

Vincent Woo Distinguished Visiting Scholars Programme 2024-25 PUBLIC LECTURE



3 March 2025 (Mon)

15:00-16:30

Patrick Lee Wan Keung
Academic Building, MB G22,
Lingnan University

**Revisiting the "Comfort Girls" of Report #49: Gender, Race,
and Documentation on the Battlefield in Burma, 1944**

In September of 1944, an interrogation report written by a Japanese-American interrogator named Alex Yorichi caused a minor frenzy among Allied soldiers posted on the border between India and Burma. The report described twenty Korean "comfort girls" and two Japanese comfort station operators who had been captured after the fall of the northern Burmese town of Myitkyina to Allied forces. Nearly fifty years later, declassified and rediscovered in the U.S. National Archives, Report #49 again caused a commotion, and ever since it has circulated in scholarship and among activists, employed variously as evidence, artifact, and ammunition. This talk looks through and beyond the notorious document, using Japanese and English memoirs, diaries, and oral histories to reconstruct the encounter between Korean women and Nisei intelligence officers, many of whom had come directly from American incarceration camps. Using the strategies of microhistory, which emphasize specificity and contingency, it contemplates what is lost when a document becomes so famous that it obscures its own subjects.



Amy Stanley,
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Amy Stanley is the Orrington Lunt Professor of History at Northwestern University. Primarily a social historian of early modern and modern Japan, she has special interests in global history, women's and gender history, and narrative. She is the author of *Selling Women: Prostitution, Markets, and the Household in Early Modern Japan* (UC Press, 2012), as well as articles in *The American Historical Review*, *The Journal of Japanese Studies*, and *The Journal of Asian Studies*. Her most recent book, *Stranger in the Shogun's City: A Japanese Woman and Her World* (Scribner, 2020), won the National Book Critics' Circle Award in Biography and PEN/America Jacqueline Bograd Weld Award in Biography and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. She received her PhD in East Asian Languages and Civilizations from Harvard in 2007, and she has held fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Japan Foundation, the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

