

# MESEISET

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## The GOOD, the BAD, and the UGLY: A Peek Into the History of Micronesia

by Edwino Akira

The history of Micronesia is a history of change. The change has been social, economic, and political, among other things. It has been good and bad, as well as ugly. Let us read about some changes, as written by students in SS 150 (History of Micronesia). ▢

### TÉÉCHAP

by SS 150 Students\*

Today we define *tééchap* as fund-raising, but many of us have different ideas about it.

When World War Two ended, the Chuukese people were suffering. They needed to rebuild their lives after the war's destruction.

In 1947, Petrus Mailo, a famous *itang*, created the word. It came from two other words which Petrus put together: *tée* (which means to go forward or even crawl) and *chap* (which means to fall backward and face down). Some say that it means *apworo*, or to get together to solve a problem. Others define the word as

“go for broke”. Still others say that *tééchapw* is really a Pohnpeian word.

Nowadays, we think of *tééchapw* as an activity for working together and collecting money to renovate buildings or to improve the community. Also, we think of the word as a kind of language change — a good change — which we have made without foreign assistance. ▢

(\*) Student contributors include Willenda Nimwes Bil-limon, Flynn Fredy, Frank Michael, Domiko Moses, Richy Petrus, Johanson Saret, Dunevich Sefich, and Antia Titus.

### WHERE IS RESPECT GOING?

by

Ai-Tong Enlet, Daryl Irons & Arthur Itamin

Traditional respect is changing and troubling families, work, and marriages. In a family, a son may respect friends more than his own parents. At work, an employee talks bad about another. In marriage, a husband does not respect his wife, disregards her brothers, and gets a divorce. This is not respect; it is the negative way in human relationships. Why does this negative change happen to us?

First, the clan used to be all-powerful. People in a clan did not want to hurt each other. Now, as **INDIVIDUALISM** increases and as social responsibility decreases, individual family members do not worry about their own families or clans. They do what they want to do, and they do not care how the family or clan feels. Individualism!

Second, **DEMOCRACY** in Chuuk can be bad when it encourages the same individualism and disregards the same social responsibility. We begin to think that our freedoms stand above our social obligations. We forget

that, like a coin, one side of our lives may be freedoms, but the other side of the same coin requires social obligations. Democracy!

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## LANGUAGE CHANGE WILL NEVER STOP!

by

Frank Michael, Ruben Rosokow & Antia Titus\*

Our Micronesian languages change all the time with and without the help of foreigners. An example without foreign help is our own *tééchapw*. But, of course, our languages have borrowed vocabulary words from the Spanish, German, Japanese, and American languages.

First, below is a list of 22 Spanish borrowed words in Chuuk. Do you know all of them, and more?

(01) <i>alato</i>	(09) <i>kantela</i>	(17) <i>sacramento</i>
(02) <i>antare</i>	(10) <i>loyola</i>	(18) <i>salator</i>
(03) <i>arkangel</i>	(11) <i>mapuchi</i>	(19) <i>salatora</i>
(04) <i>asension</i>	(12) <i>matere</i>	(20) <i>santisimo</i>
(05) <i>ermano</i>	(13) <i>paska</i>	(21) <i>soprano</i>
(06) <i>hostia</i>	(14) <i>pastor</i>	(22) <i>stasio</i>
(07) <i>insenso</i>	(15) <i>patere</i>	(23) <i>sutana</i>
(08) <i>kansino</i>	(16) <i>relikia</i>	(24) <i>Teus</i>

Second, we found only nine German borrowed words, as shown in the box above.

