

Events:

- 5月20日 Shiga AJET Meetup
- 7月6日 Biwa Boat Ball

The Shiga Situation

Mini Yet Meaningful Art Contest Topic:
New Beginnings

Mother of all Newsletters



Glory Be to Golden Week!

日	月	火	水	木	金	土
4/21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	5/1	2	3	4
昭和の日	天皇陛下即位・改元	憲法記念日	祝日法により祝日	みどりの日		
5	6	4/27→5/6で10連休!!				
こどもの日	振替休日					

In fact, there were no such wizards at work. The true hero is none other than [THE LAW](#). There are two laws that are tag-teaming to make this Golden Week super duper awesome. First, any national holiday landing on a Sunday is observed on the following Monday. So Children's Day, May 5th, will be celebrated on May 6th this year.

So this year the holidays kick off with a normal weekend, followed by Showa Day 昭和の日. This day commemorates the Showa Emperor, who died in 1989. April 30th is [National フクワク](#) day in giddy anticipation of May 1st when the new emperor will ascend to the Chrysanthemum Throne (a phrase that is infinitely more epic if read while listening to the [GoT title theme](#)). The festivities will be followed by [National プロ疲れ様](#) Day on May 2nd. After that, we have our normal Golden Week of Constitution Day 憲法記念日 (honoring the "peace" constitution was put into effect in 1947), Greenery Day 緑の日 ([#sakuraislife](#)), and Children's Day 子供の日 (because they are [the future!](#)) which will be celebrated on the 6th.

Golden Week 2019 is almost [upon us](#). In order for you to better appreciate the godsent holidays, we thought it would be nice to give you some background. A casual observer of the calendar would be quick to realize that the 10 days of holiday are actually only 5 national holidays. Now obviously, the weekends should be taken into account, but that would still only give us days off on April 29th (Showa Day), May 1st (Coronation Day), and May 3rd (Constitution Day). So what sort of wonderful sorcery got us April 30th, May 2nd, and May 6th as well?

The second law states that any day that is between two national holidays automatically [becomes a national holiday](#), too. (Sidenote: this is the origin story of Greenery Day, May 4th. Originally, "Greenery" was celebrated on Showa Day to honor the former emperor's love of [nature](#). However, seeing as May 4th had to be a holiday—because it was sandwiched between Constitution Day and Children's Day—it was decided to rename it, and Greenery Day was born.) With the national holiday in honor of the new emperor's coronation on May 1st, April 30th and May 2nd are the juicy brisquet of a [double-decker holiday sandwich](#)—which makes them holidays as well!

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The applications for summer orientation have been emailed and are [due on Friday, May 10th!](#) If you haven't checked your email in a while, there's no better time than now! Please complete the application and fax is to Nick at Kencho (077-528-4953). **All re-contracting ALTs are required to complete the application.**

Back to Business

Among the many things that "spring" brings to mind, I bet "JET Essays" are near the [very top!](#) For the 1st years, JET essays are your opportunity to write about your experiences while living and working in Japan. All JETs must write approximately ½ a page about: 1.) **Teaching English** 2.) **Japanese Culture** 3.) **Life in Shiga**. The essay will be due at the end of June, but it is best to get a head start on it because you will need to have your JTE translate it and have your principal (or VP) send it to your BoE—who will THEN [send it to Kencho](#) (at which point Odysseus will slay all of Penelope's suitors and only halt his blood-lust vengeance at the intervention of Athena). Your schools will be sent physical copies of detailed instructions to be given to ALTs. You can also access these documents by clicking [HERE](#). If you would like to read last year's essays, scan or click the QR code below.



As always, there are four main orientations: Survival A&B, Michigan Exchange Program, and Job Orientation. We need multiple ALT volunteers to help with each. You can indicate your preference on the form. If you want to help new ALTs with their lives in Shiga, sign up for Survival Orientation. If you want to help better prepare Shigan high schoolers for their exchange program in Michigan, sign up for that orientation. If you want to make sure ALTs are as prepared as possible for the school year, put a mark by Job Orientation. Marking that you are unable or unwilling to participate does not officially excuse you (though we will do our best to honor that). Alternatively, not completing this form most definitely [will not](#) get you out of helping at the orientations. Again, all re-contracting ALTs are required to complete the application by [Friday, May 10th](#). Need another copy? [CLICK HERE](#)

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Uminoko English Camp!



Shiga English Camp 2019!

