

## Going Deeper in the Intercultural Dynamics of a Given Region

We engage in a co-creative process in developing our retreats each year. For 2019, we brainstormed several retreat locations in several regions of the US: Pacific Northwest, Southwest, Northeast. Ultimately, we intentionally decided to return back to the Pacific Northwest where we had held our first 2016 retreat. Going back to the Puget Sound area of Seattle presented us with the opportunity to dig more deeply into the historic, intercultural dynamics of that region. It also presented members of the virtual Group to connect up with members of the emerging Puget Sound local group. Our 2019 theme, “The Transformative Potential of Global Intercultural Relationships” built on our tentative exploration during the 2018 workshop on how each of us are impacted by our global intercultural relationships. We wished to be even more deliberate in preparing ourselves for coming to the region and for considering the complexities of global intercultural encounters



Again, we sought to explore the unique historical and contemporary forces which shaped the cultural undercurrents of the Puget Sound region of the state of Washington. So, our initial preparation for traveling out to this area was to ground ourselves in the geography of the region. The Puget Sound is the large bay of water upon which the city of Seattle sits and which creates the Kitsap Peninsula, multiple islands, and further west the Olympic Peninsula.

From a ferry on the Puget Sound, one can look west towards the Olympic mountains, east towards the Cascade mountains, northeast towards snow-covered Mount Baker, and southeast towards the majestic Mount Rainier. This landscape has beaconed to and shaped the multiple peoples of this place. [Insert photos of the mountains from the ferry]

We hoped with this retreat to help ground ourselves in this place of majestic beauty and introduce ourselves to the peoples who have come to call this space their home. Among the places, spaces and cultural traditions we hoped to learn more about include: 1) Vibrant city of Seattle with her Pike Place market; Pioneer square; International District; 2) Quaint Bainbridge Island with notable, creative people and a history that has come to terms with challenging

periods as evident through the Japanese Exclusion Memorial; 3) Complex Kitsap Peninsula with a notable native people's legacy as evident through the Suquamish Museum, Chief Seattle Grave, Cultural Center & Casino and more recent cultural influences evident through the Norwegian village of Paulsbo.