

Angela Kay Kepler

Conservationist and 'Old-Fashioned Naturalist'

Angela Kay Kepler
New Zealand
1964, M.A.

Angela Kay Kepler has camped on uninhabited coral atolls, in tropical forests and on icy tundra.

She's spent difficult months at sea on large and small vessels — even a former Russian spy ship. All for the purpose of ecological and conservation research, which has taken her to wilderness areas and national parks in some 90 countries — from the Hawaiian Islands to Alaska and the Russian Far East, the Caribbean and the remotest islands and atolls in the Pacific, to the Chilean Fiords and Antarctica.

Birdwatcher. Backpacker. Lecturer. Award-winning photographer and author. Conservationist. The New Zealander who now lives on Maui says, "I still call myself 'an old-fashioned naturalist' — a dying species in this age of specialization!"

But her modesty belies her impressive achievements. Kepler has discovered or co-discovered several new species of birds, plants and lizards. The most notable is a new species of Puerto Rican bird named after her, the Elfin Woods Warbler (*Dendroica angelae*) that lives in high-elevation cloud forest. It was the first new species discovered in the West Indies in 100 years. On Maui, she came upon a tiny, flightless fossil, excavated from a lava tube. The extinct Hawaiian bird was named *Porzana keplerorum* in her honor.



PHOTO: CAMERON KEPLER

Kepler's remarkable career grew out of a childhood interest in butterflies and beetles she collected in New Zealand. This developed into a quest for knowledge relating to plants and wildlife. "A passion that consumes me even today," Kepler says.

She considers her EWC experience "a turning point in my young life. The East-West Center opened up opportunities to interact with people, not only from all over the world," she says, "but with standing in the community and at higher levels than me in the university system."

The author of 18 books, Kepler is recognized as the world's authority in three areas: a West Indian family of birds called *Todidae* (these four-inch long birds resemble a cross between a hummingbird and small kingfisher); Hawaiian and Pacific traditional bananas and plantains; and Pacific Island ecology and conservation of uninhabited atoll ecosystems and seabird colonies.

For more than 30 years she's campaigned for the preservation of prime natural areas. Kepler's "special loves" are the Line and Phoenix Islands, especially Millennium Island, formerly Caroline Atoll. With "a crystalline lagoon and teeming seabird colonies," she describes it as "one of the two or three most near-pristine atolls in the world." In 2000, Kepler was declared an honorary citizen of Kiribati for her conservation work in the Pacific Island nation. At the same time a "long-awaited dream" took shape when the president of Kiribati announced plans for Millennium Island to become a national park and UNESCO World Heritage Site. ♦





PHOTO: CAMERON KEPLER

“The East-West Center opened the gateway to my deeper understanding of the Pacific. As a conservationist and old-fashioned naturalist, I sought opportunities to use and expand my increasing breadth of knowledge to protect wildlife and terrestrial ecosystems.”

Muhammad Jailani

Ensuring Child Rights in Southeast Asia

Muhammad Jailani
Indonesia
2003, M.A.

Two dozen middle school and high school students from villages in North Sumatra bond at a camp

where they learn peer-counseling skills. These youth counselors are part of a prevention effort to reduce incidents of child-trafficking and violence against children.

This is just one of the programs of the Education and Information Center for Child Rights Indonesia (KKSP Foundation) based in Medan, Sumatra’s capital, where Muhammad Jailani works as a human rights trainer. Peer group training is only one of his many responsibilities. He trains law enforcement officials on prevention and handling of cases of child trafficking following basic human rights standards. He advises journalists on guidelines for news coverage involving child victims. With his assistance, street children form and maintain a community in which they express themselves through music.

KKSP provides protection, education and medical services for children in Northern Sumatra and training to ensure child rights in an area scarred by poverty and years of strife. The NGO was constructive in the recovery in Aceh province after the devastation of the 2004 tsunami, building nearly 800 houses for families who’d lost their homes. And it operates three children’s centers that facilitate 700 youngsters every month, two mobile libraries that reach 600 children in remote areas,



three kindergartens, two health clinics for women and children, and a community radio station with programming on women and children’s rights managed by young adults.

