

Special Speech, The 3rd CJK Cooperation Dialogue

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Former Prime Minister of Japan

I have known Mr. Kusaka for a long time, and we have worked together on international exchange projects.

First, I would like to extend my welcome to the overseas participants here for this Dialogue.

I meet Mr. Gong Ro-Myung regularly at diplomatic forums and various other occasions, and I would like to thank him for his dedication and hard work in trying to improve the international relations.

There are considerable number of Japan-China-Korea dialogues and forums, and one of the reasons behind that is because the current affairs (political) between the three countries are unstable. As such, politicians should first strive to create an environment that will relieve the anxieties that the people have. On the other hand, I am beginning to feel that these activities are slowly manifesting into easing of tensions in the Japan-Korea and Japan-China relationships. I am hopeful that the fruit of efforts to build a positive environment, such as this Japan-China-Korea Dialogue, can be seen from the end of this year to the beginning of next year.

The importance of the East Asian (Japan, China, and Korea) region in the economic and technical dimensions are increasing, and I think the aspects for building a new generation are embedded here in this region. I believe that if the economic powers that lie within the three countries are brought together, then that power will be greater than that of EU, and match that of the US, with the potential to becoming the leading force of the global economy and civilization.

I have been calling for the importance of a trilateral cooperation mechanism for about 10 years, but the reality is that there still tends to be numerous feuds and our strengths have not been fully exhibited. Nevertheless, if the impact and the importance we have on the world is considered, I hope to make it our goal to strengthen each of the three countries of Japan, Korea, and China through trilateral cooperation, thereby making us more powerful than the three countries simply combined.

Bearing in mind the current dynamics of the trilateral relationship between Japan, China and Korea, improvements in the political front will lead to economic development. For political anxieties to resolve, cooperation from the people becomes

necessary. With the fast progressing computerization of things around us, political leadership cannot be fully exhibited without the support of the people, regardless of what the mechanism looks like.

Asia is a growing region, but on the other hand, ageing society is a serious issue both in Japan and Korea, and it is said that China will also face the same challenge in a few years. In this respect, building a Japan-China-Korea mechanism has time constraints. On environmental issues, with China joining the Paris Agreement, the global momentum and direction has been set, and therefore by strengthening the Japan-China-Korea cooperation mechanism, we should be able to build environmental measures that are more effective than other regional economic areas of the world.

As we see things in this light, the current situation can only be considered “Mottainai (Too good to waste)”. This term is thought to have originally come from China to Japan, and as this term depicts, the three countries of Japan, China, and Korea all share a common thinking. By utilizing this thinking and laying ground for a cooperation mechanism, future global vision and goals should be set.

It is meaningful for the participants here today from Japan, China and Korea to engage in discussions that cultivate a path for the great challenge that lie amongst the three countries. I also hope that the politicians clearly set the path on the political front.

Thank you very much for providing me with an opportunity to deliver a short speech today.