

LANKA JAPAN FRIENDSHIP SOCIETY - ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

The Executive Committee is pleased to present the Annual Report for the year 2021/2022.

The 62nd Annual General Meeting of the Lanka Japan Friendship Society (LJFS) was held on 18th Feb 2021 at the Sasakawa Cultural Centre Auditorium, Colombo.

The following were elected to the Executive Committee:

Patron (as per Constitution):	His Excellency the Ambassador for Japan in Sri Lanka
Vice Patrons (appointed):	Mr. Rajah Sinnathuray (JP) Immediate Past President, Mr. Sumana Liyanage, Mrs. Lalitha Rajapakse, Mr. Deepal Gunaratne.
President:	Mr. Merrick Gooneratne
Vice Presidents:	Mr. Mahendra de Vaz, Mr. A. Shelly Thenuwara, Mr. Wilson I. Gunawardena, Mr. M.D.(Tony) Saldin
Hony. General Secretary:	Professor Gaminda Haegoda
Hony. Treasurer:	Mr. Fredrick Vijayakumar Marian
Hony. Assistant Secretary:	Mrs. Jenneth Ismail
Hony. Assistant Treasurer:	Mr. Rukshan Perera
Executive Committee	Mr. A, Anandagoda, Mr. Sudhammika Attygalle, Mr. Jayaraja Chandrasekara, Mr. D.H.R. Chadranath, Dr. P.H.P. de Silva, Mr. Ashok L Ganwani, Dr, Upali Jayawardena, Mr. Chanaka Kariyapperuma, Mrs. Sarojini Nagendran, Mr. Harindra Rodrigo, Mr. Manoranjan Wijebahu, Mrs. Sunitha Wijepala, Ms. Himani Wijemanne.

(As per nominations received):

(The following were elected uncontested at the AGM to fill the shortfall, proposed by the Chair:	Ms. Nishanthi Galhena, Ms. Samadara Mampitiye, Mr. Neomal Perera, Mr. Kadirgamar Rajah
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The following were appointed by the President:

Mr. T. Kawakami, Counselor as Representative of the Embassy of Japan.
Mr. Akira Matsui, General Manager of Itochu Corporation representing the Japanese business community.

EXCO Meetings:

Eighteen (18) Executive Committee meetings were held during the period under review. Due to the Covid 19 situation prevalent throughout the country, restrictions on travel, and the shortage of fuel, the Annual General Meeting could not be held as scheduled in early 2022.

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However, the Executive Committee continued to function on a limited scale during the early part of the year with meetings held using Zoom technology, until such time conditions were appropriate to hold EXCO meetings physically. The approval to continue with the same Executive Committee was on a mandate given by the EXCO, until such time the AGM could be held

Activities during the period under review:

