

# The Shiga Situation

## Mother of All Newsletters

### HELLO, GOOD BYE



#### Upcoming AJET Events:

- Farewell BBQ July 7
- Nagahama Fireworks July 27
- Group A Welcome August 3
- Otsu Fireworks August 7
- Group B Welcome August 10
- Welcome BBQ August 18
- Beer Train September 7



#### Important Dates!

- Survival Orientation s: Aug. 3 & 10
- Materials Due: July 20
- Michigan Orientation: Aug. 9 & 10
- Materials Due: July 30
- Job Orientation: Aug. 21
- Materials Due: July 30



Welcome to the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Shiga Situation. It comes at a troubling time for many an ALT. Whether you are stressed and worried [about leaving JET](#), upset [about watching your friends move on](#), or simply excited to [meet some newbies](#), no one leaves this season unscathed (and even if you *are* emotionally fine, the [searing heat is still bound to get ya!](#)).

I am personally among the second group this year, and want to say a couple things I've come to realize after four years of watching friends leave. First and foremost: friendship does not belong to the dimensions of space and time. It does not fly away with the wind and if it does erode in time, it does so like a vast mountain whose decay cannot be noticed in a human life. However, it is natural to fear that your [friendship is ending](#) because you are going separate ways. This is a rational fear, because your friendships *are* inevitably going to change. But it's important to remember that friendships change naturally for many reasons: moving to another country is just one.

You shouldn't suppress the fear, nor should you act like everything is [normal](#). It's important to talk with your friends and tell them what's bothering you. It's much worse to let emotions go unsaid and let them fester and rot the relationship from the inside. You may find that you and your friends have been getting into more [arguments](#) about trivial things, or that you are constantly anxious around them. In my experience, this is because you are grasping to make every moment perfect, already accepting the fate that the friendship is ending.

Realizing this will expel the fallacy of inevitability from your mind and help you see that your problems were a misguided attempt to [conceal true emotion](#). No friendship ends without a choice. If you don't want to grow apart or stop being friends, no span of ocean or tick of the clock can force you. So go have fun and enjoy your friendships as they are and as they will continue to be. Do some stupid things and make some more memories, but don't look down the road with fear. Short of an apocalypse, your friends on JET [will always be here](#).



If you belong to the third group in the previous article, then this time of year is full of excitement! Maybe you'll have a new neighbor. Maybe a future significant other is inbound! Hopefully, at least, you will have a [new friend\(s\)](#) in the coming months. Whatever happens, make sure to be as open and friendly as possible with the new JETs. Think back to your first days in the program and what you needed help with. Be sure to come out to the [welcome events](#) and stay active in your block pages to give a hearty [ようこそ!](#)

If you belong to that first or second group and are having a hard time finding balance and peace in these trying times, please don't be afraid to reach out for help. You can always contact the PAs through email (Nick: [kenchopa@gmail.com](mailto:kenchopa@gmail.com)) (Emilie: [shigapa@gmail.com](mailto:shigapa@gmail.com)) or Facebook. If you want professional help or anonymous counseling, please take a look at the resources below:  
 -[JET Counseling Service](#) Login: amejpi2017  
 -AJET Peer Support Group 050-5534-5566  
 Skype: AJETPSG  
 -[TELL Counseling Services](#)  
 -[International Mental Health Professionals Japan](#) (new)



## HELP WANTED!

As we are all made painfully aware each year, the JET program is not an everlasting adventure. I'll save you the many clichés of departure and endings, and get down to brass tax: 2018-2019 is my final year on JET. It's been a great time and I'm a proud unicorn, but my rainbow road is almost over.

But instead of reverie in the past, I must look to the future of our Shiga JET community and find my successor! In the coming months (at the first SDC) I will be releasing the PA application forms and officially begin the selection process. But it's never too early to start thinking about becoming the PA. If you are interested in applying, are not sure whether the position would suit you, don't know what the PA is, or just want to ask some questions, please reach out to me via email ([kenchopa@gmail.com](mailto:kenchopa@gmail.com)) and/or Facebook (Nick Anthony) at any time.

The PA application will be open to absolutely every ALT (1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> year). Japanese is not required. If you love the JET program, but also have ways in which you want to improve the ALT experience in Shiga, this is a position for you!



### Take Me Home, Country Road

Whether you're moving to greener rice fields or going back home, July is bound to be busy and [a bit stressful](#). Here are a few reminders of things to do before never hearing about [how good you are at chopsticks](#) again:

- Moving out:  
 You've probably already started cleaning, getting rid of stuff and sending things home. With about a month left, find out when the last days to throw away certain trash types are, and use second-hand stores and Facebook groups like [Mottainai Shiga](#). Whatever the case, don't hesitate to [get help!](#)  
 You'll also need to tell [your city hall \(etc.\)](#) what's up with a tenshutsu-todoke (転出届), so make sure to take the time to do it. In the same vein, you'll need have all utilities and services cancelled.
- If you have a successor, please also fill out the guide for them (which you will find attached!) and try to remember how it was when you got here.
- [More red tape!](#)  
 Here are a few more things to keep in mind:  
 •Depending on when you plan on leaving Japan, you may have to [switch your visa type](#).  
 •Don't forget to pick someone to [deal with your pension](#).  
 •Get your [reference letters](#) if you want them.  
 •Leave your hanko and a copy of your resident card with your supervisor in case they need them.  
 •Take time to relax and enjoy the time you have left!