The official sign up for the camp has been sent to your BoEs and base schools. If you have not already received them, please check with your supervisor. They are due on Friday, April 26th!
(the rest of this article has been translated into [pirate English!](#))
Are ye ready t' sail th' high seas o' Lake Biwa aboard th' Uminoko. We embark from Otsu Port, headin' north across th' open blue o' Biwa, t' th' [Port o' Nagahama](#). Thar, we'll lay siege t' th' 'village o' Black Wall 'n plunder our weasely hearts out! Th' time aboard th' vessel 'n in town will be filled wit' English-language activities t' be led by th' wonderful crew o' volunteer ALTs. All th' souls aboard will live like a sailor, sleep in th' brig, swab th' deck, 'n eat th' finest [Ohmi cuisine](#). If ye think ye be ready for such a venture, Grab yer eye patches, peg-legs, 'n [dictionaries](#), 'cause this voyage will be lingual as Davy Jones' locker. Put ye mark on the survey above, and keep ye eye on th' horizon fer more information!
Date: August 23-24 **Cost:** no more than 2000yen



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It's (Almost) Time to Say Goodbye

As the JET year starts to wind down, it's time to think about departure procedures. If you are an ALT who will not recontract in August, your first order of business is to [get in contact with your BoE supervisor](#). Some BoEs are more on-the-ball about this than others, so it's best to just make the first move--DO NOT expect them to hold your hands. Make sure to inquire about:

- **cleaning and clearing procedures**
 - What rental equipment and furniture needs to be returned? When?
 - When/where/how can large trash (sofa, TV, table...) be disposed of?
 - What is the BoE/apartment policy on leaving things behind for successors?
 - [Who](#) is responsible for cleaning? If the apartment will be professionally cleaned, who is expected to pay?
 - Is there an apartment-cleanliness check? If so, when?
- **Utilities and services cancellation (water, internet, gas...)**
 - What utilities need to be canceled, when should they be canceled, and who will do it?
 - Can my successor just inherit my wifi or should I cancel that as well? What will the cancellation fees be like?
 - When and how will I cancel my cell phone contract? Do I have to ask them to unlock my phone upon contract termination? Are there cancellation fees?
- **Residence Tax**
 - You will be required to pay your [annual residence tax](#) in a one-time payment before you leave the country. This can be a lot of money, depending on where you live, and unfortunately comes as a surprise for many ALTs.
 - Check with the BoE about the residence tax procedure and when/how you can pay.
- **Pension**
 - What do I need to do before heading home to guarantee that sweet sweet [pension refund](#)?? (Hint: get out you [JET Handbook](#))
 - Who will be my designated tax representative? Are they aware of the responsibilities?
- **Return Flight**
 - What is the procedure for booking the tickets? Some BoEs do everything, others ask you to find several possible flights. Some BoEs buy the tickets out-right, others just transfer the funds into your bank account. Be sure to ask for the specifics before flight prices start to rise!



These topics and questions are [neither complete nor exhaustive](#); they are just a platform from which you can start to think about the upcoming move. As someone who has listened to 5 years of ALTs complaining about moving (and who has moved multiple times while on JET), the mantra I believe works best is, "MORE". Everything about the process will take *more* time, *more* money, (possibly) *more* nenkyu, and *more* hassle than you are probably thinking. Plan accordingly and minimize your headaches so that the final days of your time on JET are as care-free and enjoyable as possible!

Useful resources: [AJET](#), [JET Handbook](#)

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A Message From Your Shiga AJET Leader

How's it hanging Shiga! Hope everyone is pumped for Reiwa (new gengo, new you!) While Japan is welcoming a new era it just so happens that Shiga AJET will be going through some changes this year. In the next few weeks we'll be changing over to a new AJET team and as such this will be [my last entry](#) in the Shiga situation. I'd like to take a moment to say it's been a real joy leading the Shiga AJET team this year. Big thanks to the AJET reps and also to everyone who's come along to an event this year! It's awesome to see so much enthusiasm behind AJET events and everyone trying to make the most of their time in Shiga. I might be biased in saying this but I honestly believe Shiga is the best JET community in Japan, and I'll be returning to Australia this August with cherished memories of this wonderful little prefecture thanks to all the amazing people I've met here!



But as a wise person once said, out with the old and in with the new! There will be an Open Meeting to join the new AJET team on Monday, May 20th and even if you're on the fence about joining AJET I strongly encourage you to come along! This is a great opportunity to see what Shiga AJET is about and also have a say about the kind of Shiga AJET you'd like to see. I've been on the AJET team for two years now and I could speak at length about the personal and professional benefits of joining AJET, so if anyone has any questions please don't hesitate to contact me.

