



**JETAA**  
**PORTLAND**



JET PROGRAMME • PRE-DEPARTURE ORIENTATION

# Your Person Is Going to Japan ...And So Is Your Love

*For families, partners, and close friends of incoming JET participants*

# What We'll Cover

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- Before they leave & what you need to know
- How you can help right now
- What Japan will be like ... for them
- Distance, time zones, and staying connected
- Communicating well and what to watch out for
- Taking care of yourself
- Being their anchor but knowing when to step back

# Before They Leave

*Very good things to know*

## Timeline



- A) Departure: late July – August 2006  
2-day Tokyo orientation, then local placement
- b) Decision to renew contract by early/mid January  
(but can be pressured into deciding in November)
- C) Earliest return if contract is not renewed: late July - August

## Documents



Leave copies at home/shared online drive:  
passport • credit cards • travel orders • medical

## Starting Cash



¥404,000 – ¥485,000 JPY  
for bills & groceries before first paycheck

## Communication



Japan is 16 hrs ahead now through November 1. After that, Japan is 17 hrs ahead.  
Set call times before they leave — not after

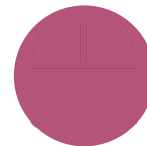


# How You Can Help Right Now



## Send care packages

OTC medications, familiar snacks, home-country spices, winter clothes — hard to find sometimes or just way more expensive. Pre-pack before they leave.



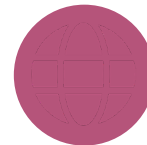
## Help them pack well

Business attire for the Tokyo orientation goes in the carry-on. Business casual for work. Appropriate clothing for the sticky summer months. Comfortable walking shoes are essential for daily life.



## Start planning a visit

Late December to early January; late March to early April; Golden Week, late April. Even a rough plan gives you both something to look forward to.



The most powerful thing you can do before departure: show up. Help pack, plan, prepare. The most powerful thing after: stay steady.



# What Japan Will Be Like ... for Them

1

## Honeymoon

*Months 1-2*

Exciting. Overwhelming.  
Everything is new.





# What Japan Will Be Like ... for Them



1

## Honeymoon

*Months 1–2*

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2

## Friction

*Months 3–5*

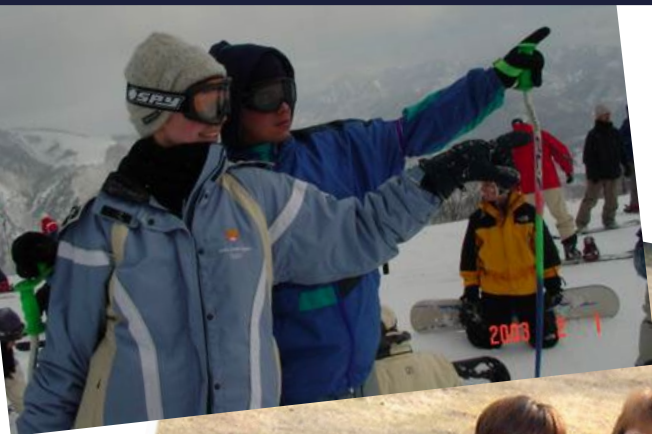
Harder. Quieter.  
Homesickness peaks here.







# What Japan Will Be Like ... for Them



## Adjustment

*Months 6–9*

Finding rhythm.  
Work feels real. Japan feels  
like home.





# What Japan Will Be Like ... for Them



4

## Integration

*Months 10–12*

Confidence.  
Community. Fluency in daily  
life.

Knowing the arc means you can show up differently at each phase — not just when it's easy.





# Communicating Well



## ✓ Try saying...

*"Tell me something good that happened."*

*"I'm so proud of you."*

*"I looked up [place you mentioned] — it looks incredible."*

*"We're handling things here. You focus on Japan."*

*"Send me a photo of your lunch!"*

## ✗ Try to avoid...

*"When are you coming home?"*

*"It's not the same without you."*

*"You're missing everything here."*

*"I worry about you every single day."*

*"I don't understand why you had to go."*

# Things Worth Being Aware Of



## Neurodivergency

Japan's sensory environment can be both exciting and overwhelming. Executive function demands are high.

Patience with different communication styles: texting over calling, brief over long - is a form of love.



## Social Media & Over-Watching

Following every post, reading every story, asking about everything you saw online can feel like surveillance.

Let them share on their terms. Your presence  $\neq$  your awareness of their every moment.



## LGBTQIA+ in Japan

Rights vary by region. Many JETs are not out at school.

Your job: be a safe place. If you're still building understanding, reach inward for support - not toward them.



## Hovering vs. Anchoring

Checking in  $\neq$  checking up. Daily 'are you okay?' messages signal anxiety, not love.

Weekly calls + trust = the strongest foundation. Let them grow - even when that growth looks unfamiliar.



# Taking Care of Yourself Too



**You can't be their anchor if you're unmoored yourself.**



## **Find your people**

2–3 people you can talk to openly. Don't carry it alone.



## **Keep your own rhythms**

Exercise, a weekly dinner, a project. Groundedness is a skill.



## **Get curious about Japan**

Watch a documentary. Try cooking something Japanese. Share the curiosity.



## **Plan something**

A visit, a trip, anything on the calendar. Anticipation is medicine.



## **Send surprises**

A care package, a handwritten letter. Tangible love travels well.



## **Celebrate their growth**

Reframe newness as growth you're witnessing. You're part of this story.

# How to Be Their Anchor

*An anchor doesn't  
pull the ship back  
to shore.*

*It holds it steady.*



Celebrate small wins. 'I navigated the post office alone!' is a big deal.



Listen more than you advise. Resist the urge to fix.



Share the ordinary from home. 'The dog did something funny' matters.



Handle what you can at home. Let them know the logistics are covered.



Remind them: being there is not abandoning anyone. It's extraordinary.

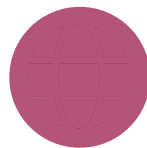


# A Note on Homecoming

**They will come home changed. That's the whole point.**



They may feel disoriented at home.  
This is reverse culture shock - it's real and it passes.



They may miss Japan deeply.  
That's not a rejection of home - it means it mattered.



Ask about “their” Japan.  
Be curious. It's a gift they want to share.



The relationship you built from a distance is stronger than you think.

# So, what are you going to commit to?

## **I will connect by...**

*e.g. A standing Sunday LINE call*

## **I will take care of myself by...**

*e.g. Planning a visit in April 2027*

## **I will be their anchor by...**

*e.g. Sending a surprise care package with their favorite snacks*

**This session was presented by**  
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JETAAPDX Treasurer

## Resources

### **JET Program USA**

[jetprogramusa.org](http://jetprogramusa.org)

### **JET Pre-Departure**

[jetprogramusa.org/orientation-training/](http://jetprogramusa.org/orientation-training/)

### **USJETAA Alumni Assoc.**

[usjetaa.org](http://usjetaa.org)

### **LINE App**

[line.me/en/](https://line.me/en/)

### **Stonewall Japan**

[stonewalljapan.org](http://stonewalljapan.org)

