

South Korea mulls ending arcane age system to match rest of world

<p>Notes & Cues:</p>	<p>Article:</p> <p>A South Korean MP is attempting to overturn a centuries-old tradition in which every newborn baby turns one on the day they are born and two on the next New Year’s Day.</p> <p>The unusual custom means a baby born on New Year’s Eve becomes two years old as soon as the clock strikes midnight.</p> <p>The system’s origins are unclear. One theory is that turning one year old at birth takes into account time spent in the womb — with nine months rounded up to 12. Others link it to an ancient Asian numerical system that did not have the concept of zero.</p> <p>Now, though, an MP is attempting to end the tradition, claiming that many of his compatriots fear it makes South Korea, Asia’s fourth-biggest economy and a global technology giant, appear out of step with the rest of the world.</p> <p>”The biggest problem is that the legal age and the age used in everyday lives are different, ” says Hwang Ju-hong, who recently introduced a bill that would require the government to use international ages in official documents and to encourage people to use them in everyday life.</p> <p>Not all South Koreans agree that the traditional calculation is anachronistic.</p> <p>”Why can’t the Korean age and the international age system coexist, in the same way that the traditional lunar new year holiday and Christmas coexist?” said Jang Yoo-seung, a senior researcher at Dankook University’s Oriental Studies Research Centre.</p>
<p>Summary:</p>	