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EAST-WEST CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Terry Rambo Interview Narrative

6-15-2006 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

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The **East-West Center Oral History Project** strives to capture the Center's first 50 years as seen through the eyes of staff, alumni, and supporters who have contributed to its growth.

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A. Terry Rambo

6-15-2006 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

Personal Background

I'm Arthur Terry Rambo but I've always been known as Terry Rambo. A. Terry Rambo. People always want to know what the A is so I thought I'd get that out of the way. My father was named Arthur and my parents had agreed to name me Terry Arthur Rambo, because they never intended to call me the same as my father. And while my mother was still groggy from the anesthetic, they came in to get the birth certificate filled out. And she suddenly realized the initials of Terry Arthur Rambo would be TAR. And so she, without consulting my father, changed it.

So I have been stuck for my whole life with one of the worst administrative problems you can have because a first initial isn't legal for things like drivers' licenses and social security, etc. So (laughter) it's an infinite struggle. So I go into Straub [*Clinic and Hospital*] for an appointment and they'll call for "Arthur" and I sit there.

OK, my name is one that no one ever hears, of course. So, unfortunately, the Rambo movie has made Rambo, which is an extremely rare name, very common. And what's curious is it doesn't go away. Every time I go into Long's Drugstore or Safeway and use my credit card I get jokes.

What is this? Must be 15, 18 years since the first Rambo movie. Never stops. And people usually now are trying to be sophisticated so they say, "Oh, we bet you get a lot of comments about your name, don't you?"

The name is actually Swedish -- I only learned this fairly recently -- 'cause people always ask, "What's your background." Never knew. My father had always said we were

Swedish. My father hated the French for reasons I have never understood. And didn't want it to be Rambo from R-A-M-B-E-A-U -- Anglicized. So my sister and I discounted this story. But no one knew.

And it turns out Rambo is a Swedish name. The first Rambo came to what was then New Sweden in the early 1600s and was the pastor of the church in what is now Swedesboro. And then after the British took over, the Swedes didn't like the Brits and so many of them migrated to the then frontier in Tennessee.

Now, curiously, the Rambo -- the novel on which the Rambo movie is based is set in the mountains in Tennessee. So it picked up on that. And then Rambos moved -- kept going west and they moved from Tennessee to Oklahoma. And that's where my earliest -- we can actually trace the lineage of our family. And then my father's father moved to Colorado Springs. And my dad and my mom were from Colorado Springs and they moved to California. I was born in California. Then we went back across the country and I largely grew up on the East Coast in New Jersey.

He was a chemical engineer. Or chemist, actually, and he worked as a plant manager for Clorox. And so they shipped him around whenever they were setting up a plant. So he became manager of the Jersey City factory for Clorox.

Life Before EWC

Research in Vietnam

So I did most of primary school through high school in Verona, New Jersey. And then from there, I began moving west. I got a bachelor's degree in Ann Arbor in University of Michigan, which always prided itself on being the best in the west.

Well, Michigan had been considered western territories at one time. And University of

Michigan was the first non-East Coast university to really develop any academic stature.

In fact, they sometimes refer to themselves as the Harvard of the West. President

Kennedy came to Ann Arbor during the campaign in 1959, I think it was, and he gave a

speech where he first launched the idea of the Peace Corps. An absolutely memorable

occasion. I was in the audience with my girlfriend at the time. Kennedy started his

speech by saying, "Well, I am really glad to be here because I come from the Michigan of

the East."

And after that the audience was eating out of his hand. He could have said anything but

then he proceeded to throw out the idea of the Peace Corps. Which was a staggering

idea. And sort of you always remember that -- that moment.

Then from Michigan I got involved, through a professor in my first course on Southeast

Asia that I took there, with Vietnam. And so then I headed really west. I began doing

research in Vietnam in 1966. And continued off and on through 1975.

I'd been working for a private Beltway research firm outside Washington, D.C. I left

them in '69 and came to Honolulu to do my doctorate at the University of Hawai'i. And

spent three years here and got my Ph.D. based on a comparative study of peasant social

organization in Northern and Southern Vietnam.

And also got married and had my first child, Charmaine.

And then, went on a post-doc to Saigon in '73 and was a visiting professor at Dalat

University Graduate School of Politics and Economics, which was in Saigon, not in

Dalat.

When I was doing the early work from '66 through '69, the war was very active and we

were very active in it. In fact, my research was on the impact of the war on civilians.

Particularly refugee movement. And there are a full set of my reports -- maybe the only full set in the world -- in Hamilton Library Asia Collection which I donated.

Much later I read a book about refugees in Vietnam. This was a retrospective -- kind of the definitive study of the refugee problem in Vietnam. And he referred to the reports that my colleagues and I had done. I was the team leader of the HSR field team in Vietnam. And, he said that they were extremely valuable insights into what was going on. But no one in the bureaucracy responsible for dealing with refugees had ever seen them.

Our studies were done under contract to, what was then OSD/ARPA. That's Office of the Secretary of Defense/Advanced Research Projects Agency. It was a contract operation. Because ARPA was, I guess, military chain of command. They didn't share anything with USAID and the embassy and the civilians.

So we had all the information and the people at ARPA realized there was a big problem with the refugees. Commissioned the studies. But then they didn't share it. So it was, in terms of policy in fact, completely wasted.

It was dangerous in Vietnam. It was also exciting. A high adrenaline situation. Phil Estermann and I actually first got to know each other in Tuy Hoa in Central Vietnam in 1966. He was a USAID intern. And I was doing a study in that province on the refugees. Phil later joined the same company I worked for, and he and I did a joint study together in a valley back in the mountains in Quang Nam province called Thuong Duc. And probably came as close as either of us ever have in our lives to getting wiped out.

So it was a rather nervous time. But always -- always interesting.

And ultimately, incredibly hard psychologically because of the nature of my situation in

Vietnam. I worked primarily with Vietnamese not with Americans. Became very close friends with many people. And then during the fall of Saigon in 1975 I was still there and got involved in trying to get people out.

And, was successful with some close friends and failed with my own research assistant for many years. Yeah, that was something that haunted me for a long time. He was later picked up by the new regime and sent off for re-education. And typically it had nothing to do with me even though he'd been working closely with an American.

The local Communist agent in his neighborhood knew both of us. He never reported him.

Dung, instead, was sent because he -- like all college graduates in Vietnam he'd been called up into the army as anybody with a recent degree was pulled in. So he'd spent a year as an officer. He didn't want to. He was actually anti-regime. But, you know, no choice.

