



# 3rd Workshop: CHamoru Seafaring Lexicon

## Summary Workshop Report

**CONNECT ME | CREATE ME | PROMOTE ME**



**WORKSHOPS IN PREPARATION FOR THE 12TH FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS**

July 26, 2014  
The Guam Community College  
Mangilao, Guam

July 27, 2014  
The Latte of Freedom  
Governor's Complex  
Adelup, Guam

Written and presented by

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## Introduction

A two-day workshop in preparation for the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts (FestPac) was held 26-27 July 2014 at the Guam Community College (GCC) and the Governor's Complex at Adelup. The "Seafaring Lexicon Workshop" is the third in the series, **Connect Me | Create Me | Promote Me**, organized by the Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency (CAHA) to help artists, cultural producers and members of the island community prepare for FestPac, which Guam is hosting in 2016. FestPac is the largest arts and culture festival in the region with hundreds of delegates representing 27 different Pacific islands and nations and thousands of visitors who participate in the two-week long event.

This particular workshop follows an initial gathering in 2009 of traditional Chamorro canoe builders and navigators to develop a Chamorro lexicon of terms used in seafaring and navigation. The lexicon would fill a need for a standard set of terms for all practitioners of traditional Chamorro navigation to communicate essential aspects of canoe-building, including the parts of the canoe, and for understanding sailing and navigation, such as directional points, natural phenomena, and seabirds. The lexicon would also be a way to reconnect with the past by using terms that existed before Spanish colonization but had been documented in historical accounts, and *fino' haya*, Chamorro language that pre-dates the introduction of Spanish or does not incorporate Spanish loan words, to create something new for words that are lost to history.

Because of the amount of discussion necessary to reach a consensus over the lexicon, the workshop was spread over the course of two days. Day One included morning and afternoon sessions held at the GCC Multipurpose Room in Mangilao, and Day Two was an afternoon session at the Latte of Freedom, Hall of Governors, Adelup. Speakers for the workshop included Guam historian Dr. Larry Cunningham, Mario Borja from San Diego-based Che'lu, Inc., Peter Perez from Tanapag, Saipan and the *500 Sails* project, and Frank Cruz and Sandra Okada from Guam-based Traditions About Seafaring Islands (TASI) and Traditions Affirming our Seafaring Ancestry (TASA), respectively. The discussions were facilitated by Ignacio Camacho from TASA and Fermina Sablan, GCC Program Specialist. Guampedia Managing Director Rita Nauta also helped facilitate the workshop agenda.

Dr. Cunningham presented a brief history of Chamorro-Micronesian seafaring traditions and revitalization efforts over the last two decades; Borja presented the story of the *sakman* project in San Diego and his experiences of trying to understand the mechanics and physics involved in sailing traditional Chamorro canoes. Perez discussed a project to increase production and access to Chamorro canoes to promote Chamorro cultural identity and pride; and Okada and Cruz presented a slideshow of their recent participation in a Secretariat of the Pacific-sponsored event in Fiji regarding seafaring and ocean sustainability.

About 50 people registered for the free workshop and included mostly members of the seafaring and canoe-building organizations. Individuals interested in Chamorro language and culture, notably Rosa Palomo from the Micronesian Language Institute (MLI) at the University of Guam, and Jeremy Cepeda and Leonard Iriarte from *I Fanlalaian* Oral History Project, also participated and were able to share their expertise with the other attendees. Discussions were animated and informative. Participants began by looking at the working list that had been generated in the initial 2009 meeting (this list had been emailed along with other materials to the registrants prior to the workshop). One by one, words were discussed openly among the entire group. Those words that were problematic or required lengthier discussions were tabled until Day Two. New words or phrasings were proposed, as well as corrections for grammar and usage. Allowances were made for different groups using variations of some terms, depending on context or what was normally practiced by their members. Participants aimed to reach a general consensus regarding each term by the end of the workshop. However, because there were still some terms (especially regarding the naming of directional stars) that were not addressed, it was agreed that a third session would be held

the following evening with a contingent from the different seafaring organizations present to discuss and finalize these terms.

This summary report covers the individual workshop presentations and the entire list or lexicon that was approved by the workshop participants. Readers should be mindful that this report by Guampedia does not include the specific comments and points of discussion for each word. However, the lexicon includes the original word from the 2009 meeting, the newly approved 2014 words, English translations, and a pronunciation guide or key.