On the other hand, in the case of Japanese borrowed words, we found a minimum of 90 words. There are many more. Below is a partial list:

(01) <i>ampai</i>	(28) <i>kiramerú</i>	(55) <i>renna</i>
(02) <i>atake</i>	(29) <i>kita</i>	(56) <i>rensú</i>
(03) <i>chassi</i>	(30) <i>koro</i>	(57) <i>riaka</i>
(04) <i>chikongki</i>	(31) <i>kuropw</i>	(58) <i>rukusentái</i>
(05) <i>chipwosta</i>	(32) <i>kusu</i>	(59) <i>saichopa</i>
(06) <i>chokking</i>	(33) <i>maskú</i>	(60) <i>sakanto</i>
(07) <i>choseng</i>	(34) <i>masta</i>	(61) <i>saramata</i>
(08) <i>chusing</i>	(35) <i>mihari</i>	(62) <i>sato</i>
(09) <i>etái</i>	(36) <i>mungane</i>	(63) <i>seito</i>
(10) <i>fasto</i>	(37) <i>nangkui</i>	(64) <i>sense</i>
(11) <i>fintosi</i>	(38) <i>okasi</i>	(65) <i>sensú</i>
(12) <i>fuseng</i>	(39) <i>oror</i>	(66) <i>sensukang</i>
(13) <i>hachimaki</i>	(40) <i>pakkú</i>	(67) <i>sentoki</i>
(14) <i>hairú</i>	(41) <i>pakúfú</i>	(68) <i>sikoki</i>
(15) <i>hanchúpong</i>	(42) <i>pakutang</i>	(69) <i>simpúng</i>
(16) <i>iakkiú</i>	(43) <i>pampeí</i>	(70) <i>sipiringú</i>
(17) <i>ien</i>	(44) <i>patta</i>	(71) <i>taihachú</i>
(18) <i>kaingun</i>	(45) <i>pengkio</i>	(72) <i>taiho</i>
(19) <i>kairu</i>	(46) <i>pokungo</i>	(73) <i>taiso</i>
(20) <i>kamwété</i>	(47) <i>pwachchi</i>	(74) <i>tangkiri</i>
(21) <i>kareta</i>	(48) <i>rakka</i>	(75) <i>tempwo</i>
(22) <i>katana</i>	(49) <i>rakkasa</i>	(76) <i>tengki</i>
(23) <i>kawa</i>	(50) <i>ramune</i>	(77) <i>tengko</i>
(24) <i>ketaii</i>	(51) <i>ranchú</i>	(78) <i>torakú</i>
(25) <i>kikanchú</i>	(52) <i>ranning</i>	(79) <i>totai</i>
(26) <i>kiowakkai</i>	(53) <i>rappwa</i>	(80) <i>utong</i>
(27) <i>kippú</i>	(54) <i>rekingun</i>	(81) <i>zori</i>

(82) <i>eksait</i>	(85) <i>kintahin</i>	(88) <i>maak</i>
(83) <i>Elpet</i>	(86) <i>lehang</i>	(89) <i>sepeniin</i>
(84) <i>Erpet</i>	(87) <i>lufaferrh</i>	(90) <i>tok</i>

Finally, what about borrowed words from American English? We know that there are more than Japanese borrowed words, but we have listed below only 96 words.

