



EAST-WEST CENTER
COLLABORATION • EXPERTISE • LEADERSHIP



EAST-WEST CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Patma Vityakon Interview Narrative

5-22-2006 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

Please cite as: Patma Vityakon, interview by Terese Leber, May 22, 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, 2007.

Patma Vityakon

5-22-2006 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

Personal Background

I was born in Bangkok and my family has four children and I'm the first. I have two brothers and a sister. My parents were from southern part of Thailand and they moved to Bangkok to get a higher education. And that's why all of us were born in Bangkok. But we feel -- we are related to the south. We used to visit our relatives in the south every summer vacation. So we have special attachment to the southern part of Thailand. And my mother, when she finish her bachelor degree at Chulalongkorn in Faculty of Arts, she got the Thai government scholarship to come to the U.S. -- in 1949. I think this was after the Second World War. So she had this very good relationship with America because she's partly educated there. She got her master degree at Oregon State in home economics.

And then I was born in Bangkok and get education up to high school in Bangkok. And then I went to Faculty of Science in Chulalongkorn for one semester. During which time I also tried several scholarships to continue my study abroad. So I was lucky enough to get this Colombo Plan scholarship to go to New Zealand. But to accept this scholarship it means I'm bonded to Khon Kaen University because they wanted to build up the staff capacity of this new regional university.

Life Before EWC

Khon Kaen University

So I accepted the scholarships and I spent close to seven years in New Zealand to do my bachelor and master degree and then I came back and immediately was attached to Khon

Kaen University in Faculty of Agriculture. And I was trained in soil science. That's what they want their people to be trained for.

So I don't have experience job hunting and that's what I always tell my students. That when they were about to graduate I told them I don't have much to tell you about job hunting because -- well, some people are apprehensive about being bonded. But to me it works out all right and I always find my work in Khon Kaen University challenging and it's not like working in Bangkok. But also you can contribute a lot and you have a lot to do in the regional university.

Khon Kaen is in the northeast. So actually Khon Kaen University when it was established 43 years ago was supposed to be the higher, like, university of the northeast. It's a regional university. So it was established at the same time with Chiang Mai University, which was supposed to be the university of the northern part of Thailand. So I got a master and I came back to work at KCU or Khon Kaen University.

But then I felt the need of getting higher degree to be in this academic circle. So not too long after I started working I started looking for other scholarships to further my study. But during my initial time at Khon Kaen, I also was involved in -- how you say -- like rural development project. Because I thought of myself as someone who came from the city, from Bangkok. And I came to work in Khon Kaen, which is rural area in the northeast, which is economically I think they thought of the northeast as the poorest area. So I like to learn about rural areas, villages and things like that.

I would say that my initial path at KCU, I had to learn about teaching. And it's all undergrad teaching. At the same time look for avenues to continue my education. So at that time in my faculty, and especially in my Department of Soil Science, there's a link

with Japan, Japanese scientists, through JSPS, Japan Society for Promotion of Science. So at first, I try this Monbusho [*Japan Ministry of Education*] scholarship to do my doctorate study. And there was a professor who had on-going research collaboration with my department in soil science who was interested in having me. So I tried Monbusho and it looked like I was going to get it because of the support of this very highly regarded professor.

Applying for EWC

But at the same time I also tried East-West Center scholarship. And at that time I think EAPI [*Environmental and Policy Institute*] through Terry Rambo had a very good collaboration with Professor Terd. Professor Terd Charoenwatana in my faculty. So Dr. Terd also recommended me and I think I met Terry once or twice in Khon Kaen, something like that. Then Dr. Terd told him that I was someone who had education from New Zealand and even if I was from Bangkok, I was interested in working in the rural context. So maybe Terry thought that this was quite good for someone like me. So then I applied to EAPI through the East-West Center and now I have two scholarships, but I don't know whether I would get any of them or not. Although I have, like, Japanese one, I had quite a good chance. But then I was somehow more inclined to come to the U.S. So then I was torn.

And then I felt rather not so good that if I turned this down I would disappoint the Japanese professor, that kind of thing. So I asked Dr. Terd whether he could find out what my chance was at that time. And then East-West Center informed us that I stood a good chance but they could not tell me for sure because now they got to get the yes from the UH [*University of Hawai'i*] also. The UH department, because you got to get yes

from both the East-West Center and UH, the graduate division, like that. So they said, well, I stood a good chance but they had to wait for the result. So then I decided to tell the Japanese side that I would like to withdraw.