- Participants:** About 50 members of the seafaring arts community and other educators and language experts.
- Facilitators:** Rita P. Nauta, [guampedia.com](http://guampedia.com) Managing Director  
Ignacio Camacho, Member, Traditions About Seafaring Islands (TASI)  
Fermina Sablan, Program Specialist, Go'ti Yan Adahi I Fino'ta Chamorro, Guam Community College, acting vice-president of TASI, and co-chair, FestPac 2016 Language Committee
- Hosted by:** Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency (CAHA), a division of the Department of Chamorro Affairs, the Guam Visitors Bureau (GVB), the Guam Preservation Trust and the Guampedia Foundation, Inc.
- Special thanks:** Guam Community College for the use of the Multipurpose Room for Day One of the workshop, and the Guam Museum Foundation for the use of the Latte of Freedom, Hall of Governors, Ricardo J. Bordallo Governor's Complex, Adelup.
- Presenters:** Lawrence Cunningham, PhD, Historian and Founder of TASI  
Mario Reyes Borja, Master Carver/Advisor, Chamorro Hands in Education Links Unity (Che'lu, Inc.) *Sakman* Project  
Sandra Iseke Okada, Board Treasurer, Traditions Affirming our Seafaring Ancestry (TASA), Ta'tasi Guam  
Frank Cruz, President, TASI  
Peter Perez, Che'lu, Inc., *500 Sails* Project



# Day One

## CHamoru Seafaring Lexicon Workshop

26 July 2014

Guam Community College

Multipurpose Room, Mangilao

## Welcome

**Monica Okada**, Chairperson, Guam Council on the Arts and Humanities Agency (CAHA) board, gave a brief welcome and introduction to all the workshop participants. Leonard Iriarte from I Fanlalaian performed an opening chant, *I Tinituhon*, a chant, he believed, could be used two ways – to give praise to “the Creator,” and to acknowledge the ancestor spirits. For monotheists, the chant is appropriate because the words are translated as, “In the beginning, the very beginning, in the mind of the Most High, all things were one...” Iriarte further explained that this chant came before a much longer chant that was a version of the creation story. It was based on the view that this human colony in the Marianas could only begin, following the initial discovery of the islands by ocean navigators. He says,

“...A navigator of the canoe would have possessed esoteric seafaring knowledge to help him find the islands in the first place. Such a school of knowledge would have had a patron spirit of navigation – a real person, someone at the head, the start of that particular school of thought. We don’t know what his name would be but we’re talking about an old school of navigation that must have existed, knowledge of which has passed on through oral tradition. [According to Dr. Cunningham] the name of that school of thought was the ‘School of the Highest Spirit.’ We [then] took the Chamorro words which can be used for a creator spirit. [So] in this room of people interested in seafaring and navigation, we will include respect for our Creator and for that ancient teacher that led that navigator that guided that canoe and crew to discover this land in the first place, so many thousands of years ago.”

Okada began the workshop with an update for the 12th Festival of Pacific Arts (FestPac), announcing that a week after this meeting the organizing committee would hold their next programming meeting. She explained, as the lead agency, the Guam Council of the Arts and Humanities (CAHA) has tried to put together these cultural arts workshops to prepare for FestPac. They started with a workshop on history, then the visual arts workshop, and a grant writing workshop. [The summary reports for each of these workshops can be found at <http://www.guampedia.com>.] For those that submitted grant applications, she added, CAHA will be reviewing the proposals in August and will contact awardees in December for the 2015 grants.

Okada explained that this workshop on the seafaring lexicon is a follow-up to a workshop held in 2009 and the third in the *Connect Me | Create Me | Promote Me* series. She also announced that a literary arts workshop will be held on September 6th, and a cultural values workshop on October 4th. For 2015, they will hold other workshops for fashion, chant, film and weaving (in conjunction with historic Inalahan and the Dinana Minagof festival in February). These workshops are funded by the Guam Visitors Bureau, in partnership with CAHA, and the Guam Preservation Trust (GPT) – and the Guam Community College (GCC) for this particular session. Okada also acknowledged United Airlines for providing an airline ticket for Mario Borja from Che’lu, Inc. in San Diego. United Airlines and the Bank of Guam, she added, are major sponsors of FestPac.

Also present for this workshop were representatives from Traditions Affirming our Seafaring Ancestry (TASA), Traditions About Seafaring Islands (TASI), Che’lu, Inc., and Dr. Larry Cunningham, Mina Sablan from GCC, and Guampedia staff, who were tasked with documenting the workshop for publication on the [guampedia.com](http://www.guampedia.com) website.

**Rita Nauta**, Guampedia managing director, went over the workshop agenda, beginning with Dr. Cunningham who would present an overview of the history of Chamorro seafaring. She then announced the goal of the workshop – to produce a Chamorro seafaring lexicon that is accessible to everyone. She stated that Sablan and Ignacio Camacho from TASA, would facilitate the workshop with assistance from Tony Borja and Mario Borja.

Nauta pointed out that there were twelve pages of words that were proposed and deliberated over in the original 2009 meeting. This workshop would allow for words to be added, questions to be addressed, etc. She then announced the plan for Day Two of the workshop to be held at the Latte of Freedom where a general consensus on the lexicon will be anticipated. Discussion of the terms as well as additional presentations by Mario Borja, Frank Cruz (TASI) and Sandra Okada (TASA) would be part of the program.