(01) <i>aisches</i>	(33) <i>lait</i>	(65) <i>reitia</i>
(02) <i>aispwoks</i>	(34) <i>lefen</i>	(66) <i>safol</i>
(03) <i>ákson</i>	(35) <i>lóók</i>	(67) <i>sea</i>
(04) <i>aluminum</i>	(36) <i>makasin</i>	(68) <i>sééch</i>
(05) <i>ama</i>	(37) <i>mwesiin</i>	(69) <i>sel-foon</i>
(06) <i>apel</i>	(38) <i>mwota</i>	(70) <i>seneteison</i>
(07) <i>chepel</i>	(39) <i>nius</i>	(71) <i>simen</i>
(08) <i>chet</i>	(40) <i>notpwuk</i>	(72) <i>sipw</i>
(09) <i>erhkóón</i>	(41) <i>ofes</i>	(73) <i>siroks</i>
(10) <i>erhpwort</i>	(42) <i>óil</i>	(74) <i>sisal</i>
(11) <i>fail</i>	(43) <i>órus</i>	(75) <i>sitof</i>
(12) <i>filaik</i>	(44) <i>pakpak</i>	(76) <i>softiring</i>
(13) <i>hantikáp</i>	(45) <i>palastik</i>	(77) <i>spám</i>
(14) <i>inises</i>	(46) <i>pasikit</i>	(78) <i>suke</i>
(15) <i>káápwich</i>	(47) <i>pásket</i>	(79) <i>sukuru</i>
(16) <i>káás</i>	(48) <i>pattiri</i>	(80) <i>sus</i>
(17) <i>kampiuter</i>	(49) <i>peet</i>	(81) <i>taia</i>
(18) <i>kap</i>	(50) <i>peinaper</i>	(82) <i>taip</i>
(19) <i>karasin</i>	(51) <i>peinit</i>	(83) <i>taksi</i>
(20) <i>kattu</i>	(52) <i>pelit</i>	(84) <i>taun</i>
(21) <i>kii</i>	(53) <i>pen</i>	(85) <i>telefon</i>
(22) <i>kipworht</i>	(54) <i>pilei</i>	(86) <i>tep</i>
(23) <i>kis</i>	(55) <i>printer</i>	(87) <i>termos</i>
(24) <i>kofi</i>	(56) <i>propein</i>	(88) <i>ti</i>
(25) <i>komw</i>	(57) <i>pwakit</i>	(89) <i>tiffi</i>
(26) <i>kónteiner</i>	(58) <i>pwakit</i>	(90) <i>tiin</i>
(27) <i>kóuu</i>	(59) <i>pwes</i>	(91) <i>tiis</i>
(28) <i>króun</i>	(60) <i>pwor</i>	(92) <i>tipwot</i>
(29) <i>kúlok</i>	(61) <i>pwuk</i>	(93) <i>tiromw</i>
(30) <i>laam</i>	(62) <i>rais</i>	(94) <i>toner</i>
(31) <i>laimus</i>	(63) <i>rauses</i>	(95) <i>tóun</i>
(32) <i>lain</i>	(64) <i>reik</i>	(96) <i>Transko</i>

So, is it good for us the Micronesians to change our languages by borrowing foreign words? The more, the better! ☺

(\*) With assistance from the following classmates: Willenda Billimon, Marvin Cholymay, Justleen Daniel, Ai-tong Enlet, Adrianna Hainrick, Yolanda Herry, Daryl Irons, Arthur Itamin, Emailyn Made, Domiko Moses, Trisha Omwere, Richy Petrus, Marivic Preciado, Kelvin Raymond, Johanson Saret, Dunevich Sefich, Chavon Sirom, Enseleen Sirom, Juliet Soram, D.M. Sorim, Samanta Tedor, and Andme Uruo.

## ARE COMPUTERS GOOD OR BAD?

by

Domiko Moses, Trisha Omwere & Samanda Tedor

Most of us would agree that changes in technology are good. After all, we have transportation improvements. Canoes may be good, of course, but so are ships, motorboats, airplanes, and cars. But let us spend a little time on another technological change — computers.

Okay, in the past, we used the *séwi*, or conch shell, to communicate. Nowadays, we have computers, and they let us communicate very quickly with people throughout the world. After all, we have Internet and e-mail. At Chuuk Campus, we need Internet search engines for research. So, computers are good. Right?

On the other hand, many students spend a lot of time on computers, using YouTube, Facebook, and other social media, just to chat with friends, to steal music, or to watch pornography. According



to a report from Palikir administration a few years ago, 90% of COM-FSM computer time is spent on social media. So, computers at Chuuk Campus are bad. Right?

So, what should we do? Should we take away the computers from student use? After all, students are experts at computer misuse and abuse. Should students change the way that they use the computers? Students are students. What should we do? ☐

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## LET'S TALK EDUCATION

by

Marivic Preciado and Andme Uruo

Education is good — right? This is what most Chuukese would say. So, let us look into history to find answers.

During the Spanish era in the Marianas, missionaries taught vocational skills, as well as religious instruction, to Chamorros.

The German administration in 1905 built public schools in Micronesia. According to a Micronesian Seminar report entitled The German Era, *"In the Carolines and Marshalls, the Germans provided formal education only to those few chosen to serve as policemen."* Oh, does that mean that Micronesian police officers had to protect foreigners from Micronesian troublemakers?

