

YOUNG ACHIEVER'S AWARD RECIPIENT



Alissa Wang



Alissa Wang is a first-year law student and a Ph.D. candidate in political science at the University of Toronto. She is a global governance researcher and the Chair of the BRICS Research Group based at the Munk School of Global Affairs. She was also part of this year's Canadian G20 team to Germany.

Alissa has been a regular volunteer at ALPHA Education (Association for Learning and Preserving the History of WWII in Asia) since high school. As president of the U of T chapter of ALPHA, she led a team of passionate peers in educating students on campus about Asia's WWII history and promoting the values of peace, reconciliation, and justice. Through events such as speakers' series, documentary screenings, panel discussions and debates, students on campus had the opportunity to learn about "comfort women," the Nanjing Massacre, the atomic bombings of Japan, the POWs, and the medical atrocities.

In 2015, Alissa traveled to the Washington National Archives to collect primary sources on Japan's WWII biological warfare program from recently declassified American documents. She published a research paper in a campus journal, designed a workshop for high school students, and made several presentations on the topic of Unit 731 – a Japanese biological warfare research facility that committed large scale, medical atrocities such as involuntary human medical and biological weapons experimentation in northeastern China, focusing on the aftermath of Unit 731, when the American government, in exchange for Unit 731 human experimentation data, granted immunity to Japanese Unit 731 war criminals in the Tokyo trials.

In the summers of 2016 and 2017, Alissa traveled to Harbin, China, to pursue further archival research at the Unit 731 Research Center. She is currently leading a group of volunteers to develop the Unit 731 Digital Archive, to provide online access to digital versions of primary sources on this subject.

Alissa is pursuing an inquiry into the aftermath of historical atrocities and war crimes – how international law failed to bring the perpetrators to justice, how universal values interacted with politics, how they were betrayed in the postwar era, and how we can better shape a future based on historical lessons and fundamental, universal values.