

ALPHA EDUCATION | QUARTERLY REVIEW

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WHAT'S NEW?

Happy 2018, friends and family of ALPHA Education! In this issue of our newsletter, you'll find updates on our current projects, reports on events from the last part of 2017, recently-published works on the Asia-Pacific War, and a thoughtful reflection from an ALPHA youth. As ever, more information can be found on our [website](#).

Welcome, Michelle K. and Theng! – First and foremost, we want to offer a very warm welcome to Michelle K. and Theng, who have recently joined our office team! Michelle has been a member of the ALPHA family since her time in high school; now, having recently graduated university, she has come on as **Project Coordinator for the Asia-Pacific Peace Museum and Education Centre project**. Theng, too, is contributing to the museum project as **Project Manager**. These two are full of ideas and enthusiasm, and they are ensuring a quick and smooth transition as we embark on this new journey!



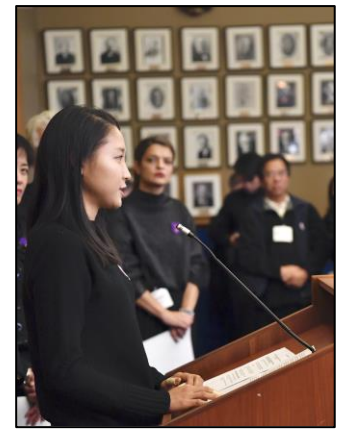
Tamaki Matsuoka Visit – In November 2017, it was our pleasure to host peace advocate, educator, author, and documentarian Tamaki Matsuoka in Toronto. While she was here, she screened her new documentary, **1300 Lives Lost of Taiping (Peace) Gate**, held a public talk at University of Toronto's Regis College, and participated in several ALPHA workshops at local high schools. Ms. Matsuoka's contributions to this area of research are invaluable, forcing participants to ask difficult questions about the past, present, and future.

Dr. Hung Cheng Visit – In December, MIT Professor Hung Cheng was our special guest. Author of the novel, **Nanjing Never Cries**, Dr. Cheng came to share stories from his childhood (having grown up in war-torn China), to introduce his book to a Canadian audience, and to participate in the commemoration of the 80th anniversary of the Nanjing Massacre. His novelization of the Nanjing Massacre provides an accessible read for those who want a human tale of surviving atrocity.



Nanjing Massacre Commemorative Day – Thanks to the efforts of thousands of volunteers, advocates, activists, and upstanding leaders, this year marks the first official commemoration of the Nanjing Massacre in Toronto and Ontario. The efforts of MPP Soo Wong and City Councilor Jim Karygiannis, the peace community of our city and province were provided the opportunity to come together in solemn recognition of this atrocity and its legacy – and acknowledgement that is central to the advancement of peace and reconciliation in our time. Special events took place throughout the day, across Toronto and Ontario, including **special addresses at Queen's Park, a candlelight vigil, and a commemorative concert** (featuring Dr. Hung Cheng as a keynote speaker). The support and solidarity of our multicultural communities made such events possible,

and we humbly extend our deepest thanks to those who worked toward this important landmark event in Canada.



“Your efforts have resulted in a resounding success in... making December 13th every year the day of memorial for the Nanjing Massacre. I want to thank you and all of the volunteers and employees toiling with you, working toward this noble goal.

Please keep up the good work!” – Dr. Hung Cheng, MIT



Photos: David Lai

AROUND THE OFFICE: OUR CURRENT PROJECTS

Judy: Happy 2018! I'm anticipating another busy and exciting year with upgraded and newly-initiated projects in 2018. My calendar is already filling up with a few **conferences, workshops, events, and funding proposal deadlines**. I've started the prep work for **ALPHA's annual Peace Fest** in the summer by booking the venue and connecting with other interested parties. One hope for the year is that **more youth will volunteer and participate in leadership roles in transforming this event as a signature event of the city of Toronto**. My involvement in Camp P.U.L.S.E. as an education director excites me the most, as I get the opportunity meet a new group of students who are eager to learn and make differences in our world!

Michelle M.: 2018 is shaping up to be a busy year for ALPHA! We're currently set to organize **3 History Meets Humanity conferences** with the TDSB and YRDSB, and are expected to facilitate even more in school boards across Toronto. On top of this, our calendar is also marked with multiple student workshops and history projects including facilitating workshops for the **TCDSB iLITE conference**, engaging **over 500 elementary students from grades 7-8**. As we plan for our educational programming for this year and beyond, we are reminded of **the impact made on young people** when learning about the marginalized history of the Asia-Pacific War.

