



STUDY ABROAD

by CLAIRE COCCIOLE

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No Longer So Exotic Destinations: South and Southeast Asia

The latest survey by the Institute of International Education finds that more American college students are studying overseas, and more are venturing further afield. The number of American students studying abroad in 1994-95 rose 10.6 percent, to 84,403, continuing a ten-year upward trend.

In a recent interview in *The New York Times*, Richard M. Krasno, IIE President said, "As recently as a decade ago, studying abroad was considered a luxury. I think it's now considered a more instrumental part of undergraduate education."

He believes American students are reacting to exposure to other cultures on their own campuses, and recognizing the importance of a second language and international experience in competing for jobs.

In earlier times, a semester in Great Britain seemed exotic to most American students. This still remains the most popular choice, with 23 percent, or 19,410 students, going there. But today students can choose from an ever-growing array of programs located just about anywhere, including South and Southeast Asia.

Southeast Asia is generally regarded as the region comprised of Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Myanmar (formerly known as Burma), Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. South Asia con-

sists of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Sri Lanka. At the moment, India, Nepal and Thailand seem to be the hot destinations for semester or academic year programs, judging from the number of programs being offered in these countries.

While some past descriptions of this part of the world as "remote" and "distant" may linger, the truth is that today no major city is truly isolated. Modern technology brings even remote areas within easier reach. Students have grown increasingly aware of this, and have used this argument to convince many an anxious parent.

Perhaps one of the more difficult things to learn for study abroad students is the ethnic, linguistic, and religious diversity, and the resulting ramifications, found in the region. In many of these countries social classes and social groupings have long remained separated. Despite their immensely mixed populations, the concept of heterogeneity, as it is viewed in North America, is unknown. Rather, there is a recognized hierarchical system based on ethnic background and mother tongue that provides social stability but also serves to perpetuate the relative political and social stratification.

Some of the formats for these South and Southeast Asian programs are not of the garden variety. Many institutions have come up with extraordinary itineraries, while a large number of them place students in direct contact with the local communities, offering an even greater chance of learning about the host environ-

ments. A sampling of some programs is mentioned below.

■ **The Council on International Educational Exchanges** offers programs at IKIP Malang, Indonesia; Khon Kaen University, Thailand; and Vietnam National University, Vietnam. The program in Indonesia allows students to gain knowledge of the Indonesian language and to grasp a meaningful understanding of contemporary Indonesian society. Students also participate in a three- to four-week field study, during which they live in an East Javanese village. The CIEE program in Thailand emphasizes the Thai language and culture, with required electives in development studies, environmental studies, Thai literature in translation, Thai writing, or an internship. Students at Hanoi University take courses in Vietnamese language, culture and civilization.

■ **Michigan State University will launch a new program in Nepal** in the spring. It maintains a unique, multidisciplinary approach among the colleges of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Social Sciences, and Arts and Letters. The program is based in Pokara, with a week-long orientation in Kathmandu.

■ **An Asian Cultural History Tour is sponsored by Eastern Michigan University**, with visits to China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Nepal, Thailand, and Vietnam.

■ **Friends World** offers a two-semester program in comparative religions and culture, including travel to Japan,

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Thailand, India, Nepal and Israel. Included are an area studies program as well as independent study in each of the countries.

■ **The School for International Training** has long been active in the region, with programs in Nepal and India. For the past decade they have hosted a Tibetan Studies Program at sites in Nepal, India, Tibet and Bhutan. SIT also has programs in Bali, Indonesia and northwest Thailand. As Chris Deegan, the Regional Director for Asia/Oceania Programs, put it, SIT tries to disillusion students of the concept of 'exotic' so that they can begin to blur the lines between themselves and the 'other', i.e. the culture in which they are living and studying. This is accomplished through direct immersion, forcing students to leave behind their cultural baggage and focus on what is in front of them.