**Mario Borja** announced that one of the scheduled presenters had not arrived due to a delay in his flight schedule. He requested the participant be allowed to present during the second day of the workshop. Nauta agreed to adjust the schedule. She congratulated the participants for their efforts and their part in revitalizing Chamorro seafaring. At the first planning meeting Ignacio Camacho had pointed this process was very difficult, but Nauta emphasized this is really the beginning to establish a common platform, that the list was not the final, be-all end-all. The list will be downloadable and printed; it will be a “living” list that we will continue to add to or build on and that all the participants are pioneers in this revitalization. She added, Guampedia is happy to be along for the journey.

## **Discussion of Terms**

**Facilitators: Ignacio Camacho and Fermina Sablan**

During this period, the workshop participants went over the working list of some 300 words. Ignacio Camacho and Fermina Sablan facilitated the discussion, with Sablan taking note of the comments, suggested changes and additions on a large easel pad.

The words were organized into categories associated with specific aspects of seafaring, including wayfinding, natural phenomena, seabirds, time of day, etc. It was emphasized to the participants that this project to produce a lexicon is continuous, as the group continues to research and discover words associated with our “ways of life” as seafaring people.

The discussion was directed toward coming up with indigenous words and terms that captured indigenous sensibilities or expressed indigenous perspectives. The words would be agreed upon or approved by consensus among the group. The list, however, is a “living list” and changes were to be expected.

Considerations needed to be made for regional differences or how different groups understand or use certain words, for example, the names of certain seabirds. Participants often spoke of how they remember using one term or another as they were growing up. They also noted if a word was used one way in Saipan or Rota, and a different way on Guam. Even words seemingly used exclusively by the Chamorros in San Diego were noted. The group decided it was important in the lexicon to indicate the traditional names as well as the new ones, i.e., distinguishing the traditional terms and the words decided upon by consensus.

Spanish or other western language words were eliminated and to the extent possible, traditional words were maintained. However, it was acknowledged that even traditional words change over time. This was something else that was considered during the discussion, whether older traditional words would be included or the more modern or recent words that have become traditional.

It was also understood during the discussion that some words would need further, extensive and laborious effort to provide appropriate and suitable definitions. In addition, these words should be correlated meaningfully with the lived experiences of the Chamorro people.

Words that the group was unable to get to on the list as well as terms that needed further discussion were tabled until Day Two of the workshop.

## **Lunch Break**



## Presentation One

### *Chamorro Seafaring Historical Overview*

Lawrence Cunningham, PhD

Historian and Founder of Traditions About Seafaring Islands (TASI)

Cunningham opened by declaring, “Guam is good.” He stated that for the last three years he has had to spend most of his time away from Guam, pointing out, “We take a lot of things for granted but when you’re away for a while, you really remember how great we have it here and just how good Guam is. I feel really blessed that I was able to live here and raise my daughter here. I spent a lot of time with my nieces and nephews and I am really proud of my daughter – that she is a kind, respectful person has a lot to do with the community she grew up in. It is a blessing.”

Cunningham cautioned the group about his presentation that he would leave out a lot of important things that others will be better able to describe, especially the importance of the paddling community here on Guam and all the work they have done. Seafaring and sailors, he said, can learn a lot from these organizations, through all the things they have done, for example, how they have represented our island at the South Pacific Games. He also cautioned that in the Northern Marianas, especially Saipan, seafaring is a long tradition and is very important, and there have been many voyages and many things that have happened over the years, but he will not be able to cover these individual voyages. He did want to emphasize, though, that Saipan and the other islands have had so much to do with what led the way toward revitalization of Chamorro seafaring traditions.

Cunningham noted a couple of paddlers, such as Linda Roberto of Guam and Margie Cushing Falanruw in Yap, and especially the open ocean tribute they did for Manny Sikau after his passing. He pointed out that people from the NMI helped people in Hawaii revive their seafaring tradition, such that the Hawaiians are now going around the world in a voyage of peace. And it all started with the Central Carolines and the Marianas and that relationship.

Discussing the origin of Austronesian-speaking people, Cunningham explained that most linguists think the source of these languages is in Taiwan and the China coast near Taiwan as sort of the epicenter for the proto-Austronesian language. There were about 3,000 Austronesian languages, of which about 1,000 are spoken today. The word *Austro*, meaning “south,” has nothing to do with Australia; but these people, outside the modern era, were able to spread their language around the earth more than any other people – from Taiwan, to Southeast Asia, Malaysia, coastal New Guinea and Fiji, Vanuatu, the Solomons and then out to the Polynesian islands, and, amazingly, even all the way to Madagascar. The first people in Madagascar, only 250 miles off the coast of Africa, were people that looked very much like Chamorros – they used many of the same words and had the highest per capita consumption of rice in the world. Cunningham added he has talked to people that have met ambassadors from there and have felt a real kinship with them. If the Austronesian languages cover a huge part of the world, from Madagascar to Rapa Nui and New Zealand, how did they do it?

Cunningham stated this is so important for us to study – Chamorros, Carolinians and Hawaiians, all Pacific islanders – they could not exist without their canoe technology, without a system of navigation and most important of all, an adventurous and courageous spirit. They became the many cultures we see today because they discovered islands. He added that, in a very real sense, when we look at the story of creation, it really is true the Chamorros created themselves here in the Marianas – they became distinct people, different from Southeast Asia, in these islands. And Chamorros and other Pacific islanders continue to create and recreate themselves. It is an ongoing cultural process.

