

WORLD SCHOLARS

East Asia • North America • South Asia • Europe • Latin America • Africa • Middle East • China

A Newsletter of the Friends World Program at Long Island University's Southampton College

An Internal Way of Life by Rebecca Silverman, South Asia Center

On a bumpy road with the direction unknown. The bus jammed with people and nowhere to rest your head. Nodding off to that desired state of sleep but instantly awakened with every jerk or with the laughter of the person sitting next to you. No one knew what lay ahead of us and we stared out the window at a landscape that was foreign to us. Eyes full of curiosity and a blank slate to create a memory on. We arrived after making our way down a little winding path and there in front of us lay a beautiful building. The walls were open and the roof hovered above with the help of a few pillars. Our shoes lined up in rows as we took them off to climb up the stairs. There we sat on a platform that looked out on a silent piece of land with colors of green so defined and exquisite and textures I had never seen before. In the distance was a windmill spinning and pumping up the water that we used for cooking and bathing. Such a calming sound throughout the day and night. Little straw mats were laid out in a square for us to sit upon as we ate. We all looked in at each other, sharing our stories and insights and then we settled into our rooms. Mattress after mattress lay across the floor, girls separate from boys. The candles were lit and mosquito coils burnt and we slept together as strangers who would soon become friends. The morning started early. At six o'clock we drank our tea and walked along a path, through fields of purple to an open-air room with colorful mats spread upon the floor and a few pillows dispersed throughout. There was a statue simply placed



in the front and four pictures of different gurus and swamis. They were all foreign faces to me but I still felt respect for them and could almost feel their presence as I learned

from their traditions. We sat in silence with our hands consciously put in *mudras* and our eyes closed. We chanted the "Om" three times as a repetitious beginning and we directed our focus on the third eye and from there we searched for a state of mind that was far from thought, a state of body that was conscious and aware yet heavy



McLead Ganj (Dharamsala) Northern India

Photo by Brian O'Leary

and relaxed, and a state of spirituality that I had yet to explore. The techniques of breathing, the body still and relaxed, we began. Ankle rotations, butterflies, shoulder movement and then the neck, round and round. Palm trees swaying in the wind. Salutations to the sun. Breathing in and out. Inhaling deep into the core of our beings and relieving the tension that so blatantly controlled our day-to-day lives. We sat together in rows with just enough distance to define our own personal space. We listened to the teacher's repetitious, monotone voice and learned from his actions.

Breath...in through the left, out through the right. In through the right, out through the left. Focused on my third eye. Internalized to the core of my being. Exploring the spirituality within. My third eye, that line to the wall that gives me my focus. An internal vision that keeps me from falling. An internal way of life. The contours of my body, so intricate in detail but so simple in the state of my presence. Wind through my nostrils, brushing the walls of my consciousness and leaving me with an inner awareness so pure and simple. Aware of emptiness, a freedom so foreign and yet within us all. In... Out... My weight drops through the floor. Falling, falling. Pulled by a magnet. My still presence so hallowed and my conscious thought so stable. Focused on the motion of breath. In the left, out the right. In the right, out the left. Balance and the freedom of stillness.

It was, to the say the least, a breath of fresh air, a healing process. The noises were different. No motorcycles or rickshaws riding by, no honking, no voices. Just birds and crickets, and the leaves whispering as the wind passed through them. A blanket of purple covering the ground and embracing the earth with a layer of warmth. A place of peace.

Letter From The Director



Friends World Director, Lewis Greenstein

Dear Friends,

Let me apologize at the outset for the length of time it has taken to produce this edition of *World Scholars*. I am prepared to make excuses if you insist but I think I'll wait for you to ask. Let me use this space instead to tell you about some of the things that have been happening at Friends World during this academic year.