Some of the more interesting programs are highlighted below. This list is by no means inclusive of all semester or academic year programs, and does not touch on summer or short-term programs offered in the region.

INDIA

■ **SUNY Oneonta's** long-established program is offered every two years. From orientation and departure in June until the return at the end of November, participants are kept on the go. They visit sites throughout India and are engaged in community service and research projects, including work in the Mother Theresa Home, in orphanages, and with battered women's groups.

■ **Brethern Colleges Abroad** runs a program in Kerala, India, where students study at the Cochin University of Science and Technology. The program offers a unique Peace Studies component through the host university's College of Gandhian Studies. Participants also study the notable success which has been achieved in economic development by the linking of the economy to literacy and gender equity.

■ **The Global Campus at the University of Minnesota** offers the Minnesota Studies in International Development

(MSID) program in Pune, India, 100 miles southeast of Bombay. Course-work, language instruction, internships, orientation and home stays are arranged in cooperation with a wide variety of non-governmental social service, environmental and development agencies in Pune and nearby rural areas.

In addition, just a few of the other sponsoring institutes in India include:

■ **College Consortium of International Studies** offers a program at Mount Carmel College of Bangalore University in South India;

■ **Colgate University** can be found in Madras with their program entitled "India Study Group;"

■ **Davidson College** sponsors a fall semester program in Madras; and

■ **Antioch College** sponsors a Buddhist Studies program, which is based in Bodhi Gaya.

NEPAL

■ **Cornell University** has teamed up with Tribhuvan National University in Kirtipur, Nepal to run a program which focuses on the study of Nepali language and Nepalese studies. At the same time, it also offers field study in either environmental and ecological diversity of the cultures and peoples of Nepal. The semester is organized around an orientation, two months of coursework, one additional four-credit course and a study tour.

MALAYSIA

■ **Western Michigan University** has established a joint program with Sunway College near Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, whereby Malaysian students can transfer to WMU after five semesters of study to complete their baccalaureate degrees. American students can spend a semester at Sunway and apply credits earned directly to their WMU degree as the courses offered are clones of the WMU curriculum, taken directly from the WMU catalog, and are based on WMU grading standards.

■ **The University of Minnesota - Twin Cities** has an exchange with Universiti Malaysia, in Penang. Students in Malaysia are free to enroll in English

courses offered in the curriculum as well as in language classes.

THAILAND

■ **Antioch College** holds its spring semester Thailand program in Prachuab Kiri Khan, south of Bangkok, for the first three weeks, and then in Chiang Rai, northern Thailand, for the remaining 12 weeks. Participants study the Thai language, culture, history, and community development. They also observe first-hand the impact of industrial forces on the culture and environment of Thailand.

VIETNAM

■ The University of Hanoi is the site for **Hobart and William Smith Colleges'** "Vietnam Term Abroad." The focus of this program is Vietnamese civilization, culture, economics, political science, and Vietnamese language.

■ **The Oregon State System of Higher Education** will begin a program in the winter in Hue, Vietnam. The first half will be devoted to intensive language study and the second half will be an internship. Candidates for the pilot run have interests which include native clothing and costume design, sports, and nutrition.

The vast cultural differences existing between North America and South and Southeast Asia mandate that the student prepare far in advance and be well aware that the experience of a study abroad program in this region will be like no other.

Social mores may serve as strong barriers to integration by the outsider. What is considered acceptable behavior by many North Americans may prove to be impolite in the host country. Bea Szekely, of Cornell University's Study Abroad Office, tells of the difficulties students encounter in adjusting to Nepal, for example. Men and women are housed in separate hostels with Nepali roommates. Women must never expose their arms or feet or go out alone at night. Students also must be careful not to violate certain practices governing eating. While these restrictions may seem limiting at first, Szekely says, many students come to view them as liberating in the sense that they draw them closer to Nepali culture.