Cunningham then directed his presentation on canoe technology: the asymmetrical hull, outrigger, triangular (lateen) sails – these are the most efficient kind to take advantage of the wind pushing at the back of the sail and pulling the canoe along – and a mast that can be tilted. All of these things are very

sophisticated. When western mariners first came to Guam, they were amazed at the Chamorro canoe. It was faster than any sailing vessel they had seen, traveling at a fast 20-26 knots. Cunningham mentioned he had more of a thrill sailing at those speeds than driving in a car at 120 mph. In 1521, Ferdinand Magellan's chronicler, Antonio Pigafetta, wrote about these red, white and black canoes that leaped through the water like dolphins, reminding him of venetian gondolas with sails. In 1742 British navigator George Anson spent time on Tinian where he and his crew captured a Chamorro canoe. They said, no matter what your culture is, where you come from, you have to absolutely be amazed; no matter how skillful, you have to respect this kind of seafaring technology. It was impressive to them, and it still is today.

Why do we study this? Cunningham explained, western culture respects navigators and honors them, with holidays like Columbus Day and Discovery Day. He said, not to take anything away from Columbus or Magellan, but people were sailing out of the sight of land not 100 years before those navigators we celebrate in history books, but more like 4,000 or 5,000 years before them. People need to know this – there is still the battle that this is just “drift voyaging,” and that Pacific islanders could not possibly have had that technology back then. Cunningham is flabbergasted that people will believe almost anything except admit that Pacific islanders could navigate thousands of years before anyone else in the world. They would rather believe in the possibility that aliens from outer space helped settle these islands rather than believe that Pacific islanders figured this out, long before anyone else – and they did this without instruments like the compass, sextant or other tools.

Cunningham then stated that about 5,000 years ago, these Austronesian speakers began sailing farther, which started this process. While almost all of the history books on this topic will say that demographic factors pushed these first voyages – war, famine, etc. – Cunningham questions this as the main reason for the movement of Austronesian-speaking peoples. At the time of these movements, the Pacific island region was pretty empty. For Cunningham, these people were not forced out of these places. He said, “Can you imagine saying Columbus or Magellan came out of Europe on their voyages of discovery because of starvation, famine or war?” Instead, he believes these voyagers likely were driven by economic factors, like looking for turtle shell that could be used for money, or Spondylus, or following fish, but most of the reasons were social reasons – a sense of adventure, of wanting to know what is out there. Pacific islanders are still this way. He said, “there is not a country in the world you won't find a Chamoro – they are everywhere. They haven't stopped traveling.” He added, “According to Professor Paul Rainbird from the University of Wales who published *Archaeology of Micronesia*, the first people to reach the open ocean islands were the people of the Marianas, the people known today as Chamorros.”

Cunningham explained that there is an accurate date for the Achugao settlement site in Saipan of about 1784 BC – and that is not the oldest, so maybe people began settling this area around 2500 BC. About the same time but without as much proof, Palau was settled. By about 1500 BC, Yap was settled, while the rest of Micronesia was still vacant. The earliest settlement in the rest of Micronesia is dated about 500 BC in Kosrae, and the rest of the islands of the Central Carolines, including the outer islands of Chuuk and Yap, were settled around the time of Christ. These people were the Austronesians who best preserved their knowledge of canoe technology and non-instrument navigation, which gave rise to speculation about purposeful voyaging. People before would not accept that there was purposeful voyaging in this region.

Then Dr. David Lewis [a New Zealand physician who studied traditional navigation in the Pacific and wrote the book, *We, the Navigators*] suggested that maybe we should ask Pacific islanders themselves about their seafaring knowledge. Lewis went all over the Pacific, but found the best place that preserved this knowledge was right nearby in Polowat, Satawal and Lamotrek – islands where this knowledge still existed, and people still practiced it. It was not like something they heard about, they were still making voyages.

This tradition was maintained, and these people took it full circle, back to Southeast Asia and the Philippines. For example, there are 2,000 Carolinians in Sumar. Cunningham said this could be explained

by keeping in mind that not everyone who gets in the canoe is a navigator, or they fall in love somewhere else or some other reason compels them to stay, but these people know where they are from. Cunningham suggested that a future project could entail Chamorros sailing to Sumar, reuniting with these people, building a Chamorro canoe there and then sailing it back.

Cunningham reiterated how blessed the Guam seafaring community was to have Manny Sikau. Sikau was a seventh-generation navigator who had that seafaring tradition and knowledge and was willing to pass it down. There were a lot of others like him, including Mau Piauleg from Satawal who was a blessing for the people of Hawaii and for their canoe revitalization efforts.