Jailani’s role as a leader in child rights extends beyond Indonesia. He was re-elected chairman of the Steering Committee for the Southeast Asia Region’s Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers at a meeting in Bangkok in September 2009. And he is involved in organizing a conference on Islam, childhood and building a culture of peace in Southeast Asia, to be held in the Philippines.

At the East-West Center, he earned a master’s degree in sociology, examining the subculture of street children in Medan. His studies influenced his belief that to solve problems, you must involve everyone, including children, and treat them with respect. “The East-West Center taught me to make something impossible to be possible,” he says. “There is no difficulty to do something if we focus on our objective and work as a team.” ♦

Arjumand Faisel

Committed to a Pakistan You Don't See on CNN

Arjumand Faisel
Pakistan
1987, MPH

After an earthquake devastated northern Pakistan in 2005, Arjumand Faisel visited an orphanage in Islamabad that was a refuge for 450 young children. They were provided housing, education and medical care. But when the children ran up to greet the physician and public health specialist as he entered the orphanage, he realized what they missed most was affection.

Faisel recruited EWCA chapter members to “hug a child.” Newspapers covered their day at the orphanage, saluting the chapter for its community service project. EWCA alumni played cricket with the children, sang folk songs, painted henna on the hands of girls — and hugged the youngsters.

Chapter leader Faisel expanded outreach to other orphanages. The chapter also organized seminars on earthquake safety for structural engineers and geologists. These are just a sample of the activities on his plate, in addition to his ongoing work in public health.

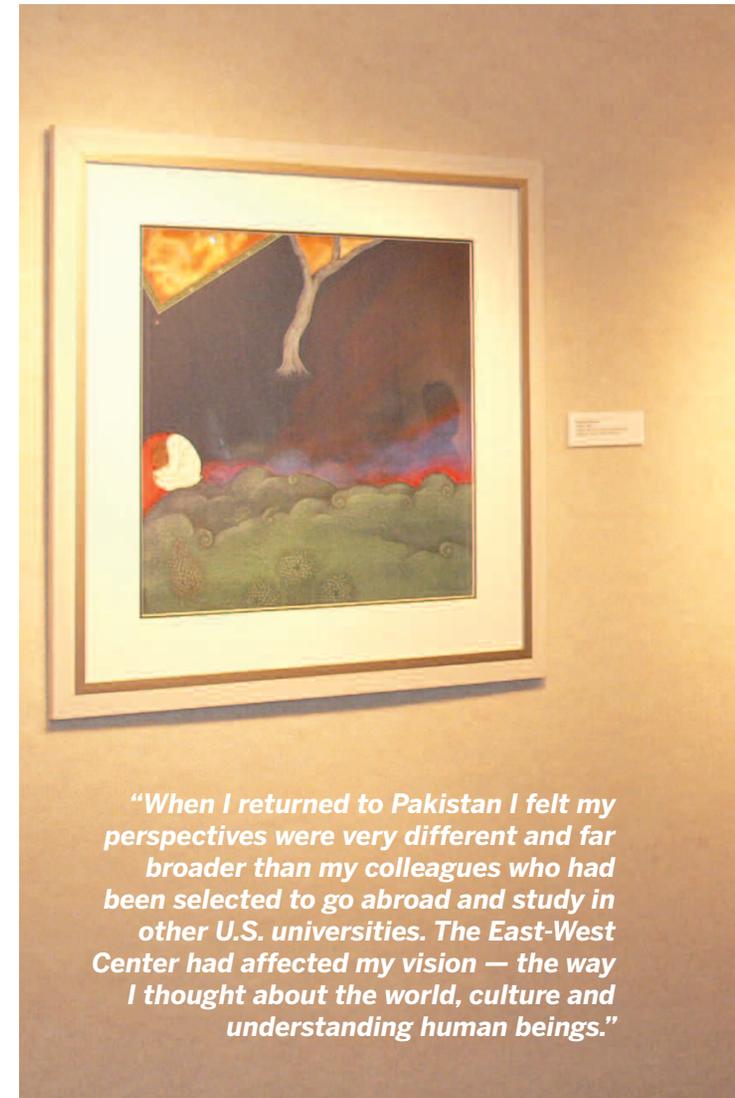
Faisel was in Honolulu in 2008 for the opening of “Unseen Visions,” an exhibition of contemporary Pakistani art in the East-West Center Gallery in Burns Hall. During his visit, he gave several talks, speaking with quiet passion about the work of 12 Pakistani artists, including his daughter, a promising artist whose work has been shown in London and New York City.