Four of our centers have new quarters. The North American Center here at Southampton College has finally emerged from its seven-year-long "basement captivity" into the sunshine. We have moved into a building which is almost entirely reserved for our use and includes individual offices for all faculty members and staff, a "comfy room," and three seminar/classrooms. It also has room to store and display our collection of journals. The centers in Costa Rica, Israel and India have also moved. In each case we have dramatically improved the facilities available to students and faculty. In Bangalore and Jerusalem we now have exclusive use of our own houses and in San Jose we are occupying a former religious center which, I am told, has ample space in a main building and outbuildings. All in all, we seem now to be very well situated in all of our centers.

Other important news concerns the accomplishments of our students. Nathan Patmor, a 1998 graduate of the program is the winner of a Truman Scholarship for graduate study, one of the most prestigious of the awards available to college seniors. And Josh Newton, a current senior studying water policy issues at the Middle East Center, has made it through the first round of the competition for a Fulbright Scholarship. Two other seniors, Emily Oakley and Jennifer Bacciellieri, are candidates for this year's Truman Scholarships. The level of achievement of our incoming students continues to rise and we find ourselves competing with Yale and Stanford for particular students as well as overspending our budget for merit-based scholarships. This is not altogether an unpleasant problem.

I invite your comments on this edition of *World Scholars* and welcome your advice at all times. With best wishes for a happy spring,

In Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lewis Greenstein".

Lewis

School of the Americas

by Alder Phillips, North American Center

The US government's School of the Americas, sometimes called the "School of Assassins," is located in Fort Benning, Georgia. It is known for training Latin American soldiers in combat, counter-insurgency, and counter-narcotics. According to several human rights groups, graduates of the School have been responsible for some of the worst human rights abuses in Latin America.

On November 19th, a group of 12 Friends World and Southampton College students left Long Island for Georgia and a planned demonstration to be held at the School of the Americas. Annette Cousins and I had organized meetings and a non-violent civil disobedience training session over the past month and a half. The demonstration was scheduled for Saturday, November 21st and Sunday, the 22nd.

The first day was dedicated to speakers, signing, street theater and networking among protesters. There were probably about 4,000 people the first day, and I think everyone was very moved by the sight of so many people gathered for this common cause. That same night some students went to a student caucus and others went to an information session about the civil disobedience scheduled for the next day. There had been so many people going to the trainings that they had to schedule extra ones and the sessions were packed! That night the estimate of how many people were going to cross the line the next day went from 1,000 to 1,500. We were all psyched!!

Sunday morning we arrived to find the streets filled; every direction we looked there were people gathered. All those who planned on crossing the line were gathered on one side of the street holding crosses that had people's names on them representing victims of SOA graduates. We climbed onto the roof of a building above all the people gathered and it was amazing to see the mass of people below. It gave me (and a lot of us) the feeling that this school was so wrong in what it was doing, and that the cause everyone had gathered for was justified.

To know that just a year earlier there had been only 601 people who crossed the line, and this year there were 2,319 was outstanding! Thinking about the many different

kinds of people there was amazing it itself. Everyone was there: Native Americans, people from other countries, locals, priests, nuns, students, children, elderly - and everyone else. It was no longer just a religious movement; it encompassed people from all walks of life. All in all there were about 5,000-7,000 people gathered at the demonstration on Sunday.

Line crossing began in the morning in the form of a solemn funeral procession onto the base. We commemorated the deaths of

six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper, and her daughter, all killed in El Salvador in 1989. The following year was the first year of these demonstrations against SOA. After the line had filed onto the base, about 20 busloads of people (including 6 students from Friends World and Southampton) were escorted to a nearby baseball field. The rest of us waited on the side of

the road for the buses to return. We waited an hour and a half or more and then were taken to the park. As we got off the buses, an army official told us that they had chosen not to process us, due to the large number that had crossed and we would be released. As we deboarded the buses, they handed us a letter banning us from the base until midnight that night. Last year, this same action had resulted in being barred from the base for six months, with repeat offenders charged and sentenced to six months in jail and a \$3,000 fine. This year the 70 repeat offenders were released with everyone else. After the release everyone returned to the base where the protesters were gathered. There were two lines of people waiting to welcome and congratulate everyone. It was an awesome feeling! Even though nobody got arrested, knowing that it was too much even for the army or the police to deal with made us appreciate our great accomplishment. Plans for next year have already begun, and SOA Watch, the group working to close the SOA down, will be better prepared for so many people. Hopefully, even more.