At that time I wasn't sure whether I would get this (the EWC scholarship] but fortunately I get this one. And I tried to maintain good relation with the Japanese professor and wrote to him and that kind of things. Although I didn't get to come to work with him. So now I came to the East-West Center.

Life at EWC

On Scholarship, 1981-86

That was 1981. So I was initially at Khon Kaen University for just under two years.

Then I get the scholarship and come to the East-West Center. Actually I looked for other scholarship as well. Like my former professor in New Zealand who I did my master with, he was a graduate of University of Illinois. So he wrote to his former professor in Illinois and tried to find a like research assistantship and that kind of thing. But they didn't have it at that time. So finally I get to come to the East-West Center as a student grantee from '81 to January '86. I got my Ph.D., yes. I used up my four years as a student grantee but I could not finish. So I needed a little more time.

So Gerry Marten, who was my advisor at the East-West Center. In EAPI, yes. He was very kind. I asked him about an extension. So he helped me to get what they call professional associate. For six months but then I was able to finish before that. So then I was professional associate for several months also, to get the scholarship extended, yes.

Cooking Co-Op

I was also in a--so-called cooking co-op with some of the friends in Hale Kuahine.

Robina Bhatti from Pakistan and Ruth from Papua New Guinea and another friend from Singapore. It was a lot of fun because Robina always cooked spicy rice, very nice. She used an ordinary rice cooker, but she put spice and all that in and make it very distinctively nice. And Ruth cooked her Pacific island dish which she used the shoots of pumpkin. It's a soup dish cooked in coconut milk and that's so very nice. We eat together like that. So you took turn cooking. So it's very interesting. We didn't shop together, no. But we had this cooking co-op. So it was good.

EWC Participant Association

When I was a student I did some extracurricular activity also. So I was quite active. After I finished my comprehensive exam, which was a big load off your shoulder, then I participated in this Participant Association. I was made the vice president for Southeast Asia. So then we had to take some major responsibility -- you have to choose which one you want and finally somehow I got to do the International Fair for 1984. Actually people asked me, "Oh, why do you accept to do it?" Because it's quite a lot of work. Yeah, big job organizing. I remember an American student friend asked me -- he was in the Participant Association also and actually this one, somehow people tried to avoid it. To organize this. But somehow it fell on me. So when he asked me I said "Well, someone has got to do it." But anyway it was a very valuable experience. And I feel good about it till now, yeah.

So first you got to form an organizing committee. And I was so fortunate to have all my friends and colleagues in the committee who were so very supportive and helpful and had a lot of ideas and they're all different characters. I remember them very well. I remember Zailan Zakaria. She's from Malaysia. She's very, very helpful. And Leng-

Seow Tan from Singapore. Joshua Daniel from Sri Lanka. May -- I can't remember her surname. She's from Malaysia also. And the president at that time, he's American -- I have to think of his name -- the president of the East-West Center Participant Association. And one from New Zealand. So it's all very good, a lot of things that we had to work out and we had regular meetings. And each of them was assigned to different things and they came back to report and we had to solve problems one by one and things like that.

International Fair

International Fair is just a one-day event but it's food and cultural activities. So food, we have food booths that sell food from different countries in Asia-Pacific and the U.S. Yes, the students made themselves. For various countries and from various clubs, also like Vegetable Club. They harvested their vegetables from Hale Kuahine [*garden*] and then sold them.

So that was very nice and then we also made T-shirts and things like that, which was quite a good souvenir. And then for cultural activities we had different countries have their cultural performance on stage. So people can eat and enjoy the performances at the same time. It's a one-day event, which is enjoyed by the community as well, the whole community. In Jefferson Hall.

And also it's quite well-publicized in the Honolulu newspapers. So actually we got good cooperation from the journalists to write about it.

EAPI (Environment and Policy Institute)

My academic involvement was both at the East-West Center and at the UH. At first I got to look for an advisor. So I had to go 'round the EAPI [*Environment and Policy*

Institute] and talked to various research associate and finally it's Gerry Marten who's my advisor and he's very keen on it -- because he's under this program at EAPI, HITE, Human Interaction with Tropical Ecosystems, which was led by Terry Rambo.