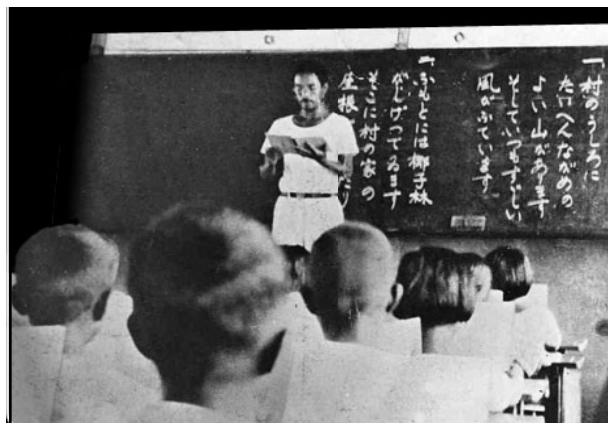
The Japanese era was something else. As far as we are concerned, Japan's purpose in education was to Japanize Micronesians. Another Micronesian Seminar article entitled In Search of a Home: Colonial Education in Micronesia (1975) Japan wanted to socialize Micronesians with *"blessings of civilization"*. Oh, does that mean that we were really uncivilized, maybe primitive and definitely uneducated?

We found a black-and-white picture (right) of a classroom in Pohnpei during the Japanese ad-

ministration. It shows Pohnpeian students learning the Japanese language. This picture comes from a Micronesian Seminar mini-photo album (2003) entitled A Brief History of Education in Micronesia. Japanization, right?

Then, the American era began soon after World War Two. Many Micronesian leaders said that America's educational policy was to Americanize us. Well, look around ourselves. It looks true.

So, is education in Micronesia really good? Is it good for us the Micronesians to be Japanized or Americanized? Our SS 150 instructor Alton Higashi says that we should ask ourselves that question. Some of us may say that education is good, and others may say that it is bad. What do you think? ☐



## A NEW KIND OF SUICIDE

by Jo Bernard, Johanson Saret & DM Sorim

Pollution in Chuuk — a long time ago? Sure, we polluted our environment before foreigners came to our islands. However, it was not much.

Then, foreigners came and brought different kinds of land, sea, and air pollution. Of course, let us not just blame foreigners, because we are guilty as well. For instance, we throw our trash everywhere. Our dump sites are filthy and stink. We litter anywhere we want. There are two problems with this situation. First, we destroy our own environment. Second, we do not care if the environment is destroyed. We must be stupid!

We want paved roads, and so our government has the road construction project on Weno. Just look at the mud everywhere on these roads, running into the sea and killing reefs along the shoreline.

What are we doing to ourselves? Is this the kind of change that we want for our future? Are we causing our own environmental suicide? 🌀



muddy road  
construction



mud run-off  
near Seaside

trash here, trash there,  
trash everywhere!



## JUST SAY NO!

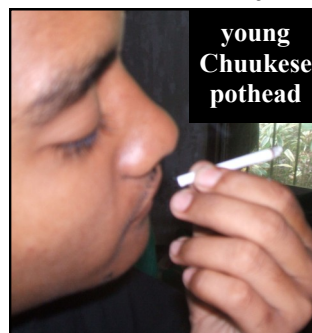
by AJ Bisalen, Richy Petrus & Dunevich Sefich

Drug abuse is rampant in Chuuk! Let us talk about only two kinds — alcohol and marijuana.

The traditional Chuukese did not have alcohol before foreigners came here. However, liquor was drunk by the foreigners, and the islanders did not get invited to these drinking parties. Then, in 1966 and 1967, our government allowed Chuukese to drink liquor, such as beer. Well, we know what has happened in the past 45 years — alcoholism! Just look at the Chuukese drunkards all over the place. We even have some on our own campus!

In the case of marijuana, the first time it was introduced was 1967. A Peace Corps Volunteer planted marijuana seeds on Nema Island. Well, again, we know what has happened in the past 45 years — a whole bunch of Chuukese potheads! And each one of us knows someone who smokes pot. Don't we know how to talk to that person and to advise him or her to stop smoking marijuana?

