



EAST-WEST CENTER  
COLLABORATION • EXPERTISE • LEADERSHIP



---

## EAST-WEST CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

---

# Everett Kleinjans Interview Narrative

## 3-20-2006 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

*Please cite as: Everett Kleinjans, interview by Phyllis Tabusa and Terese Leber, March 20, 2006, interview narrative, East-West Center Oral History Project Collection, East-West Center, Honolulu Hawaii.*

These narratives, which reflect interviewees' personal perceptions, opinions, and memories, may contain errors of fact. They do not reflect positions or versions of history officially approved by the East-West Center.

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.

Co-coordinators: Terese Leber and Phyllis Tabusa

Narratives Editor: Susan Yim Griffin

Copyright East-West Center, 2006.

## Everett Kleinjans

3-20-2006 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

### **Personal Background**

I'm going on 87, and if I account for each of those years, and do it in detail, we will be here a long time. (laughter) Now, I was born in Zeeland, Michigan. And my people came here from the Netherlands, where there's great -- not religious diversity -- Christian diversity, where they have a state church, called the *Hervormde Kerk*, the reformed church.

And my forbears had a big fight with just the regular church. But then there's a group of people that call themselves the *Kristliche [Christelijke] Hervormde Kerk*, the Christian Reformed Church, and they are more Christian than other people. And I was born into that group. (laughter)

Zeeland is a town in western Michigan with about 3,000 people. And if you were a robber, you'd do it on Sunday morning, because everybody is in church, nobody is at home. But anyway, that's where I was born.

I was sent to Christian schools (the Christian Reformed Church set up their own schools). From kindergarten, I went right straight through high school in these Christian schools. And when I graduated from high school, I went to Hope College in Holland, Michigan. People in Zeeland thought that was awful, because that's a college of the Reformed Church, not the Christian Reformed Church. But I went to Hope College, and in both high school and in college, I was a basketball player.

And I would say a pretty good one. We had a championship team -- we, we are still credited, if you look into the Michigan Intercollegiate Athletic Association Catalogue,

you will see our picture in there, because we are the people who brought what is called the “fast break” in basketball into Michigan.

Going down the floor fast. It used to be, when I was in high school, you take your time. You take your time -- and you'd have scores, 25-30. That kind of thing. But anyway, I went to school there, and I majored in mathematics and physics.

## **Life Before EWC**

### ***World War II Years***

And upon graduation from college, I went into the army. I evidently scored rather high on what was called the AGCT -- Army General Classification Test. And so they put me into the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP). And I was sent for basic training to Camp Hood in Texas. I was given 13 weeks of basic training there, finished up in the fall, and interviewed, expecting to go to some engineering school. The man who interviewed me, said to me, "I imagine you expect to go to some engineering school," but he said, "I see two things. One, you speak some Dutch. Two, you have done very well in German, both in high school and college. Would you like to go to Stanford University and learn Dutch and Malay?" These languages were to prepare us for going to what was then called the Netherlands East Indies, and today is called Indonesia. It's now independent.

I said, "You sold me." As soon as he mentioned Stanford, I thought, “Well, that's a pretty good place.” So I was sent there, and spent approximately one year, from September through June, studying Dutch and Malay, and studying all about Asia. I found myself getting very interested in China. Well, anyway, I was one of a few who graduated from the program, but the Army put me into the infantry.

They sent me to Mississippi for training, and then sent me to Europe, for combat duty -- in the infantry. And by then I had become a buck sergeant. And I was sent overseas to Europe as a buck sergeant in a heavy weapons company. Walked practically all the way across Southern Germany from France to Austria as an infantry soldier, saw an awful lot of things, all the way from killing, for example, to being near people at the Austrian border.

I've forgotten the name of the town, but I was walking along in this town when I saw a woman cleaning her porch. I looked at her, and I said, "Can you make me a cup of coffee, I'm thirsty." She said, "Sure, come on in." This was all in German. So I went in. She pointed to a big overstuffed chair for me to sit in and so I sat in it. And just like that, a little, probably three-year-old kid, boy, came running over, climbed up on my lap, and threw his arms around me. And I just sat there and held him for a while. And then I saw her crying and I said, "Your child?" Yes. "Where's his father?" His father's in Belgium. "What's he doing there?" He's in jail. "Has your husband ever seen his son?" No. And I sat there as I remember, stunned almost, saying, "What in the hell are we doing fighting this war, because these people are exactly like us."

And then we had another battle or two, and we finished up on Easter Sunday of 1945. So we dug foxholes, which we always would dig to prepare for the German counter-attack. And when we were finished, a church bell rang, and I said to the guys around me, "Watch my hole, I'm going to church. If you need me, I'll be there." So I went down the hill, and went to this church. Everybody was kneeling when I walked in, so I knelt way in the back row. I put my head down and said a little prayer. As I looked up, every eye in that congregation was looking at me. They were all turned around looking. Then I suddenly realized that I had my M1 rifle next to me, pointing up toward the ceiling. So I

took it and laid it down on the floor. And then I looked around, and for all the world, those people looked like my relatives back in Zeeland, Michigan. I could almost see that there was Uncle Bill, or there was Uncle El, or Aunt Deane, or something like that, you know. So I put my head down, and I said a prayer that went something like this. "God, if I ever get out of this god-damned mess, and you know why I'm saying it that way, because I think it is, let me work for peace." And, that's all I said, and then I stood up, and I bowed to the people, and walked out, and went on. I was kept in Germany for about a year after the war was over, in the army of occupation. And did the "tremendous service" of playing basketball for the army, which was very nice because I traveled all over Germany.