A few of the thousands who descended on the School of the Americas at Fort Benning on November 22 to protest the Army's role in training Latin American military personnel are seen here. Twelve students from the Friends World Program of Long Island University attended the annual protest. (Photo by Alder Phillips)

Measuring the Depth of Learning in China

by Julia Renfro, Administrative Director, China Center

October 26, 1998

After one month in China, one wonders how to measure the depth and rapidity of learning. How does one see that time is passing, that ideas are flowing? Is it by noting that today, you finally understand the Chinese phrase that the cashier at the cafeteria has been repeating to you every day at virtually every meal since your arrival? (Her question, "What's your name?" so that she might send your order to the correct table. Much to her amusement, in response you had always answered "Xie xie" - meaning "thank you" as if "thank you" were your name.) And now you can laugh with her. Or is it by realizing that you no longer think twice about riding your bike at any time of the day? You are no longer petrified by gag-gles of high speed bicycles carrying unimaginable cargo (three-meter metal beams over one shoulder, a haphazard heap of collected plastic bottles, a brand new computer monitor, a wife on the back and a baby, all under the same rain poncho). It could be by appreciating that now, when you wake up, you know exactly where you are and how you got there, and while still half asleep, greeting your Korean roommate in Chinese, your only common language. You can hop on a bus alone and pick out landmarks (that's the place to buy peanut butter, that's the Silk Market, and over there's where you can rent UFO-shaped boats to tour around the lake); you know the correct fare and exactly where to get off.

Or again, maybe it's by noticing the accumulation of information you draw on. When you visit a local village you already expect to observe remnants of the Cultural Revolution, and you'll point them out to your teachers and guides. When you learn the grid showing grain output drawn on the wall dates from 1960, you can place it in the era of Mao's Great Leap Forward, and you know the old folks' faces around you are those who survived the ensuing famine.

Whatever the measures may be, the beautiful thing about the daily foibles of life here in Hangzhou is that you always are in the process of learning and the results are so enticingly real.

In the past month, students have created these small and steady reference points; tiny little finger and foot holds that they, like the rockclimber, know to be useful on the way up. They come in the shape of learning new words, becoming familiar with a city and just letting the mysteries of Hangzhou, China become normal. Going to Mandarin language class every morning for two to three hours, touring the local countryside, and participating in

Area Studies lectures, discussions, and field trips also help.

And successes are apparent. Whereas a month ago many students were speechless and frustrated when confronted with communicating daily needs, now positive language days prevail. This signifies several moments in a day when at least one more native speaker under-

stands the sentence that just came out of your mouth; the one that you've been painstakingly formulating in your head for the previous ten minutes. And unbelievably, they react accordingly! You are communicating! It works! You buy your red bean steam bun (no meat inside because you know how to say that, too), you fill your bike tires with air, you arrive at your desired destination feeling silly and euphoric.

On a recent cold, rainy day a couple of students' spirits could not be dampened, for virtually every language interchange with local Chinese was a success. Out on their bikes in search of a market, they asked for directions from a man directing traffic, he smiled and pointed them on their way. Later, when the rain came, they simply realized that they had to learn the word for the ubiquitous bicycle poncho that Hangzhouese are rarely caught without. And when the raingear they found was too expensive they bargained their price. This seemingly dismal rain was a gift; a new vocabulary word! A new chance to speak!

But small successes also meet with daily setbacks. To mention the rainy weather is to mention the variable health conditions the Chinese believe it brings and which it certainly brought to the China Center. Autumn is com-



ing to town gradually, and draped round its neck come the colds and flu to bodies that are unaccustomed to them. It doesn't help that our bodies are especially susceptible, due to the changes and stresses they've undergone these past few months.