So when I was writing the introduction to my book I was working on about three years ago, the first part of the book is an account of my own experiences doing research in Vietnam. I was writing the section about the fall of Saigon. And I'm typing away and all of a sudden I'm crying.

It's still there. It doesn't ever go away. But I was fortunate. Dung spent a terrible time in the re-education camps but then succeeded in escaping and came to Malaysia and I was able to visit him there and actually get him out of the camp so he could come to our house. His hair had turned completely white. From malnutrition and disease. And then it later regained its color. Once he got a good diet and all that. Still had gray in it but not completely white.

So he did survive and then went on to California and works in a computer assembly plant, has been quite successful, married. Most of my other good friends got out one way or another and I still stay in touch with three or four of them. But it was a wrenching experience to go through that.

I was there on a Ford Foundation post-doc and working at the Dalat University Graduate School. And actually, in late '74 or early '75, the situation started to get really grim. Well, in what was left of the south. It was very clear that the southern side was losing. The Americans' support was down, it was purely logistical. There were no more American troops. And some of my more farsighted Vietnamese colleagues began looking around and arranging to leave.

The department I was in was called Asian Studies and the head of that department had studied in Australia. So he managed to take his family to Australia, I think in maybe January of '75. And they didn't have enough Vietnamese professors left. I was appointed as the head of the Asian Studies Department. For a short period. My last official act, which was in mid-April, was to turn in the final grades for the spring semester for the students.

This was the weird thing. The country was collapsing. Everybody knew it was collapsing and yet everything normal kept going on normally. Mail was still delivered, the trash was still picked up. Maybe two weeks or three weeks before the fall, I couldn't do research anymore, obviously. I was working as a stringer for the *Washington Post*. I'd always wanted to be a journalist. In fact, when I first went to Michigan my intent was to become a journalist. Then I got hijacked by anthropology.

So this was my brief moment and I actually had six or eight stories front paged in the

Washington Post. I simultaneously loved it and hated it. Because academic training is -- you have to be very careful and check everything. Journalism, there's no time. It was, you know, it was very exciting. And fulfilling in many ways but also frustrating because you could never do the follow-up. The checking.

Anyway, I had gone to cover a story down on Phu Quoc Island for the *Post*. And, through an interesting and much too long a story to relate here, I got stranded there. I had to spend the night at a Vietnamese navy base, which was the only safe place I could sleep. And, I was sitting, drinking with some of the officers and they were asking what I did. At that time my Vietnamese was fairly fluent. And, I explained that I was living in Saigon. And one of them insisted on getting my address and phone number because he hoped to be transferred to Saigon and he wanted to come and study -- practice his English with me. This is two weeks before the collapse! But people still went on doing everything normally.

No one wanted to believe. Many people didn't know. A large percentage genuinely didn't know. And, of course, neither the government nor the U.S. was rushing to tell people. In fact, one of the eternal sins of the American ambassador and the embassy was they did deny how bad it was. And this kept a lot of people that should have gotten out from getting out.

After Saigon, I was there until, I think, eight days or 10 days before the fall. Believe it or not, I've lost my notes on that period. But I got a chance to take out a close friend who also was a professor. She was from the north and had publicly spoken against the Communists. Her survival chances would have been about zero. And there was a change in the policy. Any American could go to the evacuation point. And if you would swear

to the consul or official that the Vietnamese with you were your family, you didn't have to have papers.

So I ended up taking her and her niece and nephew with me. And there were -- huge line, of course. I never forgot the moment of having to stand up and take the oath. And, of course, for my generation to lie to the government is unthinkable, but in that situation what could you do?

And, in fact, they were doing it. They knew what was happening and there was no legal way that the consular officials could let people out other than this. So they did. In fact, the wife of the head of the United States Information Agency showed up with 12 faculty members from Saigon University and took them out. She's a heroine, right?

A lot of things like that happened. But it was, again, you can't forget that kind of moment.

Well, I was terribly torn. I desperately wanted to stay because this was going to be the most interesting historical moment. At the same time I had some knowledge of what happened to Westerners who stayed in China in 1949: You know, people who were just journalists were put in detention for many years. I had a three-year-old daughter. And I did not want to face that. And so I was agonizing. In fact, once we got through and my colleague and her nephew and niece were cleared to go on the plane I almost said goodbye and went back.

And I didn't. I've always regretted it. In fact, if I had stayed -- I had a journalist card. They allowed journalists to continue working for about a month and then they were all thrown out. But nobody was detained.

But you don't know. If I had the choice to make over again with the knowledge I had, I'd

still choose what I did. But I always felt bad.

University of Malaya

So, after that I had actually already been slated to go to Kuala Lumpur for a position at the University of Malaya in the Anthropology and Sociology Department. I was supposed to have reported for duty on May 1st. And I couldn't leave Vietnam under the situation. So I was delayed and, I think finally showed up in KL in the beginning of July. I was evacuated to the Philippines. And from the Philippines I got to Guam and then from Guam I got back to the U.S. because my wife, Dawn, and Charmaine were both with her mother in Texas. And then we finally linked up at my mother's in New Jersey. And she had not known what was happening to me for a long time.

Charmaine was born in Hawai'i when I was a graduate student. But we went to Vietnam when she was 16 months old. So, showing how stupid we were as new parents. But, anyway, she survived, we survived. Then I went to University of Malaya and, this is like a disjuncture in my career because I had had no knowledge of anthropology of Malaysia and insular Southeast Asia. I mean just what I'd gotten in graduate school. I'd never been there, never done any work. And all of a sudden I'm teaching in a department there. I became involved in studying the aboriginal people from the mountains, the Orang Asli. So for several years I did nothing more on Vietnam but completely spent about five years focused on Malaysian anthropology. And partly Vietnam was just too uncomfortable to deal with. I have tons of field notes, most of which I've never written up.

But you know, my closest friend was in detention camp, re-education camp. You just couldn't touch it. So I only did one paper which was a brief literature review on Vietnamese religion during that period.

So I became one of the world's leading authorities on Malayan aborigines. Then when I left Malaysia in 1980 to come to the East-West Center, that stopped. So it was like a five-year section of my life on something -- and then no more. It wasn't that I disliked it or anything, it was just the nature of what I had to do changed.

I've looked at my academic career and the way I keep moving. And quite a bit of my work has been on shifting cultivation. I've decided I really am a "shifting cultivator" academically. That I work on an area and then abandon it and go on to something else. And once in a while I'll be a "rotating shifting cultivator." I'll come back and pick it up again as I did with Vietnam. But often I will have done it and then onto something else. I think this fits with the whole family history of being a frontier family. Constantly moving -- moving west, actually. And so now I've finally ended up in Thailand. Which is halfway around the world from where I basically started in New Jersey.