Peggie: The New Year brings exciting new changes to ALPHA. On top of our annual events, our school workshops and conferences, the biggest change is that **we will be moving into a new building in the spring!** This new building will serve as our office and as the new **Asia-Pacific Peace Museum and Education Centre**. We are in the early stages of planning the museum, but we have already made plans to use the bigger space to conduct school workshops and to provide a better work space for our summer interns from different universities from around the world. The summer interns will be of great help to us to assist in the initiatives that we have planned, but we are **always looking for volunteers**. [If you are interested in being an intern or a volunteer please check our website](#) to learn more about our mission and to learn about the different projects that we have planned this year. Happy New Year and have a prosperous 2018!

Student Comments on ALPHA Education Workshops, 2017:

"I enjoyed learning more about [the 'comfort women' issue] and hearing the grandmother's experiences as it helped to **open my perspective** on the situation and **struck an emotional chord** with me."

"I liked learning about an important part of history that **deserves to be told.**"

"I loved that the workshop was very **interactive**, it helped really learn **different points of view.**"

"Today was an exciting day! I learned many new things that I **would not have if I only studied the textbook.**"

"Overall, I enjoyed today very much and was able to learn new information about the lives of people. The fact that many women were sexually assaulted was horrible and **impacted the way I looked at the war.**"

We're very excited to hear what you have to say in 2018! To find out more about **requesting a workshop or conference**, click [here](#) visit our website!

Sarah: January 2018 has found me with a singular word in mind: **Interns!** I am currently supervising, supporting, preparing for, and initiating new plans for so *many interns!* Currently, our interns through **University of Michigan's Global Scholars Program** are working on a research project related to Unit 731, while our student from **Pro Bono Students Canada** (UToronto) is exploring recent legal developments in the 2015 December Agreement between Japan and Korea. As I'm finalizing application materials for the **interns we will send overseas this summer**, I'm also preparing interview materials for incoming interns from **Hong Kong University** and the **Education University of Hong Kong**. In addition, we're all working hard to determine our needs for the summer and developing internships accordingly through **Canada Summer Jobs**. I'm very glad we're moving into the new building soon, as we are going to be overflowing with bright, brilliant, and enthusiastic students! I can't wait!

Michelle K. and Theng: Update – Asia-Pacific Peace Museum and Education Centre

2018 will be a year of tremendous changes, including moving to our new, modernized head office within the Asia-Pacific Peace Museum and Education Centre. The first of its kind in the world, the Asia-Pacific Peace Museum and Education Centre will consist of the existing building, plus a new expansion that will be constructed in late 2019, which will be ready to serve the public in 2020. The Asia-Pacific Peace Museum and Education Centre will host exhibitions, support research, educate and engage the community, and will be a place to commemorate the Asia-Pacific War.

Our head office will be ready in the spring, taking up the entire third floor of the new building, while the remaining second floor will be dedicated to workshops, research resources, meetings, and functioning as a networking hub and conference centre for students, educators, and other professionals. The first floor will house our main hall of exhibition, a reflection- and action-provoking showcase of testimonies and artifacts that will educate future generations, to prevent such atrocities from happening again as we work toward peace and reconciliation.

The crown of the building, a rooftop Peace Garden, will serve as a permanent home for peace statues and monuments to keep the stories and memories of victims alive. Visitors will reflect on and pay tribute to those who perished in this human tragedy and will be inspired to take transformative action in the name of social justice. With our dedicated Museum Team and Building Committee working hard, 2018 will mark the official launch of this exciting project.

ON OUR CALENDAR: COMMUNITY EVENTS

April's Dream Choir, Annual Concert

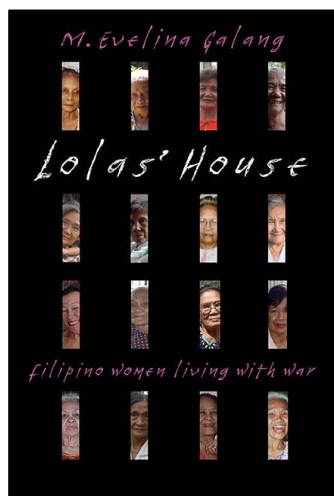
"Unblossomed Flower"

Sunday, April 15, 2018, 6:00pm

York Woods Theatre
1785 Finch Ave W
North York, ON M3N 1M6



NEW ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS ON WWII IN ASIA



Lolas' House: Filipino Women Living with War (Northwestern University Press, 2017)

By M. Evelina Galang

Lolas' House tells the stories, in unprecedented detail, of sixteen surviving Filipino “comfort women.” During World War II more than 1,000 Filipino women and girls were kidnapped by the Imperial Japanese Army. They were taken from their homes, snatched from roadsides, and chased down in fields. Overall the Japanese forced 400,000 women across Asia into sexual slavery. M. Evelina Galang began researching these stories in the 1990s as 173 lolas, “grannies” in Tagalog, emerged after decades of shame and silence to demand recognition and justice from the Japanese government.