In fact, I was in Stuttgart, Germany, standing on the corner, doing guard duty. And I heard a loud voice, "Ets Kleinjans," my nickname is Ets. And I looked around, and there was Johnny Visser, a guy who played center on one of the teams at Hope College. And he came over and we talked. He said, "Why don't you play basketball for me?" I said, "How do I do that?" He said, "Join my outfit." I said, "You arrange for me to join." I said, "You see what I have? I have three stripes here, I'm a buck sergeant, you're a lieutenant colonel, you can do that." And so he did. And I went over to his outfit. And so I played basketball, and then I found out, and I shouldn't say this on a recording I guess, but then I found out that the basketball teams were made up of officers. And so the first ball game we went to, he said, "Hey, you can't go with that jacket on. Here," he said, "take my jacket." So I took his jacket, and there I was a lieutenant colonel, and I walked in and played basketball for them. (laughter)

### *Interest in China*

Anyway, I got back to the United States, and married my college sweetheart. That would be in 1946. I'd stayed in Germany a year after the war was over. She was the daughter of a Christian minister in Chicago. And there was a fellow who was the secretary of the Board of Missions of the Reformed Church of America who was, according to the newspaper, coming to Holland, Michigan, to go to the seminary. There's a seminary of that church in that town. He was going to the seminary -- and she knew him, because he had been with her father in Chicago and so on. And he had just returned from China. And so I said to her, "Can we get an appointment with him, and let's talk about China." Which we did, he was one of the greatest people I've ever met, really. Wonderful, wonderful man. Anyway, he invited us to dinner. We went to dinner, and he said, "Tell me about yourself." So I told him about myself, Zeeland, Michigan, the conservative Christian Reformed people. I said, "What I would like to do is teach in China." I said, "I don't know, but possibly the American school in Shanghai," and I mentioned a few others. I could do something like that. "Well, if you want to do something like that," he said, "we have a position open right now, for a boy's high school in Fujian Province, in Amoy. Actually, it was up country from Amoy. And he said, "Would you like to teach there? If you want to, I think we can arrange it." So I looked at him, and I was ready to say yes, but I said to him, "We had better talk it over between us, and see if that's something we want to do. How long are you going to be in town? I'll give you a call tomorrow." So the next day I called him up and said, "We'll go." He said right away, "Well, then you ought to go to Columbia University in New York, and get yourself a master's degree in education. Before you go, you need some status, and you need the education."

OK, so then because this was in Holland, Michigan, and because practically everybody knew me there from playing basketball and that kind of thing -- a former professor there, professor of English, called us on the phone and said, "I see by the paper that you're going to go to China. And that you're going to go to Columbia University." And I said, "That's right." He said, "If I were you, I would go to the University of Michigan," (he was a graduate of Michigan). "They have a course there on teaching English as a second language." And that program was just beginning at that time. That sounded good to us, so I called New York and said, "This is what's been recommended, would you endorse that," and they right away said, "Of course we'd endorse that."

So we went to Ann Arbor, and I enrolled in this course. I also took a couple courses in education, thinking, if they're going to send me ultimately to Columbia, well, you know, these courses would help. I got into this course on teaching English as a second language. I didn't know what they were talking about. Phonemes, morphemes, terminal contours, I mean -- you can go down through all terminology -- you don't even know them all. Ha. And so, one day after the, uh, phonological workshop, I went up to the woman assistant of the course and said, "Look. You guys are talking English, I know, but I don't understand it. What do you mean by this, what do you mean by that?" And she looked at me and said, "What are you planning to do? Why do you want to know?" I said, "I'm going to China to teach English in a high school over there."

She said, "If you're going to do that, you should stay here at Michigan, and get your master's degree in linguistics." And I said, "How do I do that." She said, "Well, you have to see Dr. Charles Carpenter Fries." I said, "How tough is he?" "Well, he's a wonderful man." So anyway, I went to see Charles Carpenter Fries, and said, "I'd like to enroll in your master's program in linguistics." He said, "Tell me your background." So

I told him my background in physics and math at Hope College. Then I told him about getting into the army, and about the army putting me in the Army Specialized Training Program, and then sending me to Stanford University to study Dutch and Malay. He looked at me and said, "You're accepted."

So I stayed at Michigan, and got my master's degree in linguistics.

### *Teaching in China*

And then we went off to China, and I kept asking, should we go there, because the Communists were moving around in the north. Well, they said go ahead. So we got there, and a year after we got there, not quite a year, the Communists took over the whole country. And then I thought, well, why not stay with them? I mean, Communists are human beings, just like the rest of us. And then I'm a crazy guy, I went out of my way to get acquainted with them. (laughter) And we talked about all kinds of things. But, then the Korean War broke out. And I came home one day -- we had a man working for us, whose wife was one of the more beautiful human beings I ever knew, and highly intelligent but soft-spoken. And we would talk, and I wanted to talk with her, because that was the way I was learning the language also.

But that day I came home from school, and when she saw me, she said, "Kung Sien."

They called me "Kung" for Kleinjans. My name in Mandarin was Kang, which is a very famous name over there. Kang Shi was one of the emperors. But in Amoy they say Kung, and up there they say Kang Sien Shung. Sien Shung means teacher. But in Amoy they say Kung Sien. So anyway, she said to me, "Kung Sien, come here." So I went to her. She said, and she said it softly, "Take your wife and two babies and go home now. It's no longer any good for you here." Well, I appreciated that because she used to go to



Communist Party meetings -- in the sense that they were for the general public but run by the Communist Party -- almost every night.

Certainly every other night, and she'd come back and tell me what they talked about. And I'll never forget her telling me when she had come home one day, "Last night we had a meeting," she said, "It was funny." I said, "Oh? What was it?" She said, "There was a man who came down from Shanghai, and he was leading the group, and he would shout. 'Can we get to Taiwan?!' And everybody would have to shout, 'Yes! We can get to Taiwan!' 'Can we get to Taiwan?!' 'Yes! We can get to Taiwan!'" And then she told me, "And then we would whisper to each other, 'Even if we have to fly.'" (laughter) I will never forget that, because that told me more about her, and it told me more about the Chinese people than a long explanation would. That, you know, you can't lead them all that much. So when she said to me, "Time to take your two babies and go home now, and your wife," I applied for exit, and we left. We went out through Hong Kong, and we had to wait a while.

We finally got a boat, and the boat went up to Japan, and I was able to get ashore both in Osaka and in Yokohama. When we got off at Yokohama, we were shown around by Reformed Church missionaries. In Yokohama, there's a girl's school run by the same Reformed Church. And that was a possibility. And in Tokyo there's a boy's school run by the same church. They joined with the Presbyterians, and they run the place. Oh, they're everywhere. Absolutely. And so I said thank you.