The major activities that I was involved with were the agroecosystem studies. We used system perspective to investigate very special agricultural systems -- we put emphasis on those in Southeast Asia. He organized a long-term workshop on agroecosystem study, especially of agricultural systems in Southeast Asia. And he had people, both students and professional associates from various countries from Southeast Asia to contribute. He came up finally after a long time -- years -- with a volume that he edited on traditional agriculture in Southeast Asia. We all contributed and it's out of this workshop and continuing work after the workshop. I more or less combined this with my study at the UH to do my Ph.D. at the same time. So I would say it's quite solid for both things.

At that time I haven't taken any other extracurricular activity yet. No Participant Association yet because at that time I'm struggling with my study and also duties and things like that.

At the UH I went through the process of selecting my topic and my professor and that kind of thing. Finally I had Professor Goro Uehara as my professor and then I got Gerry and Professor Uehara to meet so they could understand my situation that I would have to work with both institutions. So it's nice of Gerry to agree to come to the department and meet my professor and get to know each other.

He's [*Gerry Marten*] very nice to students. He tried to give time, although he has so many other things to do. I think he paid a lot of attention to younger researchers, younger students. Mentoring, yes.

So the first two years were a lot of study at the UH and I worked at the East-West Center at the same time. And finally I passed my qualifying exam -- which is a lot of worry and after that comprehensive exam it was a big relief. I remember I had shingles after passing.

Yes, I didn't know that [*at first*] and then people explained to me, oh this is what happens when you are under great stress.

This happened after I had passed the comprehensive exam and then suddenly all these rashes or something came up. I didn't know I was under such stress. And then, I decided to take this International Fair thing because I thought, well, I should contribute. It's a lot of work but it's given me a lot of good memories and probably that's why I couldn't finish in four years also. But just a bit of extension, not too much. So I think it's worth it.

UH Research

I haven't mentioned my experience at the UH. Actually my degree -- even the professors in agronomy and soil science said that it's a little unusual because my minor was in human nutrition. So it's rather different mixture, rather unusual in that way. My dissertation topic was on how soil can influence or can modify the nutritional quality of food crops. My major professor, Goro Uehara, is a soil scientist, but my minor professor, who I worked a lot with, was Bluebell Standal and she's a professor in human nutrition. So I get very good support from both of them and both of them were very open-minded to have a student who was in the middle or crossed fields between human nutrition and soil science.

And at that time, the project that funded me for my dissertation was IBSNAT. IBSNAT, it's headed by Professor Goro Uehara. IBSNAT is International Benchmark Soils

Network for Agrotechnology Transfer. They were interested in my idea about looking at how soils can affect the nutritional quality of food crops. Because they had a bit of that in their project.

When I decided to take up this as my research topic for my Ph.D., then Professor Uehara supported it fully. At that time it was almost at the end of the life of this project. So they tried very hard to fit me in and appropriated the money and all needed to get my work done and then contacted Professor Standal to be my human nutrition advisor. So it was very, very good.

I got to do my field experiments, both in Oahu and in Molokai. So it was quite fun because I got to go to Molokai every now and then and travel on this very small plane. And every time I went they had to weigh me to know exactly how many kilos I weighed. Then I met up with a local person who took care of the research station there.

Life After EWC

Returning to Khon Kaen University

After finishing my Ph.D., I went back to Khon Kaen. Straight after I finished all the requirement. But somehow just before I left I had a different feeling than when I was leaving New Zealand. When I was leaving New Zealand it's like, oh, when I would have a chance to come back and things like that. When I was leaving Hawai'i, I didn't feel that I wouldn't come back. It's like we had many other activities and we had a lot of links and things like that and I felt pretty sure that I would get a chance to come back. Which was true, yeah. So it's different than New Zealand.

From my human nutrition experience, because this was my dissertation, when I went back to Khon Kaen I wanted to introduce to my students the connection, relationship,

between soil and the quality of the food crops. Because from agronomy viewpoint we always just think about how to increase production. How to increase the yield and things like that. But we pay less attention to the quality of the things that we produce. So when I was given this task to teach advanced soil fertility as a graduate level course, instead of just teaching about the nitrogen in the soil and phosphorus and sulfur and soil organic matter and all that, I have a section even if it's a smaller section on the soil influence on quality of food. Then in the introduction of the course I always tell my students that I want them to appreciate this side of things as well, if they become researchers or extension workers or something like that, and advise people how to improve soil fertility by putting fertilizer or organic materials, or putting lime to correct acid soils -- it doesn't have the effect just on improving the yield of the crops but it also affects the nutritional quality, such as vitamins.