My daughters have both also had the same approach. And my younger daughter Claire, after she graduated from Grinnell College went to Vietnam for a year as a volunteer English teacher and then went to Japan for two years as a JET English teacher. She went up to Tohoku, which is just under Hokkaido. So frontier for Japan. That's a remote area. And now she's settled in Seattle and Charmaine has ended up in Portland.

Institutional Transitions

Environment and Policy Institute (EAPI)

[Editor's note: In 1979, Rambo came as a visiting fellow to EAPI (East-West Center's Environment and Policy Institute).]

EAPI was very new, then. I think it was about a year old.

It was still in formation. There was a director, Bill Matthews, and Dick Carpenter and

Mark Valencia, Gerry Marten, and two or three people who left very soon: Diana Drigot and Roy Stubbs. Larry Hamilton was just coming in. He and I were both visiting fellows at the same time. In the summer of '79. I think we were both offered jobs at that time. I had already signed a contract to continue at University of Malaya. So I told him I just could not come 'til I did the teaching here.

So I did not actually show up here until February of 1980. And I think Larry came in a little bit before me.

Bill Matthews was trying to put together a group. And he kept trying to get somebody in social science, and hadn't been able to get anybody who could please his natural scientists. And so finally, I was recruited. So that was basically what I was brought in for. But, it was a very small institute compared to the established ones, particularly Pop *[Population Institute]*.

And, Bill Matthews was under tremendous pressure to get results. And particularly this was the beginnings. This was when I came in. I think it was the last year that Ets Kleinjans was the president.

And, I think Lee-Jay Cho took over as acting president. And then Victor Li came in.

Maynard Hufschmidt, EAPI Director

Bill Matthews left maybe '85, '86. Then Maynard Hufschmidt was acting director for a year. I think for all of us who were here, that was the great year. Maynard was -- unfortunately he died about two years ago -- a wonderful man.

He knew what mattered and what didn't. He basically left you alone but on critical things he would get in and he would make decisions. He made some very difficult decisions. Some personnel decisions that were not easy to make. But he did things for the good of

the institution.

He was actually already retired. He had been brought in as a visiting fellow by Bill Matthews to get the “extended benefit cost analysis” going, which was one of the major contributions that EAPI made to the world. And that was mainly Maynard and John Dixon who pursued that. And then they had a succession of what were then called visiting fellows.

So Maynard was already close to 80. Maybe he was 80. And he gradually wanted to cut back. And when I became director he was down to quarter-time and he was doing on quarter-time more productive work than many full-time people.

[After retiring from the Center] Maynard developed a whole new career. He had been dragooned into playing a curmudgeon in an amateur drama company and Maynard had never done any acting. And he was a huge success. After that, anytime they needed an elderly person in any of the drama companies they pulled him in. He had a wonderful time with that.

Anytime I'd come back to Hawaii I'd always called and we stayed in touch that way. But then like two years ago Larry Hamilton contacted me and told me Maynard had died of Parkinson's. But he must have been already 90 or older when he died.

He was a good man. Anyway, he was the acting director for one year.

Director, EAPI

Then Norton Ginsberg came in as the new director. Victor Li brought him in. And then John Bardach became the acting director.

Then when Mike Oksenberg came in *[as EWC President]*, I think he continued with all of the existing directors for six months or a year. And then he basically made changes.

In the EAPI case it wasn't unexpected because John was already retired and was just doing this on an acting basis. So Mike tapped me for EAPI and Geoff White, I think, was called in for -- could have been cultural learning and communications? They were combined and I think it was called Cultural Studies.

And Pop, can't remember. Andy Mason came in. Resources was Fereidun [*Fesharaki*], he was already in. I think that was it. Was there another institute? Then I think we're down to four. So I can't remember when, what month. But it was 1992 I took over.

Unfortunately, within six months of taking over both Larry Hamilton and Dick Carpenter resigned. In Dick's case, his health. He decided it was time to quit. He was already in his 70s, because he had come in, actually, retired already [*from the National Research Council*].

And he's still fine. I just talked to him about a month ago. He's busy as ever. He's an amateur artist. Actually does some good stuff. And he's a volunteer in hospice. He's living in Virginia now up near Charlottesville where the University of Virginia is.

And in Larry's case, his son, who was in his 30s had [*become ill*]. So the stress on Larry was unbelievable. And he [*Larry*] developed an allergy to the sun.

So Larry would show up in the morning. He always bicycled down from his house in Manoa. And he looked like, who is it? Gunga Din, you know, foreign legionnaires, because he had the hat and face wrapped up, long sleeves, gloves. Because evidently the least bit of sun on him, he got a rash.

So Larry said, "Well, there's no point to staying in Hawaii." So he and his wife moved to Vermont. And I think now the problem has gone away. His son recovered, is fine.

Larry is still very active. He's still involved in his mountain network.

Gerry Marten left in '86 or '87. Jeff [*Fox*] had come on. And, let's see. Who else was here? Michael Dove. Kirk Smith.

We had a good group.

Stepping Down as Director

In '97 -- I'd been repeatedly invited by the Ford Foundation to go to Hanoi to be a resident consultant for the environmental work there -- I did not want to continue as director [*of EAPI*] and so I accepted. I think in the history of the East-West Center I am the only director to voluntarily step down. At least in the history of EAPI. I was the only one -- and I think maybe for the whole place. So then Michael Dove took over as director.

Intellectual Innovations

Pioneer Work in Flood Prevention

You know, the work Larry Hamilton did with “forest hydrology” was pioneering. It was basically looking at the idea that planting trees will stop floods. The common belief was that deforestation causes floods in the rainy seasons, and droughts in the dry season. Larry organized a group of researchers from all over Asia -- top people in all of the Asian countries and from the U.S. -- and they pursued this. They put out a book and Larry wrote an incredibly important paper called -- *Myths and Misperceptions* -- in which it was shown that trees don't prevent floods. If you get enough rainfall, you'll get a flood. It doesn't matter how many trees you have. And in the dry season trees actually reduce water flow because they use water. If your purpose is to provide water for lowland areas, then good grass cover is actually better than trees. And Larry felt terrible because he was the original tree hugger.

Anyway, this was really original important work. And maybe last year the British Department for International Development published a report on the role of trees in water management with exactly the same findings that Larry had had.

They credited him. But in fact, they have almost nothing new. I mean, there's more research but the ideas weren't new. But they did big press releases and it was in, you know the science sections of various newspapers and all that. Whereas the East-West Center had been way ahead of its time.