Going back to Lewis, Cunningham described how Lewis traveled in his sailboat to the Central Carolines in 1969 and interviewed people about their navigation system and how it works. He asked to be brought back to Saipan using their methods. [A Polowatese navigator named Hippour agreed to take Lewis back although he had never been to Saipan before, nor had anyone traveled from Polowat to the Marianas in many years. However, Hippour was taught the star courses and with this knowledge, he successfully navigated the 500-mile trip from Polowat to Saipan.] The following year, Dr. Benusto Kaipat and others were wanting to show Lewis something more impressive, and eventually a pair of Satawal islanders completed the voyage from Satawal to Saipan in traditional canoes without modern navigational tools. These initial journeys were followed by other attempted voyages in traditional canoes.

By 1972, a canoe from Polowat came to Guam with a young boy on board named Manny Sikau. Sikau's grandfather, Ikuliman, was the navigator on the canoe. Apparently, Henry Simpson, a businessman on Guam, had wanted a traditional canoe for business purposes so Ikuliman sailed one here. The canoe came in toward Apra Harbor, and although Ikuliman knew the name of every single channel on Guam, the Glass breakwater was not part of his knowledge. Instead they continued on to Talifak by the old Spanish bridge in Agat, coming in by night. A local fisherman, Ramon Cruz, was out checking his fish traps and was surprised to see several mostly naked men on a canoe. He mistakenly thought they were *taotaomona*, even asking if they were real. The crew actually was afraid to come ashore because of immigration laws, but Cruz convinced them to land and even brought them home where they were treated to a meal of Spam and eggs, which, Cunningham added, Manny enjoyed very much.

There were other voyages that were able to take place over the next few years. Governor Ricardo Bordallo had a canoe project during his second administration. A Samoan dancer from one of the hotels built it. There was obvious interest brewing here on Guam to revive this tradition.

In 1984 the American Red Cross sponsored a swim/crazy craft/canoe race to Cocos island. Cunningham and his eleven year-old daughter won – they had the only canoe. They raced for 26 minutes 38 seconds to get to Cocos. With a laugh, Cunningham added that it is remarkable how far we have come from 1984 to today.

In the 1980s, a young man in Colorado freezing over there had just read an issue of *Glimpses* magazine. Rob Limtiaco learned that some people from Saipan had just completed a trip from Polowat to Saipan in a canoe. Moved by this story, he returned to Guam and found master carver Segundo Blas and fellow traditional canoe enthusiast Gary Guerrero. Together, under Blas' direction, they built a canoe and learned to sail it. The canoe was later displayed in the Guam Museum. It was a great accomplishment. But in the process, they realized a lot of Chamorro traditions had been lost and that if the Chamorros were going to revitalize their traditions, they would have to do what the Hawaiians did and go to the Carolines where they have kept that 5,000 year-old knowledge the best. So, Limtiaco and Guerrero went to Polowat to learn from them – and each eventually married women from there.

In 1990, a new seafaring organization was incorporated – TASI, which stands for "Traditions About Seafaring Islands." One of the people very active in this organization was Dr. Vince Diaz. He convened

two conferences in 1994 for people from every area of Micronesia and formed the Micronesian Voyaging Society (which still is in the books, although it is not active right now), and later produced a video called *Sacred Vessels*. He also taught courses on Micronesian navigation for undergraduate and graduate credit at the University of Guam. The real teacher, though, was not the professor on record, but the men from the Central Carolines – Sosthenis (Soste) Emwalu and then Manny Sikau. They were the source where the knowledge was best preserved and they were willing to share that knowledge. Over the years not only were different aspects of traditional navigation taught at the university but students could get credit for learning them.

Poring through the university's collections of historic documents and books, TASI members were able to compile primary sources and every eyewitness report they could find about Chamorro canoes. About 130 pages of materials were found at the time, although there may be more discovered in the future. They started with small things, like making sure the sail was on the correct side of the mast – unlike in the image of a canoe on the Guam flag. They eventually moved on to bigger accomplishments, like the successful voyage from Polowat to Guam, and, Cunningham added, he was privileged to be a part of that venture.

They built canoe houses and rebuilt them after they were destroyed by typhoons. Sailing in traditional sailboats, they spent time in Pagan, with Manny Sikau teaching navigation skills. They have been able to celebrate Discovery Day – not in honor of Magellan – the *real* Discovery Day, when the ancient Chamorros landed in the Marianas. With their canoe the *Quest*, they re-enacted this journey, bringing food plants that people used to establish a community here. Cunningham also mentioned transporting St. Joseph's statue in Inarajan using the canoe. Indeed, they participate in all kinds of community events whenever possible.

In FestPac 2004 a Guam canoe was shipped to Palau and they were able to sail it around there alongside two other canoes: one from Yap representing the northern Mariana Islands and another representing Tobi and Sonsorol. There were also paddling canoes and even an 80-man war canoe. Holding up a picture of the canoe in the water, Cunningham remarked there was nothing more beautiful.

Cunningham emphasized that participants in TASI were always keen about education. Some of the canoes they built included the *Geftao* and the *Saina*. There were so many people involved in those efforts, including the Galaide Group, CAHA, various businesses, the Guam Visitors Bureau and the Guam Preservation Trust. Cunningham added they have received about thirteen or fourteen grants from CAHA over the years in support of their work.

