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Japanese Foreign Minister’s Commendation awarded to Sri Lankan

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Japanese Ambassador Nobuhito Hobo formally awarded the Foreign Minister’s Commendation to Lal de Alwis, Vice Patron of the Japan Sri Lanka Technical Cultural Association (JASTECA) on behalf of the Foreign Minister of Japan at a special ceremony held at the Ambassador’s residence in Colombo recently.

On July 24th this year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan announced the list of recipients for the Foreign Minister’s Commendation for the fiscal year 2014.

The Commendations are awarded to individuals and groups for their outstanding achievements in international fields, to acknowledge their contribution to the promotion of friendship between Japan and the respective country.

De Alwis is one of Sri Lanka’s senior executives in the private sector. He played a pioneering role together with the late Ian Dias Abeysinghe in establishing the Sri

Lanka alumni of AOTS and ABKD known as the Asia Cultural Association in 1965 for the purpose of channeling technical training opportunities for Sri Lankans.

In February 1984, he, together with Abeysinghe, and assisted by four others established the Japan Sri Lanka Technical Cultural Association (JASTECA). In 1985, he was elected Secretary General of the JASTECA and became its President in 1984, 1989, 1990 and 1991 for four years respectively.

In 1989, he was unanimously elected to chair the World Convention of AOTS Alumni Societies held in Yokohama, Japan. On his initiative as the Chairman of the World Convention of AOTS, an independent fund known as the WNF was established to assist developing countries.

He is currently the Vice Patron of JASTECA and a Trustee of the JASTECA Trust. He was also instrumental in securing the assistance of the Asian Fight Oral Cancer organization based in Tokyo headed by Professor Kanichi Seto to fight against oral cancer among Sri Lankans resulting in the cure of over 250 victims.

De Alwis also followed two training programs organized in Japan by the Asian Productivity Organization and was able to transfer this technology to many private sector companies and government organizations through seminars conducted by JASTECA. In 1983, he followed the AOTS Program for Cross-Cultural Management (PCCM) in Japan and was instrumental in introducing the 5S management practices for the first time in Sri Lanka.

Since then, JASTECA has organized seminars, workshops and also conducts an annual award scheme known as the Taiki Akimoto 5S awards and Kaizen Awards which have grown in popularity among many organizations and industries in Sri Lanka. De Alwis has played a key role in promoting JASTECA activities for the last 30 years resulting in the Association being graded as one of the best AOTS Alumni Societies in the world by ATOS.

De Alwis graduated in Business Management in 1976 and holds a Diploma in Professional Diplomacy and World Affairs which he obtained in 2011 conducted by the Bandaranaike International Training Institute. He, was the President of the National Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka for a period of two years from 2009 to 2011 and was also elected to chair the Joint Chambers Business Forum comprising of all the trade chambers of Sri Lanka. De Alwis has served as Managing Director and CEO of several prominent companies in Sri Lanka.