### ***Teaching in Japan***

When I got home, we went to Nebraska, because my wife's parents were there at the time. And then the man, Luman Schaffer, who got us to go to China, came through town, and he stopped in and saw my wife's father. And then, of course, he right away

saw me and I still think that was the reason he came, because he said to me, "I'm going back to Japan, we're going to rebuild Meiji Gakuin," which is the school they had set up in Tokyo. And he said, "I'd like to have you come with me, and work with me and help me in this." I looked at my wife, and she sort of said, yes, and I said, "OK, we'll do that." So we did that.

And that fall, we went out to Japan. Life is full of mystery. But anyway, we went there, and were in Yokohama studying the language. Then Thanksgiving came along, and we all went to Thanksgiving dinner at the home of this Luman Schaffer. And he asked me to sit next to him at the end of the table. And we had a great time talking and so on. And then the dinner was over, we all stood up, and as we stood up, he fell over.

Yeah. I caught him. And I asked another fellow to give me a lift, and we put him on the couch. He had a stroke, and so he had to go home to America. He couldn't stay, which was very sad for me, because he was such a good guy. Such a good guy. But anyway, we did that, and then we stayed in Yokohama. However, they wanted me to switch over to Tokyo, to the school where he was going to redo and so on. So I went there and taught. And I also asked even to teach in junior high school, so I could teach kids just beginning to learn English. And it was very, to me, very interesting, this whole business of language, because it's not only that you talk in a certain way, you hear in a certain way.

Now, this is popping in my mind because of that junior high school. Here's a little boy standing up, and I asked him to count. And of course he would count, "one, tchu, sree, hor," and so on, you know? So I said to him, in Japanese, "*Chu, tchu to you koto iwanaide*, don't say 'tchu,' say two." He looked at me and said, "I said tchu." (laughter)

Well, he heard something different from what I said. When we were at Yale, studying and learning Japanese -- because Luman Schaffer said we ought to go to Yale and start picking up Japanese before we get to Japan -- there was a fellow sitting next to me from South Carolina, from the Southern Baptist church who spoke with a southern accent, where the word for "Tie" isn't "tie," it's "taa." And the plural of man is not "men," it's "me-in." Now, the Japanese have a word which means "very:" "*taihen*," and they use it all the time. All the time. And the teacher said to him, "Say 'taihen,'" and he said, "taa heein." And she said, "No, I want you to say 'tai hen.'" He said, "Ah said 'taa heein.'" I mean, those experiences stick with me, and when these guys like [*Noam*] Chomsky and so on talk about universal language and all that kind of thing. You know? Anyway, so I'm in Japan, and I taught at Meiji Gakuin, I asked to teach in their junior high school. They asked me to teach in their university. And this went on until I came home for furlough.

And in the meantime, I spent a lot of time not only studying Japanese, but beginning to compare it with English, because my professor at the University of Michigan, Charles Carpenter Fries, had this course on the teaching of English, and his basic idea was that you've got to know both languages. Not necessarily to speak, and certainly not to speak to the students in their language, but to compare and to say, you know, why are they making the mistakes that they are. And he said, "People from different countries make different mistakes, etc." And so I gathered material, and so when I went back to the University of Michigan, he was still there. And so my doctoral dissertation, which I still have, is a comparison of Japanese and English, noun head modification. Now, I used noun head modification because I found a dissertation in their library on that, and the woman who wrote it said that "noun modification takes up one-third of English

grammar." That's a lot of stuff to figure out. So anyway, I took it, and I compared the two languages, and then I began saying all sorts, not just negative comparison of the two languages, but there are places in Japanese that are just like English. If you say, "red book," the Japanese have an expression for red, "akai," and book is "hon." And when they say red book, they say, "akai hon." The order is exactly the same as English. But, if you say, "The book over there," they say, "The over there book." They put that modification before. So there are places where they're alike, where they're somewhat different, where they're completely different. So I said, at this level, they're going to have the least amount of problems, at this level they're going to have more problems, and at this level they will have the most problems. And my prediction of their mistakes came out exactly the way I predicted.

Then instead of going back to Meiji Gakuin -- the vice president, who was an American, of the International Christian University, went to the University of Michigan, which is known for its English teaching. And said, "Look, we're looking for somebody who knows linguistics, knows language teaching, and do you have somebody here that we could hire?" And they looked at him and said, "You don't have to hire anybody, there is somebody in Japan right now," and they named me. So he came back, hailed me, and said, "Come out to the International Christian University," which I then did, because they choose the most intelligent Japanese students in Japan. They take the high school exam, they take the university exam, they give their own exam, and they take all that -- and they give everybody an interview. And the interview is in both English and Japanese. So the student has to be supple enough to be able to answer an English question in English, and a Japanese question in Japanese.

Now, that's how it works.

At one time, at ICU, I was the academic vice president, I was the dean, and I was the chairman of the language division. We had a president who came from the University of Tokyo, Ukai, Nobushige Ukai. Brilliant fellow, he was read by everybody when it came to law in Japan. But he always wanted to talk to me because I would sort of educate him on what the International Christian University should be, and that kind of thing. And then he'd just back me like the dickens, you know?

And at one point, we needed a dean, he said, "Why don't you do it?" And oh, and then we needed somebody in charge of the language, and he said, "Why don't you do it?" (laughter) And so I was doing all -- of course, it was a small university, we only had about 1,500 students. But a good university, and trying to do some new things in Japan. And so for me, again, it was a marvelous education. And Ukai-san was great. I could go over to his house any time, and his wife would make me dinner, and we had a great relationship. And of course that's, that's in one sense what universities should be more about, is relationship. That's what life is all about. And universities ought to, if you've had education, by God, it ought to be for life.

Well, the amazing thing was when I became academic vice president there, I did a test: Which of these entrance exams predict, with the greatest accuracy, which students will succeed at ICU? In other words, which students get good grades, and which students don't, and what's in between. And the most interesting thing to me was that the interview was the most predictive. Not the written tests, but the interview. And this again reinforced some of my knowledge, or attitudes or whatever on language, and language learning.