In 2007 Sikau was invited to speak at universities, museums and planetariums in Japan as part of a Toyota Foundation tour, where he was treated like a rock star. Realizing the importance of this knowledge and tradition, the Japanese hired Sikau as a consultant for their Oceanic Culture Museum. Back in 1975, a canoe had been sailed over 46 days from Satawal to Saipan, then to Maug and to Okinawa. But the National Museum of Ethnology stole the canoe. So one of the recommendations Sikau made was to replace that canoe with a Carolinian one.

In 2008, designated the Year of the Proa, a couple of canoes were built, including the first ocean-going *sakman*, a vessel that had not been built since 1742. Cunningham mentioned there is a report of such a canoe in the 1780s, but when he read the report, he believed the French author had plagiarized Anson. According to Cunningham, 1750 was about the last time those canoes were known to be used. Now, however, a lot has changed, and there are many canoes out in Guam's waters, even ocean-going sailing canoes. Many people have been involved, including people from the Bank of Guam and local attorney Mike Phillips.



Cunningham noted how Austronesian settlements may have spread in the Pacific because of factors like clan fissioning – sometimes, for various reasons, clans break off and form new groups. One of the great things about TASI is the fissioning that has occurred, creating lots of “progeny,” interested in learning about and maintaining knowledge of traditional seafaring. This includes the group in San Diego – although they existed long before 2008, they, too, began to focus on building their own *sakman* with their Sakman Chamorro project. There is also TASA (Traditions Affirming our Seafaring Ancestry) which has been able to build canoes and canoe houses. So much has happened, these organizations continue to grow, and there is so much to look forward to in the future. Cunningham added that credit should be given to brothers Mario and Tony Borja who in 2009, stressed the importance of a lexicon conference and making sure there are terms about seafaring and navigation that all can use. This is an ongoing process continuing today and it will continue in the future. Cunningham commented, “We are in the business of restoring a tradition; it will last a long, long time.”

That same year the traditional navigation society in Yap invited Guam to participate in their three-day Canoe Festival, and they have been attending the event ever since. Chief Tharanganon and master navigator Ali Haleyular from Lamotrek are doing wonderful things. In 2010 they visited Guam. Chief Tharanganon is a canoe builder, and Ali Haleyular is a traditional navigator and another giant like Mau Piauleg and Manny Sikau. Cunningham explained, “They have this tradition – Haleyular got this tradition from Urupe; Manny got his knowledge from Ikuliman – and this tradition marches on.” Cunningham believes this knowledge that was lost by the Chamorros can be restored by imitating the Hawaiians who relied on Piauleg.

More recently TASI was contracted to build a canoe completely from scratch. Seven trees were cut down and only axes and adzes of metal were used and no other modern tools. They made their own rope from canoe husk, their own paint, and filmed the entire thing producing 120 hours of footage. The same people that filmed the Saipan-Maug-Okinawa trip in cinemascope in 1975 also filmed this traditional canoe being built. Although the TASI group wanted to sail the canoe to Okinawa, the film company would only pay to sail the vessel to Guam. The canoe was placed in a container, and then eight people from Polowat and one from Guam went to the oceanic museum in Japan and put the canoe back together.

Another recent event was the 2007 commemoration of the 90th Anniversary of the sinking of the German ship *SMS Cormoran* in Apra Harbor. TASI canoes went over to the site and threw coconuts over the spot while a big yacht spread flowers as part of a nice ceremony. The *Cormoran* crew apparently had been short of fuel and stopped at Lamotrek. They were desperate enough to burn coconut oil in their engines until they made it to Guam. Joe Cunningham from the Micronesian Divers Association (MDA) filmed the 2007 ceremony, although it was accidentally taped over. Herb T. Ward, author of *The Flight of the Cormoran* (1971), wrote about the ship and its journey to and eventual scuttling in Guam in 1917. Ward himself was an avid diver who enjoyed exploring the wreck and retrieving items. He died in 1975 in a solo dive to the sunken vessel.

Another recent project that Guam’s seafaring organizations have been involved with is promoting sustainability of our ocean and its resources. People in the outer islands pay \$10 for gas. They cannot afford to go fishing. NOAA and the Western Fisheries Council contracted TASI to build a stable platform fishing canoe. It was called TASI 20, and six of them have been built so far. This fishing platform was something that could be used for good purposes like bringing food and fish home for families. The project culminated in TASI going to Washington, DC. They brought the only canoe with a sail which had cost \$8000 to transport to the mainland, then they hauled it by truck to the University of Illinois Champaign-Urbana where Vince Diaz was using it to teach students about traditional seafaring. In addition, Frank Cruz and Sandra Okada just came back from a conference where they are talking about rebuilding sailing freighters – doing something about energy and making it affordable for people.