We have all felt waves of sickness in one way or another, and it brought us together for comparisons of symptoms, sharing of remedies, and for some, a few days alone in bed. And the sick times bring with them some restoration and peace, too. Repaired physically, save for coughs and sniffles, we are gearing up for a ten-day excursion to Beijing next week. Looking forward to a packed schedule of visits and lectures with government workers and renowned scholars, as well as a walk on the Great Wall, a visit to the Beijing Opera, and a chance to try Beijing Roast Duck. We will certainly need all our energies with us. In fact, the cold-and-flu-induced rests were probably well timed. As our tai chi teacher repeated while instructing us in movement on the dewy field one morning, "To go ahead, you first go back, to go right, you first go left."

Such Taoist exercise has also been helpful in the past two weeks of Area Studies. After two weeks engulfed in Chinese Ancient and Modern history we pass to a different level of learning. Guided by our benevolent expert on Chinese Religions, Wen-jie, students have tackled the biggest questions we can ask as humans: Who are we? Who are we in relation to others? In relation to the universe? What is the meaning of our action? How do we act?

Sitting on a hilltop at a local Taoist temple and monastery's teahouse, Wen-jie asked us to imagine the class period in the Chinese scholarly tradition of qing tan ("pure talk"), an attempt to speak of the essence of life. And as the afternoon hours stretched on, surrounded by singing birds, wondering monks, blooming trees and the chatter of the regulars playing cards, a certain living purity was indeed found.

Leaning forward, sipping green tea, pontificating on our understanding (Is there any real understanding? What is it to understand?) of the Tao, there was an amazing clarity

to words chosen and ideas shared. So different from Western worldviews, students attempted to allow the Taoist concept of "actionless action" sit with them. And for a group of young people so dedicated to changing the world, the proposition of a Taoist activist, who may not always "act" in the way an American would, posed an insightful challenge. We wandered down from our perch on the hilltop teahouse a bit lighter, a bit quieter.



Fall 1998 Adventurers in China

And so today finds students packing bags for a 16-hour train ride to Beijing, typing papers, eating noodles, quoting from Buddhist sutras, planning a Halloween party scheduled for our return to Hangzhou (How will we explain Halloween to our local Chinese friends?), and stretching sore muscles from the Gong-fu martial arts class. The levels in our life here are many; layers of belief and disbelief, tension and relaxation, patience and irritation all circling in that interdependent cycle that the Taoists Ancients saw as yin and yang. The intense mixture of oppo-

site forces interacting that we know to be true, because we live it - sometimes in the most striking ways. As soon as you learn how to say "Where's the toilet?" in Chinese and you are skipping down the hall because you have had a positive language experience, you halt and gasp, realizing you have forgotten your tissue. (Chinese bathrooms don't provide such a luxury.) Alas, the yin/yang spirals on: In happiness is distress, in learning there is innocence, in distance is proximity.

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FWP and AFS: Mutual Admiration and Assistance

by Janet Davidson, Associate Director



One of my distinct pleasures this semester has been to see the degree to which AFS, the international exchange organization, and the Friends World Program reinforce and extend each other's aims and objectives. As a student of, and a practitioner in, the field of international education, I firmly believe in the promotion of positive international experiences

among youth. I credit AFS for opening my eyes to the world beyond Lincoln, Nebraska. I can trace a continuous line from the AFS summer I spent with the Aguiar family in Brazil to my position now with Friends World. The international connections and reconnections I have made along the way weave through my academic, social, and professional lives. I suspect that many Friends World alumni and students are in the process of constructing a similar set of international links. Many of our former and current students are AFS returnees.

