



Session Sketch

Asan Plenum 2019: “Korea’s Choice”
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Book Launch: Asan Chung Ju-yung’s Autobiography *Born of This Land: My Life Story*
Date/Time: April 23, 2019 / 17:00-18:00

Rapporteur:

Jeanne Choi, Johns Hopkins University SAIS

Moderator:

Hahm Chaibong, The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Speakers:

Chung Mong Joon, The Asan Institute for Policy Studies

Edwin J. Feulner, The Heritage Foundation

Karen E. House, Harvard Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs

Lee Hong Koo, Seoul Forum for International Affairs

Paul D. Wolfowitz, American Enterprise Institute

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The book launch at this year’s Asan Plenum celebrated the publication for the first time of the English translation of Chung Ju-yung’s autobiography, *Born of this Land: My Life Story*. Originally published in 1997, the book illustrates the life of the founder of Hyundai in his own words.

The moderator, Hahm Chaibong, began the session by introducing the reasons behind the publication of the English translation. The book was not just important for Koreans to read, but as a resource for non-Koreans in providing one of the best explanations of the Korean “miracle” of rapid industrialization. Chung Mong Joon welcomed the audience to the Asan Plenum and to the launch of his father’s book. He stressed that the reason for publishing an English translation of the autobiography was not to show what a remarkable individual Chung Ju-yung was, but to convey his message that success can come to even those from impoverished backgrounds if they live by the values of diligence and integrity. Edwin J. Feulner shared anecdotes from his personal relationship with Chairman Chung, highlighting some of the critical lessons drawn from his autobiography, including the importance and availability of opportunity for all. The Heritage Foundation has honored Chairman Chung’s legacy and support of the institution through the establishment of the Chung Ju-yung Fellowship. Karen E. House recollected her long history with South Korea and with Chairman Chung, which started after she interviewed him in 1992 for the *Wall Street Journal*. She described his many achievements and adventures, including his leadership in South Korea’s bid for the Olympics in Seoul in 1988. For her, and for many others, Chairman Chung literally personified what it is about South Korea that turned it from an impoverished war-torn country to a model for the world in terms of economic development and democracy. Paul D. Wolfowitz shared stories from his long relationship with Chairman Chung, which

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—began in 1994 when he was Dean of the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). He emphasized that Chairman Chung’s greatest qualities, risk taking and strategic thinking, were a large part of the reason why he was able to achieve such greatness. Finally, Lee Hong Koo explained that the autobiography celebrated not only a remarkable individual in the history of modern Korea, but also the achievements and aspirations of the Korean people in the twentieth century. He emphasized Chairman Chung’s common sense as being one of the driving factors behind his success.

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