

East-West Center Oral History Project: Ilpyong Kim



Ilpyong Kim

Ilpyong J. Kim, born in Seoul, Korea in 1931, served as a commissioned officer in the United Nations Forces during the Korean War and was awarded the U.S. Bronze Star Medal for distinguished service and bravery in 1953. After the war, he obtained his M.A. and Ph.D. in political science at Columbia University. As a research associate in the Institute of Advanced Projects from 1963-65, he served as rapporteur for the Institute's Senior Scholars-in-Residence program, where "men of established professional standing from universities and colleges, government agencies, and research institutes" came from the Asia Pacific region and the United States "for intensive work on a series of common problems important to the development of their countries and to strengthening of cooperative professional ties between the US and the region." [*EWC 3rd annual report*, page 15.] Here it was, he says, that he became convinced of the importance of the exchange of ideas between scholars from the East and the West. With this perspective, he went on to teach at various US and Asian universities for 35 years specializing in comparative politics and international relations of East Asia. He is currently Professor Emeritus of Political Science and International Relations, University of Connecticut at Storrs. In March and April of 2007 he was a POSCO fellow at EWC.

Read Kim's interview narrative (see separate pdf)

- **Personal Background**
- **Intellectual Innovations** - Institute of Advanced Projects
- **Life at EWC** - Early 1960s - Graduate Program, 1960s - Best Memories
- **EWC's Impact** - Changing Students' Perspectives - On Career, Perspectives
- **Ties That Last** - Connection to Hawai'i - Future EWC Priorities - Personal Legacy

Interview Quotes

"Lincoln Hall housed the Institute of Advanced Projects, the visiting scholars' offices in those days. A couple of people I knew from the East-West Center, after finishing M.A., went to the mainland to work toward Ph.D. and became professors. Many other alumni of East-West Center returned to their homeland and became professors and professionals. So, in that sense, East-West Center made significant contribution to our thinking of how to integrate or synthesize East and West. So the East-West Center functioned as the incubator for many Americans who became Asian specialists and Asians who introduced American culture to Asia."

"Throughout my academic career, because of my spending a couple years here at East-West Center, really made me to think in terms of East-West comparison, or East-West relations, and how to bridge the gap between the Asian way of thinking and the Western way of thinking. So I became to think and to look at East and West more comparatively and try to search for similarities that could be integrated or synthesized into one universal culture."

"It was my role to create the atmosphere in which the Asian and American scholars meet and understand each other. It was also my duty to write the summary of what has been discussed each session [IAP] and then set up the agenda for the next meeting. It was a kind of advanced seminar in which the American scholars might learn the administrative culture from the Asian scholars, and the Asian scholars might learn about public policymaking and techniques of public administration from the American experts. It was very interesting to see Eastern and the Western culture interacting and how their thinking as well as approaches were sharpened with comparative perspectives."

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 06/05/2020)

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