The original American Field Service returnees were not exchange students at all. They were the individuals who had driven the ambulances on European battlefields during World War I and World War II. Like the founders of Friends World, a dedicated group of volunteers joined together to create a program which would bring people from different nations and cultures together. They saw

hope in the prospect of mutual learning and volunteer service. In 1947, high school students from eleven European countries were hosted by U.S. families. The following year, teenagers from Germany were included in the group. Today, the AFS network includes more than 100,000 volunteers: Host families, community support groups, and friends.

AFS has lent its active support to Friends World over the past several years. Each fall, AFS-USA has provided the FW admissions office with the mailing list of the previous year's students, thereby allowing us to contact potential students directly and inform them of our unique program. In recognition of their international experience, AFS returnees automatically qualify for the Friends World exchange grant of \$1000 per year. This past fall, 147 current and prospective students were eligible to receive that grant.

Friends World students, alumni and friends have likewise been active AFS supporters. By lending support to their own communities' AFS committees, building interest in international exchange in school rooms, serving as host families, and volunteering for orientation activities members of the Friends World community express and continue their commitment to increased mutual understanding and world peace.

We in Friends World are grateful for the support we have received from AFS-USA and look forward to many more years of mutual cooperation.

Sign onto the FW Listserv!

A listserv (or "listserv" for short) is like automated electronic mail. You send to the list and everyone who has subscribed to the list gets a copy of your message. It is easy to use because it works like email; messages come into your mailbox in chronological order and are intermixed with other mail.

The new Friends World listserv offers an opportunity for students, faculty, staff, and alums to stay in touch with each other despite being scattered about the world. Possible uses will be to discuss policy issues and social issues - as well as to collaborate on work between students studying similar subjects in various parts of the world. Hopefully this will be just the first step to staying in touch.

Visions for the future might include web pages of model degree programs and/or majors, continually updated by current students' work. We could establish links to a database of all catalogued portfolios, as well as a database of all internship contacts we have already established. We can DREAM up other uses of this technology as we go along!

Although a new service, we have already received posts from students and staff in East Africa, North America, Singapore, along with lots of news and announcements.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBSCRIBING:

To subscribe, send an email message to

listproc@phoenix.liu.edu

Leave the "subject" line blank, and don't include an email signature

In the body of the email message, type:

Subscribe fw-student firstname lastname

(substitute your first and last name where indicated)

Send off the message. In a short time, you will receive a confirmation that you have been added to the fw-student list. You can then send a message to the list members. To send a message to all the subscribers, address your message to: *fw-student@phoenix.liu.edu* ALL are welcome to join!

Letter from the Student Executive by Brett Rader, North American Center

During the past six months, acting as the Student Executive for Friends World, I have truly learned about taking the world as the core of my curriculum. It is a unique position because the Student Executive deals with the majority of small communities within Friends World. Everyday I receive e-mails from students, faculty and staff regarding issues and concerns. Sometimes these issues envelope me into the late hours — and finally, I turn off the light to go to sleep.

When I came to Friends World, I was just a young hick-boy from western Washington State. I didn't know much about the world, except for a two-month trip I had taken as an exchange student to Paraguay with American Field Service in the summer of 1993. Now after three-and-a-half years, I have seen a great deal of the world and feel pretty much at home wherever I go. I took on the position of Student Executive so that I could represent all of the students in the program.

Friends World has changed me. I find myself involved in projects I could not envision myself doing three years ago. I am now working with my colleagues to update the Student Handbook, which governs Friends World, as well as planning for Student Development which will take place at the Southampton campus (May 18 - May 22). Each year, the Student Development Workshop gives students in the community a chance to discuss and evaluate different aspects of the program. That report is provided to both World Headquarters and the faculty. That workshop will be the culminating experience for me as Student Executive. Holding this position of Student Executive has been a very rewarding experience in terms of using what I have learned in Friends World to promote change and understanding.

