

*ASIANetwork Freeman  
Student-Faculty Fellows Program:  
An Intense Study Abroad  
Experience*

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During the past two summers, 20 pairs of student-faculty researchers conducted research in different Asian countries, namely; China (including Hong Kong), India, Japan, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam. In summer 2000, we will be sending 10 more pairs of student-faculty fellows to China, India, Japan, Malaysia, Nepal, and Taiwan. In announcing this fellowship program three years ago, we briefly outlined the rationale for the program, how the program is implemented and the intended impact on the student-faculty pairs and their home institutions as follows:

As students begin to develop an interest in Asia, they and those who teach them realize that the most effective way to develop a deeper awareness of the region is to spend some time there. One means to cultivate their interests and intellectual commitments to Asia is through scholarly research on-site. Even a short period of time can be used for intense and productive research, particularly if there is good cooperation

with and supervision by a faculty member knowledgeable about the region. Such intense, in-depth research experiences may promote further investigations and publication opportunities and also enrich the home campuses in the United States when the students and faculty members return.

The report that follows validates the stated rationale and shows the tangible end products and intangible benefits that the student and faculty fellows reaped from their experiences. Since it is impossible to summarize the substantive findings of each research project here, this article will highlight some of the reported impacts of the fellowship in the professional and personal lives of the recipients. Summaries of each research project are available on the ASIANetwork web site. For information on the 1999 projects, go to [www.asianetwork.org](http://www.asianetwork.org) and select "ASIANetwork Resources: Programs and Reports." Reports of the fellows clearly show the significant impact on the academic lives of both students and their faculty mentors.

Student fellows came from a broad range of disciplines in the liberal arts as well as professional schools. Their research focused on contemporary issues and topics and took them to northern India to study Tibetan Buddhism and Tibetan women, or to other parts of India to investigate religious and environmental issues. They went to the villages in northern Thailand to research HIV/AIDS, traveled to the cities and countryside of China to study traditional medicine, interview women writers, assess income distribution, observe girls' schooling, follow the path of a missionary, and study woodblock prints. They went to Hong Kong to investigate ecological issues, visited Taiwan to study investment patterns, went to Vietnam to study the role of women, traveled



**l to r: Rev. Jin Feng, Augustana College Freeman Student Fellow Jane Tiedge,  
Rev. Wang Dong Bi, Faculty Mentor Marsha Smith, Weijia Wang  
at Christ Church of Baoji, China**

to urban and rural Japan to study language diversity, Shinto festival music, and the political socialization of children. They went to Sri Lanka to study lay Buddhist women and how women handle the population dilemma. That the fellowship benefited the academic and professional lives of the students is unquestionable. Karen Stoll (Kalamazoo College), under the supervision of her faculty mentor, Carol Anderson, wrote her honors thesis "Ritual Speaks: An Exploration into Contemporary Ritual Practices among Buddhist Laywomen in Colombo" using information collected during her research trip. In addition to on-campus presentations, students have also made presentations at other venues. Based on her work in India, Amanda Walker (Davidson College) presented a paper "The Viability of Wetland Use to Provide Wastewater Treatment" at Camp Resources VI in Wilmington, NC. The paper she co-authored with her faculty mentor, David Martin, titled "A Rich Decision Model for Municipal Wastewater Treatment" was submitted to the journal *Ecological Economics*. On the basis of her research "Discovering Ingeborg's China," Jane Tiedge (Augustana College) has made numerous presentations in the local community and was featured in the local newspaper. Jan Brunson (Eckerd College) presented the results of her study conducted in Sri Lanka, "The Relationship Between the Status of Women and Fertility Rates: Insights from a Small Rural Village" at the national meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology. To continue his studies on Asia, Paul Boruta (St. Olaf College) went to Taiwan after graduation under a Fulbright fellowship.