The specific thing that I looked at in my dissertation research was what we call antinutrient. I looked at the oxalate and phytate and how oxalate can prevent the good use of calcium in the diet that you take. So I more or less try to influence my students on their way of thinking that they should think about the quality of food crops and not just *[how]* to improve the soil, just to increase yield like that.

When I first got back, before I get into trees and things because this is very fresh in my mind, it's my dissertation, so I tried to get some research going in this. Because in the northeast we have oxalate problem. You have this urinary bladder stone in the northeast. And actually Faculty of Medicine has been doing research on it but from medical viewpoint because a lot of people have big stones in their urinary bladders. I went to see a professor in Faculty of Medicine and proposed to him whether we could collaborate

and I would look at the soil, the production side. He was interested but somehow I wasn't skillful enough in grantsmanship. I couldn't get a research grant. So later it just faded away because other things came in. [*The Farming System Research and Sustainable Land Use projects involving*] trees in paddy fields in Northeast Thailand and things like that.

So I didn't get to do any more research from that side. But I did teach the students on this. And whenever I strike any papers or anything related to this topic, it always stimulate something in me to incorporate it into my teaching.

So that's that side. And another side is on agroforestry. I was into it because from research point of view it seemed to be saleable -- I was able to attract funding for research. And I can get on with it. So later I incorporate it into my teaching by establishing a course on agroforestry as a graduate level course. I started to have this course in 1995. It's a team teaching course. There's students from my own department and also from some social science department registering for it. So it's been more than 10 years now that this course has been going on.

This has led me into involvement with SEANAFE and later we were able to have our own Thai Network for Agroforestry Education.

My department has changed its name from soil science, close to 10 years now, to Land Resources and Environment. I guess to follow the trend. But we still keep telling and reminding each other that our main strength is in soil science. Although we recruit some new younger staff, we have three more now -- two in environmental science, and one in forestry -- we should keep our strength in soil science. But we broaden our soil science not only in agriculture but into environment as well. Then the new staff can more or less

join in and learn about soil science as well. Then we try to integrate to be Land Resources and Environment but with the emphasis on the role of soils in environment and not just in agriculture.

Khon Kaen has grown to become a very nice city with all the amenity and facilities that you can find in any good-sized city. But at the same time it's not too big. The only thing is we hope that it won't grow out of proportion and become like another Chiang Mai or Bangkok, but who can limit that, but at the moment it's quite nice.

Partnerships and Networks

Terry Rambo, SUAN Activities

After I left the East-West Center and went back, then we still in close contact with people in EAPI, especially with Terry. With Terry actually because at that time he had his SUAN activities, Southeast Asia University Agroecosystem Network. So I continued to be involved in various workshops and activities that are organized through this SUAN. My first project that I was involved with was with Dick Carpenter. But through Terry. Terry recommended me because at that time Dick Carpenter had this project on ecological application to land management, something like that. So he liked me to work on various land management and problems with the land use. So in Khon Kaen, where I worked, there was a project run by Forest Department, the Royal Forest Department on the use of agroforestry to help alleviate the problem of soil erosion.

So through the East-West Center I approached them and see whether I could collaborate with them. Because they had already built some erosion plots to study erosion. I approached them to see whether I could, in collaboration with them, do some research. They agreed and the head of the project in Puryong watershed joined Dick's project also.

So we collaborated and I sampled the sediments and things like that after rainstorms and brought back to the university for analysis. So I get to come back to the East-West Center for the first time to report for this workshop. Only a year after I left, then I get to come back on that project.

SUAN Activities, Mekong Delta

So actually first with Dick Carpenter but later continued on with Terry Rambo on SUAN activities. We get to go to Vietnam. First in 1990, and this was to conduct a study in Mekong Delta. I was so excited because at that time Vietnam was so near but it's like it's so far because it's so hard to get to -- at that time it's not so open yet. I was so excited. We traveled to Mekong Delta and we got to go by this boat, by bus and then the bus get into this very big boat to cross several channels of the Mekong.

