong sense of belonging in Canada and cannot integrate themselves into society as a result of ethnic enclaves. Multiculturalism is often seen as hurting the Canadian, Québécois, and Aboriginal culture, identity, and nationalism projects; and it perpetuates conflicts between and within groups.

Can women rescue the Japanese economy? Yes, according to the government of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, whose ‘womenomics’ policies mark the first time that a Japanese government has made the promotion of working women a signature feature of the country’s growth strategy. However, many commentators are not so sure, especially as Japan’s inability so far to generate a system that allows women to achieve a work-life balance has had dire economic and demographic consequences. In terms of gender equality, Canada barely makes the grade in the top 20 countries. According to the four measures used by the World Economic Forum (economic participation and opportunity, education attainment, health and survival and political empowerment) it is outranked by countries such as the Philippines, Ireland, Nicaragua, Latvia, Cuba, Lesotho as well as South Africa.

Clearly issues of citizenship, culture and identity as well as gender are of critical interest to scholars in Japan and Canada. Language issues are also important. Thus, in preparation for Japan’s hosting of the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2020, it is being suggested that the country establish ‘special English

zones' where English would be designated as an official language to be used by local people in return for tax reductions. In Canada there are concerns about the number of older immigrants who are not being linguistically integrated into Canada (i.e., not learning either English or French).

Scholars at the JSAC 2015 Conference – both from Canada and from Japan - will raise these and allied issues about the challenges of Culture, Identity and Citizenship in Japan and Canada.

1. How can Japan address the need to extend its education in a variety of languages and take advantage of the rising numbers of international students?
2. To what degree has Japan's colonial past shaped the Nihonjinron discourse in the current period?
3. Does multiculturalism hurt the Canadian, Québécois, and Aboriginal culture, identity, and nationalism projects; and, it perpetuates conflicts between and within groups?
4. To what degree can national security and disaster preparedness take into account the need to address issues of gender, diversity and the wide use of a variety of languages used in our communities?
5. What are the politics of immigration in Japan and are there lessons from Canadian experience?
6. How can gender inequality be addressed in both Japan and Canada?
7. How is diversity treated in Japanese urban and rural communities and are there similarities with Canada?
8. Are there lessons for Canada from the 'Cool Japan' tourism initiative?

### **Field Trip:**

Dr. Tom Waldichuck (Thompson Rivers University) will lead the 2015 JSAC Field Trip to Tsukuba Science City and Mt. Tsukuba

Date: Sunday, May 24

Time: 9am – 9 pm

Cost: cost of express train from Tokyo, local bus to Mt. Tsukuba and no-host dinner.

For details contact Tom Waldichuck (Thompson Rivers University) [Twaldichuk@tru.ca](mailto:Twaldichuk@tru.ca).

Note: subject to minor changes