Alcoholism, marijuana use, and other kinds



young  
Chuukese  
pothead

of drug abuse are not the fault of any foreigners. It is our own fault. If we do not want this problem in our islands, then the solution is actually quite easy — just say NO! 🌀



## A SPECIAL HISTORY OF THE COPRA INDUSTRY

by Karty Benjamin and Atson Tomita

We read an interesting report by the Micronesian Seminar entitled "When Copra Was King". Fascinating was a collection of photos of copra traders during the late 19th century. Let us share these photos, thanks to the Micronesian Seminar.

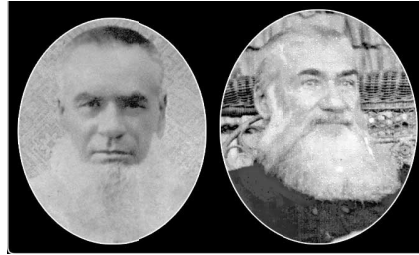
Two copra traders in the Marshalls in the 1860s were Adolph Capelle (Germany) and Anton DeBrum (Portugal). The report said that they *"were the real founders of the copra trade in Micronesia"*.

The next two in the 1870s were Bully Hayes (U.S.) and David O'Keefe (Ireland). Hayes' copra business was in the Eastern Carolines, and O'Keefe worked in Yap.

Then, in the 1880s, Charlie Irons (England) set up copra trading stations on Polowat and in Chuuk Lagoon. Pierre Nedelic (France) set up stations in Pohnpei, Mortlocks, and Chuuk Lagoon.

Finally, in the 1890s, two Japanese men became copra traders in Chuuk: Magohira Shirai and Koben Mori.

Of course, copra is nothing new in our islands. We have used it as food and body oil for hundreds of



DeBrum

Capelle



Hayes



O'Keefe



Irons



Nedelic



Shirai



Mori

dustury in the 1860s.

So, why did foreigners want copra? It was, and still is, a commercial ingredient used to make other kinds of food, such as margarine, vegetable oil, soup, cookies, and candies. It is used to make soap, shampoo, candles, cosmetics, and even glue. Really, this is all true!

Unfortunately, Micronesia is no longer a big copra producer. Other countries, such as the Philippines, Papua New Guinea, India, and Indonesia produce today most of the world's copra as a commercial product.

It is sad that the copra industry is gone from our islands, and we still need economic development. Many unemployed people could become copra farmers and earn good money. Why do we not want



## IMPORTED FOOD

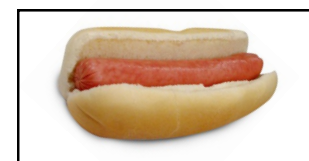
by

Flynn Fredy, Enseleen Sirom & Kelvin Raymond

We talk so much about how imported food has changed our lives. That is true, but think about it.

Sure, imported food — such as canned meat, rice, hot dogs, turkey tail, and other items in stores — have come from foreign nations. All the same, we the Chuukese people buy these items, because we want to eat them! Let's not be so quick in blaming foreigners for what we have done to ourselves.

So, let us thank ourselves for this change from foreign countries. We are very happy to have high-blood pressure, high blood-sugar levels, diabetes, heart attack, obesity, and other health-related joys! Change is good — ha, ha, ha!



# An Ugly Change in Micronesia: Nuclear Bomb Testing in the Marshalls

by Adrianna Hainrick, Jonah Hainrick, and Willenda Billimon



## Part 1: Brief History of the Testing

In 1946, a year after World War Two had ended, the U.S. military brought the ugliest change to Micronesia. It was nuclear bomb testing in the Marshall Islands. The first test (above) was at the Northern Marshallese island of Bikini (below).

For 12 years, from 1964 to 1978, the U.S. military did 67 nuclear bomb tests at Bikini and Eniwetok atolls. The first was an atomic bomb, and it

*(continued on page 7)*

## Part 2: Effects of Nuclear Fallout

The singlemost destructive effect of the nuclear bomb testing was **radioactive fallout**. It was a yellowish dust from the test sites, and it spread in the atmosphere, falling on several Marshallese islands nearby. The dust was poisonous.