The 1999 fellows continue to fine-tune their work based on their summer trips. Jennifer Lawrence (Coe College) will co-author a paper on the Thomas Christians of Kerala with her faculty mentor, Elizabeth Galbraith, for presentation at a conference of the American Academy of Religion. Andy Shroeder (Colorado College) reports that he will be drawing upon his experience during the trip when he returns to Japan as an assistant language teacher on the JET program. Janna Pistiner (Colgate University) plans to present her results on "Urban-Rural Partnership for Enhancing Girls' Schooling in China" at the conference of the Comparative and International Education Society. Heather Schmidt (Kalamazoo College) and her mentor, Jeremy Mayer, have drafted a co-authored paper titled "The Apathetic and the Spoon-fed? Political Interest, Gender, and Values Among Junior High School Students in China, Japan, and the United States." Amy Brendel (St. Olaf College) and her mentor, Michael Leming have drafted a paper "Community-based HIV/AIDS Prevention and Education in Urban and Rural Northern Thailand." Sarah Fischer (Seattle University) has prepared a draft of her research results, "Taohuawu Woodblock Printing: Changing Popular Culture in China's Modern Dynastic Age." The experience of studying women as performers of Shinto festival music gave Luanne Homberger (St. Andrews Presbyterian College) the confidence to continue her studies on Asia and made her participation in the St. Andrews Japanese Festival Ensemble more meaningful.

In addition to the concrete products realized by the students from this fellowship, they were unanimous in emphasizing that the opportunity to be in Asia, the varied experiences they had, the many challenges they faced, and the diverse situations they encountered enriched their academic and personal lives. Students' testimonies attested to the invaluable benefits derived from doing on-site research. "Being in the country I was researching allowed me to conduct interactive research which enhanced the entire process and made it much more memorable," said Heather Schmidt. Jennifer Lawrence declared, "I believe strongly that being immersed in the country, its culture, and all that it includes is an absolutely invaluable, educational experience." The intangible impact of the fellowship was very aptly expressed by Paul Boruta. "The experience of living and traveling in China has left a lasting impression on me personally. I was rewarded time and again by the friendships I made with Chinese people." Without exception, these sentiments are echoed by all the other students.

For the faculty mentors, the trip to Asia afforded them the much-needed opportunity to renew their professional ties. While in Asia, some faculty mentors made their own professional contributions to the academic community. For instance, Victoria Baker (Eckerd College) was invited to give a guest lecture "Coping with Uncertainty: Livelihood Issues and Challenges Facing the People of Suduwatura Ara," for the Moneragala District Integrated Rural Development Programme in Sri Lanka. Brian Hatcher (Illinois Wesleyan University) reported that while in India he was given the opportunity to engage in a public discussion about his work when he was invited to a debate at the P. C. Sen Memorial Seminar at Presidency College. David Fish (St. Andrews Presbyterian College) and his student were asked to perform at the Sanja Matsuri, the largest Shinto festival in Tokyo. Every faculty fellow took advantage of the opportunity to collect more materials to further advance their own research agenda. Undoubtedly, they returned to their campuses much invigorated by the trip and with new materials for their classes.

The faculty mentors learned much from their mentoring experiences as well. As Elizabeth Benard (University of Puget Sound) described her relationship with her student: "She questioned things I just assumed or barely noticed. This exchange of perceptions, perspectives, and foci created a dynamic dialogue of inquiry, and at times, sheer joy of discovery." Guiding students not only in conducting research but also in navigating an entirely different culture proved very challenging to them. In the process they learned about themselves as well. Paul Huo (University of Puget Sound) realized that "Many things that I have taken for granted for years are not taken for granted by (my student). In a sense, through his eyes I was able to take a fresh look at what I thought I have known well but actually not." They also realized the impact professors have on their students. Barbara Reed (St. Olaf College) confessed that she "gained a greater sense of how my teaching fits into the decision paths that students take when they leave our

colleges.”

Clearly, the Fellowship has enriched the professional and personal lives of both the students and the faculty mentors. We anticipate that the impact of the Fellowship will continue to be evident in the academic career of the student fellows. As David Fish (St. Andrews Presbyterian College) aptly puts it in praising the Fellowship Program: “By allowing experienced professors to mentor individual students through their first Asian fieldwork projects, it addresses a significant lacuna in Asian studies. I certainly wish something like it existed when I was a student. Like many if not most Asian studies scholars, I carried out my first foreign fieldwork completely on my own in a country I had never been to before. I had taken graduate courses. . . but these had only prepared me theoretically. It was much like learning the rules of the road in a classroom and then being sent out alone on a busy highway to actually learn to drive.” Hopefully, student Fellows who continue their careers in Asian studies will be much more confident when they return to Asia as a result of their Fellowship experiences.

**Editors’ noter: Look for photos of students and their faculty mentors through this issue!**

## 2000 ASIANetwork FREEMAN STUDENT-FACULTY FELLOWSHIP RECIPIENTS

In summer 2000, the Student-Faculty Fellows Program will support collaborative research in Asia for at least three weeks by ten student-faculty pairs from ASIANetwork colleges. In summer 2001 another ten pairs of student-faculty fellows will be supported by the Freeman Foundation grant to ASIANetwork.