Partnerships and Networks

Southeast Asian Universities Agroecosystem Network (SUAN)

The good thing about the EAPI at that time [1980] was because it was new, it wasn't set in anything. So if you had an idea and you could convince Bill it had some prospects of success, you'd get funds to do it.

What I was interested in doing was creating a network of researchers in Southeast Asia on human ecology. This grew out of while I was in the University of Malaya, the Ford Foundation had recruited me as a part-time consultant on human ecology in Southeast Asia. They were interested in promoting this as a way to get natural scientists and social scientists working together to solve environmental problems. Ford sent me around to visit all the institutions in Thailand and Indonesia and the Philippines where they were supporting environmental work.

So I became friends with many Southeast [Asian] environmental scientists, ecologists, and already knew some of the social scientists. So I was able then, when I came to East-West Center, to use funds from the EAPI and also Ford Foundation contributed to basically help create a network which became the Southeast Asian Universities

Agroecosystem Network, mercifully abbreviated as SUAN, which means garden in Thai. That kept growing and eventually involved institutions in the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, and Yunnan in China. It was an extremely active and successful effort.

Human ecology was really quite a new field. The first time the term was even used was in the '60s. When I did my doctorate, UH had one professor, Hank Lewis, who unfortunately died a couple years ago. He was one of the very early leaders in the field and he was my first advisor. Wonderful guy. He worked in the Philippines. And, then he left to become the head of the department at Alberta, and Alice Dewey took over as my advisor.

Always been grateful to her because my thesis was already laid out and had been all worked out in consultation with Hank. And Alice just said, "Keep doing what you're doing." And she was a marvelous advisor. I could go to her with any question about anything and she'd always know the book to look at.

But she was remarkably non-directive. The only time she ever was directive was when I was on chapter -- I think it was chapter 10 or 11 of my dissertation. It was already several hundred pages. I brought it to her and she said, "Oh, good, you brought me the conclusions chapter." I said, "No, this isn't the conclusions chapter." She said, "It is now. I'm not going to read anymore."

Alice denies this happened but it did. And it was a good thing. Dawn was pregnant already, I needed to get a job, and I would have gone on forever. I actually had plans for about five more chapters. So I think the ultimate dissertation was about 500 pages.

So most of my work at the East-West Center from '80 to, actually 'til around '90 was

focused on SUAN and I don't even know how many hundred people took part in our activities. We did training courses on human ecology.

Actually, we only did one big one here. The first one. Then after that we did them at institutions in the region. Using mostly Southeast Asian scholars as the lecturers. And a few people from here would take part. Gerry Marten was very active with this. Later he went on and wrote his own textbook on introduction to human ecology and now he's in Japan.

Based on the SUAN approaches, we had an annual SUAN symposium and this gave young scholars at the participating institutions the chance to present academic papers. In a sympathetic environment.

We used to joke that the language of SUAN was tropical English. Because people had to present in English because we had a multi-national group but we didn't expect them to be up to American academic levels or anything. And then for each of those meetings the local coordinator and I would work together and co-edit the proceedings so that everything got published. So this was, for young people, the network. This was a huge boost. A lot of those people are now in senior positions in their universities. And it's interesting to see the ideas and the connections are still ramifying out. Frequently, people from one institution will contact somebody they know from SUAN days at another institution to get help.

Like all the good things about the East-West Center, this is undocumented. It was meeting a need. And the funding came in. I think probably over the life of the institution, close to a million dollars came in to the East-West Center from Ford Foundation.

The good thing about East-West Center was we could easily bring in people from Southeast Asia as visiting fellows. So every year we would have one of the leaders from one of the Southeast Asian universities spend a year here as visiting fellow. And he would basically, or she would basically act as the activity coordinator together with me. And we would bring in young people from the groups as research interns. So every year we had two or three people like that. So a lot of activity was going on.

SUAN/Vietnamese Program

Beginning in 1987, in fact, early summer, Dawn was in Straub – in the terminal phase **and** a group of senior Vietnamese environmental scientists led by Vo Quy and Vo Tong Xuan were visiting for one day to the UH and here. They had an appointment to meet with Percy Sajise, who was a SUAN coordinator who was here as a visiting scholar, and myself at 10 o'clock in the morning. It was the only time I could be there. And they were delayed and they showed up at 11 and I had to leave at 12. So they had one hour. This group of scientists included the top two ecologists [*Vo Quy and Le Trong Cuc, both from Hanoi University*] from Vietnam. And we talked about SUAN and they said, “We want in.” And then I had to leave. Percy continued discussing with them. The following summer I got a telex -- remember telexes?

I got a telex from Le Trong Cuc, who was one of the two scholars, inviting me to come to Vietnam. We had been able to bring them in [*as visiting researchers for six weeks*] after that visit -- which was very, very difficult to do at that time. We could not use East-West Center money because of the embargo. So Dick Carpenter worked with me on that because [*Dr.*] Can was working on environmental impact assessment which was also Dick's main interest. I can't remember who he got funds from but it was an outside

NGO, I think.

This was early '88 -- that they came. Actually, I brought the first Vietnamese to the East-West Center in 1981.

The Ford Foundation funded that. So we had two Vietnamese: a geographer and an ethnologist. They took part in the first SUAN training workshop here. We got a few more Vietnamese in '82, '83, for various conferences.

Then they invited me to Hanoi in August of '88. I went over with Bill McCalpin from the Rockefeller Brothers Fund. And we had two weeks: one week in the north and one week in the south.

Cuc had set up the schedule and he had one day for us to go up to see his field research site in Vinh Phu where he was doing agroforestry experiments. Then the rest of the time in the north we were being taken to cultural and scenic places. I already knew Cuc fairly well because of his time here. And Bill and I sat down with him and said, "Look, we came to see your stuff."

Cuc said, "I really want you to see my stuff but everybody told me I had to take you to these things." Anyway, he was able in 24 hours to get the itinerary changed.

I've often thought that these were really remarkable guys because they realized that the wind was shifting and they reached out and took huge risks. They saw the chance and this is where SUAN was so incredibly valuable. The connection could be with SUAN, not with America. Yet they could have Americans involved. So everything we did in Vietnam for the first few years was joint East-West Center/SUAN/Vietnam.

The two weeks were unbelievable because, you know, when I had left in '75 I thought I would never be back in Vietnam. And here I was back. Cuc got the itinerary changed

and we went up and we spent five days out in the villages and the districts where he was working, including sleeping at night in the district headquarters.

The only foreigners in Vietnam at that point were Russians.

