

Teacher Interchange Program: A U.S. Student's View

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Each year teachers from the East and West are brought together in a program at the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii to further the basic objective of the Center: developing understanding among the peoples of Asia and America. The Teacher Interchange Program (TIP) provides scholarships to American high school teachers to specialize in Asian Language and Area Studies, and to Asian high school teachers to specialize in American Studies or English Language or Literature. Curriculum coordinators and school principals are also eligible for the program. In 1963-64 there were eighteen Americans and eighteen Asians from Japan, Taiwan, Korea and Indonesia. I was fortunate to have been one of the eighteen Americans chosen to participate in this program during that year.

To promote day-to-day cultural interchange among East-West Center grantees, all grantees with the exception of married students were housed in the new and modern East-West Center residence halls with Americans and Asians as roommates. Extra-curricular activities, such as picnics, parties, community visitations, lectures, movies and discussions augmented classroom interaction. During the first semester, luncheon meetings were held where visiting East-West Center scholars from various disciplines spoke to the group.

In academic work the Asian students devoted most of their time to

the study of methods of improving and teaching of English and in understanding contemporary American society. The Americans, in turn, took courses in Asian languages or in Asian Studies, or in the History, Geography, Sociology, or Economics of a particular Asian country. However, for at least one course each semester the two groups met in a joint seminar. During the first semester Dr. Ronald Anderson, director of the Asian Studies Program, taught a Comparative Education course which compared education in the United States with education in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Red China, Indonesia, and India. The Asian grantees brought current firsthand information about educational processes and problems of their respective countries. American education practices seemed perplexing at first to the Asians since the decentralized school system of United States very often did not provide a single example from which generalizations for the nation as a whole could be elicited. For example, an anecdote involving the New York City Public Schools could not easily be related to the schools of suburban Madison in mid-west Wisconsin, or to the unique and atypical state-centralized public school system of Hawaii.

During the second semester, a seminar in American Studies was offered. It was a social science interdisciplinary approach in understanding the peoples of Asia and America and was led by Professors of Amer-

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ican Studies Reuel Denney, Gene Hamaker, and James M. McCutcheon. These two and one half hour lectures covered a variety of topics such as "Time, Leisure, and Leadership in Society," "Religion and Mores," "The Family," and "Education." After each lecture a spontaneous critique was given by an American and an Asian student which was then followed by a general discussion. In other class meetings, panel members were selected to lead the class in a follow-up discussion of the preceding lecture. During the presentations and critiques in the seminar, everyone recognized that the membership represented but a limited segment of both the Asian and American societies. Nonetheless, it was stimulating and enlightening to listen to the variations in the narratives of individuals whether the topic of discussion was concerned with the use of leisure time activities, religious practices in one's country, or in child-rearing philos-

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