And so when I went out to the International Christian University, I revised their whole English program, and I taught all the professional people there about language

comparison. And I said, "This is not something you teach in class, this is something you use, and you become like an automobile mechanic. Or you become like a medical doctor. You go to a medical doctor and say, 'This is what's wrong with me,' or he'll look at you and say, 'This is what's wrong with you, and so you should do this.' Now, as a language teacher, you hear them talking, you say, 'Oh, you're doing this wrong, you should do it this way.' You are like a doctor -- you don't use the language to explain, or to tell them anything, but mainly to know how to correct mistakes. And these kids came to be known both in the United States and in Australia, which I learned quite a bit later, as speaking English better than all other Japanese.

This was just exactly the way that a man in Australia, after I told him that I had been to Japan in the International Christian University, he raised his hand, and he said, "I don't have a question, but a mandate. I want you to go back to Japan. I want you to go to that International Christian University. I want you tell the leaders there to send ALL their students to Australia, because they are the only Japanese who speak English well."

Oh, I smiled at him and I said, "I have never gotten a greater compliment." In other words, what I'm saying here, although some people will disagree with me, it works. I know it works from experience, and that was basically what I did.

### ***Decision to Return to U.S.***

And then our children grew up, and our oldest son, Brian, went to the United States to go to college. Thanksgiving came along and the phone rang, and it was Brian. He said, "Hi, Dad, this is Bri." "Hi Bri." "I want to come home." Home was Japan.

And I said, "Why?" He said, "It isn't going well, Dad." He said, "I can't take this anymore." I said, "OK. Make sure your passport is in shape." And anyway, we brought him back, and he told us -- the first thing he said to me was, "Dad, you must remember,

that when we go from here (Japan) to the United States, we're not only going from high school to college, we're going from Japan to America."

In Japan, there's an American School in Japan. It's called ASIJ, which teaches everybody in the American way of teaching, and the American subjects and all of that kind of thing. But he said, "Look, we're not just going from high school to college. We're going from Japan to America," and he said, "Many of the things in America I don't understand. Why do they do it this way, why do they do it that way?" And he said, "I've been embarrassed many times because I didn't know."

Well, I talked to my wife, and said, "Gee, maybe we ought to give that some thought."

Then I went to the United States, I looked around, I even let some people know that I was looking for something in the United States. Yeah, this was the '60s.

## **Life at EWC**

### ***Arrival at EWC, 1967***

I came back here, '67 I think it was. I was at ICU when a man came out. He was on his way to some other place, but came out to see me. Gosh, why did his name slip my mind right now? But he came to see me from one of the universities, saying, they need somebody like you over here.

Came out to talk to me because he was very close to Howard Jones [*EWC Chancellor*].

And so then my wife and I jumped on a plane, came to Honolulu, looked at the East-West Center, asked what it was all about, and looked at the University of Hawai'i, and even looked at some of the schools here. This was 1967 I think. And then we came here, and set ourselves up. And when we came to Hawai'i our kids all went to Punahou [*School*].

It was during that time that I was deputy chancellor under [Howard] Jones. Well, we didn't talk a lot about it [of Kleinjans eventually becoming chancellor or teaching] much because the EWC did not teach university subjects, but then he talked about resigning, etc.

And I wrote The Search for Understanding. Because one of the first things that I did, I usually do this anyway, is I go to my office, and I got all the documents related to the East-West Center, and I read them all. And of course, the way the legislation was stated impressed me: "To promote better relations and understanding between Americans and the people of Asia and the Pacific through cooperative research, study and training."

And I thought, that's what real education is all about, and what international education is all about. It's not a group of Japanese coming to America and sitting in an American university class and listening to a professor and giving him back what he said. That is not understanding. And so anyway, we did this, and then because of this kind of idea, I wrote up The Search for Understanding. And that was the basis on which I was hired. As chancellor, right.

I became chancellor in '67, but I should say a couple of things. You see, he [Howard Jones] already had as his deputy, another deputy, an ex-ambassador. And I don't have anything against ambassadors as ambassadors, but they have a particular thing to do. You must promote the United States of America, and how do you criticize the United States when you're supposed to promote it?

It's this nationalistic posing that is probably the biggest problem in international relations. And how can you be a leader and admit that you make mistakes? And my immediate response is, you do it because you're human, and because if you admit you make mistakes, other people can help you avoid them. And what you do is get into what I have



come to call 'servant-leadership' frame of mind. If you're a leader, you must be a servant. And you serve people by leading them. And the big thing that you have to do is show direction, that's one thing, and then give encouragement and say, "Look, if we all move in that direction, which we've now talked about and agreed on, I'm here to help you, to serve you." Not I'm here to say, "Follow me!" (laughter) That's nonsense. You see, that's the army way of -- I mean, you know, follow me is sort of an army command. And I can see that because if you say follow me and get killed, not the most pleasant thing to think of.

### ***Promotion to EWC Chancellor***

I was here because the EWC chancellor wanted me to come, and a few other people said, "Yes," I could come, and so on. So I came, but then when I was here, Howard Jones retired, that was when I presented the Search for Understanding to the board, and saying, this is the way the Center should go. The next day he [*UH President Tom Hamilton*] called me and said, "Ets, come on over, I want to see you," and I came walking into this office, and he said, "I just asked you to come over to be the chancellor." And I said, "What does this mean? Do I -- am I in charge, can I do this, can I do that?" He said, "You do it the way you want to," he said, "I'll back you."

Howard Jones had been a diplomat for about 40 years of his life, and he looked at this place [*EWC*] in terms of what it would do for the Department of State. Well, Tom Hamilton saw it as part of the university, and saw it as part of education, and knew I was a person of education, back in education. So this was one -- I think one reason why he and I, we clicked. It went very well.

## **Institutional Transitions**

### ***Reorganizing the EWC/Institutes***

*[Editor's note: After Kleinjans assumed the position of EWC chancellor in 1967, he reorganized the Center into problem-oriented institutes, around 1970. The Center's research program divided into five institutes: Culture Learning, Communication, Population, Food, Technology and Development. For this oral history, he was asked what prompted him to reorganize the Center.]*

I would say, the legislation. The *[original EWC]* legislation says, you promote better relations and understanding, between Americans and Asians and Pacific Islanders through cooperative study, research and training. And, you see, the first Center people set up three institutes. One was for students to go and study at the University of Hawai'i, one was for technical things, etc. What was the third one? It was to give grants to scholars to do their own thing at the Center. I felt that those institutes, if left alone, would be the center of the Center. I wanted something more dynamic.

