

Important Dates in January

- 1st - New Year's Day
- 8th - Recontracting Deadline (prefectural)
- 13th - Coming of Age Day
- 17th - Shiga AJET New Year's Enkai
- 19th - JET Career Fair (Osaka)
- 25th - Shiga AJET Ski/Snowboard Trip

Important Dates in February

- 3rd - Setsubun
- 7th-10th - Block 6 Yuki Matsuri
- 11th - Foundation Day
- 14th - Valentine's Day
- 24th - Emperor's Birthday (Observed)

The Shiga Situation

2020



Year of the rat

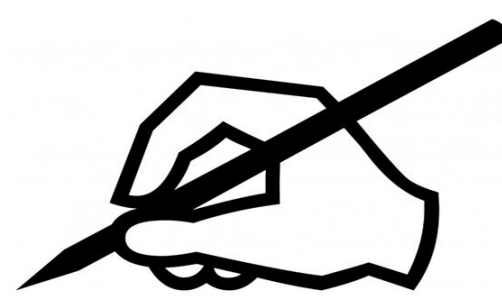
Happy New Year Shiga JETs!

I hope you've all had a wonderful holiday, whether you went home to celebrate with family and friends, went abroad, stuck around and enjoyed your first shrine/temple visit of the new year or just caught up on some sleep.

S.M.A.R.T Resolutions

The New Year is a good time to reflect on the past year and make changes to better ourselves. If you're like me you may have your fair share of overly enthusiastic resolutions that don't make it more than a month. However, our failures can be a source of learning too. To ensure a lasting change make sure what you're trying to accomplish is reasonable (small changes are easier to stick to) and well-defined. Rather than vowing to 'get healthy' specify how you can do it (eg. Abstaining from drinking creamy lattes and switching to black coffee for your daily caffeine fix).

Essentially if you make your resolutions S.M.A.R.T goals, you'll be setting yourself up for success. You can also try sharing your goals with some friends, doing so can provide support and can help you feel accountable. If you're looking for someone to bounce resolution ideas off of, feel free to talk to me. I'd love to see you all succeed in the New Year!



Recontracting Season is upon us!

By now you definitely should have received your papers notifying you whether or not you're being asked to recontract for another year. Make sure you double check when your papers are due. Give your decision some serious thought, talk to your senpai as well as your friends and family back home; it may help you see your decision more clearly.

We've also got the interesting option of a short term extension of our contract - to only continue working until mid-september. This is because of the kerfuffle caused by the Olympics leading to next year's JETs arriving later than usual. Make sure if you're offered more than one choice to circle the correct one.

If you decide it's time to move on (we'll miss you), make sure you're thinking ahead of how you can get rid of any large furniture you might be stuck with (if your successor doesn't want it). It's also a good idea to make a To Do list to keep your ducks in a row.

I've decided I'll stick around, so for those of you who sign YES, let's keep living the Shiga dream!

Specific	Measurable	Achievable	Realistic	Timely
S	M	A	R	T
G	O	A	L	S
What do you want to do?	How will you know when you've reached it?	Is it in your power to accomplish it?	Can you realistically achieve it?	When exactly do you want to accomplish it?

Calling All Writers

I'm looking for individuals willing to contribute to the Shiga Situation. If you're interested in writing for the next newsletter (March - April) please contact me at kenchopa@gmail.com. You can promote a blog, an event in your area, your favorite festival, a seasonal dish, etc.

Wrecked - Short Story (blizzard prompt)

By anonymous

It's been four days since the accident.
 The wind screamed, throwing flurries of snow at the frosted windows.
 Eddie tore the cellophane and took a bite of the granola bar he'd been saving.
 Chewing slowly, he savored it. It would have to last him a while.
 There was no helping his dry mouth; he drank the last of his water yesterday.
 He wanted to open the door, if he could, to gather snow to melt, but the thought of letting in the cold stayed his hand.
 Headlights shone from behind the bend, finally, heralding an oncoming car.
 "Please stop," he prayed.

Short Story Contest

The writing prompt for the March-April 100-word short story contest is 'growth'. You can write in the form of a short-story, a poem, or whatever strikes your fancy. If you're shy you can submit your piece with a pen name or anonymously.

It's a New Year, why not resolve to write?



Yeet Some Beans

February 3rd is Setsubun in Japan. It's the date that marks the beginning of Spring and is celebrated with a very interesting festival. Although not an official holiday, if you choose to take the day off to witness the festivities you'll be treated to a truly unique sight. 'Out with the old in the new' is the idea - except instead of 'old' it's an oni (evil spirit / demon / ogre) and instead of 'new' it's good fortune. To chase away the oni you have to throw beans at them because how else are you going to do it? After you succeeded in banishing the evil, eat one roasted soy bean for every year you've lived, plus one for the upcoming year. Although usually a household event, to catch a glimpse of this cultural spectacle you can join the crowds at any number of major shrines or temples. Ask your fellow teachers or locals in your area, and you might find you can experience a more traditional Setsubun on a smaller scale at a shrine or temple near you. And for dinner you can enjoy Eho-Maki, more or less a burrito sized sushi roll. Don't cut it and eat it facing west-south-west, the 'good luck' direction of the year.