And, you know, a tiny number of Westerners with NGOs: the Quakers, American Friends Service had Lady Borten [*as their representative*] and there were a few other people, the Swedes. But they were like kept in capsules. They had no direct involvement.

Here we were out in these districts, the two Americans and Cuc, of course. Cuc knew all the district leaders because he had his projects there. I've never forgotten. Just to give you a sense of how poor it was at that time, I had brought him a box of Japanese ballpoint pens, which probably at that time cost 19 cents a piece or 29 cents, something like that. When we went to each district where we'd spend the night, when we'd leave, Cuc would present the district leader and the party secretary each with one of these ballpoint pens. It was like handing them a bar of gold.

[*In*] Hanoi at night there were no streetlights. There was no traffic noise. There was no traffic except bicycles. You'd go out and you had to walk very carefully.

Because you couldn't see. No streetlights. The only sound was "Swish, swish, swish," which was the bicycles.

They had little bike lamps. There was an occasional glimmer of light. But there was no street life at all. The city shut up. There was just not enough electricity and not very much working.

We stayed at the Hoa Binh Hotel, which was left from the French time. I was given this palatial room. I went in and sat on the bed and it collapsed.

The white ants had eaten out the wood. (laughter)

The flask of water on the table had red mud in the bottom. It was just water taken from the Red River. There was no water filtration plant and it was boiled because -- every room would have a thermos bottle for tea, right. So when they would empty the cold thermoses in the morning, that was used to fill the flask. There was actually sediment -- a visible layer of sediment in the water.

Never forget the first night when we went to dinner. At that time there were no private restaurants. There were state restaurants, where the quality of the food and the quality of the service matched each other. Both were unbelievably bad. And the rice actually was gray and had a bad smell; it had been in storage for so long.

Now '88 was the bottom and it was actually -- people died of famine in Thanh Hoa province that year. The economy was in hopeless shape.

Then we went down to the south and spent a week there. Including, I was able to go to back to the village where I had worked in '73, '75, and got to visit my old house in Saigon. The old woman who had been the caretaker who lived in a little house in the back was still there. I was able to give her some money.

So that was a rather emotional moment because she had always been close to Charmaine as a little kid. So that was the beginnings of the reopening of Vietnam.

Then in '89, Cuc actually got permission for us to do a field research workshop in his area. We brought in a team of 10 or 12 SUAN researchers and included Hal McArthur from UH in the group. We spent two weeks working out in villages in Vinh Phu province which I think is probably the first actual field research that anyone other than Swedes or Russians was allowed to do. We had all of the graduate students in environmental science from Hanoi University with us. And they were so excited, you

know, to work with foreigners. Many of them have gone on and are now faculty themselves and I'm still working with several of them.

Embedded in them was an observer, shall we say, from the Ministry of Interior. In fact, this was still a very strict place.

Anyway, we assigned this guy to the home garden group. We were divided into various topical research groups. The Home Garden group had a young graduate student from Berkeley and Kate Gillogly, who was one of our EAPI students. They were taxonomic freaks. They were, you know, spending all their time identifying different plant species in the home gardens and all that. Very boring for anybody who's not into this, right. This poor guy went out of his gourd.

And he had absolutely nothing to report. But one of our Thai participants, Kanok Rerkasem always carried a blue backpack wherever he went. Of course, he had his passport and his papers in there. He never left them lying around. This guy, the observer, was convinced -- I was later told by some of the Vietnamese participants -- that Kanok was carrying a *[radio]* transmitter.

Somewhere in the Ministry of Interior Files there is still a document on poor Kanok. That he's a spy carrying a transmitter.

After we did the data collection we spent four days up at a hill resort called Tam Dao -- which is not a very high mountain about two hours away from Hanoi. And one night we were at the restaurant which had a veranda overlooking the Red River Delta.

Absolutely beautiful. At this time very few people came to Tam Dao. The Russians had a guesthouse up there. Now it's a major tourist center. But there was a group of young pioneers, the Communist Party youth group. Not even teenagers. Maybe 12, 13. All

with their little red scarves. They were out and the loudspeaker was playing some Russian song and the kids were sort of dancing. And Professor Terd [*Charoenwatana*] from Khon Kaen University, one of the SUAN leaders, got out and started doing the twist.

One of my daughters -- both my daughters were with me because for me to go in the field in the summer they had to go wherever I went -- said, "Oh, I have a tape of Madonna." The Vietnamese graduate students said, "Get it." And so they persuaded the café manager to take the Russian tape off and put on Madonna. All of our young SUAN people joined Terd and they're out there doing the twist or whatever it was. And the young pioneers are joining in. This is 1989, the summer.

I said, "It's over. They can't go back." And it's true. The old system was breaking down and the young people in Vietnam so desperately wanted to be part of the outside world more than just Russia. And, you know, that was still seared into my brain -- or my memory.

Anyway, after that workshop we had, oh, quite a few more in Vietnam. We were also still working in Thailand, Indonesia, Philippines, and Yunnan [*China*]. This was probably the most productive and happy period for me here.

Indo-China Initiative

Bruce Koppel and Muthiah Alagappa and Peter Xenos and I -- I think that was the core -- had set up the Indo-China Initiative. This was almost unique in East-West Center history. It was genuinely a researcher initiative. It didn't come from above. And cross-program. When Mike Oksenberg came in, he said this was great and he made me the coordinator. And basically gave me a blank check.

And said, "Just do something."

I've always remembered that when he appointed me as director he also announced that I would be the coordinator for this. And he said that, "Terry Rambo is one of the nation's most renowned experts on Indo-China."

The next week I started getting calls from journalists. I mean, I have never in my life called myself an expert on anything. I can't do it. But here -- and Mike was a great public relations person -- and here he did it. And all of a sudden I am an expert. I've never, never forgotten that.

So I had lots of money to do things on Indo-China. So we got going -- our first effort was training agricultural researchers from Laos in a joint program with UH Tropical Ag. Hal McArthur organized it on that side. That was done because we had to do something quickly and I already had the connections with the Lao Minister of Agriculture.

Then, working with Bion Griffin at the University of Hawai'i and Judy Ledgerwood [*in Cultural Studies*] we got a Cambodian training program for people from the fine arts university in Cambodia in archeology. And that's, again, still having an impact. I just was kind of the administrator for that. I never had any personal direct involvement. Jeff Fox got involved also and they did a lot of original research in Cambodia, important publications.

