

## PROFESSOR SUZANNAH LINTON SPEAKS ON WORLD WAR II WAR CRIMES TRIALS IN HONG KONG

On 3 August 2016, Professor Suzannah Linton, Distinguished Professor at Zhejiang Gongshang University Law School, spoke at the Helena May Club in Hong Kong about her work on the Hong Kong War Crimes trials. The Helena May Club is a long established women's club in Hong Kong, and is situated at one of the most historic buildings in the territory. It has a fine English language library, supports a number of women's causes, and offers two annual scholarships for young women to study at the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts.



**Professor Linton with the Hon Mr Justice Andrew Macrae, Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal of the High Court and Mr Dixon Tse of the Hong Kong Bar**

Professor Linton spoke about the 46 trials of 123 individual Japanese and Taiwanese that were held in Hong Kong between 1946-1948. The trials, by British and Commonwealth military judges, saw 21 death penalties carried out, 14 acquittals, 2 life sentences and terms of imprisonment for the rest (all commuted, further to early release). Most of the cases involved Kempeitai (Military Police) abuse of local civilians in occupied Hong Kong, abuses committed in Prisoner of War Camps in Hong Kong and Taiwan, the Japanese invasion of Hong Kong island, atrocities on the High Seas (abuse on 'hell ships' and of Prisoners of War), and abuse/killing of British nationals in China and Japan. These trials are linked to some of the trials held in China and Japan, and were part of the British programme of post-war prosecutions.

Professor Linton, who has also sexual enslavement in Asia, Hong Kong during the invasion time indicate that the violence invasion was large-scale and marginally covered in the Hong the one single case where these because the Prosecutor was not assaulted the women commanders were also at fault. the notable silence about the



been working on the issue of military raised the issue of sexual violence in and occupation. Reports from the against women and girls during the widespread, but this was only Kong trials. Even so, the charges in were raised had to be dropped able to identify which troops had concerned, and thus ascertain if their Professor Linton drew attention to so-called 'comfort women' forced

into sexual enslavement in Hong Kong. Almost nothing is known about the locations of the 'comfort stations', and there are no testimonies, nor memorials or commemorations of these women and girls and what they endured not even on International Women's Day. Since the 1980s, there has been a global movement to address the lack of redress for the so-called 'comfort women' of World War II but Hong Kong has not been part of that. Professor Linton proposed that the members of the Helena May Club could change this, for example by carrying out research into the military sexual enslavement that had accompanied the Japanese military occupation in Hong Kong, and establishing an annual event on the issue. Professor Linton was joined in her presentation by Mr. Dixon Tse, a Hong Kong barrister who had assisted her with her research into the trials, and has carried out fresh research.