**The [Osaka](#) Takeaway**  
 I don't know if you noticed, but the Earth done [quaketh'd](#). If you haven't already, please take some time to review disaster safety in your area. You can find all of the disaster shelters in Shiga [HERE](#) as well as what areas are prone to which kind of Natural Disaster. It's in Japanese, but if there is any obscure vocabulary worth studying more than this... It's also a good idea to figure out what to do in the moment instead of standing like a deer in [the headlights](#) or running around like a chicken with its head cut off, or a [dog on a bucket](#). Doomsday Preppers have been preaching that a large quake is looming (similar to Yosemite), and according to my mom, "Something's definitely happening under our feet." Check out these links and do some research on your own to better prepare yourself, because the next one [could be any moment](#).

- [Disaster Preparedness Bag](#)
- [Earthquake procedure](#)



### And Now... A Message from Shiga AJET:

The days are definitely getting hot and humid, aren't they? Japanese formalities about the weather aside, I'm pleased to announce the new AJET team is well under way preparing all sorts of fun events for this year, the first of which will be the Farewell BBQ on July 7th. Logan, Kevin, Jason, Sam, Austin and Brad are happy to answer any questions or take on board any suggestions you might have. For a list of our roles (and some interesting facts) check out the reps page on the new Shiga AJET website here:  
<http://shigajets.weebly.com/the-shiga-team.html>



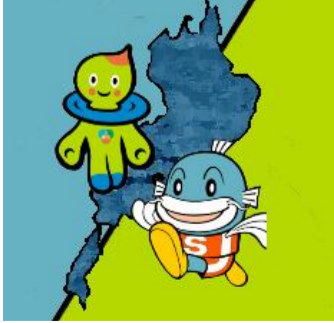
Stay hip via the (NEW!) [ShigaAJET site](#), the [NationalAJET site](#), and [FB Page!](#)



### Never too much [AJET!](#)

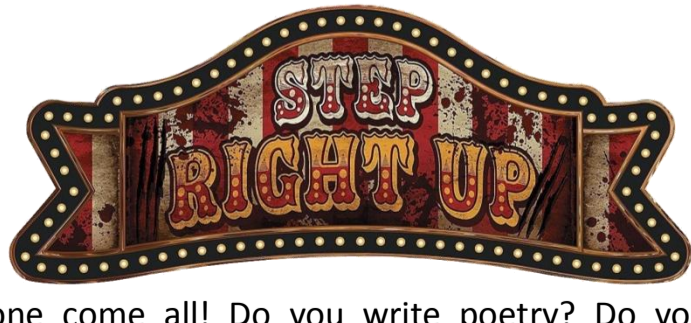
Thanks to the Bradulous Mr. Stephens, I hope you are now well acquainted with the new [Shiga AJET team](#) and are looking forward to boozing with all the other ヤンキー at Omi-Maiko this summer. But it's not just Shiga going through a change. If you haven't been paying attention, National AJET has also changed for the coming year. That means a new Leadership Council, new design and editing teams for the Connect Magazine, [and more!](#) I am extremely proud to be able to say that Shiga is one of the [most represented prefectures](#) in National AJET! All of us will do our best to improve the AJET community and help you as National reps.  
 But we can't do it all by [ourselves!](#) I hope that Shiga isn't only one of the most represented prefectures, but that Shiga's ALTs become some of the most active participants, [collaborators](#), [volunteers](#), [contributors](#), and constructive criticizers of National AJET. If you want to see change happen, don't be afraid to reach out and tell us! If you think your opinion or stories should be heard, submit articles to CONNECT! If you want to help others in Japan and around the world, take a page out of the book of our good friend, [Stanley Yelnats...](#)

Keep up the good work,  
 Nick



### Yo! Biwako

Are you a die-hard Shiga fan? Do you want to spread the gospel of the Mother Lake across the world? Are you really excited about the JET Essays and Successor's Guide and wish you could write them all the time? Do you just enjoy writing like a normal person and don't care about that other nonsense?



Come one come all! Do you write poetry? Do you sketch scenery? Do you paint epic pictures? Do you have a story that is dying to be told? Do you have a blog, instagram, etc. that you want to promote? Then you can help contribute to the "Shiga Situation". We would like to start adding short fiction (100word stories), pictures, artwork, and more to the newsletter, and for that we need your help!

If you are interested, contact Nick via Facebook or email ([kenchopa@gmail.com](mailto:kenchopa@gmail.com))