

RESEARCH EXCURSIONS

The Summer Workshop includes a series of Research Excursions to places that are of interest to artists. We will be engaging in profession research to gather visual material. We are not on a vacation tour. Here are some of our concerns about touring with a group.

PLAN

We always have a plan for each excursion. We will not, however, tell you the details of the plan. We want you to have a 'Direct Experience' and not compare what you are seeing with what you think you will be seeing.

DIRECT EXPERIENCE

Clear your mind of all thoughts. Drop all expectations. Do not ask us where we are going. You will find out when we get there. Don't think about it before we do it. Just experience it without judging. Think about it on the way home and do your conceptualization then.

THE JOURNEY

Each plan always includes getting to the destination, and sometime the journey is the most important part. Every building we pass, every crack in the ground, is important. Do not think you have a better way or shorter way to get where we are going. If you deflect from the group's course you will certainly miss something important.

DIRECTION

Sometimes it may seem like we are going in circles. Sometimes we are. Sometimes the plan is to not have a plan. Sometimes getting lost is the best way to learn new things.

FAMILIARITY

Sometimes, when some details of an excursion have leaked out, we have heard some people say things like, "Oh, I have seen that before, or I don't want to go to a [*insert name of place*]. This may be particularly true for the students who have grown up in the Tokyo area. You have not, however, done any of these things with your faculty members, and therein lies the learning process. Nor have you take the journey to that place with your group members. Therein lies the great experience. This is why we need you to drop all expectations.

FOCUS

We need all members of the class to focus on the task at hand. We are here to gather research. This means being quiet, inside and out, so you can absorb all of the visual material to which you will be exposed. It has been our experiences that students often do not stop talking while they are walking. Sometimes the conversation is about the experience at hand, but often it wanders way off base. Every minute you spend thinking about some American activity is another minute you are not experiencing some Japanese activity. This is a waste of your time and money. We ask that you remain as quiet as possible and look and feel as much as possible. We will discuss what we have seen at a later date. We need you to be in 'total input mode'.

MOVEMENT

The group can only move as fast as the slowest person. If we move at the slowest person's pace we will never get to see what we need to see. We ask that everyone keep up with the excursion leader. During an excursion, the needs of the group are more important than the needs of the individual. This can be difficult for Americans to understand because the concept of Individual Freedom has been perverted into 'Me First!'. If you have an impulse to do something, think first about how that action will affect the rest of the group.

CONGEALMENT / DEFLECTION

The group needs to stick closely together. Do not wander off or you will be left behind. If you are thirsty do not go and get a drink. If you need to use a lavatory do not go to the toilet. If you are hungry do not grab a snack. All these things throw off the timing of the group. Instead ask the group leader for a break. If you are in need of a break, chances are so are many of the other students. If this is the case, the entire group will stop and take care of the immediate need. Never wander off without telling somewhere where you are going. Do not think, "Oh, I will catch up with them at the next intersection, (or the next Station)", because chances are that we will not be going in a straight line.

ENJOYMENT

Please enjoy the Research Excursions and absorb as much as possible. We will see the effects of your experience in your images, in both visible and intangible ways. Some of it may not become apparent until you get back home. But it will be part of you forever.

ETTIQUETTE

FOOD

Japanese people do not eat or drink on the street. They also do not eat or drink on the Subway or Yamanote trains. The trains that run longer distances and have seats that face THE FRONT OF THE TRAIN do encourage eating and you will see many *obento* (lunch boxes) for sale at these stations for these trains. Drinking cans of beer in public is also a no-no.

CLOTHING

Dress nicely. The archetypal 'ugly American' is dressed in baggy cargo shorts and dirty sneakers with their tee shirt hanging out. We stick out enough as it is. Do not exacerbate the situation. Wear good walking shoes, as we will cover more than a few miles of walking on an average trip.

LANGUAGE

End every sentence with "*onegashimasu*". When you come to an intersection with another person immediately stop, make a gesture with your hand, and say "*dozo*", meaning 'please go first'. Do not be the 'pushy American'. Try bowing at the end of any interaction. You do not have to do it right. You are not expected to know how. Just trying is greatly appreciated.

RESPECT

Japan is all about respect. This is why everyone is always bowing to each other. In America we tend to be more aggressive in our actions. See if you can adopt a more passive stance. e.g. Do not cross the street against the red pedestrian light, even if no cars are coming. Do not say, "Well, even some Japanese are crossing". The law is the law and we should act within the Japanese law, especially as outsiders.