

Remarks by Ambassador HAYASHI Hajime
at the 17th Japanese Speech Contest for University Students
on 5 March 2022

I am delighted to greet you on the occasion of the 17th Japanese Speech Contest for University Students.

First of all, I'd like to express my gratitude to the hosts, the British Association for Teaching Japanese and the Japan Foundation, whose great efforts have underpinned this wonderful contest for 17 years.

Clearly, our two countries enjoy a cordial and mutually-beneficial relationship, and our bilateral friendship has been strengthened in a variety of areas. I believe it has been promoted especially through learning each other's language. It is a worldwide trend to learn English and students in Japan are not at all exceptions.

While for westerners, on the other hand, Japanese is not the easiest language to master, the rewards undoubtedly make the effort worthwhile. All of the finalists of this contest today must have gained great satisfaction from their endeavours, which will open many doors in business as well as socially and culturally.

Today, although the speeches will be streamed online, I have no doubt they will be as powerful and moving as before. I am enthusiastically looking forward to the speeches that will be presented today.

While, for all of us, these past years have been hugely challenging, we are now sensing that normality is returning. I trust it will not be long before we can fully enjoy our lives.

Let me once again voice my gratitude to the organisers, the participating students and all those who have supported this event.

I trust everyone enjoys the day.