

**Embassy of Japan
Tonga**

PRESS RELEASE

*CE/2025/01
September 12, 2025*

Japanese Speech Contest 2025

The Japanese Speech Contest for 2025 awarded prizes to outstanding Japanese language students on Friday 12, September after the competition attended by His Excellency, Mr. INAGAKI Hisao, Ambassador of Japan to Tonga and Hon. Dr. 'Uhilamoelangi Fasi, Minister of Education and Training.

Prizes were also awarded by Mr. Miyamoto Hideharu, President of the Narita Airport Business Company, who visited from Japan providing sponsorship for the contest. Dr. Giulio Masasso Paunga, Vice-Chancellor of Tonga National University also attended the event along with JICA-Tonga's Resident Representative, JICA volunteers, Japanese Language Teachers and the Japanese language students from seven school in the Kingdom.

Ambassador INAGAKI in his remarks congratulated the development of Japanese language education in Tonga since 1986 and acknowledged the dedication and commitment from teachers, volunteers and the Japanese students themselves. "Language is more than just words, it reflects culture, values and ways of thinking."

"Your journey with the Japanese language may open doors to unforgettable experiences," said Ambassador INAGAKI. He encouraged contestants that standing on stage and speaking in Japanese is a great achievement on its own by saying "May this experience inspire you to continue learning and growing."

The Hon. Dr. 'Uhilamoelangi Fasi in his address acknowledged Japan's ongoing support towards Tonga's education sector, "Tonga will be forever grateful, not only for the strong diplomatic relationship shared between our two nations but also for the many forms of assistance that have touched the lives of our children, our schools, and our communities. From classrooms to scholarship, from volunteers to culture exchange programmes, Japan's support has been both practical and inspiring."

"The Japanese Speech is not just about competition, it is about unity, understanding, and shared growth. It is about weaving together two cultures, two peoples, and two nations so that our friendship with Japan continues to flourish for generations to come," stated Minister Fasi.

In closing, Dr. Giulio Masasso Paunga spoke of "we witnessed time, dedication, and cultural collection," referring to his experience studying at a Japanese university 30 years ago. He said, "Opportunities to learn about Japanese culture are open to you in the future," and encouraged participants to continue learning about Japanese culture through Japanese language.

24 contestants competed with each other this year and were judged by the content and structure, pronunciation and intonation, presentation, grammar and richness and correct use of vocabulary in

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their speeches. The Form 4 category was won by Mauiana Lemoto of Tonga High School; Mele'unga Lolohea of Tailulu won Form 5, while Lolononga Epui won Form 6 and Mele Taufa won the Open category both from 'Eua High School.

The Japanese Speech Contest is a collaboration of the Embassy of Japan in Tonga and Tonga's Ministry of Education and Training since 2010, support by the Japanese Language Teachers and JICA volunteers in the Kingdom.

The venue for this year was kindly provided by Tailulu College.

END.

Attached; Photos

Photos:



H.E. Mr, INAGAKI Hisao, Ambassador of Japan to Tonga with Miyamoto Hideharu of the Narita Airport Business Company along with winners of the Japanese speech contest from 'Eua High School after the competition on Friday, 12 September 2025.

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The 2025 Japanese Speech Contest held at Tailulu College Hall on Friday, 12 September.

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1st in Form 5 category, Mele'unga Lolohea of Tailulu College awarded by Dr. Masasso Paunga, Vice-Chancellor of Tonga National University.



Queen Salote College contestants for the Japanese Speech Contest 2025 with Distinguished guests, Hon. Dr. 'Uhilamoelangi Fasi, Minister of Education and Training, H.E. Mr. INAGAKI Hisao, Ambassador of Japan to Tonga,

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Mr. Miyamoto Hideharu of the Narita Airport Business Company and Dr. Masasso Paunga from Tonga's National University.



1st Place in Form 4 category, Mauiana Lemoto with contestants from Tonga High School in the Japanese Speech Contest 2025.



Tailulu College Japanese Language Students with their Japanese Teacher Lesieli Tonga'onevai, and JICA volunteer.

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The Japanese Language Contest for 2025 at Tailulu College Hall.