The ASIANetwork congratulates the following recipients of the 2000 student-faculty fellowship:

*Fairfield University*, Jeffrey Adams Wenger, ’00, Religious Studies, and Ronald M. Davidson, Department of Religious Studies, Nepal: A Study of the Nepalese Bodhnath Pilgrimage Community.

*Hiram College*, Julia Levin, ’01, Philosophy and Art History, and Lisa B. Safford, Art Department, Japan: Zen Meditation, Gardening, and Contemporary Japanese Life.

*Illinois Wesleyan University*, Yi Linda Zhang, ’02, Public Accounting, and Zhenhu Jin, Department of Business Administration, People’s Republic of China: A Study of the Effectiveness of the New Chinese Tax System.

*Kalamazoo College*, Jeffrey Michael Lung, ’01, Religion, and Brian Russell Dott, Department of History, Kenyon College, Peoples Republic of China: Daoist Practice in Contemporary Beijing.

*Kenyon College*, Philip A. Davalos, ’01, International Studies, and Joseph A. Adler, Department of

Religion, Taiwan (Republic of China): Ancestor Worship in Taiwan.

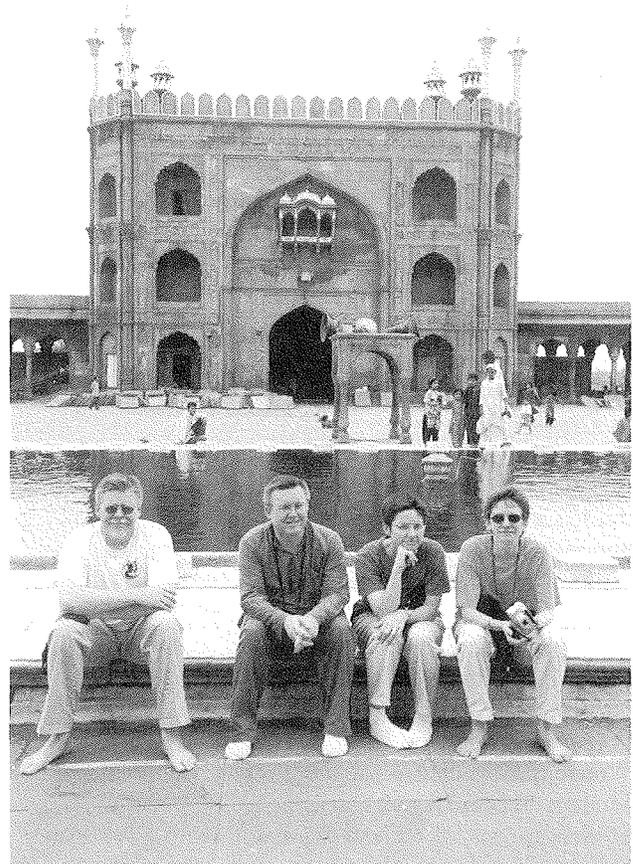
*Luther College*, Jean Marie Hollingsworth, ’00, History and Political Science, and Brahmjyot K. Grewal, Department of History, India: Mahakali: Her Worship and Her Followers.

*Missouri Southern State University*, Erin Dale Sellers, ’02, Mass Communication, and Karl Joseph Schmidt, Department of History, India: Preserving an Indian Princely State’s Past: An Oral History of Hyderabad, 1940-1955.

*University Of Puget Sound*, Jasmine Furnish, ’02, Religion, and Sunil Kukreja, Department of Comparative Sociology, Malaysia: Hinduism in the Diaspora: The Sathya Sai Movement in Malaysia.

*University of San Diego*, Karina Kirana, ’01, International Relations, and Yi Sun, Department of History, China: Dynamics and Dilemmas: The Case Study of the First Women’s Hotline in China.

*Valparaiso University*, Ryan Michael Murray, ’00, Political Science and History, and Zhimin Lin, Department of Political Science, China: Changing Chinese Popular Perception of the US in the Wake of the Embassy Bombing and the WTO Deal.



South Asia Ford Foundation Grant Participants  
Charles Keller, Michael Bartanen, Carla Oleska and Ann Burlein at  
Jama Masjid in Old Delhi, India, summer 1999