

East-West Center Oral History Project: Patma Vityakon



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Patma Vityakon, born in Bangkok, went to New Zealand for her bachelor's and master's degrees in soil science on a Colombo Plan scholarship. Returning to Thailand in 1979, she immediately started teaching at the rural Khon Kaen University. Vityakon came to EWC in 1981 as a student grantee to get her Ph.D. studying the effects of soils on human nutrition. She was active in the EWC Participant Association and chaired the organizing committee for the 1984 International Fair. Vityakon continued her involvement with the Environment and Policy Institute after her return to Thailand, with field research collaboration and helping to build Southeast Asia agroforestry networks. In 1998 she married EWC researcher A. Terry Rambo and the couple now teaches at Khon Kaen University in Thailand.

Read Vityakon's interview narrative (see separate pdf)

- **Personal Background**
- **Life Before EWC** - Khon Kaen University - Applying for EWC
- **Life at EWC** - On Scholarship, 1981-86 - Cooking Co-op - EWC Participant Association - International Fair - EAPI (Environment and Policy Institute) - UH Research
- **Life After EWC** - Returning to Khon Kaen University
- **Partnerships and Networks** - Terry Rambo, SUAN Activities - SUAN Activities, Mekong Delta - Agroforestry Projects, Thailand
- **EWC's Impact** - On Career / Agroforestry Education - On Perspectives
- **Ties That Last** - Marriage to Terry Rambo - Married Life at Khon Kaen University

Interview Quotes

"I was also in a so-called cooking co-op with some of the friends in Hale Kuahine, yes. Robina Bhatti from Pakistan and Ruth from Papua New Guinea and another friend from Singapore. And 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 would eat together. So you took turns cooking. So it's very interesting."

On planning the 1984 International Fair:

"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."

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.

LINK (as of 06/12/2020)

<https://www.eastwestcenter.org/research/research-information-services/oral-history-project/patma-vityakon>