

Embassy of Japan

Tonga

PRESS RELEASE

CE/2026/01
14 September 2026

Japanese Speech Contest 2026

Her Royal Highness Crown Princess Sinaitakala Tuku'aho and Her Royal Highness Princess Halaevalu Mata'aho Tuku'aho graced the 2026 Japanese Speech Contest with their presence on Friday, 11 September. The contest saw 26 participants from six secondary schools.

HRH Princess Halaevalu Mata'aho is a Japanese Language student of the International Class of her school, Queen Salote College, and performed at her school's item at the event.

His Excellency Mr. INAGAKI Hisao, Ambassador of Japan to Tonga, and the Honourable Dr. Mo'ale 'Otunuku, Minister for Education and Training also honoured the contest, along with Mr. MUNETSUGU Akimoto, Deputy General Manager, Human Resources Division of the Narita Airport Business Corporation, Japan, Educational Officials, School Principals, Japanese language instructors, and Japanese language students across the Kingdom.

Ambassador INAGAKI, in his remarks, congratulated the advancement of Japanese language education in Tonga since 1986, recognizing the efforts and dedication of teachers, volunteers, and Japanese students themselves.

Japanese language is currently taught at eight secondary schools as well as at the Tonga National University. Ambassador INAGAKI acknowledged that expansion made possible by the unwavering passion and commitment of all involved.

Honourable Dr. Mo'ale 'Otunuku, extended gratitude to Japan and their dedication in enriching the education sector with education resources, exchange programs and volunteer teachers. "It is a true friendship which Tonga is grateful for, lifting the education standard of Tongan youth."

He congratulated the contestants with their Japanese language skills which he was impressed and emphasized that, "By mastering this language you are transforming yourselves as culture ambassador who will carry a vital partnership into the future," stated the Minister.

The Japanese Speech Contest acknowledges the generous sponsorships from the Narita Airport Business Corporation from Japan, as well as to Toyota Tsusho Corporation and Asco Motors Tonga.

The venue for this year was kindly provided by Queen Salote College.

END.

Attached; Result & Photos

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Result - Japanese Speech Contest 2026

Open Category – “Free Theme”

1st place - Solomone Lemoto, Tonga College, 'Atele
2nd place - 'Uliafu Taumoepeau, Tonga High School
3rd place - Mele Mahe, Tonga High School

Form 6 – “My Dream”

1st place - Bertha Kaufusi, Tonga High School
2nd place - Mele'unga Lolohea, Tailulu College
3rd place - Makeleta Latu, Vava'u High School

Form 5 – “My Favourite Person”

1st place - Mauiana Lemoto, Tonga High School
2nd place - Manufualu Vailea, Queen Salote College
3rd place - Pelenaise Funaki, Tailulu College

Form 4 – “Self-Introduction”

1st place - Josephine U'anga, Tonga High School
2nd place - Kalisi Langi, Vava'u High School
3rd place - Katinia Fotu, 'Eua High School

Photos:



HRH Princess Halaefalu Mata'aho Tuku'aho with her Japanese Language class, who performed a Japanese item during the Japanese Speech Contest on Friday, 11 September 2026.

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H.E. Mr. INAGAKI Hisao, Ambassador of Japan to Tonga along with Hon. Dr. Mo'ale 'Otunuku, Minister for Education and Training of Tonga with Solomone Lemoto, winner of the Japanese Speech Contest Open category.



Japanese Speech contestants from Tonga High School's Form 7, who won 2nd and 3rd Places in the Open category.

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Queen Salote College, Manufualu Vailea won 2nd place in the Form 5 category.



Tailulu College's Japanese language students with teacher Lesieli Tonga'onevai

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Japanese language students from 'Eua Island with Mr. Munetsugu Akimoto of the Narita Airport Business Corporation who arrived from Japan to support the event.



Japanese Speech Contest 2026 at the Queen Salote College on Friday, 11 September 2026

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