

Remarks by Mr Tarun Das
At conferment of “Order of The Rising Sun with Neck Ribbon”
15th June 2018, Embassy of Japan, Delhi

1. My life story is fairy tale. The only child of my parents, from a small town in West Bengal, with a great family-my wife and 3 children – all here, amazing friends and colleagues, standing here today in the truly beautiful Embassy of Japan.

Being honoured by the Govt of Japan at the hands of Amb Hiramatsu-San.

In the presence of a wonderful group including former PM, Dr Manmohan Singh; Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation Minister, Mr Suresh Prabhu; Vice Chairman, Niti Aayog, Dr Rajiv Kumar, former Foreign Secretary, Dr Jaishankar and all of you. This is truly Cinderella story for someone whose life was CII (46 years) and helping to build institution such as AAC.

2. Amb Hiramatsu has spoken of my association with Japan in different ways and capacity. I will not repeat. But, I want to share some true stories with all of you.
 - a. 13 years ago Dr Manmohan Singh, then PM, spoke to me about the work we had been doing with USA after the nuclear tests, to bridge the gaps. And, he asked that we take a special initiative with Japan. I called Kiran Pasricha who headed CII in USA for 16 years and she reached out to Torkel Patterson, (who has come from Tokyo to be here today) and Mike Green – both of whom had served in the White House. They helped us to connect with Japan and Mr Kasai who, with me, has been the co-chair of our Dialogue for 12 years now.

Since 1974, when I moved from Calcutta to Delhi with CII, Dr Manmohan Singh has been a constant factor in my work and life, all of 44 years.

- b. And, Mr Suresh Prabhu, was a constant in our Dialogue till he joined the Cabinet. He has contributed immensely. We used to say to Mr Prabhu that he will become a Minister, a forecast which came true.

USA, Japan, and India came together at the table and it has been challenging but deeply rewarding from Ananta Aspen Centre and CII to re-shape our relations.

- c. Amb Hiramatsu reformed to the program for MPs. The most recent delegation was led by Mr Jay Panda, who is here and who has also been a long term member of our Dialogue. A great deal of credit needs to go to Dr Rajiv Kumar who, initiated this program many years ago and built the partnership with Sasakawa Peace Foundation. It was his pioneering efforts which has brought us here today.
 - d. In all our work, internationally, there has been one constant, whether he was in Delhi, Singapore, Beijing, Washington D.C. or Tokyo – Dr Jaishankar. It is he who believed in us,

opened doors, held our hands, and made sure that the process of Dialogue would bring results.

- e. My final story. The work on Leprosy. The formation of SILF in 2006, 12 years ago. The confidence reposed by Sasakawa-San, the work of Dr Vineeta Shanker and her team. We have made huge progress but we have a way to go. Together, we are at this very challenging task – take Leprosy out of our lives in India.

Japan and India are close but the potential for doing more together is limitless.

We have to work to bridge our culture distances and language gap.

This is work in progress. To be stepped up.

Indians need to learn from our Japanese friends the values of Discipline, Work Ethics, Respect and Productivity. This will be transformational for us.

And, trust. Mutual Trust. A friend to trust. As Amb Hiramatsu said recently.

Thank you Amb/Thank you Japan/for giving me this great honour. For this central role in a Fairy Tale which is a true story.

I am deeply grateful.