

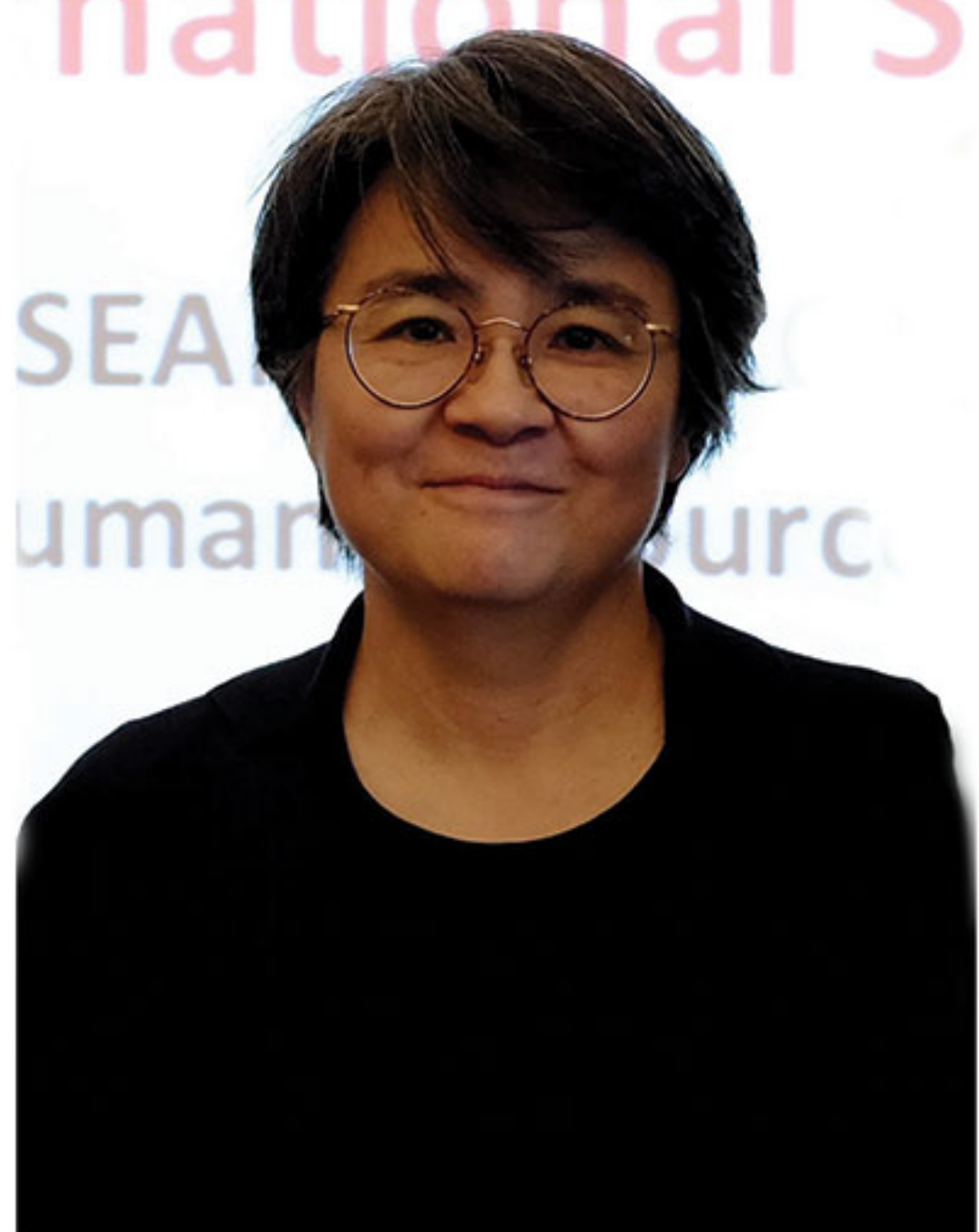
# YASUKUNI SHRINE AND MOURNING THE WAR DEAD IN JAPAN

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CPD-1.24, CENTENNIAL CAMPUS, HKU  
17 MAR 2016 (THU) 4:30-6:20 PM

Yasukuni Shrine, one of the youngest modern Shinto shrines, continues to symbolize the unrepentant Japan with regards to its role in World War II and the obstacle to reconciliation with its neighbours. Prime Minister Jun'ichiro Koizumi's repeated visits against all caution and protests left a particularly negative legacy in Japan's regional standing. However, the shrine has been and still is controversial in Japan – a point that receives scant attention in the international media reporting. It represents a nationalist narrative of modern Japanese history and sense of nationhood that is increasingly untenable in post-war, post-Cold War and post-bubble Japan. It represents one strand of Shinto belief, but not all; in other words, it risks misrepresenting Shintoism, Japan's ancient religion, and the culture and custom of how the Japanese regard and treat life and death. Without an understanding of the such cultural and historical context of Yasukuni closure of World War II is not forthcoming for both Japan and the rest of Asia.



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