I wanted institutes where people would go, work together, ask questions that nobody had an answer to. Work on the problem together, and that kind of thing -- and when you get out of it, you may disagree, but you know why you disagree, and all the rest of this because you've done it -- if you want to use the word, scientifically. Your disagreements pull you together!

Well, I did a lot of consulting, you see. If you're dealing internationally, one of the most common things is food. And then I began using the term "food system." And one day I was home at the dinner table when my third son, the smartest of them all, said, "Dad, what's a food system?" And you know what popped in my head? I said, "John, the next time you go to McDonald's, order a hamburger, and you have the hamburger in your

hand, you're ready to take a bite, stop right there, and say, how did I get this hamburger in my hand? Who got it from where?" A woman got it and fried it, and another woman got it and it had the bun. But where did the bun come from? And where did the meat come from over here? And then you go back, and then you say, "Well, this comes from the meat market." But where did the meat market get it? And then you go back there, and you gradually get to the cow. Well, where did the cow come from? Then you get into the farm. And then you get to bread, you could follow that the same way.

And I said, "Follow each one up, and you have the food system." But I said you could do this with other things as well, but I said, "What this will help you think through is: How is life and the world all inter-related?" How is a young woman over here, who is spreading butter on a piece of bread, part of the food system? And I said, so when you're dealing with the food system, you're dealing with everything, practically, because it's all food and all people eat.

And then I started to do the same thing with some of the other things, you see.

Communication. And I got Wilbur Schramm, from Stanford University to come out, and that was one of these crazy things. Here I am, on a trip through South Asia, and going to India and Pakistan and so on. On my way back, I came to Bangkok, and when the plane took off -- he came, and sat next to me. I don't know why, it just happened.

We began talking, and I began telling him about the East-West Center. And then I began talking about communication, because I got to know what he did -- and the importance of communication in international things, and all that, I said, "How in the world do we start such a program?" He got interested in it, and I hired him as the director of the program.

Culture and Learning never got off the ground the way I wanted it. Because -- having lived in China and Japan, I learned first of all, what culture is. And the second thing is

that if you're going to live in another culture, you must learn that culture so that you can communicate well -- because culture communicates.

And you see, how close you stand to somebody communicates to them. In America, we stand about two feet apart. In Latin America, they stand about 18 inches apart. That's only six inches different. But! You could read stories in certain books about an American executive who is standing talking to a Latin American. The Latin American comes a little closer, this guy backs up, until he gets to a wall, and now the Latin American has him. Something that most people don't realize is how space communicates. And whether you do things on time or not communicates. Everything practically communicates. Culture communicates, and this is what I wanted them to work on.

Verner Bickley was the new director [*of Culture Learning Institute*]. He was from Great Britain, and I got along with him well and so on, but -- and partly my fault was that I had so many other things to do, I didn't spend a lot of time telling him what I thought Culture Learning should be.

The Population Institute came because the USAID had money for population studies. And that was one of the big things at that time. And I said, "Look, we could set up a program that'll knock your eye out, and talk about population, not only from the American standpoint."

I was very fortunate in getting Paul Demeny. You read his name as Demeny, but "De-main" is the way he pronounced it. He comes from Hungary, and he was brilliant, absolutely brilliant. He was brilliant with a good sense of humor. In fact, there were a group of people from different universities and places. I've forgotten exactly what, that

were on world-wide tour to study population studies. They came here, and they said, Dr. Kleinjans, you have the best population program in the world. Under Demeny.

It was a wonderful time, and we had Will Schramm with Communication, he had been in Stanford University, and knew an awful lot about communication. Of course, I had a few thoughts myself on communication.

Food, one of the reasons I took it was the story I told you about when you have a hamburger in your hand, and ask how did you get the hamburger in your hand. And you suddenly find yourself talking about the whole world, and all people feeding themselves. The director was a guy from Michigan State University. Nic Luykx, a beautiful Dutch name. Nic was a bright guy and all these guys were bright. That's one of the reasons I chose them, and I think in a way, I don't know, see when I say bright, I guess another word for it is sensitive. And you must be sensitive on the one hand, to the world in general, but on the other hand, to the world in specifics, when it comes to nationality. Because people do act differently in different countries, and then how in the world do you interpret that, and how do you get along and all that kind of thing?

Technology and Development. And, of course, there you get into the whole business of development, which is the big word for countries like the United States talking about the under-developed world. Economic development becomes economy, money -- technology and development takes in the whole business, I felt.

Before I came here, they had three programs. And this was under the University of Hawai'i. One was the student program. Which was basically sending students to the University of Hawai'i. And another one was the Technology program, which was Baron Goto. Baron was a good guy, I like him. He was basically working with Pacific Islanders.

The *[original]* Institute of Advanced Studies was basically bringing in scholars to the Center. And the scholar would do his own work. And there wasn't any means, you know, to promote better relations and understanding in that whole cock-eyed program. They were all doing their own thing. It wouldn't go from year-to-year unless a guy stayed more than a year.

And you see, it was all those things, that I saw as kind of broken things, pieces, that I felt if they came together, and they worked together, that this -- well, I don't know if I told you about one of my little escapades. Well, I went to Washington D.C., with my predecessor, Howard Jones. And while I was there, there was a meeting in New York on Asian Studies. So I went to New York to Asian Studies, and because one of the parts of Asia was Japan, and because I knew something about Japan, I went to that group. And I sat there, and had this funny feeling. Funny, especially when I got back to my hotel.

Because here were professors teaching students getting their Ph.D. on things in Japan at Harvard, Yale and some of the great universities of the country. And I sat there saying, "But you really don't know Japan, do you?"

And I got back to my hotel, and I sat there. And I said, "Kleinjans, who the hell do you think you are, saying these guys don't know Japan?"