From Saigon. To travel from Saigon and then by bus, all that. So our collaborator there was Dr. Thuong. He's an engineer. He organized this from Saigon University. And then we traveled to Can Tho. And at Can Tho, the host was Professor Vo Tong Xuan. We went for trips to interview farmers in Mekong Delta and we had to go by boat. We interviewed different farmers of different backgrounds. So it was very interesting. For two weeks, something like that. We usually stayed at some district offices. When we traveled to different places we went by boat. So I maintained my involvement with the East-West Center through all these activities.

Agroforestry Projects, Thailand

Dr. Terd was the head of Farming System Research Project and he's a very close colleague to Terry Rambo. So I also joined the Farming System Research Project and the activity was more or less intertwined with the SUAN activities. The Farming System

Project was funded by USAID. And then there's another parallel project funded by Ford Foundation in Khon Kaen University at that time. It's called Sustainable Land Use, something like that. I was involved in that also. And through this I was introduced to the work on trees in paddy fields in Northeast Thailand.

Actually these trees in paddy fields were first studied by Terry and Somluckrat Grandstaff. They are husband and wife, American husband and a Thai wife. Terry is a Ph.D. in anthropology. And he graduated from Hawaii here. Dr. Somluckrat was a former economic professor from Thammasat University and she used to spend quite some time here as a fellow I think. Both of them actually as fellows. They came as researchers under this Ford-funded Rural System Research project.

They were so interested in why in the northeast agricultural fields, there are so many trees scattered in paddies. They began their investigation employing the technique RRA, Rapid Rural Appraisal. They're the ones who more or less developed the technique and have used it to investigate various agroecosystems in the northeast and also later conduct quite a lot of trainings to spread the use of the techniques. At East-West Center, too. They're among the first ones who started investigating trees in paddy fields. So when I came back they introduced me to this through the project in this group under the leadership of Dr. Terd. I got to investigate trees in paddy fields by looking at the effect of trees on soil because my training is soil science. So that became my interest -- I'm still very much a promoter of trees growing and try to integrate trees into agricultural fields.

EWC's Impact

On Career/Agroforestry Education

This got me involved later with ICRAF, International Council for Research in

Agroforestry. ICRAF's name has changed to World Agroforestry, but the acronym is still ICRAF. Then later, through ICRAF, there was a regional center for agroforestry education called SEANAFE, Southeast Asia Network for Agroforestry Education.

Through SEANAFE they asked me to help them with strengthening the education side of agroforestry. I was made an education fellow for a year to gather information on existing courses or programs or degree programs in agroforestry in Thailand. So I collaborated with my other colleagues from different regions in Thailand.

I'm responsible for the northeast and I'm the overall coordinator as well in the central, in the north, in the south. Then I gathered the information and wrote a paper for them on the existing education in agroforestry. They had other educational fellows in Vietnam, in Indonesia and all that for Southeast Asia. So then they got the information and they published a book in 1999.

So now it's 2006. They're doing a restudy but they have another academic to handle this for Thailand now. They want to see how much progress education in agroforestry has made.

Through that SEANAFE we were able to establish -- my colleague in faculty of forestry in Kasetsart University. That's the only school of forestry in Thailand. So we help each other and with the help of SEANAFE tried to push for national networks in agroforestry education and were able to get the ThaiNAFE -- Thailand Network for Agroforestry Education -- started.

I would say this has come out of my involvement with the East-West Center. I worked through SUAN network and with people in the SUAN network, with Terry Rambo. And with people who used to be here like Terry Grandstaff, Somluckrat Grandstaff, and

formed my own interest and it has become my research, dealing with having trees in cultivated fields and education. I more or less established a course in agroforestry, a graduate level course. And then this has led me to be involved with SEANAFE and then ThaiNAFE. So it's all linked from the past to the present and still going on.

[Editor's note: Vityakon was asked if her East-West Center experience helped her become a better networker or collaborator in her field of work.]

I think so yes. To work in the context of different institutions and even from different countries backgrounds and everything.

On Perspectives

I wouldn't say the East-West Center changed me. Because I'm in the process of development, growing up. It's part of my development into this, because actually when I was in New Zealand studying agriculture and soil science, I was involved in a lot of international activities.

