The People Power Revolution that toppled former South Korean President Park Geun-hye was historic and unprecedented. Among other things, it represented a visceral call by the public for clean government and an accountable democracy. The tasks now facing newly elected President Moon Jae-in are daunting and urgent.

ESSES BY
Yoonkyung Lee 8
John Nilsson-Wright 18
Myung-bok Bae 24
Sang-young Rhyu 30
Jae-jin Yang 36
Wonhyuk Lim 42
Kyungsoo Choi 48

PLUS
Inauguration speech by President Moon Jae-in 14
For the past few months we have been embroiled in an unprecedented political quagmire. Politics were out of control, but citizens were great. The people have opened South Korea’s new way amid the incumbent president’s impeachment and arrest. They saw the dangerous times, but they were not let down, turning them into an opportunity, and paving a new road. And today, they opened the new world.

Inauguration address by President Moon Jae-in

May 10, 2017

My fellow Koreans,

I bow my head with deep appreciation for your gracious selection. As the 19th president of South Korea, I today take my first step toward the new South Korea. Right now, my shoulders are heavy with crucial responsibilities my fellow Koreans have bestowed upon me. My heart is burning with passion to make South Korea a nation never experienced before. My thoughts are now full of blueprints for the new world of unification and co-existence.

The new South Korea we are about to make is the country our ancestors have safeguarded despite adversity and hardship. It is also the country our young people have long aspired to make through sacrifice and devotion. To make such a country come true, I promise you with all my heart that, as I stand fearful and honest before history and people, I will do all that is required of the 19th president of South Korea.

I express appreciation as well as consolation to all the candidates who ran for the election. In this election, there is no winner or loser. We are all partners responsible for spearheading a new South Korea together. We should now put the fierce rivalry behind us and move forward with our hands joined.

My fellow Koreans, for the past few months we have been embroiled in an unprecedented political quagmire. Politics were out of control, but citizens were great. The people have opened South Korea’s new way amid the incumbent president’s impeachment and arrest. They saw the dangerous times, but they were not let down, turning them into an opportunity, and paving a new road. And today, they opened the new world.

South Korea’s greatness represents the people’s greatness.

In this presidential election, our citizens wrote another page of history. The new president has been elected on the back of even support from across the country. From today, I will act as president for all the people. Those who did not support me are still my citizens and I will serve them as well.

I promise you with courage: the day of May 10, 2017, will be recorded in history as the day when the true national unity has begun.

Dear fellow Koreans, during the recent hard times, people asked themselves, “Is this a nation worthy of being called a nation?” President Moon Jae-in will take his first step from that question. Starting today, I will be a president making South Korea a country worthy of being called a nation.

I will part with the time-old bad legacy. Before anything else, I will change this first.

My first duty will be to get rid of all authoritarian presidential legacies. As soon as preparation is complete, I will move out of Cheong Wa Dae and open a new era of the Gwanghwamun President.

I will work closely with my aides. I will talk frequently with our citizens. And I will outline important messages through press conferences.

On my way home, I will drop by local markets and share honest words with citizens on the street. From time to time, I will hold discussions with the people in Gwanghwamun Square.

I will share my authority as much as possible. Law-enforcing government agencies will be detached completely from politics.

I will strengthen the role of the whistleblower to prevent any law enforcement agency from abusing power.

I will work with the people.

I will resolve the national security crisis as fast as possible. I will not rest until peace is settled on the Korean Peninsula. I will fly to Washington, Beijing and Tokyo, if needed, and I will also go to Pyongyang, if conditions are met. I will do everything in my power to bring peace to the peninsula.

I will strengthen the South Korea-US alliance while seriously negotiating with the US and China to resolve the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense missile system issue. Strong national security comes from...
strong national defense. I will work to strengthen our independent national defense capability. I will come up with a proposal to resolve North Korea’s nuclear threats and ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula through a Northeast Asia peace regime.

I will change the politics that are littered with division and conflict. Conflict between conservatives and progressives must end. As the president, I will communicate with them. The opposition party is a partner for running the government. I will meet the opposition parties regularly.

I will recruit nationwide. Appointing the right person for the right job on the basis of abilities will be my core manpower policy. Whether they support me or not, I will recruit talented people.

The economy and public welfare are now in difficulty worldwide. As I promised during my campaign, I will prioritize creating jobs. At the same time, I will put chaebol reform at the forefront. Under the Moon Jae-in administration, the “collusive link between politics and business” will completely disappear.

I will demolish ideological distrust between regions, social classes and generations and find ways to resolve irregular workers’ problems. I will build a country without discrimination.

My fellow Koreans, this presidential election was held following the impeachment of the former president. The ill-fated history of incompetent presidents has continued until now. This unfortunate history must end with this election.

I will become a new role model for the president of South Korea. I will do my best to become a successful, non-corrupt and proud president who moves in and out of office with clean hands.

I will be a president who on retirement, will return to my hometown as an ordinary citizen to share the joy of life with my neighbors. I want to be the president of whom our fellow Koreans are proud.

I will be an honest president who keeps promises. I will keep an eye on each and every promise I made during my presidential campaign. A genuine political development will be possible only when the president takes initiatives in establishing trustworthy politics.

I will not dare to do something impossible. Instead, I will honestly apologize for any mistakes. I will not ignore public opinion. I will be the president of justice. I will make a world without privilege. I will make a world where commonsense prevails. I will not turn my back on the problems of people around me. I will constantly look out to make sure there are no ostracized citizens.

I will be a president who wipes away citizens’ tears. I promise to be a president who interacts with the citizens. I will make South Korea the strongest country, with power from the lowly and the modest. I will not be a president who reigns and rules over the citizens, but who communicates and interacts with them.

I will be a president of the new Gwanghwamun era and stay close to the citizens. I will remain as a warm and friendly president.

Dear citizens, on May 10, 2017, South Korea restarts again. An epic journey to rebuild the nation as a real nation is about to begin. Please join me on this journey. I will devote my body and soul to the betterment of the nation. Thank you.

This is an unofficial translation of President Moon Jae-in’s inauguration speech courtesy of the Korea Times.