“I love the title ‘Unseen Visions,’” he said while in Honolulu, “because these really are unseen visions of Pakistan. I see there are two Pakistans: a CNN Pakistan and a Pakistan in which I live. Most of the United States has only seen the CNN Pakistan. But actually life goes on in Pakistan the way it does anywhere else in the world. Those things are never shown. Art represents this life.”

The exhibition was also an opportunity to return to the East-West Center, where Faisel spent 1987 and 1988 working toward a master’s degree in public health, in maternal and child health and health education.

After he returned to Pakistan, he managed a \$62 million, four-year project dealing with child survival. He then joined the World Health Organization in Egypt before returning to Pakistan to continue public health work for the World Bank, Asian Development Bank, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine and U.S. organizations. In 2002, he formed his own consultancy firm to tackle public health projects on a national level.

And he’s maintained a lifelong interest in the arts. At one time he provided financial support for low-income art students who couldn’t afford supplies. As a result of Promote Art in Pakistan, which he founded in 1999, the nation boasts a growing art community as evident in “Unseen Visions.” ♦



“When I returned to Pakistan I felt my perspectives were very different and far broader than my colleagues who had been selected to go abroad and study in other U.S. universities. The East-West Center had affected my vision — the way I thought about the world, culture and understanding human beings.”

Shankar P. Sharma

Representing Nepal in Washington

Shankar Sharma
Nepal
1979, Ph.D.

Shankar P. Sharma's day no longer begins in Kathmandu, against the striking backdrop of the highest mountains in the world. Recently appointed his nation's ambassador to the United States, he's adapting to diplomatic life in the corridors of Washington, D.C.

It's the latest distinction for the international economist, who earned his Ph.D. in economics at the University of Hawai'i while an EWC grantee.

Former vice chairman of the Planning Commission in Nepal, Sharma most recently has been a consultant to the Constitutional Assembly, drafting a new constitution for the South Asian nation. He also served as senior economic adviser to Nepal's Ministry of Finance.

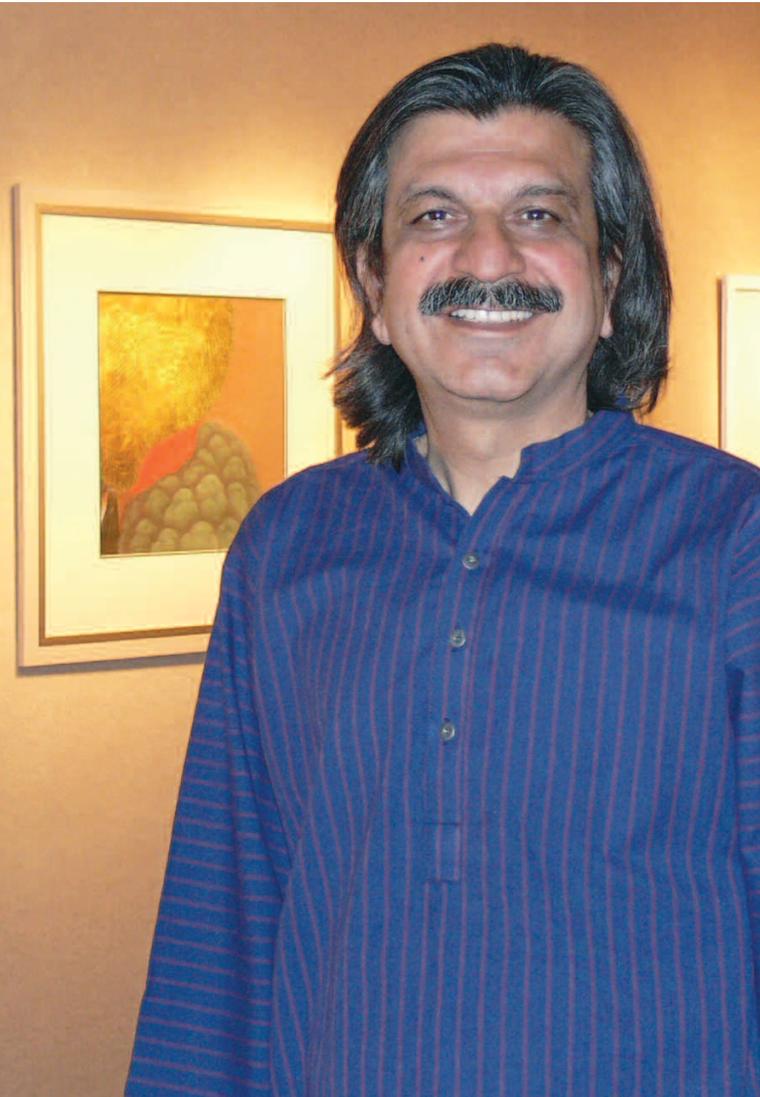
On the regional and global level, he has been involved in international organizations addressing energy issues, challenges facing Asia's least developed countries and, for UNESCAP, the implications of the global financial crisis on fiscal policy in the Asia Pacific region. Add to this hands-on experience in the field as a consultant in Laos, Bhutan and India.

