

## THE POLITICS OF INFORMAL NETWORKS IN JAPAN AND KOREA: AMAKUDARI AND PARACHUTE APPOINTMENT

**Sponsor:** Centre for Korean Research

**Place:** Room 120, C.K. Choi Building, 1855 West Mall, UBC

**By:** Sang-young Rhyu

**Type:** Seminar

**Dates:** Friday, Jan 14, 2011 to Friday, Jan 14, 2011

**Time:** 3:30-5:00pm



Many scholars viewed that the tightly weaved elite networks were the driving forces underpinning the rapid economic development in Japan and Korea. In this view, the formation of the informal network provided an institutional foundation for rapid economic growth in East Asia. Since the Asian financial crisis in 1997, however, numerous scholars have called into question the long-term efficacy of informal networks in East Asia by discrediting the so-called East-Asian model as “crony capitalism”. The gist of economic reforms in the post-crisis period was to dismantle the networks systematically built into the entire economic system.

I would like to examine the intrinsic nature of informal networks in Japan and Korea. In particular, I analyze the sources of differences between the two countries in terms of creating and maintaining informal networks. Japan and South Korea exhibit clear differences in terms of managing informal networks. The changes in amakudari and parachute appointments will be a litmus test by which to evaluate reform measures in the two developmental states. At the same time, we must

observe how amakudari and parachute appointment evolve and adjust in the changing environments.

Bio: Sang-young Rhyu is Associate Professor of political economy at Yonsei University, Seoul, Korea. He has served as Director of Kim Dae-jung Presidential Library and Museum, Yonsei University (2004-2009) and as Managing Director of East Asia Foundation (2005-present). Prior to joining Yonsei University, he worked as a senior research fellow for Samsung Economic Research Institute (1995-2001) and was a visiting fellow at Keio University (1992-1994, 2001). His current research focuses on East Asian network capitalism and Korean political economy. He has published many book chapters and articles in *Asian Survey*, *Pacific Review*, *Harvard Asia Quarterly*, *Pacific Focus*, *Applied Economics Letters*, and *International Relations in the Asia-Pacific*, and edited a few books in Korean and in Japanese.