

Contemporary China Research Base Seminar Series No.21

*"City of the Strangers: Restructuring State-Society Relations  
in Post-Reform Urban China"*

Date: 25<sup>th</sup> May(Wed.), 2016

Time: 16:00 - 18:00

Venue: 1<sup>st</sup> Conference Room, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, the University of Tokyo (Hongo Campus)

Language: English

Speaker: Prof. Jong-Ho Jeong (Seoul National University)

Moderator & Commentator: Prof. Shigeto Sonoda (University of Tokyo)

**Summary**

Prior to China's economic reforms, the Dahongmen-Nanyuan area in the Fengtai district of southern Beijing was nothing more than a derelict farming community. With the influx of rural migrants following the economic reforms in the early 1980s, however, the area burgeoned into a vast illegal migrant settlement. The area was commonly referred to as Zhejiangcun (浙江村 Zhejiang village) in reference to the large number of migrants in the area who originated from rural Wenzhou of Zhejiang province. In the early stages of its development, Zhejiangcun was composed of illegal Wenzhou migrants who sought entry into cities, impoverished local Beijing residents subsisting on the housing rents collected from these migrants, and organized crime syndicates that followed the migrants. Zhejiangcun's growth, however, was inexorable and radically transformed the once marginalized farming area into the largest garment production and trade center in Beijing, with highly developed infrastructure and luxurious facilities for the newly affluent Wenzhou migrants as well as local Beijing residents who are official and legal shareholders of the many enterprises run in the area. Zhejiangcun's growth continues today, as it pushes its way forward to become one of Beijing's five major commercial centers.

Zhejiangcun dramatic transformation presents important experience for the study of urban reconfiguration during China's economic reform period. Much of the existing discussions on the recent restructuring of migrant settlements in China focus on how the process sacrificed the rural migrant settlements in cities, and at the same time, most research surrounding this topic understand post-reform rural-to-urban migrants as having been unable to break free of the institutional constraints enforced by the household registration system. It is against such background that the experience of Zhejiangcun, with its settlement of rural Wenzhou migrants, gains notable academic and practical significance. In line with this question, the present study explains the characteristics of the formation and development of Zhejiangcun, focusing on the restructuring state-society relations, based on ethnographic findings from the fieldwork conducted annually from 1995 to 2015. Drawing on this ethnographic study, the present study examines the urban space of Zhejiangcun where alternative sources of economic power and social networks were created and utilized and therefore offers a unique perspective by locating a specifically-founded ethnographic analysis within the general debate on the restructuring of post-reform urban space.



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Jong-Ho Jeong is a Professor of China Area Studies at the Graduate School of International Studies, Seoul National University (SNU) and the Director of the SNU Institute for China Studies. He has served as the Vice-President for International Affairs at Seoul National University from December 2012 until July 2015. Professor Jeong graduated from Seoul National University with B.A. (1987) and M.A. (1990), received his Ph.D. (2000) in Anthropology from Yale University, and was a visiting scholar at Peking University, China and the Harvard-Yenching Institute, Harvard University. He has served on the policy advisory committee for Seoul City and as an advisor for the National Research Council for Economics, Humanities and Social Sciences and the POSCO Research Institute, and is

currently an advisor for the National Assembly of South Korea's Politics and Economics Forum and a trustee at the Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies, the Korean Society of Future Studies, and the Platon Academy.

His Ph. D dissertation and subsequent publications have focused on the restructuring state-society relations in contemporary urban China. His recent works include "Transplanted Wenzhou Model and Transnational Ethnic Economy" (*Journal of Contemporary China*, March 2014), "Ethnoscapes, Mediascapes, and Ideoscapes: Socio-Cultural Relations Between South Korea and China," (*Journal of International and Area Studies*, December 2012), "From Illegal Migrant Settlements to Central Business and Residential Districts: Restructuring of Urban Space in Beijing's Migrant Enclaves" (*Habitat International*, July 2011), "China's Soft Power: Discussions, Resources, and Prospects" (*Asian Survey*, May/June 2008), as well as many articles and books both in Korean and Chinese, including *Koreans in China* (in Korean, 2010), *Understanding Contemporary China* (in Korean, 2005), and "Study on Chinese College Students' Perception on the Attribution to Corruption among Officials" (in Chinese, 2013). He is currently writing a book on China's post-reform urban restructuring based on his long-term fieldwork on Zhejiangcun, the largest migrant settlement in Beijing. His research interests include social change and social stratification, internal and international migration, social capital and native-place networks, the rise of China's soft power, changing local identity and Chinese nationalism.