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Panel: Back to History in East Asia? (RR)

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Talking Points for: Togo Kazuhiko, Kyoto Sangyo University

Current Observation: Yes, history is back in all three North East Asian countries. In Japan, after its economic success up to the 1980’s and 20 years of adrift Abe came to power with his policy of “getting out from post-war regime”. In Korea, after its stunning development of democracy, economic growth and cultural charm, there is a torrent back to harshest criticism of colonial Japan under President Park. In China, rise of China in all fronts resulted in imperialist-hegemonic behavior of using its physical power to ensure its national interest in East and South China Sea.

Future of History: There is different possibility, if respective country decides to choose distinctively different way responding in full what the 21st century civilizational development requires from them. China has its task to lead a new cultural/civilizational leadership of its own commensurate to its power but harmonious with some of the most important values of Western civilization. Korea has its task of creating a genuinely confident society which would become a new civilizational bridge between China and Japan. Japan has its task to create, likewise it has done during the Edo period, a new civilization of its own but now opened and shared globally.

Symbolically, An Chung Gun’s museum in Harbin is at this point a sadly failed memento of Asian “back to history”. But An Chung Gun’s real vision of future, i.e. creation of concert of three nations, precisely guides avenue of three countries’ future of history.

* The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the Asan Institute for Policy Studies.