Friends World in the News

Friends World student Erin O'Neill told of her experiences with Hurricane Mitch, in a December issue of the Philadelphia Inquirer. Erin had been in Nicaragua when the storm hit, living in the north central part of the country and working to promote organic farming. She brought back photos of the devastation - collapsed bridges, mudslides, impassable roads, still swollen rivers. After returning to the States, Erin used those pictures to help raise over a thousand dollars for hurricane victims. She is on her way back to her host community to help with resettlement efforts.

Nancy Worobey, Friends World 1974-79, has maintained her interest in art, now achieving notice in the Norwich (CT) Bulletin as a published illustrator. She and author Nancy Hewlett Kierstad have just published a children's book, *The Green Ribbon*, based on an event experienced by Kierstad's daughter. Nancy studied Japanese art and culture with Friends World and after graduation went on to attend the University of Connecticut to specialize in graphic design and illustration. The Bulletin calls her illustrations "large and beautifully executed - certain to hold the interest of both the young and young-at-heart."

Annie P. Jones, visiting student to the South Asia Center in 1993-94, was a featured artist at a recent exhibition at the Warren Library in Tarrytown, NY. An exhibition mounted in celebration of African-American Heritage month featured a set of African masks, a Native American mask, and a series of faces and hands that expressed such concepts as meditation, resolution, contemplation, and revitalization. Although in India only a semester, Annie credits her Friends World experience as one of the

most significant events in her life. She is in the process of transforming her semester journal into a book.

The Miami Herald featured FW alumna Elizabeth Stark in a story about entrepreneurs, defined by the paper as people who "have vision, focus and an intense passion that leads them to take risks and continually seek innovations and opportunities in business." After studying with Friends World, Elizabeth lived in Brazil and Guatemala, where she taught English. Once back in the U.S., she taught English to new immigrants and eventually opened her own language school. Her Center for English Studies now offers programs for foreign students in New York, Boston, Fort Lauderdale and San Francisco. In the Miami Herald story, Elizabeth advises would-be entrepreneurs to "focus on an audience that can afford your service and listen to that audience."

Friends World visiting student, Rune Lind, is continuing to make films — and is now creating one called "Gnosis" reflecting the knowledge and insights he gained while on the Friends World Comparative Religion Program. He gathered footage for this film while traveling with Friends World to India, Thailand, Nepal, Israel, Japan and Jordan. A full length interview with the filmmaker was featured in the arts section in the February 11th issue of The East Hampton (NY) Star.

The Jane Goodall Institute for Wildlife Research, Education and Conservation, in a letter signed by Dr. Goodall herself, cites Friends World for its participation in the 1998 Roots & Shoots Program. A certificate of recognition, suitably framed, will hang proudly in Friends World quarters.

According to Morris Mitchell's book, World Education (pp. 80-82), Friends World students of the 1960s were encouraged to meet informally and draw up Center guidelines, acknowledging and respecting different social expectations of various cultures. The guidelines below were agreed upon for the North American Center at that time.

"From the North American Center – SOME STANDARDS FOR GUIDANCE"

1. Unless prior arrangements have been made, all members of the community are expected to be present at all scheduled meetings and meals.
2. It is requested that all persons refrain from smoking in the Meeting Room and in the Dining Room. Fire Marshal's regulations prohibit smoking in the student apartments.
3. The use of illegal drugs and intoxicants cannot be condoned in a community like ours without involving others in involuntary risks and affecting the unity of the whole.
4. It is expected that men and women will respect the privacy of each other's apartments, and that there will not be intervisitations after 11 p.m. All apartments will observe quiet hours after this time.
5. Arrangements for rooms and meals for guests on campus must be made in advance. Rooms: \$1.00; Meals: Breakfast, \$.40; Lunch, \$.60; Dinner, \$1.00.
6. Out of consideration for others with whom one lives, attention should be given to personal cleanliness and tidiness. Among other things, this would relate, specifically, to the orderly care of rooms and neatness in dress and appearance in the Dining Hall, particularly at dinner.
7. As a matter of both convenience and courtesy, students leaving campus for overnight or longer should register their addresses.

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