So it comes as no surprise that Sharma is comfortable with donor governments, development agencies, NGOs and the corporate sector, all of which he's interacted with in discussions of foreign aid, peace-building and development in Nepal.

His academic credentials are also impressive. In Singapore, he was senior economist in the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies. The ambassador also was a professor of economics at Tribhuvan University in Nepal. And he returned to the East-West Center in 1983-86 as a research fellow in the Resource Systems Institute. ♦



“Attachment with the East-West Center enhanced my understanding of the multicultural dimension of the Asia Pacific region and helped me to expose myself to a wide range of academic and social activities, broaden my vision about national and global challenges and develop my leadership quality.”



Didin Sastrapradja

Valued Leader in Science and Public Service

Didin Sastrapradja
Indonesia
1961, Ph.D.

Sastrapradja has provided valued leadership and advice with implications beyond the Asia Pacific region.

Throughout a distinguished career that has been a marriage of science and public service, Didin

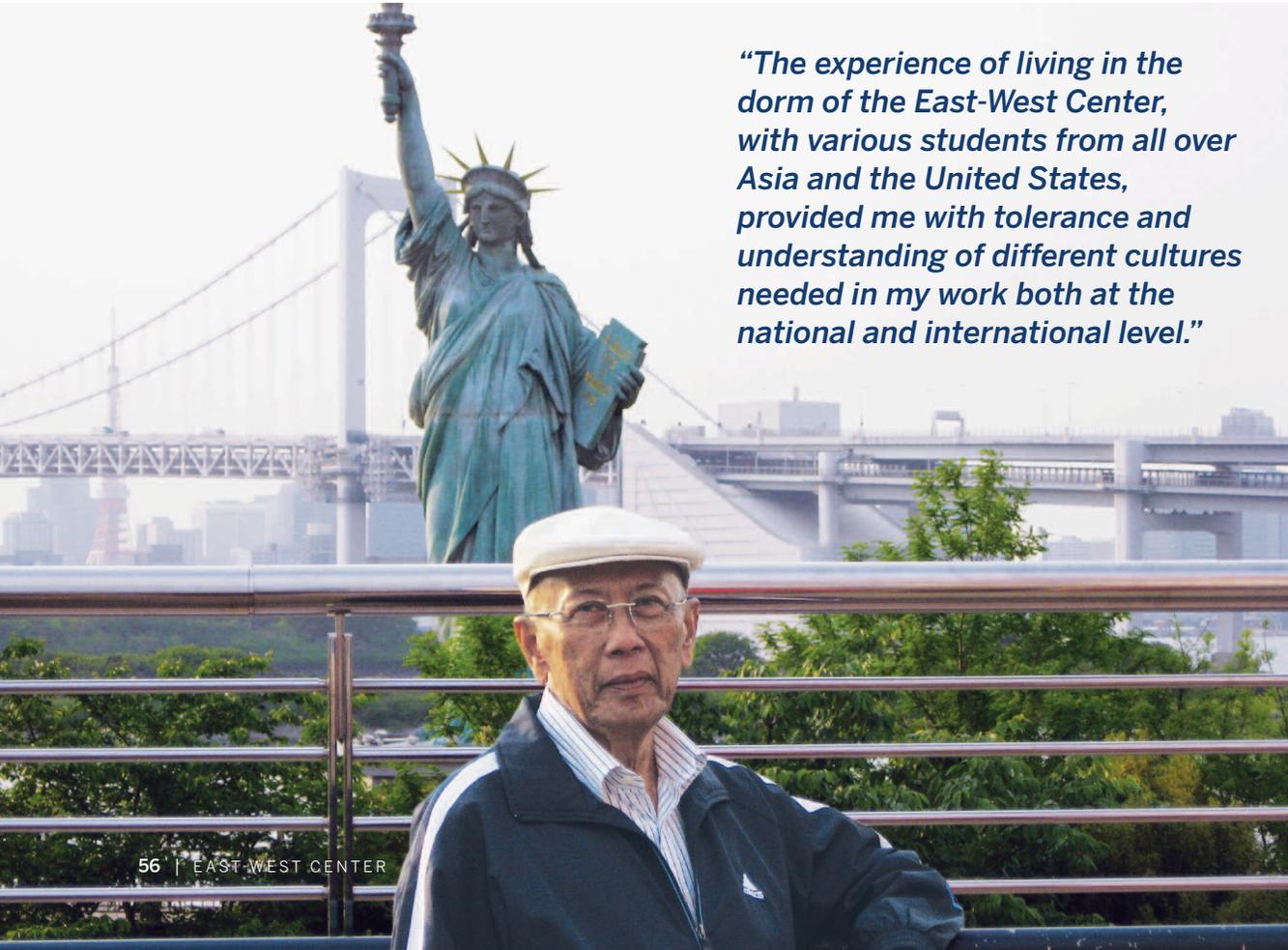
After receiving a Ph.D. in botany while at the East-West Center, Sastrapradja returned to Indonesia to serve as director of the Bogor Botanical Garden, world famous for research and conservation. He encouraged exploration into the use of Indonesian plants for medicinal and agricultural purposes, and to protect rare and endangered species.