Work in Vietnam (1997-2000)

I went off to Hanoi and I stayed there from February '97 'til the summer of 2000. And was able to do so because I was almost totally funded by the Ford Foundation. In fact, the East-West Center was getting overhead out of it. I also had grants from MacArthur Foundation and Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund and a whole series of smaller

Swedish SIDA [*Swedish International Development Authority*] grants.

I was based in the upland working group of CRES, of Cuc's group. I was just working with Vietnamese researchers on doing training programs, doing field research all focused on essentially human ecology in the uplands: How to sustainably develop the mountain areas. It was a great time in terms of the chance to get to places and see things and work with great people.

I was not free of administrative work because I was running the whole office and I had three young Vietnamese women who basically ran the office for me. And I was helped by Michael DiGregorio, who had been a student here and then had done his master's in Vietnam. In fact, his thesis was published as a special report by the East-West Center. It's on trash collection in Hanoi. Path-breaking thing. Still very widely cited. Michael is now a program officer for the Ford Foundation in Hanoi. So he got into it through his involvement at the East-West Center.

Ties that Last

Marriage to Patma Vityakon

The personal high point of the time in Vietnam was getting married to Patma, which was an “arranged” marriage.

Cuc's wife, Sy, was terribly worried about me because it was already 10 years since Dawn had died and I was a single parent, although by the time I was in Hanoi I was no longer quite so responsible. My older daughter was out and married and my younger one was in her last year at college. But Sy kept saying I had to get married again. She had a whole list of colleagues -- she was in the biology department at Hanoi University. And she kept introducing me at these various things. But all along she kept saying, "But you

know, Terry, the person you should marry is Patma." She had known Patma from when Patma had come to workshops as part of SUAN.

Sy had gotten to know her and she kept saying, "She is the right woman for you." This is quite remarkable because, you know, she stood to gain immense social credit if she could marry me off to one of her colleagues. Well, one day in early '98, she called me into her office and said, "Terry, I'm having a workshop starting in three days and Patma is coming. And there are no social activities planned. It is your job to entertain her."

(laughter)

I had known Patma since she was doing her Ph.D. at UH -- beginning '83, I think. She was at East-West Center. And she was out of Khon Kaen University, which was a SUAN institution. The leader there, Dr. Terd, had advocated that we bring her in as a graduate student. So she did her degree in soil science at UH. And we'd always been friends but there was no romantic involvement. Then she had come in the early '90s. They had the - - what was it – the Distinguished Alumni Fellowship?

She came and spent three months in Hawai'i and actually, Claire, my younger daughter and I had a backpacking trip planned on the Big Island. We asked Patma to go with us. And so she and Claire were friends.

We had always had a good time. But it had never been a romantic involvement. So I was leaving Sy's office. She looked at me and she said, "Terry, this is your last chance."

(laughter)

So anyway, one thing led to another and it turned out that, I had to go off to a village in the mountains where I'd been working for many years and Patma had actually visited there on two SUAN trips. And she had several days. I can't remember why this

happened but there were -- from the end of the workshop 'til when she was to go back to Thailand -- some empty days.

Sy may have set this up. But I think it was unanticipated. There was a ticketing problem or something. I can't remember. So I said, "Do you want to go back up to Ban Tat?"

And she said we'd stay at the house of one of the mountain people, Ba Do -- Mrs. Do.

We'd sleep on the floor under mosquito nets. Had an open fire in the kitchen, and kind of a nice place. Had a beautiful waterfall next to it where we'd swim.

This is idyllic. I think the second day we were there, two of the Vietnamese researchers wanted to go up to check out one of the swidden fields on the hill slope. And this was a several mile walk up very steep slopes. So Patma and I went with them and part way up she felt very tired. So I told the Vietnamese, "Well, we don't have to go all the way to the top." I mean, it was a grueling climb. I said, "You guys go on and then we'll find our way back down." And so we sat there in an abandoned swidden field and chatted. Then, the village women -- some of them were coming back carrying firewood from the forest. And this group are Thai-speaking group.

They speak a dialect of Thai that's very different from Patma's dialect. They only have about 50 percent comprehension. But she began speaking with them. And, of course, they love it because they have to deal with all other foreigners like me in Vietnamese. For them to be able to speak in their own language, even if it's not full comprehension, you know, this is great. And I saw a totally different side of Patma than I'd ever seen before.

One thing led to another.

So we decided to get married and so the next month I was able to get time off and I flew

over to Bangkok. Her father had already died but I had to meet her mother and actually ask her mother's permission to marry her. Her mother was very unusual because she had been in the first group of Thais to go to the United States for higher education after World War II. She went to Oregon State in 1949 and did a bachelor's and master's degree in home economics. So she's in that first bunch of Thais to get a Western education. Anyway, her mother agreed that we could get married. We then had to go through the incredible bureaucratic hurdles, including having to go to the American embassy. You had to get certain documents: One that you were not married to anyone else and the other that you had no outstanding criminal record. And, of course, the embassy doesn't know, right? So you had to swear to a consular official that these were true and then you had to take them and get them translated into Thai at a certified agency and then bring them back.

It was very time consuming. And then we had to go to, I don't know how many different Thai offices, including the Foreign Affairs Ministry. Then finally you end up at the district office and there you actually get the license. And to do that the foreign spouse has to be accompanied by a Thai-speaking interpreter, who may not be your perspective spouse, which is a reasonable law, right?

In our case I asked Terry Grandstaff. Terry is also former East-West Center. He did his doctorate in the Department of Anthropology, and he was always very proud that he had done it in four years. But I hold the record. I did it in three! Of course, I came in with a B.A. and M.A. in anthropology already whereas Terry was starting from scratch. He had done his research on shifting cultivation in northern Thailand. Then he worked as a researcher for what was called Resource Systems Institute. Then he went with USAID in

Thailand. And he married Somluckrat -- I don't know her maiden name -- who had been a researcher at EAPI for a while. An economist.

Terry and Somluck and Patma and I remain close friends. So anyway, Terry volunteered to be the interpreter. He's a very dedicated worker. He actually stayed up very late the night before reviewing legal Thai vocabulary. And when we met with the district officer, Terry was not just fluent in Thai but the officer was amazed that a foreigner knew the kind of vocabulary that was involved in all the licenses. So we finally got the paperwork done.

The only downside of this multi-national marriage was we ended up having three receptions. Because we had to have one in Bangkok, and then we had one in Khon Kaen for Patma's university colleagues, and then we had to have one in Hanoi. (laughter)

At the reception, which was also the ceremonial wedding in Bangkok at her family's house, Neil Jameson -- who also had been a visiting fellow at the East-West Center -- acted as my mother's representative because my mom was already in her 90s, or almost 90, and couldn't make the trip. So Neil was there and many former SUAN people from Thailand.