At first, the fallout did not seem to hurt anyone. Then, after a few weeks, months, and years, the effect began to show itself.

*(continued on page 7)*





## Part 1: Brief History of the Testing

(continued from page 6)

was 500 times as powerful as the one atomic bomb dropped on the city of Hiroshima, Japan. Beginning in 1954, the U.S. military began testing hydrogen bombs, not atomic bombs. One hydrogen bomb was 1,000 times the Hiroshima bomb.

Now, the people of Bikini and Enewetak cannot live on their own islands. Their islands were destroyed by the nuclear bomb tests. As far as we are concerned, the U.S. military was super-ugly. It was interested in developing a weapon for the purpose of war, not peace. It was not at all interested in the Marshallese people. After all, the bomb testing program lasted 12 years. If the U.S. military cared about the Marshallese people, the U.S. military leaders could have ended the program. They did not. ☹



## Part 2: Effects of Nuclear Fallout

(continued from page 6)

Women who were pregnant during the testing and fallout had different experiences. The lucky ones had stillbirths (at delivery, the babies were already dead). Other women delivered children with serious mental retardation or physical deformities. Still other women gave premature birth to babies that looked just like fish and dogs.

Men and women, both, also developed sterility. In other words, they became "riit" and could not have children. Their sperm and eggs had been destroyed by radioactivity.

Many islanders who played in the yellow dust or even ate it like falling snow became sick with nausea, vomiting, and itching of the skin and eyes. Others received severe skin burns and lesions. In 1963, the first cases of thyroid tumors of cancer appeared among the Marshallese. In 1972, a one-year-old boy developed a blood disease called leukemia. He was medevaced to a hospital in Maryland. He died.

The radioactive dust fell onto land and in the sea. Land, sea, and reef resources were poisoned. In 1975, the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission published a report, saying that "the consumption of pandanus, breadfruit, and coconut crab was prohibited."

There is a chemical element in radioactivity. It is called **strontium-90**, or  $Sr^{90}$ . When it enters the human body, it goes directly to bones. The bones then become weak, and in a few years the bones cannot hold the person up. So, the person becomes physically handicapped until he or she dies.  $Sr^{90}$  was in the atom and hydrogen bombs in the Marshalls. That is why many Marshallese are now physically handicapped for the rest of their lives.

After 1978, the U.S. government stopped testing its nuclear bombs in the Marshalls and apologized to the Marshallese people. It said, "Oh, sorry, we did not know that radioactive fallout was going to hurt you." That was 100% a lie! In 1945, when the U.S. military dropped the two atomic bombs in Japan, to end World War Two, the knowledge of radioactive fallout was already known.

This American practice is truly the worst kind of change to enter our islands. We need to love our Marshallese brothers and sisters. ☹



March 7, 2012

*The following news "briefs" were prepared by Pacific Islands Report, the daily online news publication of the Pacific Islands Development Program at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii. For the full version of stories and additional content, please visit: [www.pireport.org](http://www.pireport.org).*

*Meseiset also wishes to acknowledge and that the Pacific Islands Report (at the East-West Center in Honolulu, Hawaii) for this news release. We do not intend to plagiarize, because we thank the East-West Center for the article below.*

**REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS**  
**CRITICIZES U.S. OVER NUCLEAR COMPENSATION**  
*'Exploding epidemic of cancer cases,' \$2 billion in unpaid claims*

SAIPAN, CNMI (Marianas Variety, March 6, 2012) – Marshall Islanders accused the United States government of refusing to provide adequate nuclear test compensation on the 58th anniversary of the largest American hydrogen bomb test that exposed thousands of islanders to radioactive fallout. Islanders marked the national holiday in the Marshall Islands for March 1 with a candlelight vigil for those who suffered and died as a result of the 67 U.S. tests at Bikini and Enewetak.