- 1) LJFS website: www.lankajapanfs.com – the Society website is maintained by TEAM9SOLUTIONS and coordinated by the LJFS Website Coordinator. All information and activities pertaining to the Lanka Japan Friendship Society is regularly updated on the website. Website Coordinator Mr. Tony Saldin/Vice President.
- 2) LJF WhatsApp Group - For ease of communications, LJFS also maintains a WhatsApp group (LANKA JAPAN FS GROUP) where all EXCO members are regularly updated on the activities of the Society and where they can communicate quickly amongst themselves on matters related to LJFS and Japan. Exchange of any political content is not allowed in this group. Administrators – Mr. Merrick Gooneratne and Mr. Tony Saldin
- 3) Privilege Dining facilities at Japanese Restaurants: On a proposal by the President Mr. Merrick Gooneratne, it was decided to contact Japanese restaurants in Sri Lanka and request them to grant privileges to members of the Lanka Japan Friendship Society by offering them discounts on in-house dining. The following restaurants agreed to give discounts to LJFS members on production of their LJFS membership cards.
 - A) Kuuraku Japanese Restaurant, 48B, Park Street Mews, Colombo 2.
 - B) Tengku Japanese Restaurant, Hotel Kingsbury, Janadhipathi Mw, Colombo 1.
 - C) Minori Japanese Restaurant & Rooftop Bar, Granbell Hotel, 282/5, Marine Drive, Colombo 3.
 - D) Ichizen Japanese Restaurant, 63/2, Ward Place, Colombo 7.
 - E) Tsukuji Ouchi Japanese Restaurant, Arcade Independence Square, Colombo 7.Project Chairperson – Ms. Himani Wijemanne.
- 4) Membership Directory – the existing Membership Directory which was compiled and printed in 2009 is now outdated. It was subsequently decided to contact the 900 odd names listed in the old directory with a view to update same. A data base of around 700 names with contact details where information can be shared via text messages through mobile phones has now been compiled. At present it is difficult to communicate with the general membership via post due to the existing shortage of paper and high cost. It is planned to print a hard copy of the Membership Directory in 2023. Project Chairperson – Ms. Samadara Mampitiye.
- 5) Annual Members Nite - The “Year End Members Get-together” was held on Friday 10th Dec 2021 at the Sasakawa Hall amidst a distinguished gathering of members, their guests and members of the Japanese community. Mr. Kotaro Katsuki, Minister/ Deputy Head of Mission of the Japanese Embassy in Colombo was the Chief Guest. The welcome address was given by Mr. Merrick Gooneratne, President/LJFS followed by a speech by the Chief Guest Mr. Katsuki.

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Several games, a treasure hunt, table draws, music for dancing and a baila competition, were the main events. Music was provided by The Duo from Chandimal Entertainments and the event was compered by the inimitable Dr. Vijaya Corea. The sumptuous Sri Lankan buffet dinner was enjoyed by everybody.

Mr. Mahendra de Vaz/Vice President headed the organizing committee.

- 6) Pinkama for Departed Members of the LJFS – A Pinkama and Alms-giving to bestow merit on departed members late Daya Weththasinghe, Chandra Jayatilleka, Sandaseeli Anandagoda, Lal Wewala, Upali Jayaskera and other members was held on Sunday 19th December 2021 at the Hunupitiya Gangarama Temple, Colombo 2. Mr. W.I. Gunawardena, VP headed the organizing committee with, Mr. Sumana Liyanage, Vice Patron, Ms. Sunitha Wijepala, Mr.& Mrs. Manoranjan Wijebahu, Mr .A..Anandagoda and General Secretary Professor Gaminda Haegoda, participating.
- 7) Daya Weththasinghe Memorial Oration – The “Daya Weththasinghe Memorial Oration” was held on 26th Jan 2022 at the Sasakawa Hall, which commenced at 5.30pm to a packed audience. Mr. Upul Jayasuriya PC, the former BOI Chief and Past President of the Bar Association, spoke on “Ease of doing business – the way forward”. This event was recognized by the Japanese embassy as one of the events commemorating the 70th Anniversary of Japan – Sri Lanka relations. Members of the Sri Lanka –Japan Business Council (SLJBC), embassy staff, LJFS members and members of the business community from both Japan and Sri Lanka attended this event. Ambassador for Japan, His Excellency Hideaki Mizukoshi was the Chief Guest.

The sub-committee was chaired by Mr. Merrick Gooneratne, President, LJFS assisted by Mr. Mahendra de Vaz.

- 8) 63rd Annual General Meeting – the 63rd AGM was scheduled to be held on 31st August 2022 at the Sasakawa Hall and 700 notices re the AGM were posted to the general membership. Nominations for posts of office bearers and EXCO members were to close on 15th Aug 2022. However, it was decided to postpone this event by 3 months due to the lack of fuel and frequent power cuts, prevalent throughout the country. It was however decided to keep the nomination closing date as it is, without any changes.
- 9) 70th Anniversary Walk in the Rising Sun” to commemorate 70 years of Japan-Sri Lanka relations – It was decided to hold a “Walk” on the Japan-Sri Lanka Friendship Road at Sri Jayawardanapura near Parliament on 6th Sept 2022, and sub-committee meetings were held on several occasions. A tree planting ceremony, serving of Japanese food and culture were also planned and discussed with Mr. T. Kawakami, Counselor of the Embassy of Japan. A rehearsal was also held at the site. Unfortunately, this event had to be put off due to the shortage of fuel at that time, which severely curtailed travelling.

