

## CENTRE FOR KOREAN RESEARCH

*The Centre for Korean Research is pleased to present:*

### **“Haunting the Korean Diaspora: *Shame, Secrecy, and the Forgotten War*”**

**By Grace M. Cho**

**Friday, March 11th**

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

Conference room #120, C.K. Choi Building  
1855 West Mall

**Abstract:** An engrossing encounter with lingering ghosts of the Korean War. Since the Korean War—the forgotten war—more than a million Korean women have acted as sex workers for U.S. servicemen. More than 100,000 women married GIs and moved to the United States. Through intellectual vigor and personal recollection, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora* explores the repressed history of emotional and physical violence between the United States and Korea and the unexamined reverberations of sexual relationships between Korean women and American soldiers.

Grace M. Cho exposes how Koreans in the United States have been profoundly affected by the forgotten war and uncovers the silences and secrets that still surround it, arguing that trauma memories have been passed unconsciously through a process psychoanalysts call “transgenerational haunting.” Tracing how such secrets have turned into “ghosts,” Cho investigates the mythic figure of the *yanggongju*, literally the “Western princess,” who provides sexual favors to American military personnel. She reveals how this figure haunts both the intimate realm of memory and public discourse, in which narratives of U.S. benevolence abroad and assimilation of immigrants at home go unchallenged. Memories of U.S. violence, Cho writes, threaten to undo these narratives—and so they have been rendered unspeakable.

At once political and deeply personal, Cho’s wide-ranging and innovative analysis of U.S. neocolonialism and militarism under contemporary globalization brings forth a new way of understanding—and remembering—the impact of the Korean War.

**Bio:** Grace M. Cho is associate professor of Sociology and Women's Studies at the City University of New York. Her book, *Haunting the Korean Diaspora*, recently won the American Sociological Association's Asia and Asian America 2010 book award. Grace is also a contributing performance artist for *Still Present Pasts: Korean Americans and the Forgotten War*, which is currently installed at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Hawaii. She was born in Busan, Korea of a Korean mother and American father.