Nationalism can get out of control, especially when combined with anti-Japanese sentiment. But anti-Japanese feelings must be curbed, because China needs Japanese investment.

**Question:** How deep is the sense of Han superiority? What is the future of minorities?

**Vogel:** The feeling of Han superiority runs very deep. When Jiang Zemin came to Harvard a few months ago, the Chinese students were divided in their sentiments about their government. But as soon as they saw the Tibetans demonstrating, they were absolutely united against the Tibetans. Other minorities (e.g. the Mongols, Koreans) are not as hot a problem as the Tibetans who are getting foreign support. The other minorities are only 6-7% of the population and live in out-of-the-way places.

**Question:** How are the Chinese recovering from the Cultural Revolution?

**Vogel:** There are a number of problems for everyone, including figuring out how to live with the people who turned in their colleagues and neighbors. Another challenge is that of coping with the effects of Tiananmen Square. So many people have been implicated in both the Cultural Revolution and Tiananmen Square that it is very hard for anyone to speak out. There is a long tradition of holding grudges in China, but life has to go on and move beyond the cycle of endless retribution.

**Question:** What are the prospects for increasing freedom and democracy?

**Vogel:** The government sees their importance, and will take small steps on the local level, but they will not talk about these issues. The leadership wants to control people, and they do not encourage dissidents. On the other hand, we should have no illusions. The leadership will put people in jail and shoot them if necessary to keep order.

At the same time, intellectuals and think tanks in China are exploring lots of new possibilities. There is vitality amidst the greater range of ideas being discussed. Many Chinese who go abroad see that dissension can exist without getting out of control in other countries, but the fear is that anarchy might erupt more easily in China because it is such a poor country.

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**PRE-EMBARKATION AND DISEMBARKATION**

**PREPARING FOR STUDY IN ASIA AND RETURN**

**1998 ASIANetwork CONFERENCE PLENARY**

**Elisabeth Benard**

*Asian Studies, University of Puget Sound*

Elisabeth Benard directs the Pacific Rim/Asia Study-Travel Program. Once every three years, students venture to Asia for nine months of rigorous academic and personal inquiry. While visiting eight Asian nations, the group engages in a multicultural experience that forces its members to confront novel systems of culture, economics, politics, religion, and philosophy.

Benard describes the preparation for the program and the follow-through upon the students' return to the University of Puget Sound. John Holt, Bowdoin College and David Vikner, The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia were also presenters at this plenary.

**PRE-EMBARKATION**

**Ropes' course-low level**

When the group meets together, arrange a ropes' course. This is "outward bound" exercise lasts one day. For your purposes, the "low-level" option is the best because you want to know how group members will interact with each other. The "high-level" course develops individual rather than group skills.

As the leader, do not participate in all activities so that you may observe the group. Observe who takes initiative, supports and encourages others, simply follows, or wants to be alone. Observe who anticipates situations and the tactics necessary to accomplish the task, who is resourceful, and who gets frustrated easily. These tendencies will manifest during the study abroad program. Certain challenges in the ropes' course will
comfortable the first semester when many were shy about speaking with me. By reading their diaries or with each one. By the second semester, many include materials be part of begin to Craig Storti are found out who was skilled in organization and budget-ings. Some did, but others

India and how to work within a smaller group. They MN

Diaries or letters
I asked each student to keep a diary of the meetings. Some did, but others simply wrote letters. I responded to those who requested it. This was useful in the first semester when many were shy about speaking with me. By reading their diaries or letters, I had insights about each person and began a relationship with each one. By the second semester, many felt comfortable talking with me.

Intercultural communication
The best source for intercultural communication materials is Intercultural Press, P.O. Box 700, Yarmouth, MN 04096; Tel.: 800/370-2665. Many of the materials include engaging exercises. Three useful books by Craig Storti are Cross-Cultural Dialogues, The Art of Crossing Cultures, and The Art of Coming Home.

Independent research paper
I recommend that an independent research paper be part of all study abroad programs. While students begin to formulate their theses and do their initial research before departure, most of the work is done on the road in Asia. This is a demanding and challenging, but rewarding task. For some, the paper is the academic culmination of their studies in Asia and at the university; for all it is a great project and a wonderful document of what they learned in Asia.

Additional assignments with questions
Watch foreign films without subtitles and try to understand the film. What are you looking at? What are clues to help you understand?

Spend a few hours or a day in a place where you are the minority. How does it feel? Why do you think you feel this way?