His achievements brought a request to rehabilitate the Homma Botany Garden, “one of the oldest and most beautiful landmarks in the Mediterranean region,” which had suffered extensive damage during the war in Algeria in the 1960s. These efforts and his reputation as a proponent of biological diversity soon brought appointments of global scope, with such institutions as UNESCO and the United Nations Environment Programme.

Sastrapradja also served his country, as Deputy Minister of Development of Science and Technology in the Ministry of Research and Technology, before being elected a member of Parliament.

Most recently he was honored for his national and international contributions to science. “There are still many unnamed plants in Indonesia,” he told *The Jakarta Post*, at the awards ceremony in 2009. “These plants could provide ingredients for medicines, food sources, ornamental plants and many other purposes.” Sastrapradja also believes that if Indonesia invested in research into botanical science, the nation would be able to produce ample food for its people.

Within the East-West Center community, Sastrapradja is beloved for his lifelong dedication to the Center’s mission and alumni, including many years leading the EWCA Executive Board and guiding the Indonesian Alumni Chapter. Respected as a gentle man with a gift for persuasion, his legacy is the “Didin Principle,” a practice the EWCA Executive Board continues to follow, in which decision-making is by consensus rather than confrontation. ♦



“The experience of living in the dorm of the East-West Center, with various students from all over Asia and the United States, provided me with tolerance and understanding of different cultures needed in my work both at the national and international level.”

The East-West Center promotes better relations and understanding among the people and nations of the United States, Asia and the Pacific through cooperative study, research and dialogue. Established by the U.S. Congress in 1960, the Center serves as a resource for information and analysis on critical issues of common concern, bringing people together to exchange views, build expertise and develop policy options.

Officially known as the Center for Cultural and Technical Interchange between East and West, the Center is a U.S.-based institution for public diplomacy with international governance, staffing, students and participants.

The Center is an independent, public, nonprofit organization with funding from the U.S. government, and additional support provided by private agencies, individuals, foundations, corporations and governments in the region.

The Center's 21-acre Honolulu campus, adjacent to the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, is located midway between Asia and the U.S. mainland and features research, residential and international conference facilities. The Center's Washington, D.C., office focuses on preparing the United States for an era of growing Asia Pacific prominence.



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