But as I sat there, and I tried to meditate on it a bit, I tried to think about it a bit, I went out and I had dinner. And I came back, and suddenly it came to me. And I still think I'm pretty right. These guys basically learned about Japan from books, from their professors, from the history books, etc. And they went out to Japan if they had a sabbatical, they would go for one year, etc and so on. And here I am, having lived in Japan for 16 years, having worked with the Japanese trying to build a university, having sometimes had deep disagreements with Japanese because we see things differently and all that, and gaining

respect for them, because as they began explaining themselves, I'd begin to understand why they were doing things in a certain way. And that was the basis of my "search for understanding."

The "search for understanding" isn't in books, the "search for understanding" is working together, and doing things in a different way together, even. All that kind of stuff is what I call understanding and better relations. Which is a pretty big thing to think about, you know? At least I felt it was. That yes, I know something, but I'm not better than all those guys. But why is my understanding different from theirs?

And basically, the experience. And this is what I was trying to build into the East-West Center. The institutes where they would work especially together. And it works.

Way back when I started it, no one else was -- if I may say so -- was thinking of -- in this way. And the fact that it's working and that it's here, now on all that I think, good. No, not just because it's me, but because it's whatever you want to call truth. That's the way I think you come to it.

I mean, to me it was creative. It hadn't been done before, and we did it. And I couldn't have done it at a university, but I could do it here. Because way down deep inside of me, there's something that says, "You don't study just to get knowledge, you study because it's relevant to the world out there." And, if you can, if you could make even a little tiny impact someplace or other, OK? And I felt we did some of this in Food and Population.

### ***Separation from UH***

*[In 1975, the East-West Center separated from the University of Hawai'i.]*

And if I may say so, I'm the crazy guy that was behind it all the way. I got John Richardson, who was the assistant secretary of state for Cultural and Educational Affairs, I got him to support it. And I got the chairman of our board to support -- what, was that

Herb Cornuelle at the time? I don't know, maybe. But I had to get that support, because I was breaking from the University of Hawai'i. Well, if I talked about it, I was patting myself on the back, boosting myself. But if I could get these big guys in public meetings to talk about it, OK. In fact, Herb Cornuelle went to see Governor [*John A.*] Burns and asked him what he thought about incorporation for EWC. Jack Burns said, "That's the way it should have been from the beginning." And we began going and people began seeing that the East-West Center was not the University of Hawai'i.

It was important to be separate basically for two or three reasons, I would say.

Fundamentally, it's because of the better relations and understanding through cooperative study, research and training. Start there, which is the beginning. The university is not cooperative. I mean, the university is cooperative on certain things. But when a person goes to sit in the class, and the professor lectures to him, and he takes notes, and the professor gives him an exam to see if he can repeat those notes, that is not cooperation. We call it learning. I even sometimes wonder about learning.

I have certain negative reactions to most of our universities. I don't think it's good education. I mean, having had the benefit, having had the privilege of working in Japan, and now working in Cambodia -- my God, what I was able to learn. Not in a university, but I learned one heck-of-a-lot about Cambodia on the one hand, about how you work with Cambodians, about all kinds of things you can't get really in a classroom.

So, you see, I had my, whatever you want to call it. Negative thoughts or minus thoughts, or whatever on the university, and its present condition. Now, I don't know if you can change it much because of how we set ourselves up with dormitories and, you know, all these kinds of things. The students must all live together, and blah blah blah. And universities -- you see, where is the real world being lived out? It's out where



the businesses are. That's where the world is. University is pulled aside, by itself, off on a campus someplace, to talk about what those guys in the real, dynamic world are doing. And what I tried to do is make this place much more part of the place out there where the guys were doing their work, and people were working together.

Some of them in the Congress had this [*adverse*] feeling because they had pressure from some university presidents in their states or whatever because when -- I forget when I went up to the meeting in New York -- I went to other meetings like that, I was told by some of the guys, from some of the big universities, "We're going to fight you, buddy, because we want that money for students to study at our university. And the University of Hawai'i is getting it for their university." And I began saying, "No, they're doing it for the East-West Center."

But right from the beginning, the University of Hawai'i took over the Center, and used it for their purposes. But you see, those two things, one is my own perception of what the mandate of the Center was, and what the university was doing was one thing, and the second one was getting criticisms from the universities on the mainland saying, "Why aren't we getting that money? We have better Asian Studies programs than the University of Hawai'i does. We have better language programs than the University of Hawai'i does. Why don't we get the money?"

We had to be separate, and had to say the various things that the Congress had said, and get them out, because we're trying to get people to work together, etc., because we are a unique -- and still, I think are -- a unique institution.

And that's what I tried to get across, and why I was so strongly behind incorporation.

And what I'm telling you now, I was talking to people all the time, every place I would go, because I felt the basic idea of the East-West Center, as propounded by Congress in

the legislation, was excellent. And how do you get that, and develop it, and not let it be drawn into the American educational program, and become just part of American education?

And this is what I told the people in the Department of State. When I'd go there, I talked to John Richardson. He backed me 100 percent, boy, he was really, really good in giving -- because he invited me to his home for dinner a few times, and we just sat there and talked, just about like you and I are talking right now. And I would tell him, "Now John, dang, you've got something big on your hands right there, and this is what it is, and it's not that," and you see, here he is, a graduate of Harvard, and a very well-educated human being. And I'd say, "There's nothing wrong with Harvard and the kind of education that they want to give. But that's not the education that the East-West Center wants!"

So I had to keep on going through, and persuade people that the Center was a different kind of organization, because -- well, number one, was Harvard set up by the Congress of the States, the United States? No. You know, you go through -- well, was it given the same kind of mandate? No. And you go on through like this, and you say, and basically for Americans, if I may say so, I think I was using logic. Don't just say, you have this, but you're going to give it to the university and let them make it into a university. If you're going to have this, do it! And I learned an awful lot on the way, because I'm basically a university person.

### ***Growing the EWC Budget***

I guess one thing that pops in my head, having run the East-West Center, and having gotten acquainted with a lot of the people in Washington, D.C., who helped set up the Center, and who supported it and so on. What I can say is, I think we've got a good government. (laughter) I mean, does it make mistakes? Of course it makes bad

mistakes. But, to have people in there who are willing to go to bat, and set up a place like this, where you can develop programs to develop understanding between people, holy smokes.