Then Patma had to go back to work in Khon Kaen and I was still working in Hanoi. Fortunately e-mail was available by now so we could more or less keep in touch, although Vietnamese e-mail is pretty unreliable. And we'd phone, you know, twice a week. And every six weeks or so either I'd go over there or she'd come to Hanoi. Actually, now, there's no visa required for Thai. I always, of course, need a visa both directions.

EWC Support Staff

One of the great things about working here was colleagues. I had a lot of people that I was friends with, and I remain friends with, and stay in touch with. And not just researchers. The number of people -- what was called support staff.

You know, a lot of people who were good friends and stay good friends. I think, you know, particularly in my case, Marilyn Li, who was my assistant for many years. I could never forget the help I got from Lyn Moy, who was the director's secretary for a long time in EAPI and who -- after my wife's death I had what was called the "Aunties Panel."

As the single male parent of two teen-age daughters I was constantly being faced with decisions about what they could do and what they couldn't do that I felt manifestly incompetent to make. And so I had an informal group and Lyn Moy was one member and Fanny Lee Kai, and then a couple people outside the Center who whenever I would be hit with a request from a daughter, where -- particularly if I would make a decision that led to, "Oh, Dad, all the other girls can do it," I would say, "OK, we'll consult the 'Aunties Panel'." I would call whichever of the ladies I could reach and present them with the problem. And, as often happened they said, "You're being too harsh."

The agreement with the girls was if the "Auntie's Panel" disagreed with me, the "Aunties Panel" won. If, however, they backed me up, then the girls had to accept it.

So that was, I think, really one of the special things about the Center was the closeness of those relationships. And of course, I should give a pitch for the -- used to be Resource Materials Collection [*EWC's library*]. In fact, one of my greatest regrets when I became director was I no longer had time to go up at lunch and use the library. But I always got

great support from everybody -- in fact, there was one point where it was a choice of money for the programs or money for the RIS [*Research Information Services, EWC's library current name*]. I was already a director and I backed RIS. Well, you got to sacrifice sometimes, right, for the greater good.

Life After EWC

Kyoto University

Then the East-West Center went through another change and this is when Charles Morrison took over. The research programs were merged into the Research Program. I was based in Hanoi. But I was full-time East-West Center. And now I was married to a Thai and we couldn't be together. I had actually reached the point of thinking, "Well, I'm just going to resign and go be in Thailand with Patma."

I had been for a long time invited to go to the Center for Southeast Asian Studies at Kyoto as a visiting scholar. And I'd kept putting it off and the professor who wanted me to come -- Professor Fukui Hayao -- was going to retire and he said, "This is your last chance." So I said, "OK, I'll go."

So from August '99 to February of 2000 I was in Kyoto as a visiting scholar. And Patma was able to get research leave. Because they invited her also. So we had six months. Finally, after almost two years of marriage, a honeymoon in Kyoto, which is about as nice as anyone can ask for.

And, I had a marvelous time in terms of the work. Kyoto University is one of the great universities in the world and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies had incredible resources and I really hit it off well with the Japanese researchers.

And shortly before we were due to leave, one of the senior Japanese [*Professor Tanaka*

Koji and I were talking. He and I'd become, actually, personal friends in just six months. And he said, "You know, Professor Fukui is leaving and we need to fill his slot." He was in human ecology. Professor Tanaka said, "Well, can you suggest anybody?" And I jokingly said, "Well, I'd suggest myself except I'm too old," because Kyoto has compulsory retirement at 63 and I was already 58 then. Then I mentioned a few other candidates. And then that was that.

I went back to Hanoi and Patma went back to Khon Kaen. I'd been back in Hanoi about a week when I got an e-mail from Professor Tanaka saying, "Why haven't you responded to my e-mail about taking a professorship here?" I'd never gotten his e-mail. So I got back to him. And he said, "OK, you're our number one candidate but we have to have an answer within 48 hours."

So I called Patma and here we'd already talked about my coming to be with her. I told her I was being offered a professorship at Kyoto. And she said, "Oh, this is such an honor for our families. You have to take it."

So I said, "Well, I would like to." Because all of my life -- ever since having done undergraduate at University of Michigan -- I'd always wanted to work in a great research university and I'd never had that chance. And here it was. So I said, "Let's sleep on it and I'll call you again tomorrow. And then I can call Professor Tanaka." So we both agreed that I would do it.

Then we had to go through the long waiting period because in Japan, of course, even though they had already made an internal decision it's got to go through different committees and faculty and boards and the university and all this. And I think it took three months before I finally had the formal notification from Tanaka.

I was given an official appointment letter and so I went ahead and resigned at the East-West Center and went to Kyoto. November 15th, 2000, was my last day at the East-West Center and I started at Kyoto on November 16th.

So becoming the first regularly appointed foreign full professor in the Center for Southeast Asian Studies and one of, believe it or not, out of the whole of Kyoto University there are only 38 foreigners with regular appointments.

Most of them in languages and literature. So it was a kind of pioneering. And I always felt kind of a heavy responsibility in that regard. Because, I mean, Japanese institutions are very closed and the Center for Southeast Asian Studies is uniquely open for Japanese institutions. But still, to have a foreigner as a regular staff member was unusual. And tremendously added to my colleagues work because I can't read Japanese. And all documents are in Japanese.

Most of my work was research, I taught one course a semester. But for administrative meetings it meant if I was there, either somebody had to translate for me or everybody had to work in English. Now, they were all reasonably -- most of them very fluent in English. Inside the Center it wasn't a big issue. But for work outside the Center in the university as a whole, I couldn't do it. I could not be on a committee.

It was good for me but it was bad for my colleagues. I've always been grateful to them. My time in Kyoto went much too fast. I really would have liked to have been able to stay longer. In my case I actually was able to stay until I was three days short of being 64 because my birthday is April 3rd. Their fiscal year starts April 1st. 2004 end of March I hit retirement.

So anyway, that was a great experience. I regret I never made much progress in learning

Japanese. I worked at it but it's a difficult, very difficult language and I'm not a good linguist. My Vietnamese is terrible. Speaking is not good. For one thing I'm tone deaf and it's a tonal language. Reading is fine. I can read anything in Vietnamese but when I have to speak it's pretty rough and it's getting worse because I'm not using it anymore. I'm now making a valiant effort to learn Thai but it's very slow.