In New Zealand, I remember on one occasion there was an announcement of East-West Center scholarship. And a friend of mine from Bangladesh came and said, "Oh Patma, you should apply for this. This suits you." He said something like that. I remember that. So maybe he saw me as someone who made many international friends in New Zealand. Maybe the fact that he said that was because he looked at me as someone who's interested in international culture and like to make friends with international people, people from different culture and that kind of thing. I would say the East-West Center experience has added, strengthened and deepened my experience.

Ties That Last

Marriage to Terry Rambo

[Editor's note: Patma Vityakon married Terry Rambo in 1998.]

We are involved with each other in the capacity of he's a research associate here and I was a student. Then because of the close collaboration that he had with Khon Kaen University, after I had graduated and went back to Thailand, we had close collaboration. Actually, when I was at the East-West Center, Gerry Marten was my advisor. So Terry was involved more, at a more distance.

Gerry Marten was in this HITE program -- he had his own more natural science-oriented program while Terry was in more social science, although he's also very interdisciplinary. I worked more closely with Gerry as my advisor. But Terry was always in the background.

When I went back to Khon Kaen, I was involved in SUAN and Terry was a very strong supporter of our farming system group and the Ford-funded group led by Dr. Terd Cheroenwatana. So we never ceased involvement and interaction. We had all this workshops in Vietnam and then a SUAN symposium in Thailand.

So I respect him very much from his working and his sincerity, try to help Khon Kaen University. And maybe he was very positive with me about my sincerity -- I'm more an urban person but when I get the scholarship and I was to be at Khon Kaen which is a regional [*rural*] university, I commit myself to work there. It's different than Bangkok, I would say, and I was prepared to be there in a long term actually.

When I was at the UH, I studied Laotian language here. My teacher was Tom Gething, who's an American, but he taught me Lao because he spent a lot of time in Laos. I

learned Lao because in the northeast in Khon Kaen, the ethnic language is close to Lao, Laotian language. So I think Terry was impressed with my commitment.

So we respect each other a lot. Then his wife passed away. Actually he and I got married more than 10 years after that happened. So it didn't happen instantly or anything like that. It's very gradual but I think we respect each other.

We registered in Bangkok. Because you see my family home is in Bangkok, and in Thailand you have to have your *[marriage]* registration where your house registration is. Even if I was in Khon Kaen for a long time, my house registration was still with my family.

So we have all the paperwork done in Bangkok. Then we had the traditional ceremony in my Bangkok family house. The traditional ceremony for Thai wedding is such that the older elder relatives and elder colleagues, pour water into the couple's hands and then you have this sacred sort-of-like string to join the couple. And then they bless you. You have string attached to the couple's heads.

Terry had some of his Vietnamese colleagues come from Hanoi also. Because at that time he was working as an East-West Center representative in Vietnam. His best man was Neil Jamieson because Neil and Terry are very old friends, best friends, and then he had his Charmaine and Clair, his two daughters, come from the U.S.

So we had the traditional ceremony then and two days afterwards we had a reception in Khon Kaen in a hotel there, so all my colleagues and his colleagues in Khon Kaen could come. And also some from Chiang Mai did come also. About two months later, we had another reception in Hanoi. Yes, for the Vietnamese colleagues there. So then Terry

asked me whether I would mind wearing an “*ao dai*,” Vietnamese traditional dress. So the Vietnamese colleagues were very pleased.

And then later when we came to Hawai‘i for the first time as a married couple, we had a party at Helen Griffith's house also. So people were very kind to us.

Married Life at Khon Kaen University

We live in the faculty housing at Khon Kaen. Terry is in the position of a “special professor” in this international program called System Approach to Agriculture. So he's still able to teach human ecology, which is his specialty. At the same time he can use the material from SUAN days and the material produced by the KCU Farming System Group and the Sustainable Rural Development Group to teach students. So, well, he loves it.

He said his involvement keeps him young but at the same time he didn't want to go at the pace that he used to. So it's good. He still likes to be involved but not at a too stressful pace.

He likes to spend like three months a year in Hawai‘i and maintain his work and connection with the East-West Center.

He'd like to see how America is developing also. Otherwise, he still thinks of Hawai‘i as his home. Maybe his first home even.