Galang enters into the lives of the surviving women at *Lolas' House*, a community center for comfort women's organizing in metro Manila. She accompanies them to the sites of their abduction and protests with them at the gates of the Japanese embassy. In *Lolas' House*, each woman gives her testimony, even though the women relive their horror at each telling, they offer their stories so that no Filipina, no woman anywhere, should suffer wartime rape and torture again.

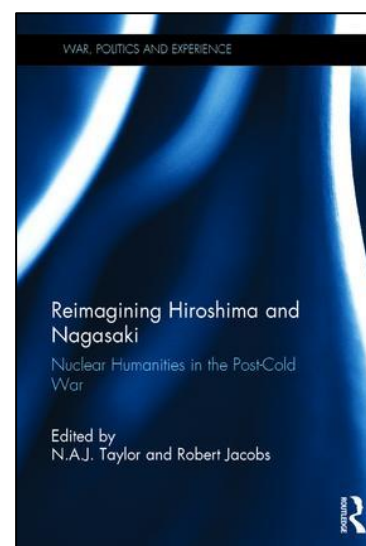
Lolas' House is not only a book of testimony and documentation, it is a book of witness, of survival, and of the female body. Intensely personal and globally political, it is the legacy of *Lolas' House* to the world.

Reimagining Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Nuclear Humanities in the Post-Cold War (Routledge, 2018)

Edited by N.A.J. Taylor, Robert Jacobs

This edited volume reconsiders the importance of the attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki from a post-Cold War perspective.

It has been argued that during the Cold War era scholarship was limited by the anxiety that authors felt about the possibility of a global thermonuclear war, and the role their scholarship could play in obstructing such an event. The new scholarship of Nuclear Humanities approaches this history and its fallout with both more nuanced and integrative inquiries, paving the way towards a deeper integration of these seminal events beyond issues of policy and ethics. This volume, therefore, offers a distinctly post-Cold War perspective on the nuclear attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The chapters collected here address the memorialization and commemoration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by officials and states, but also ordinary people's resentment, suffering, or forgiveness. The volume presents a variety of approaches with contributions from academics and contributions from authors who are strongly connected to the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and its people. In addition, the work branches out beyond the traditional subjects of social sciences and humanities to include contributions on art, photography, and design. This variety of approaches and perspectives provides moral and political insights on the full range of vulnerabilities – such as emotional, bodily, cognitive, and ecological – that pertains to nuclear harm.



REFLECTION: SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF ATROCITY

Over the past few months, I have had the true pleasure of participating in ongoing correspondence with **Edward Li, McMaster ALPHA Chapter president**. Our conversations have been trenchant and engaging, spanning a variety of topics like gender, reconciliation, psychology and sociology of atrocity, and more specific issues like military sexual slavery (“comfort women”).

Though Edward aspires to be a medical doctor, he is also deeply passionate about exploring the struggle for justice for former “comfort women.” In pursuing this passion, he has undertaken an expansive interview project, meeting with academics, activists, and artists who all deal with this issue in some way. While the ALPHA office has provided general guidance and contacts for this amazing and ambitious side-project, one of my key roles has been that of facilitating a kind of “thinking through” – that is, providing a platform for discourse around very difficult questions about humanity and our bewildering capacity for both great beauty and unspeakable horror.

Below is a reflection from Edward, borne of a lengthy set of email exchanges that could likely fill a notebook at this point (and we’re still going!). Here, he makes important empathetic connections between his lived experiences, his interviews and research, and his own aspirations, using a medical metaphor to think through the horrors of life as victim or perpetrator of atrocity. Informing this reflection is a notion of shared humanity, recognizing the grave, inexcusable injustices done to women who were forced into sexual slavery, and also the violation that comes from forced militarization of young people who are molded into perpetrators by a system that makes atrocity not only thinkable, but *doable* and even *rewarded*. Working toward peace requires justice for victims, no doubt. It also requires us to create a world in which murderous and rapacious perpetrators are no longer manufactured in the interest of any ideology or state.

