

**51<sup>st</sup> NSW Japanese Language Speech Contest**  
**Opening Address**  
**Kiya Masahiko, Consul-General of Japan in Sydney**  
**22 August 2021**

みなさん、おはようございます！私の名前は紀谷昌彦です。日本の総領事をしています。1年10か月前にシドニーに来ました。今56歳です。

(Thanking the organiser and participants)

It is my great honour and pleasure to be invited to the 51st NSW Japanese language speech contest.

I believe it must have been a big challenge for the Steering Committee to organize this event under COVID restrictions. You have already done this on-site for 50 times, but for the very first time online. Congratulations for coming this far!

It is more so for students. How is your learning from home going? I commend you for deciding to enter the contest and to take on this extra challenge.

This also applies to the teachers. Encouraging and supporting your students online for this contest must have been another challenging experience for you.

The very fact that the contest is being held during this difficult time is the evidence of your commitment and enthusiasm for the teaching and learning of the Japanese language here in NSW.

Thank you very, very much.

(My speech experience)

I took part in a speech contest in English when I was a university student. It was difficult, but I learned so many things. Later in life, I started making public speeches in Belgium about 10 years ago, and when I was the Ambassador of Japan to South Sudan, I made so many speeches myself and listened to so many speeches of others.

What I have learned through these is that making a public speech is very exciting, because you can change the world together for the better by the power of words. Only by making your ideas known to others by speaking up, others can get to know you and work with you.

I am doing this in English, and you are now doing this in Japanese.

(Opening a new door to Japan)

There are so many interesting things in Japan – anime, food, sports, technologies, culture, tradition, and history – and the Japanese people are working with Australians in so many areas.

You are making a big step forward today. Your efforts this time have opened a new door to Japan. You have now learned a great skill!

My message today is this. Please keep your excitement for learning Japanese. Australia and Japan are complementary and bound with trust. We can create great things together.

You are the future of Australia-Japan relations. I wish you all the best!

Thank you very much.

(End)