Take a walk of at least two hours through a city that you have never visited. Go alone. What did you think? Did you plan a route and did you stay on your route? Perhaps you decided to wander without a route or definite destination. Did you get lost? From this walk, did you learn anything about the city? Did you have interesting conversations? What do you remember about the walk?

DISEMBARKATION
Culture shock
A few days before the group disbands or returns home, you need to prepare the students for "culture shock." There is more and more information available on the subject. Formerly, people did not realize that culture shock takes place upon returning home. Home was home. What need was there for adjustment or preparation? We now know that mild to extreme disorientation can occur, and it may take several months to realize that one is disoriented.

I tell the students that for the first two weeks upon return, they should keep in touch with one another. If they made a good friendship during the program, it is crucial to communicate with that person for the first two weeks. Each will encounter some of the same confusion, and it is good to have someone with whom to discuss these perplexities. Because the participants in the University of Puget Sound program have been together for nine months, loss of the group identity has had profound effects on some.

Skits
To explain some of the effects, the program staff members perform skits.

Skit example: You returned a few weeks ago, and you accidentally meet two friends in the mall. They greet you warmly and ask, "Well, how was it?" You begin to tell them how fantastic it was and how it is difficult to explain what you saw and felt. They listen for a few minutes and then begin to talk with each other.
about last night’s episode of ER. They seem more enthusiastic about the episode than about your trip. Suddenly, they “gotta go” and say, “Let’s have lunch sometime. Bye.”

Skit example: You are back in school, and you meet a former dormmate. She asks about your trip, and you tell her in detail about the countries and places. She thinks it is wonderful, and how lucky you are. Throughout the semester, you keep meeting each other. Different things trigger your memory. One day in the student union, the rice isn’t good, and you tell her how great the rice was in Japan and how awful it was from the road stands along Highway One in Vietnam. Another time, you hear the Macarena. You tell your friend about the great party you had with Korean roommates in Seoul.

After a few of these encounters, she tells you, “I am tired of your bragging. I don’t want to hear more stories.” You are confused, hurt, and more careful about relating your experiences to others.

Returning to school

Within the first month, have a get-together, a potluck to which the students bring Asian food. The students should bring their photos or albums. This is a good time to exchange pictures.

In the second or third month, hold a group meeting for serious talk about how the students are adjusting. Some will deny adjustment problems, but when they begin to talk, problems become apparent. A few will not come because they have decided to “get on” with their lives. The group is less important to them now that they are with other friends. However, for the rest of the group, this talk is very important.

Slowly they will share experiences of being back and how things seem different. They will discuss the frustrations encountering people who are not interested in their trip, who don’t know where is Asia is, and who don’t care. Some will mention American consumerism and wastage of water or electricity.

A recent group discussed how much they enjoy being with each other. Many cried and needed the catharsis within a caring and understanding group. After this meeting, the students felt much better. It was a turning point for many to “leave” PacRim, realize they were on campus, and needed to make decisions for the future.

Second semester

In our program, the new students have been selected for the next program by the end of the first semester. I organize a pizza party for the “veterans” and “neophytes” for the second month of the spring semester. The veterans bring photos to share with the new students. Each new student asks the veterans one question about the program.

At a recent gathering, the questions went on and on. When the responses of the veterans contradicted one another, the new students realized that there were multiple perspectives and experiences. Both groups had a wonderful time. One of the veterans commented, “I kept thinking I should stop. They couldn’t want to hear more. But they did. I could talk and talk. Wow, what a night.” The veterans’ experiences, cosmopolitan views, and confidence impressed the new students. I know some thought, “In two years time that could be me talking.”

By scheduling the party early in the semester, the new students have opportunities to speak to the veterans in class, at the café, or wherever they meet.

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1998 ASIANetwork FREEMAN FELLOWS REPORT ON THE WEB

Excerpts from the 1998 Student-Faculty Fellows’ reports are now published on the ASIANetwork website. These published reports are those for which Teodora Amoloza, Director of the ASIANetwork Freeman Student-Faculty Fellows Program, received “permission to publish” by October 30, 1998. The URL addresses are:

- ASIANetwork website: http://www.asianetwork.org
- ASIANetwork Freeman Foundation grant information: http://www.asianetwork.org/freeman

If you are applying for the 2000 competition, you may want to check this out to have an idea of the kind of work that the first group of fellows did. Please pass this information to ASIANetwork colleagues in your institution who may be interested in the reports and may wish to apply for the 2000 program.

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