



Embassy of Japan in Ireland
Japanese Language Teachers in Ireland

24 March 2014

[14-06]

The 12th Japanese Speech Contest in Ireland

On 22 March 2014, the 12th Japanese Speech Contest in Ireland was held at the Clock Tower, Department of Education and Skills, Marlborough Street, Dublin 1.

The contest was co-organised by Japanese Language Teachers in Ireland (JLTI) and the Embassy of Japan in Ireland, and supported by the Japan Foundation and other organisations in order to encourage and promote Japanese language education in Ireland.

This year, 13 participants in the Secondary School Category (TY & LC1 Group), 5 in the Secondary School Category (LC2 Group) and 3 in the General Category enjoyed speaking about Japan and the things that interest them. The participants were judged on the basis of the content, expression and grammar of their speeches and a Q&A session with the judges. The prize for the winner was a return ticket to Japan, funded by the Japan Business Society in Ireland.

According to the latest Survey on Japanese-Language Education Abroad 2012 conducted by the Japan Foundation, 2,827 Irish people study Japanese, which is the biggest number per capita among the 28 EU countries, mainly in around 40 secondary schools and five third level institutions.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Atsumi said, "I believe that if more and more people can learn our respective languages and communicate directly with each other, we can gain a much deeper level of mutual understanding. That is why I think it is wonderful to see you all studying Japanese and giving speeches here today.", and continued, "Prime Minister Abe visited Ireland last summer, and then the Taoiseach Mr Enda Kenny went to Japan later in the year. Japan and Ireland are both gradually emerging from difficult economic times, and I am sure that our business ties will expand substantially in the future."

Ms Keiko Inoue, Chairperson of the JLTI appreciated "the hard work and dedication made by the contestants", and continued, "the organisers hope the Speech Contest not only provides an opportunity to showcase the contestants' language ability, but also contributes to further friendship and mutual understanding between Ireland and Japan".

The contest started in 1999 and is organised by the JLTI. This year's contest was the twelfth organised by the JLTI, and the second to be co-organised by the Embassy of Japan. Every year, about 30 contestants take part in the contest which attracts an audience of around 200 people.

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