Mr. Mahendra de Vaz/Vice President, Chairman of the organizing committee.

- 10) Amendments to the LJFS Constitution – A two-member subcommittee comprising Mr. Tony Saldin/VP and Ms. Samadara Mampitiye, Attorney at law, was appointed at the monthly EXCO meeting held on 7th September 2022 to look into amendments to the constitution with required provisions for effective operation of the society.

11) Reception to felicitate the Sri Lankan Ambassador designate to Japan on 12th Oct 2022

A dinner reception to felicitate the Ambassador designate to Japan Mr. Rodney Perera, was held at the Capri Club on 12th October 2022 with 15 LJFS EXCO members including the President participating. Ambassador Perera is a career diplomat with 32 years' service in the Foreign Ministry. He is the 18th Sri Lankan Ambassador to Japan during the last 70 years of bilateral relations between the two countries. His first overseas assignment was as 2nd Secretary to the Sri Lankan embassy in Tokyo. He has previously served as Sri Lankan ambassador to Italy, Norway, the European Union and the United States of America. Project chairperson – Mr. Jayaraja Chandrasekara

Other events attended by the LJFS

Ground-breaking ceremony of the Sasakawa Trust's new Headquarters on 31.05.2022

The Lanka Japan Friendship Society was invited to participate in the Groundbreaking ceremony of the Sasakawa Trust's proposed nine (9) storied Headquarters at no: 85, Ward Place, Colombo 7 on 31st May 2022. Mr. Merrick Gooneratne, President, Mr. Deepal Gunaratne, Vice Patron, Professor Gaminda Haegoda, Hony. General Secretary, Mr. Mahendra de Vaz, Vice President and Mr. Tony Saldin, Vice President were invited to this ceremony. Mr. Deepal Gunaratne, Vice Patron and Past President, LJFS is also the LJFS representative in the Sasakawa Trust Board.

Annual General Meeting of the Sasakawa Trust on 28th Sept 2022 at the Sasakawa Hall

The President and a few senior EXCO members of the Lanka Japan Friendship Society were invited to the above AGM on 28th Sept 2022, which was followed by dinner.

Acknowledgements –

We offer our sincere thanks to the former Ambassador of Japan, His Excellency Mr. Akira Sugiyama and Madame; Mr. T. Kawakami, Counselor, and Present Ambassador His Excellency Mr. Hideaki Mizukoshi and Madame; Mr. Kotaro Katsuki, Minister and Deputy Head of Mission; Mr. Kenji Inoue, 1st Secretary, Public Relations and Cultural Exchange Affairs and all the staff of the embassy, Mr. Akira Matsui, GM, Itochu Corporation and Mr. Kenichi Umehara, GM, Mitsubishi Corporation for attending our meetings and various functions and for the co-operation extended towards the Lanka Japan Friendship Society at all times.

We thank the Board of Trustees, Manager and staff of the Sasakawa Trust for their co-operation, the Chairman of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority & the General Secretary of the Ceylon Mercantile Union (CMU) for releasing their car parks to us for our various functions. We also thank all our sponsors and well-wishers for their contributions and support at various events of the society.

We also thank the President Mr. Merrick Gooneratne for his leadership, and to the office bearers, EXCO members and the general membership of the LJFS for their co-operation, contributions, participation at EXCO meetings and events at all times.

Professor Gaminda Haegoda, J.P.
Hony General Secretary
Lanka Japan Friendship Society
(for and on behalf of the Executive Committee)
1st Nov 2022