Khon Kaen University/ Retirement

My retirement was effective on the 31st of March. April 1st Patma and I flew to Thailand. Then we went up to Khon Kaen, and Khon Kaen University had already appointed me as a visiting professor. KKU had been a SUAN institution. I had close relations with quite a number of staff and actually shortly after I went to Kyoto they started an international program in agriculture and they wanted me to be able to be on committees so I was already a visiting professor.

So I'm there officially now as -- in Thai it's called "special professor." I can do everything that a regular professor can do in terms of I can be on thesis committees, I can chair them actually. I can be on internal committees in the university but I don't have any administrative duties so it's ideal.

I'm in a small program called Systems Approaches in Agriculture. We have, I think, nine students, all graduate students. I teach two courses a semester, usually. In English. We run the program in English. I'm chairing two [*thesis*] committees and I'm on three others. So I have plenty to do but not full-time.

I discovered that retirement is a difficult transition in one's life. Well, I never made preparations. One day I'm working full throttle in Kyoto, which was very intense, and actually two days later I'm in Khon Kaen with nothing to do.

We arrived right at the start of the long vacation. So I had about three months with nothing going on. And I got so depressed. It's interesting because you think you have all these things you want to do but you have no structure to your life anymore and nothing has to be done. As a result, nothing gets done. I realized I was in trouble when the high point of the day became the delivery of *The Nation*, the English language newspaper. I had a friend who'd been a roommate when I was at Michigan who had retired a couple years before. And we'd lost touch for a long time. Just before I moved to Khon Kaen we got back in touch. I e-mailed him about, you know, how do you cope? And he wrote back, "You've got to get structure in your life." So I got involved then in the teaching and that's provided the structure. But it took me almost two years to get really adjusted. But nobody expects this, right. Somehow, you know, actually the major events in our life, marriage, having children, and retirement are things we don't prepare for.

Well, retirement I knew was coming. But I wasn't ready for it. Anyway, now I'm quite happy with life in Khon Kaen. I have an office, internet and I work closely with three Thai colleagues, all who are deeply involved with SUAN. And the students are great. One of my students is a Japanese young woman who speaks quite good Thai and is actually our first real foreign student in the program. We'd had a couple of Lao students but it's fairly easy for them to get by in Thai. She's doing her research on wild forest products in the market in the city. Quite innovative work. I have another young Thai woman student who's looking at the difference between farm households that have irrigated rice fields and those that have rain-fed fields in terms of their economic situation and how they cope. And several other Thai students where I'm just a member of the committee.

The Thai students actually did not join the international program. On paper the program is run as a Thai track and an English track and the Thai students join the Thai track.

But when I came my colleagues said, "Well, all the Thai students have to take your course." Because my basic course was human ecology. And the Thai students didn't complain. They loved it.

They have to work and I have to work. I mean, I teach at maybe half the pace I would teach here because I have to speak slowly. I have to explain words. And I -- you develop almost like a radar to -- when I use a word and they don't understand. Actually, they're now getting confident enough if they don't understand they'll ask. In fact, I really knew things were working out well when after the first course, when I was repeating it for the second year, the students from the first year came and said, "Could they sit in?" They said they'd missed things the first time around.

And they're all working on their English. I wish I could learn Thai as fast as they learn English. So it's very rewarding. And that keeps me busy.

Publishing Searching for Vietnam

The new book is *Searching for Vietnam*. It's published in the Kyoto Area Studies in Asia series by Kyoto University Press and Trans Pacific Press, I believe it is. It's 450 pages. And it's \$80. And it's highly subsidized by the Center for Southeast Asian Studies. It's a compilation of my writings on Vietnam over 40 years. Basically a lot of what I published on Vietnam was in very obscure and often gray literature sources are almost impossible for people to find. So this pulls together a lot of it. And has a long introductory chapter where I discuss the context in which each of the papers was done and fitted into my own evolving understanding of Vietnamese society and culture.

EWC's Impact

Alumni

I think particularly the SUAN activities intensely influenced probably close to 100 people and to some extent many hundreds. I recently got an e-mail from Carmelita Rebanos who had come to the EWC as a research intern out of University of Philippines at Los Banos. She is now director of a center at a regional university in the Philippines. She was writing me to get permission to use some of the SUAN publications in their training there. So it keeps going.

The Center has its own trajectory and I don't think individuals change it very much. The way the Center has changed Asia is through the education. I mean one of the remarkable things is the graduates all over the region. And not just the graduates who got UH degrees. I mean, the alumni, I guess is the term. Maybe more importantly, the people who have been through the research effort. Or, I think to me the most valuable part about the Center that's pretty well lost now was the interaction between the student grantees and the researchers. I still work with a lot of those people and it's different. They're different.

The Mission

I think, you know, in terms of the biggest need that I see in the region now there's a shift going on -- I haven't actually seen anything published about it -- towards people getting their graduate degrees in-country. So Thai universities are now -- all of the big ones are offering masters and Ph.D.s and most Thais are getting their degrees in Thailand. They never get that exposure to other approaches, other ways of thinking that the older generation of Thais had.

At Khon Kaen University virtually every faculty member over 50 has at least a master's

and usually a Ph.D. from abroad and from a range of countries: New Zealand, Australia, U.S., Philippines, Japan. The younger ones are almost all locally trained. And there's a real disjuncture. And the Thai academics are very worried about this.

The dean of agriculture at Khon Kaen University, Assanee, who's an East-West Center former grantee is making a big effort to get overseas training for his younger staff.

Because he's very worried about this kind of provincialization that's occurring. And it's, you know, Malaysia had it earlier. Japan is an acute case, actually. Almost all faculty members in Japan are products not just of Japanese universities but of the university they're in, yeah.

Somehow we need to find a mechanism to open things up again. And, you know, the strength of American universities has been our openness to foreigners. American universities took off, actually, as real academic centers in the 1930s with German faculty who came to get away from the Nazis. And we've historically stayed open, whereas Asian universities are usually closed. In Thailand there are a handful of foreigners who are regular faculty. It's almost illegal. You can be like I am, where I'm a special appointment. But I can't be a regular. So that somehow, I think there's a big role for the Center -- if people will get aware of this -- and work on it, on providing not graduate education but, in effect, post-docs for graduates of Asian universities. To give them an experience outside the local system.

It's not that Western education's necessarily better. It's different. Getting that opportunity to be in a different place and with different people is, I think, needed.

And that's what the Center could do.

I mean, I think, you know, I'm glad the student program has recovered. But in terms of

impact now, it will never be like it was with the people who were here in the '60s and '70s who were going back as maybe the only person in their country with a Ph.D. Now it's a different world out there. So we have to find, I think, different ways to still be achieving the same basic goal, which is not to spread Americanism, but internationalism.