

John (Song Pae) Cho

“Faceless Things: South Korean Gay Men, Internet, and Sexual Citizenship”

Date: Friday, March 4, 2011

Time: 3:00-5:00 PM

Place: Price Center West, Marshall Room



In this presentation, Cho will examine the connections between the internet and globalization of sexual cultures in one of the most wired and internet-savvy hotspots in the world, South Korea. The explosion of new media (mobile phones, electronic message boards, etc.) has sparked a revolution on this tiny, crowded, and resources-poor but information-rich peninsula. No group has felt its impact more profoundly than South Korean LGBT communities, who have relied on this media technology to covertly express

their sexual identities in a country notorious for regulation of information and sexual conduct. In chronicling two very different ways that South Korean gay men have taken up the internet, Cho will highlight the formation of non-state-sanctioned sub-communities within the Korean nation—ones based more on affect, taste, and lifestyle than on generation, ethnicity, or gender. He will also further a transnational dialogue on what it means to be gay today in face of strident market reforms, neoliberal governance, and global circuits of Internet-mediated queerness.

John (Song Pae) Cho is a doctoral candidate in socio-cultural anthropology at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. His research focuses on Korean gay men, internet, and sexual citizenship within the context of South Korea's transition from a late-developmental model of economy, directed by the state, to a global/neoliberal one, driven by individual desires and consumption. Cho's selected publications include "The Wedding Banquet Revisited: 'Contract Marriages' Between Korean Gays and Lesbians" (*Anthropological Quarterly*, 2009) and "Korean Gay and Lesbian Movement: 1994-2008: From Identity to Community" (co-authored with Kwon Kim Hyun-young), forthcoming in the edited volume of *Korean Social Movements: From Democracy to Civil Society* (Routledge).

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