Accredited National Four-year Colleges & Universities in Korea

| Name of Institution | Year established | City | Fax |
|---|------------------|------------|----------------|
| Andong National University | 1947 | Kyungbuk | 0571-50-5599 |
| Anseong National Polytechnic University | 1939 | Kyunggi-do | 0334-73-2704 |
| Changwon National University | 1979 | Kyungnam | 0551-83-2970 |
| Cheju National University | 1952 | Cheju-do | 064-55-6130 |
| Cheju National University of Education | 1962 | Cheju-do | 064-55-5061 |
| Cheongju National University of Education | 1962 | Chungbuk | 0431-67-7343 |
| ChinJu National University | 1910 | Kyungnam | 0591-745-8741 |
| Chinju National University of Education | 1940 | Kyongnam | 0591-52-9554 |
| Chonbuk National University | 1947 | Chonbuk | 0652-70-2188 |
| Chonju National University of Education | 1962 | Chonju | 0652-81-0102 |
| Chonnam National University | 1952 | Kwangju | 062-524-6714 |
| Chungbuk National University | 1951 | Chungbuk | 0431-63-0612 |
| Chuncheon National University of Education | 1939 | Kangwon-do | 0361-261-4328 |
| Chung Ju National University | 1962 | Chungbuk | 0441-853-1236 |
| Chungnam National University | 1952 | Taejon | 042-823-1469 |
| Gyeongsang National University | 1948 | Kyongnam | 05191-54-8061 |
| Inchon National University of Education | 1962 | Inchon | 032-541-0580 |
| Kangnung National University | 1979 | Kangwon-do | 0391-43-7110 |
| Kangwon National University | 1947 | Kangwon-do | 0361-51-9556 |
| Kong-Ju National University of Education | 1962 | Chungnam | 0416-54-1578 |
| Kong Ju National University | 1948 | Chungnam | 0416-53-3157 |
| Korea National Open University | 1972 | Seoul | 02-744-5882 |
| Korea National University of Education | 1984 | Chungbuk | 0431-60-2966 |
| Korean Maritime University | 1945 | Pusan | 051-414-2475 |
| Korean National College of Physical Education | 1977 | Seoul | 02-418-1877 |
| Kumoh National Inst of Tech | 1979 | Kyungbuk | 0546-461-0136 |
| Kunsan National University | 1979 | Chonbuk | 0654-62-5334 |
| Kyungpook National University | 1946 | Taegu | 053-954-6806 |
| Kwangju National University of Education | 1938 | Kwangju | 062-528-2622 |
| Milyang National University | 1923 | Kyungnam | 0527-355-3186 |
| Mokpo National Maritime University | 1950 | Mokpo City | 0531-42-5176 |
| Mokpo National University | 1979 | Chonnam | 0636-52-4793 |
| National Fisheries University of Pusan | 1941 | Pusan | 051-625-9947 |
| Pusan National University | 1946 | Pusan | 051-512-3368 |
| Pusan National University of Education | 1962 | Pusan | 051-505-4908 |
| Pusan National University of Technology | 1924 | Pusan | 051-621-2821 |
| Samchok National University | 1938 | Kangwon-do | 0397-72-8620 |
| Sangju National Polytechnic University | 1921 | Gyeongbug | 0582-32-6005 |
| Seoul City University | 1918 | Seoul | 02-244-5301 |
| Seoul National University of Education | 1946 | Seoul | 02-885-5272 |
| Seoul National University | 1948 | Seoul | 02-885-5272 |
| Seoul National Polytechnic University | 1910 | Seoul | 02-970-6088 |
| Suncheon National University | 1982 | Chonnam | 0661-50-3117-8 |
| Taegu National University of Education | 1962 | Taegu | 053-651-5369 |
| Taejon National University of Technology | 1927 | Taejon | 042-625-1485 |
| University of Incheon | 1979 | Incheon | 032-762-1548 |
| Yosu National Fisheries University | 1917 | Chonnam | 0662-41-5520 |