- Sarah Lynn Kleeb, PhD | Director of Education, ALPHA Education

Social Determinants of Atrocity: At the Crossroads of Health and History, by Edward Li

The closest I came to understanding what it felt like to be a victim of wartime atrocity was when I contracted the common cold during the spread of the severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) virus—or, at least, when I first emerged from not knowing and woke up into my mother’s nightmarish recollection of what it must have been like taking care of a sick five-year-old in foreign Canada.

Whether it be related to a physical insult to the body or the knock-on burden of mental worry imposed on a caregiver, a disease of any sort generally brings about pain associated with some aspect of loss. Upon immediate inspection, it may be the taking-away of a physical ability once had. For me, it was a momentary confinement to my bed pending my return to full strength.

For my mother, it must have been a longer and more unusual sort of confinement as she wondered what would have happened if that recovery failed to come.

The idea of speaking to white-coated figures in an unfamiliar language, being thrown into quarantine, and witnessing the loss of her child all equated to the slim chance, but real fear, of losing her identity, freedom, innocence, and family—a fear that my mother and I had escaped but was already a reality for victims of SARS and war alike. Are the characteristics and consequences of historical atrocity then significantly different from that of a disease which metastasizes from the body into one’s personhood and humanity?

To the 200,000 girls and young women forced into military sexual slavery by the Japanese Imperial Army during World War II, disease encompassed not only physical assault unto the body, but also a redaction of language and identity, a confinement to unlivable “comfort stations”, a forbiddance of social contact, a

witnessing of innocence-undoing atrocity, and even, at times, the unwilling sacrifice of a newly borne innocence of their own.^[1] It was a fear of losing identify, freedom, innocence, and family.

Perhaps the only fundamental difference is that the disease of historical atrocity has not received sufficient treatment as a matter of human health. During my visit to the family doctor, and amidst the Canadian outbreak of SARS, my mother recounts being asked everything I had been up to, everywhere I had been, and every-when I had gone, but exactly whom I had been in contact with was besides the question; the person who had lent me their contagious symptoms was as much of a victim as a perpetrator and, above all, a product of a society that did not yet have the necessary safeguards in place.

For survivors of the Nanjing Massacre and of military sexual slavery, the healing process stopped upon identifying that it was a member of the Japanese Imperial Army from which they contracted the disease.^[2]

Yet, what I've come to realize from my recent interview with Diana Tso, theatre artist and author of "Comfort," is that the antagonist of the Asia-Pacific War is not a singular group of soldiers but the prevailing authoritarian, patriarchal society at large, and its quick willingness to treat human beings as a means to an end.^[3] In fact, as I've learned from Dr. Sarah Lynn Kleeb, soldiers who raped and killed may have been "victims-as-perpetrators" in their own respects, having been subject to the harsh conditions of militarization and made to undergo "a substantial reprogramming of human psychology."^[4]

It's difficult for me to come to terms with the fact that at least one of these soldiers, as unknowing as I was at five, had brought their watercolour brushes with them to war. I can't imagine being stripped of my teddy bear at the dentist's office. Neither can I bear the thought that any survivor forever needs to live with this pain.

In the words of my close friend, "nobody grows up wanting to be the bad guy," though in hindsight, disease isn't always forgiving towards the young. With persisting social oppression being a key determinant of recurring atrocity and humanity being its collective target, the onus is on the patient, perpetrator, and provider within every one of us to pursue a path towards peace and reconciliation. More than knowing the root cause of disease, we need an opportunity to heal.

I truly hope that you have all appreciated Edward's thoughtful reflection as much as I have! **If you are interested in writing a reflection, book review, short thematic essay, or a related piece of writing to be considered for the net issue of our next newsletter, please feel free to reach out and suggest a book or topic!** We are particularly interested in providing a venue for youth and student voices, but we would also consider submissions from educators, academics, or those in the community.



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^[1] Radhika Coomaraswamy. Addendum: Report on the mission to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the Republic of Korea and Japan on the issue of military sexual slavery in wartime. UN CHR, 52th sess, Agenda Item 9, UN Doc E/CN.4/1996/53/Add.1 (4 January 1996).

^[2] Jungmin Seo. "Politics of Memory in Korea and China: Remembering the Comfort Women and the Nanjing Massacre." *New Political Science* 30, no. 3 (2008): 369–92. doi:10.1080/07393140802269021.

^[3] Diana Tso. Interview by Edward Li. Personal interview. Toronto, December 30, 2017.

^[4] Sarah Lynn Kleeb. E-mail communications. December 12, 2017.