Cunningham then went on to share a few more words about Manny Sikau: he was a seventh-generation navigator who, unlike most in the room, was able to name his ancestors that far back in time. Sikau's knowledge was a treasure trove, a blessing. Cunningham declared that, "in all that we do, we're standing on his shoulders, just as the Hawaiians are standing on Mau's shoulders." He added that one of the things Sikau would say was, "You never know what the other person has in their sea chest, the one that doesn't rust." In other words, do not underestimate what others know, because you do not know what the other knows. Until David Lewis asked how Pacific islanders sailed or navigated by the stars, no one knew how it was done. At the last lexicon conference there were lots of great ideas there from all sources. But Leonard Iriarte brought one of his proteges, a student named Jeremy Cepeda, and he really had the most to say. Like Manny would say, "Be respectful, listen and you will probably learn something."

For Cunningham, another profound thing he learned from Manny was that tradition is not inherited. He explained, "You can inherit a name, land, money, even the color of your eyes. But the only way you get traditional knowledge is if there is an elder that trusts you enough to pass it on to you and if you have the willingness to work hard enough to learn. It is hard work; it doesn't come through osmosis. Tradition is learned, it is behavior and actions. You are not born a sailor. For Manny from the time he was three years old – there was never a canoe that left Polowat without him on it...[to get this knowledge] you have to work at it..."

Cunningham closed by recalling a poem that Manny enjoyed written by Banaban/i-Kiribati poet Teresia Teiawa. In the poem she describes how the women in Banaba take their long hair and tether a butterfly to it; now, imagine three dozen butterflies tethered and the woman dances outward with all the fluttering wings. Teiawa likens this to the connection people have with each other. He elaborated on this connection – "When Frank lends me his adze, when you're working on the canoe, this adze gets so hot your hand would blister. And when you're working hard and the sweat is flowing and when you taste the sweat, it is salt water. And if you're as clumsy as I am, sometimes you hit a knot and get bloodied and you taste the blood – and it is salt water. In this life we have times of great joy and great sorrow and it is during those times when tears flow, and we taste that it is salt water – in the larger sense, we are all *taotao tasi* (people of the sea)."

"We sweat and cry salt water, so we know that the ocean is really in our blood." – Teresia Teiawa

Rita Nauta announced a break, and thanked Dr. Cunningham for reminding the participants of where we come from and whose shoulders we all are standing on, and the journey and responsibility we have in the workshop to produce a lexicon for people to use.

A group photograph was taken of the workshop participants.

## **Break**

## Presentation Two

### *Our Sakman Story: One Sentence in History*

Mario Borja

Master Carver/Advisor, Che'lu, Inc.

Borja began by relaying greetings from the Che'lu group from San Diego. He attested that the participants' presence is a unique testimony to the success for the lexicon workshop. He also thanked CAHA for this forum of educational exchange and learning.

Borja then proposed if anyone were to scan through history books, would they be able to find one sentence in history that summarizes why the individuals at the workshop are present and why they do what they do? He explained his reasons for building the *sakman* were as much about appreciating the various aspects of the canoe as they were about appreciating the uniqueness of Chamorro culture. For Borja, he wanted to “share with the world our rich Marianas history as navigators; to continue to do this to bring back our pride, recover our ancestral legacies and to rediscover history.” His research through various documents and accounts led him to find one sentence that summarizes his story well.

Borja introduced himself as someone from Chalan Kanoa, Saipan, the son of a carpenter and fisherman. The story of the *sakman* has been the “fire and focus” of the Sakman Project in San Diego that has brought him to the workshop today. Along with other members of Che'lu (Chamorro Hands in Education Links Unity) he wants to promote and sustain Chamorro language and culture through education, believing that language begets culture and vice versa. He explained that back in San Diego, the way they are promoting and sustaining Chamorro language and culture is through the canoe, and this workshop's effort to develop the lexicon is “testimony of that same mission.”

Borja went on to describe the story of the *sakman* project, which began with the plan to build a 47-foot canoe, and the passion and drive behind the project. He wanted to end the story with a final bow of respect to the ancestors and give them credit for the legacy they have left behind for the Chamorro people.

Borja explained the project started with a simple and infectious dream. Chamorro statesman Carlos P. Taitano was the dreamer and mentor for him. In 1975 Taitano had greeted the crew of *Hokulea* on their journey as they began the revitalization of the Hawaiian canoe tradition. He dreamed of the building of a *sakman*, and his dream became the dream of the San Diego group. Borja wasted no time and started working with the George Anson drawing of the Chamorro canoe which was a detailed drawing of the front, side and top views. This image was particularly useful as it provided valuable scale data and was the first good look at the “flying proa” the Chamorros built centuries ago.

Borja then went on to Maui in 2008 and learned under Chief Bruno Tharanganon of Yap how to build a canoe. At that time Borja was not ready yet to build a canoe as large as a *sakman*, so he began by building small canoes – a small prop and a small table-sized model. He tested each model he built, trying to apply all he learned to building the next. These were functional models, and when placed in the water, they could float and be managed. Borja claimed building these models was a great experience for learning the parameters of sailing but it also helped him to build his confidence to construct the larger canoe.