And for that, I give a lot of credit to the people, including guys like [*U.S. Senator*] Dan Inouye. Dan and I became very good friends. In fact, when I got the budget here up to \$18 million, he called me in one time, he said, "Ets, are you going to go any higher, in the budget?" He said, "I don't know that I can support it that much." But you know, it's that kind of thing I recognize he had a lot of obligations in Washington, and he had to fulfill certain obligations in order to get certain things for Honolulu, or for Hawai'i, and so on. And Spark Matsunaga was another, both of them were very strong supporters. And whenever I went to Washington, all I would do is jump in a cab and go to their office. And their staffs all knew me, and what can we do for you? It was very, very helpful. And I appreciated it very much, the support that I got from these guys. And they would introduce me to other people, and I would go and some of these other people didn't know about the Center, and I'd tell them about it, and they'd say, "Gee, that's wonderful."

So then I can remember there were times in Washington where I would walk around the House of Representatives there, and see a representative in his office, and I'd go in and say, "May I see Representative So-and-so?" Well, who are you? I'm so-and-so from the East-West Center, Honolulu, that was set up by -- oh, OK. I'd go in and see them. And I'd just talk, and I'd say, "Did you know about the East-West Center?" Oh yeah, I helped -- really? Look at what we're doing, etc. I try to keep them all informed.

Oh, [*that's*] tremendously important, I think. If you want support, you got to let people know on the one hand, but also kind of show them, hey, I support you, because you did

this. Washington's a strange town in many ways, and I was able to get around with the people at the Department of State pretty well. Saw the secretary of state on a couple of occasions. And I felt things like that were important for the Center. That he knew that the Center was made up of people, and what we were trying to do, and so on. So a lot of those things helped me raise the budget from \$5.3 million, which it had been since the foundation, until I began moving it up.

### *Leaving the EWC*

*[In 1980, Kleinjans left the East-West Center. ]*

I didn't resign, I was fired. Yeah. We had a meeting in New York of the -- what do we call it, National Review Board? Whatever. Board of Governors.

When they came to me, and said, "We want you to quit," I just said, "Why?" "You're too weak a leader."

Well, one time, when we met with a few of the people *[on the EWC Board of Governors]*, I said, "May I ask a couple questions?" They said, "Go ahead." I said, "I'm being asked to quit, because I'm a weak leader. Number one, when I took over, the Center's budget was \$5.3 million, right now its \$18 million. Would you call that weakness?" No, no, you were good at raising money. "OK, when I took over, we had no researchers as members of our staff. The researchers would all be asked to come in and do their work here and return to their home institution. Now, we have 76. Is that weak, are we do..." No, no, no, that's very good. "Well, what do you mean I'm a weak leader?" You're not telling people strong enough what to do, and what not to do.

(laughter)

And I have never had that before in my life. And I'm not the kind of guy who's going to fight them. That's what I told them, I said, "I'm not the kind of guy who fights, so if this

is what you want, OK. It's up to you. I mean you guys are the leaders. You're the board," and I said, go ahead, and the people in Washington didn't like it. They got to like me.

And my own perception is especially at a place like the East-West Center, there's enough turbulence in the world, and what you're trying to do is build people up so that they can control that turbulence, and help people to live. But -- so, I was fired.

When I was fired, there were big headlines in the newspaper here. I don't know if you could get them -- Star-Bulletin, all that kind of stuff. And I didn't do a heck of a lot of talking. Some other people did.

Being at the East-West Center was one of the great experiences of my life. Just no question. A lot of things were accomplished, some things that I wanted to get going weren't really. There are some things I probably shouldn't have done, I don't know. It's hard to say -- you can get all kinds of criticism, and I got them. (laughter)

But anyway, for me, I've always felt, 'Do it,' if you're willing to stand up and say why. I knew that some things were not popular, especially with the university. And especially with some people who thought that they knew more about international relations and the way to get people to work together and so on than I did. And you could get all kinds of people like this, and what do you do with them? You listen to them, but then you got to keep on going, you have to maintain your own personal integrity.

### **EWC Mission**

Well, you see, this whole thing at the East-West Center was -- in one sense I would say the highlight of my life. I mean, I could do things here that I wanted to do, that I could never do in a university. The basic philosophy to promote better relations and

understanding between the people of the United States and the people of Asia and the Pacific through cooperative research and training.

One of the greatest things that impressed me, is a guy came to the Center from -- was he in the Department of State at the time? He was in the government, anyway, called up and said he'd like to come and visit me. I said fine. So he came, and while he was here, I took him around and showed him things, and all of the Center.

And when we were finished, we went back to my office, and I said to him, "Well, what do you think?" He looked at me and he said, "If you want to know really what I think, you now have set up really what we had in mind."

I said, "You couldn't have given me a better compliment, because I looked at the legislation, I saw it, I liked it, and I moved in that direction. And you see where it was different when we were under the University of Hawai'i. The University of Hawai'i tried to pull us into them, and that would make us conform to them. And our students would be conforming -- or our scholars, or our whatever would conform to them. And I wasn't here to set up anything for the University of Hawai'i, I was here to set up something for the federal government. And for the American people and the people of Asia.

It isn't that I'm against the University of Hawai'i, but I just don't want to be another university, when we're the East-West Center. I mean, are we connected with education? Of course. But the way American universities do their education isn't the only way you can do education.

## **Life After EWC**

### ***Teaching at Hawai'i Pacific University***

*[After Kleinjans left the East-West Center, he taught at Hawai'i Pacific University for 12 years.]*

I didn't go around exploring what to do. I thought OK, so I left, and I was out on the street, and I saw the president of Hawaii Pacific University. And when I met him he said, "Hi, Ets, how you doing?" I said, "You need anybody to teach for you?" He said, "Who?" I said, "Me," he said, "You're hired." (laughter)

That was the fastest hiring I ever had in my life. And I said, "OK, I'll come and see you." He said, "Good." So I went and saw him, and told him what I had in mind, and then he said, "What do you want to teach?" He didn't say, "Come here and teach that." And one of the first things I said, "I want to teach the world." What is the view of the world that people should have, if they're going to be in the world, and be especially international. He said, "I like it, do it." And what did I call the course? "The World Problematique."

