

Program in Transnational Korean Studies

Presents:

“Discourses of a *Zainichi* Korean Athlete in South Korea: Possibilities and Limits for de-colonial and de-Cold War Imagination”

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This study examines how the re-configuration of *zainichi* Korean subjectivities reveals both the continuity and rupture of colonial and Cold War systems in the 21st century South Korea. For this purpose, it examines South Korean discourses on Jong Tae-se, a *zainichi* Korean soccer player born in Nagoya, Japan as a third-generation Japanese-resident Korean. Jong has become a national star in Japan, North Korea and South Korea, and also attracted global media attention by playing in the 2010 World Cup as a member of the North Korean national team. Afterwards, Jong has played for several professional clubs in Japan and Germany, and is currently a member of the Suwon Samsung *Bluewings* in South Korea. As a global sport star, he seems to exemplify a new generation of a *zainichi* Korean, who is celebrated for culturally diversified and flexible identities. As a migrating sport athlete, furthermore, he often exemplifies flexible citizenship, one who neither belongs to any nation, nor is limited by fixed or essentialist notions of nationality. While he holds South Korean citizenship (through his father), he decided to play for North Korea, which issued him a travel passport. Put simply, Jong is a South Korean citizen, a North Korean passport holder, and a Japanese permanent resident. However, his multiple and contested (national) identities keep him tethered to anti-communism and anti-Japanese issues in South Korea. His presence and representation in the media often conjure colonial and Cold War memories and reveal unresolved historical wounds among East Asian countries. Such vicissitudes of *zainichi* subjectivities illuminates paradox and inseparability between post-colonial/Cold War desire and colonial-Cold War systems in South Korea. In examining diverse discourses on Jong, this study discusses both the possibilities and the limits of *zainichi* subjectivities as a tool for de-colonial and de-Cold War imagination in postcolonial East Asia. (Source: Paper Abstract for Authenticating Celebrity: Celebrity Journal Conference 2016)

Date
Thursday, February
4, 2016

Time
4:00-6:00pm

Location
Humanities & Social
Sciences
Room 4025