U.S. Ambassador to the Marshall Islands Martha Campbell told the event in Majuro Thursday evening that *"the United States has provided nearly \$600 million in compensation and assistance to the Republic of the Marshall Islands to help the affected communities overcome the effects of nuclear testing,"* and noted that the U.S. and Marshall Islands governments had agreed to *"a full and final settlement of all nuclear-related claims"* in 1983.

But [RMI] Foreign Minister Phillip Muller called on the United States to pay the more than \$2 billion in unpaid awards made by a Nuclear Claims Tribunal that exhausted its U.S. government-provided funding.

*"Today we are witnessing an exploding epidemic of cancer cases,"* said Charles Domnick, an islander who was 12 years old and living on an island about 400 miles downwind when the U.S. detonated Bravo, a 15-megaton hydrogen bomb test at Bikini. *"Cancers, birth anomalies and other radiogenic diseases make a compelling argument for the United States to reopen the nuclear*

*test at Bikini. "Cancers, birth anomalies and other radiogenic diseases make a compelling argument for the United States to reopen the nuclear issue," Domnick said. "But because our population is limited, the United States takes the position these numbers are statistically insignificant and that we have in fact received compensation for all damages past, present and future." Domnick criticized the settlement agreement reached nearly 30 years ago as unfair to the Marshall Islands. ▯*





## WE LOOK DIFFERENT, DON'T WE?

by Chavon Sirom

It is bad to change our traditional clothing in Micronesia. For one thing, it did not cost money to make traditional clothes. Also, it was easy to wash our clothing — no detergent, no bleach (such as sarasko). And, of course, it fit our tropical lifestyle.

Look at the two photos on the right. The first shows a Yapese couple. The second shows five Palauan men. The people wore traditional clothes a long time ago.

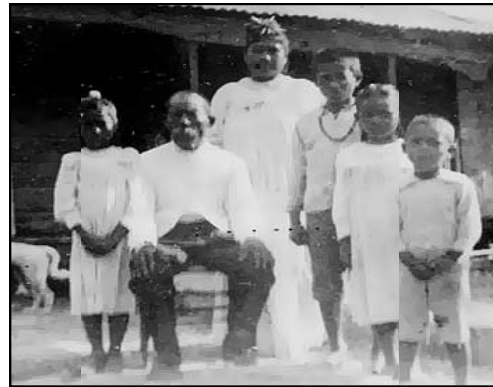
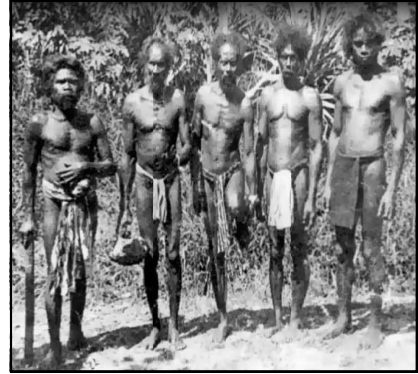
First, we used to make our clothing. We used coconut leaves, for example, and even in the case of the man's clothes, we used the loom to weave it.

Second, we used to wash our clothes by hand, without a washing machine (or laundromat) and without soap or detergent. Clean, fresh water was enough.

Third, Micronesia is a tropical place, and we did not have to wear lots of clothes to cover up our bodies. We needed tropical clothing to live in a tropical environment.

Then, foreign missionaries came to our islands in the 19th century. They looked at our people and said, "Oh, no! They're naked!" Well, that is not true. Micronesians did not go walking around naked, but to the missionaries our ancestors were naked. So, they told the islanders to wear clothes, as shown in the third photo of a Kosraean family wearing clothes, to please the missionaries.

Nowadays, the young Micronesians want to look cool or hip-hop. So, they copy what young Americans wear. Look below at the pictures of fashion models who wear hot outfits. Wow!



And, remember, we want to copy not only the clothes but also hair styles!

Hey, people! We are not rich, and we are not American. Can we go back to our past and start thinking about how we should begin anew to wear traditional clothing?

So, men! Let's start to wear our afittittá again! Women, let's start to go around bare-breasted and wear only grass skirts!

