

The Korean Restaurant: Beyond Violence in Zainichi Korean Film*

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Depictions of conflict, frequently in the form of physical violence, occupy a prominent space within Zainichi Korean film. Even the most violent of films, however, depict other divergent forms of interaction that shape social ties and inform explorations of identity. These divergent forms of interaction, in many cases, revolve around the consumption or production of Korean food and frequently take place within the shared culinary space of the Korean restaurant. Focusing on the films *Yakiniku Dragon* (2018), *GO* (2001), and *Blood and Bones* (2004), this article analyzes the ways in which Korean restaurants function as spaces of congregation and healing in Zainichi Korean film and act as interactive spaces that lend themselves to subtle representations of ethnic identity that coalesce around notions of intersection and hybridity. Though food, as a symbolic marker of ethnic identity, is certainly linked to direct confrontation and violence, it is the shared culinary spaces depicted in these films that allow for conflict resolution, connections across divides within the Zainichi Korean community, and the assertion of varied and complex Zainichi Korean subjectivities.

Keywords: Zainichi Koreans, yakiniku, Korean food, violence, kimchi

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