I taught a second one on language. After I taught the first one, I was teaching about things in the world, then I got into international relations, and began pointing out how the relations between men and women were different in the United States than in Japan or China, or other places. And for whatever it's worth, it was a few years after, it was 1984, that my first wife and I separated. And then I married another -- well, I went with another woman in town, who was very interested in women's studies. So anyway, I taught this course, and I brought up "the family."

And when I brought up "the family," the interest of the kids in the class just went zoom, like this, you know? So I went to the president of HPU, and said, "You need a course on women and men," he said, "What have you got in mind?" I said, "Oh, basically just

women and men in the world." He said, "OK, go ahead and teach it." So I set up this course, and this course became one of the most popular at the HPU.

My courses were just packed with people. And for me it became very interesting, because studying women and men is a very interesting topic. And then in that course, I found that a lot of kids wanted to talk about -- see, I divided into two I think. One is women and men in the world of work, and women and men at home, or something like that. And so I had two courses. And one was basically women and men in their relationships, another was relationships in the world of work. And that was fascinating. I mean, I can remember kids in my class crying because we had touched things, when they were kids, that they looked back on and cried about. Because they were women. Oh, here was a man actually, who had married and gotten divorced, and he sat in class and cried, because of his relationship with his wife.

I just talked everyday life, you know? And I felt these are grownup human beings, I didn't hold anything back, really. You don't get into all kinds of sexual things necessarily, because that can go into everything. But when you get into relationships, it's a very powerful part of our lives, and I enjoyed teaching it. And so I did that. I taught there for about 12 years from 1980 to 1992.

### *Years in Cambodia*

And it was in '91, when there was a meeting in Europe on Cambodia, and they had decided certain things and prepared the country toward an election. When this guy, this Cambodian young man who was on an East-West Center grant came to me and said, "Would you help develop a program for the development of Cambodia?" and so I went out there.



And after seeing the place, I thought, holy smokes, there's a lot to do here. I mean, a lot of things I can talk about anyway, whether they'll follow me or not, I don't know. So then I came back, and told the president of HPU that I was going to go out to Cambodia, and he said, "Go ahead," he says, "It sounds like you." (laughter)

And in a way, it is like me, because I enjoy going there, and when you get there, and you -- well let's just use one little example. You talk about democracy. They don't know anything about it, about democracy [*in Cambodia*]. They don't know -- some of them know intellectually, but emotionally? Thpt. Men especially. *K'nyom* [*thumps chest*]. *K'nyom* means I. *K'nyom* [*thumps chest*].

And they can be very powerful, and women can be very humble – a very vertical [*society*]. Very vertical based on power. And that's -- you see, where I get into difficulty in a place like that, is in talking about democracy, and talking about equality, holy smokes. I mean, how do you get something like that? Or, in talking on “servant leadership,” they told me that you don't put two words like that together. Leaders are not servants, they lead.

I was asked to go there, because a fellow at the East-West Center getting his doctorate at the University of Hawaii came to see me and said, "I'd like to have you help me develop a research institute for the development of Cambodia." And he did this on the basis of certain recommendations of faculty at the university.

And I looked at him, and said, "You chose the right guy, because I know nothing about Cambodia." He said, "I'll give you the information." Well, we worked for about a year, came out with a big thick document like this. And he went back to Cambodia, set it up, and about a year later, he came and said, "Will you come out to Cambodia and run it? I don't know how." Now, the unfortunate thing about him being Cambodian partly I think,

is that I began developing the place, but then as I began, my crazy ideas started to go again, so I set it up not as an institute, but as a graduate school. Because Cambodia had no graduate education at that time.

And I felt they needed it for various reasons. So I set it up, wrote it up, etc., and asked three prominent friends of mine to go to the two prime ministers and ask them would they endorse this as a graduate school? Both of them said yes. And then the person who's the real head [*of Cambodia*], Hun Sen, made a speech at the Royal University of Phnom Penh rather, in which he told the students, you'll no longer have to go abroad for graduate education, we're setting up a graduate school. The next day, the man who asked me to help him develop the idea and come out to Cambodia, came to my office, and said, "You're no longer president, I am."

I said, "On what authority are you doing this?" "I'm the founder." And in a way he was. So these other people who were fired came to see me, and said, "What do we do?" I said, "Then, let's do exactly what we are doing now, only change the name." I said, "On my computer, I have the whole --" well what would it be called, "description of what was then called the Preah Sihanouk Raj Academy." Sihanouk was a king.

And I said I will take that, and substitute another name for it. We talked a bit, and came up with Center for Advanced Study. And they said OK.

So I went back, told the computer to change the document, printed it out, gave it to them, and we started the Center for Advanced Study, which today, is still going and doing a beautiful job on Cambodian problems. It's not a graduate school, but the thing was, because of what we did -- I say because, Hun Sen and [*Norodom*] Ranariddh, the two prime ministers, set up a graduate school, and now there is a graduate school. Problem: the guy they appointed to be president of the graduate school is a historian. I was asked

to be a consultant and all that kind of thing, and I told him, I said, "I think what you ought to do, is work this into problem orientation, because what that does, is aim you at the future. What's the future of Cambodia?" He said, "We must know our past." And I guess I couldn't argue with a guy that spent most of his life studying the past. But you see, that isn't what Cambodia needs. Cambodia needs something for the future, and this is what I tried to get across. And wasn't able to.

### **EWC's Impact**

This is what, at least for me, what you have to do is recognize that this is a national institution. I mean, you can't say it's the state. I mean, it's put in the state because of the location and the population of the state, there's no question about that. And I think that has a real plus on it. But you have to keep people back there informed. If they're spending \$18 million or \$20 million, they want to know where the money is going. And they deserve it, because they can either vote for this, or they vote for something else. And I want them to vote for this. For two reasons, not just because I ran it, but because I felt, what we were doing was excellent for our country. If you're dealing nationally, you cannot stop with small ideas. I know I've had people criticize me for having big ideas. OK, I don't mind that. (laughter)