

SUMMARY

This issue of #시각 highlights a host of pressing political and social issues in South Korea. What receive particular coverage here, as well as in news and print media, are the myriad domestic issues that confront the Park Geun-hye administration. They include: rising inequality, welfare reforms, the highly politicized sedition case against Lee Seok-ki, and the “How are you doing nowadays” youth movement. Further to these, the ongoing court battle over the hard-left United Progressive Party’s legal status and changes in national identity and political values are also discussed. Not to be forgotten is contemporary government-business relations, the structure of Korea’s foreign trade, and the future of its growth-generating export sectors.

Christopher Green [@Dest_Pyongyang](#) Jan 18

[@wonsoonpark](#): 지하철 9호선처럼.. 맥쿼리, 우면산터널서도 쫓겨나나 | 미디어다음 <http://durl.me/6jvurg>
reserving judgement; worthy of closer assessment. #시각

Post of Seoul mayor is [one of those up for grabs](#) in June 4 polls. Possible link to fact that on January 17 *Hanguk Gyeongje* reports that Park Won-soon city government wishes to cancel contract for the privately operated (by Korean infrastructure arm of Australian investment group Macquarie) Woomyeonsan Tunnel [우면산터널]. On January 18 Seoul City [reins the story back](#): denies that it planned to cancel anything, acknowledges that excessive profits have been earned, and states intent to restructure the existing MRG (최소운영수입 보장; Minimum Revenue Guarantee) system and reduce the earned income from operating the tunnel.

경향신문 [@kyunghyang](#) Jan 19

#시각 영화 ‘변호인’ 1000만 관객 돌파. 부림사건의 피해자인 고호석씨는 “지금 민주주의가 엄청나게 퇴행했는데 영화를 계기로 이런 얘기할 수 있다는 게 다행”이라고 말했습니다. <http://goo.gl/bbWNdd> pic.twitter.com/Ub6JzTCs15

Kyunghyang Sinmun story wherein victim in hit movie “[Byonhojin](#)” states that South Korean [democracy is visibly regressing](#) under Park Geun-hye. Hero worship, or aggressive denial of the same, of former President Roh Moo-hyun may be the object of the exercise, but influencing June 4 local elections is the medium-term goal. Pushback: *Chosun Ilbo* makes energetic attempt to find and elucidate a litany of what it deems [distortions and falsehoods](#) in the portrayal offered by the film [link requires login].

연론 협동조합 프레시안 [@PRESSIAN_news](#) Jan 21

1995년엔 상위 10%가 국민 전체 소득의 29%를 가져갔는데, 2010년엔 44%를 가져갔습니다. 나머지 90%가 차지하는 몫은 그만큼 줄어든 거죠. "486세대"는 가망 없다. 대안은?" #시각 <http://bit.ly/KBcfPt>

Story on issue of global concern: rising inequality. In 1995 the top 10% in South Korea controlled 29% of the wealth, but by 2010 that figure had gone up to 90%, it claims, adding that [the “486 Generation” has no prospects](#). Which is to say nothing of the “397 Generation” [born in 70s, school in 90s, now in their 30s]. Unequal growth has serious implications for South Korea’s heretofore “growth with equality,” which has lead scholars to categorize countries like South Korea as a [“productivist” welfare state](#).

Steven Denney (@StevenDenney86) Jan 27
National Identity under Transformation: New Challenges to South Korea <http://ow.ly/sZ2Bg>
[@JosephWongUT](#) #시각

Dr. Kim Jiyeon, research fellow at the Asan Institute for Policy Studies, writes on the change in South Korean national identity. She finds that ethnic-based nationalism is on the decline and liberal “civicness” is on the rise. The trend is particularly stark among younger South Koreans. Steven Denney and Karl Friedhoff have discussed [South Korea’s “new” nationalism](#) before and One Free Korea’s Joshua Stanton finds [changes in South Koreans’ attitudes toward North Korea](#) interesting enough to write about.

Steven Denney (@StevenDenney86) Jan 19
Welfare reforms in SK, part of PGH’s “innovative plan” <http://news.mk.co.kr/english/> #시각

The *Mail Kyongje* (Economics Daily) reports that men are “forecasted to be entitled to receive the entire ordinary wage in the first month of their paternity leaves....” Women who “trade career for family duty” will also be incentivized to return to the office. This is part of Park Geun-hye’s “innovative plan,” recently [discussed by Marcus Noland](#), and an effort to grow [South Korea’s underdeveloped “residual model” welfare state](#).

Peter Ward, 워드 피터 (@rpcward89) Jan 19
Can North Korea Save the South? <http://bloom.bg/1m9q6J6> via [@BloombergView](#) #시각

William Pesek, reporting on Park Geun-hye’s interview with Bloomberg on January 10, discusses the economic potential of unification saying that “the South needs a big bang if it’s going to match Japan and stay ahead of China” and that “Economists generally rate Park’s first year in office as a dud... her plans to empower small- and medium-size companies and to rein in the family-run conglomerates, or chaebol, that dominate the economy remain embryonic.” Indeed, Park’s recent statement that [South Korea will seek Trans-Pacific Partnership \(TPP\) trade talks](#) suggests that South Korea’s dependence on exports to fuel economic growth puts serious structural constraints on efforts at government-lead economic reform.

Peter Ward, 워드 피터 (@rpcward89) Jan 26
Hankyoreh is reporting that if the [Democratic Party] and [Ahn Cheol-soo] joined forces they would lead the NFP [Saenuri] by 11 points: http://hani.co.kr/arti/politics/politics_general/621510.html?_fr=mt5 ...
#시각

The leading progressive daily in South Korea, the *Hankyoreh*, projects that if independent Ahn Cheol-soo and the Democratic Party (DP; 민주당) joined forces, rather than Ahn creating a new political party, the Democratic Party’s popularity rating would surpass that of the current ruling party (Saenuri; New Frontier Party/NFP; 새누리당). [Polling for “party support” at the end of last year](#) put the DP at a meager 19.2%, while the NFP more than doubled that at 43.9%. The same polls show were Ahn to create a new political party, as he has announced he will do, the new party would poll at above 20%, siphoning support from the DP and dropping its support to around 10%.

Contributors: Christopher Green ([@Dest_Pyongyang](#)); Steven Denney ([@StevenDenney86](#)); and Peter Ward ([@rpcward89](#)). All Tweets cited above can be found on Twitter at [#시각](#).