So that's it, take it easy Shiga! [So long and thanks for all the funazushi.](#)

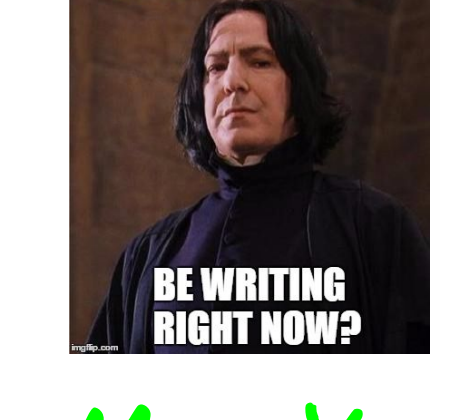
Tarobogu Rice Planting Festival

お田植大祭 May 19th!

Tarobogu Shrine sits beautifully perched on a scenic mountainside of Higashi-Omi. It's famous for its red-faced tengu god, its [steep, stone stepped approach](#), its trail through a large split rock (supposedly meant to close in and crush you if you've been telling fibs), its fireworks and festivals and, every May, its traditional rice planting festival to hopefully ensure a [good rice season](#) ahead. For this 'taue' festival, numerous offerings are made to the gods followed by a dramatic solo dance to bless and purify the rice and fields. After, several performers in festive rice planting attire enter the paddies accompanied by song and drums. Planting to the rhythm, they cover several meters of field, often to the snaps and comments of up-close spectators. This year the festival will be held on [Sunday, May 19th](#). It usually gets underway mid-morning so you can make the most of the rest of the day exploring the large shrine complex and even hike to the top of the mountain. To get there, take the Omi Tetsudo train line to Tarobogumae Station and follow the [tori gates towards the mountain](#). The festival is at the base of the mountain on the [left of the road](#). As there is not much cover for guests, a hat is recommended. Hope to see you there!



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May/June theme:
New Beginnings

Written entries must be 100 words or less.
Visual entries (sketch, drawing, painting, etc...) need to be the size of a standard business card.

Fresh Cheddar!

In April, the Ministry of Finance announced the [new designs](#) for the \$10,000, \$5,000, and \$1,000 banknotes. Japanese banknotes are regularly changed (~every 20 years) as an anti-counterfeiting measure. The announcement has no official ties to the impending [Reiwa Era](#). The new notes will enter circulation in early 2024. [Shibasaburo Kitasato](#), an influential bacteriologist in modern medical science, will replace medical scientist Hideyo Noguchi on the \$10,000 bill. [Umeko Tsuda](#), the founder of Tsuda University and pioneer of women's education in Japan, will replace poet Ichiyo Higuchi on the \$5,000 bill. And [Eiichi Shibusawa](#), "the father of Japanese capitalism", will replace Yukichi Fukuzawa, the founder of Keio University and an intellectual leader of the Meiji Era. When redesigning the bills in 1984, the government decided to no longer feature politicians or military leaders in an effort to maintain [political neutrality](#). Thus, all banknotes, post-1984, will replace poet Ichiyo Higuchi on the \$5,000 bill. The change of the 10,000 note is of special significance because Yukichi Fukuzawa's 10,000 note has not been changed since 1984.



Mini Yet Meaningful Art Contest

Curtain Call

Our selection for this edition was submitted by Kily Buta (Zeze SHS). We hope you enjoy it as much as we did. You can read the rest of the wonderful submission [HERE](#). Thank you to everyone who participated!

Seems like it all just began,
As I just arrived in this magical land,
New job, new adventures, and new friends
It seemed the fun would never end,
But now there is no time to stall,
Because it's time for some teacher's curtain call,
I still can't wrap my head around it,
Why these teachers have to split,
But there's no time to despair,
Because spring is now in the air,
And as the Sakura begin to bloom,
They say it's time to change the teacher's room,
And when the new recruits arrive,
It's time for the school to thrive.

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Job Opportunity!



Calling all ALTs who will leave the JET program this fall! Torahime High School is looking for a full-time (non-JET) English teacher to begin work in April 2020. This will be a direct hire situation, and thus you would be given the responsibilities and pay of a normal teacher, making you eligible to receive the yearly [pay raises and bonuses](#) that ALTs do not. Additionally, the job would not be bound by a limited contract! That means, if you are a capable and motivated teacher, you could stay [until your retirement](#).



A teaching degree is not required for this position. More information will be available in the coming months. The application will be posted publicly, but we wanted to give JET ALTs [a heads up](#) to keep your [eyes peeled](#) for announcements coming from Kencho this spring.