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Reflections

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REFLECTIONS: ERIN DUNLAP

12/25/12



Figure 1: Victoria Peak

I am sitting at the airport in Seattle before my last flight home, the last leg of my 20-hour journey home. I decided that for my last journal entry I would reflect upon this past semester. - During the three-day orientation that HKBU has for all incoming exchange students at the beginning of the semester we visited Victoria's Peak during a daylong tour of Hong Kong. It was hot and humid and I was jetlagged, tired, sweaty, and just wanted to be back in my bed asleep. Nonetheless, the view from the peak is one of the best you can find of the Hong Kong skyline. Three weeks before leaving I revisited the peak with some friends, this time at night. It was freezing cold, windy,

and the last place I wanted to be at that time was asleep in my bed.

Hong Kong wasn't the same place to me at my last visit to the peak than it was at my first. When I was there at the beginning of the semester Hong Kong was an unknown foreign city that was exciting in all it had to offer. By the time of my last visit, however, Hong Kong was home to me, I knew my way around it, and it was familiar to me in all it had to offer.

There's no denying that studying abroad was one of the best decisions I have made during my four years at Linfield. There's also no denying, however that this past semester was not free of many bumps in the road and challenges that I had never had to face before. The thing about studying abroad is that you can't rely on other people to do things for you; if there's a problem with your phone bill or credit card back home, you're the one that gets to fix them and you have to figure out how to do it. It isn't fun, but it's an important learning experience. Studying abroad teaches you independence and in some ways, how to be a functioning adult away from your parents and anyone else who normally helps you at home. This is at the least what this whole experience taught me.

The time I spent in Hong Kong made me a better person, I'm not that same girl that boarded a plane to a city in Asia she knew nothing about four months ago. Now when I think back to my two trips to the peak I can clearly see the difference between those two people. The one in the beginning of the semester was afraid of what was to come that semester. The one at the second visit, however, wasn't afraid of the uncertain anymore; so many aspects of life are uncertain and being afraid of those uncertainties is the same as being afraid of life itself and where's the fun in that?

Cheers from Seattle,
Erin Dunlap