Come on, everyone! Let us bring the past into the present and the future!



An Editorial Essay: “Thank you, Atina!”  
by Adrianna Lynn Hainrick

Reading Atina Ruben’s articles “The Perception of COM-FSM Chuuk” and “My Life” in our first *Meseiset* issue (January 2012) totally inspired me. Atina had spent most of her childhood in the States, growing up there, and then returned to her home State of Chuuk to continue her high school and, of course, to attend our Chuuk Campus. I began wondering, “Why do many of us choose to attend COM-FSM Chuuk Campus?”

So, to answer my own question, I did some research on campus by interviewing students and asking three questions. First, is it because they did not want to leave Chuuk? Second, is it because of financial expenses to attend colleges out of Chuuk? Third, is it because parents made the decision for us to stay here? Here are my research data, findings, and analysis.

Is it because they did not want to leave Chuuk? Most answers were yes. After all, “there is no place like home.” Why should we attend an overseas college when we have one not far from home, one that can keep us at home?

Is it because of financial expenses to attend colleges out of Chuuk? Many students also said yes. College expenses are high, but the PELL grant and scholarships cover them. So, we do not need to find jobs to pay for tuition, unlike those who went abroad to pursue their education. They have had to find outside jobs. Sad to say, 44% of our overseas college students came back to Chuuk with degrees. Many of the rest, with or without

college degree, remain abroad because they can find jobs with good salaries. They chose not to return to Chuuk because they know that it is hard to find jobs in Chuuk. Or worse, some who have returned without college degrees were deported.

Is it because parents made the decision for us to stay here? A few, mostly female, said yes. Another question arises: Why did parents decide that their daughters should not go to colleges abroad? Because they come home pregnant! So, they leave their homes in Chuuk and return to Chuuk with a different kind of college degree — pregnancy.

So, in the final analysis, COM-FSM Chuuk Campus may well be a better solution, as shown in my three findings above. No, COM-FSM is not academically better than most colleges outside of Chuuk. But it gives us a certain peace of mind. For one thing, we do not have to experience the social, cultural, and emotional trauma of living on Guam, Hawaii, or U.S. mainland. Also, we do not have to suffer economic crises of living in a new and expensive society outside Chuuk. After all, at Chuuk Campus, it is not expensive at all. Finally, we still depend on our parents’ guidance and assistance as well as their watchful eyes over us.

I see COM-FSM Chuuk Campus as a guiding star for many of us. It is a gift. I am no fool to throw away or misuse this opportunity. So, I end this essay with open questions to all readers: What is your opinion? Do you appreciate this gift? To be sure, we all know that COM-FSM is in very big trouble. So, what are we doing to save or help our campus and ourselves? ▢

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### Where Is Respect Going?

(continued from page 1)

Third, in addition to democracy and individual freedoms, there is in our FSM National and Chuuk State Constitutions something called **HUMAN RIGHTS**. So, nowadays, a boy does not have to obey or honor his parents. Does he get punished? No, after all, he has the right to dishonor his parents! So, nowadays, an employee plays politics in the office against his fellow workers. Does he get punished? No, after all, *pachification* rewards him! So, nowadays, a man divorces his wife. Does he get punished? No, after all, he has the right to find another wife. No, after all, he has the right to do what he wants to do!

With our human rights, we find excuses to do bad things. In effect, we live in a democracy, and we have

our individual freedoms and rights. Okay, we have the right to steal, rape, and even murder. We have the freedom and right to break laws, and we do not worry because *pachification* rewards us for doing bad.

Finally, are we going to blame America for democracy, individualism, freedoms and rights? Many of us do blame Americans for what we do wrong. After all, we are like Pharisees — always pointing fingers at others for what we do wrong.

We need to wake up, people! We need to remind ourselves that life is a coin — it has two sides. It may be true that America brought this change, but we have to blame ourselves for changing the good to bad. If we really want to live in a democracy with individual freedoms and rights, then we need to shape up. Learn what we do wrong to ourselves, and let us move forward with respect! ▢