Borja also wanted to dedicate this day to canoe carver and teacher, Manny Sikau. Sikau, he said, also had a dream that he worked out through these builders, through their hands. They built their largest model canoe in Ypao in 2008 – the five-foot *Patgon Saina*. Peter Perez of Sakman Chamorro asked Borja if he would be able to build a canoe if Perez provided him with the wood? With assistance from Perez and his wife Emma, Borja was then able to share his dream with others, and as a group they began to commit themselves and sacrifice for the project.

Borja mentioned that initially they wanted to build the canoe with *lemmai* but there was none in San Diego, so they decided to use local woods. In the sequoia forests of Mendocino, California, they found a redwood tree. They used a 33-foot section to work as the hull, and then the rest would form the bows and planking. In August 2009, the wood was hauled to El Cajon. They gathered as a community and asked for a blessing and guidance – and a miracle when they saw how big the log actually was. Borja remarked that 99% of them doubted it would turn out to be a canoe because of the wood’s length and size. Moving forward, though, the canoe project drew the attention of the community. They started construction on 26 March 2010, using tools of old to better appreciate the rigors of canoe-building. However, Borja admits, they did use handheld power tools to facilitate some of the construction, adding, “the ancestors would have done the same if they had had these tools available to them.”

Borja also admitted that when the group started the project, none of them were canoe builders. Everyone took a whack at the wood to dig out the bow. In fact, setting the bow was the trickiest part of the work. This, Borja stated, was the same process used centuries ago and also seen in other countries that make similar vessels.

Borja declared the main hull looked menacing because of its size and weight. Seven months later, they brought the canoe to the rest of the community to show their progress and generate excitement. By 25 March 2011, one year after they had started construction, they took the canoe to the bay, and lashed it together to get it ready for its first dip in the ocean. Some of the young apprentices helped to lash the outrigger together.

All in all, Borja expressed, building the canoe was difficult, but even more difficult was learning to sail it. This required a lot of preparation and sailing, because, he added, “building a canoe does not make you a sailor; however, given time, the builders can become sailors as well.”

The first placement of the canoe into the water, Borja says, was an opportunity for learning, to teach each other about safe practices in the canoe. The vessel was placed at the dock in San Diego next to the *HMS Surprise*, a replica of a British ship, a sight he imagined could have been similar to the British ship *Centurion* which Anson had sailed to Tinian. Borja remarked that the Chamorro canoe “must feel right at home” with San Diego’s 20,000 Chamorro residents.

Borja then expounded on Anson’s voyage and how the *HMS Centurion* had landed in Tinian in October 1742. Anson was on a journey around the world, but with the ship severely crippled, the crew decimated and hungry, Tinian was the last bastion of safety. Anson saw a Chamorro canoe in the distance and was fascinated by its performance and agility, sailing at 20 knots, or 23 mph – which was unheard of – and skipping along the waves. This sight amazed him, but he was also fearful because the canoe was flying a Spanish flag. Anson captured the canoe but even then he knew he had to document the vessel and show the rest of the world something he had never seen before.

Borja emphasized that because of what Anson did, we are here today, learning about the *sakman*. Anson’s draftsman Percy Brett produced a drawing of the canoe, and from this drawing from 1742, there was enough data to rebuild it centuries later – and anyone else years from now will be able to do so as well. Fortunately, Peter Perez conducted extensive library research and got more detailed versions of the Anson drawing, where one can actually see pencil lines and slots not clearly visible in the original. The history books do not contain another such detailed drawing of a native canoe anywhere else in Micronesia, Polynesia or Melanesia. This drawing, Borja asserted, gives the *sakman* immortality. Anson may have chosen to lay low and let the canoe fly by, but instead, he chose to do the drawing and we are now able to build the canoe. He added, this drawing was “the greatest gift the Chamorros received from the British.”

Borja then shared what was the “one sentence in history” that inspired him so much. It is found in the ship’s log by Anson [note: later published in three volumes in 1781. The account of the landing in Tinian is found in Book III, p. 339]:

“These indians are a bold well-limbed people; and it should seem from some of their practices that they are no ways defective in understanding; for their flying proas in particular, which have been for ages the only vessels used by them, are so singular and extraordinary an invention that it would do honour to any nation, however, dexterous and acute. For if we consider the aptitude of this proa to the particular navigation of these Islands, which lying all of them nearly under the same meridian, and within the limits of the trade-wind, require the vessel made use of in passing from one to the other, to be particularly fitted for sailing with the wind upon the beam; or, if we examine the uncommon simplicity and ingenuity of its fabric and contrivance, and the extraordinary velocity with which it moves, we shall, in each of these articles, find it worthy of our admiration, and meriting a place amongst the mechanical productions of the most civilized nations, where arts and sciences have most eminently flourished.” – George Anson, 1742 [From *A Voyage Round the World In the Years M, DCC, XL, I, II, III, IV*. Compiled by Richard Walter, Edinburgh: Campbell Denovan, 1781.]

Borja admitted he did not understand this passage fully when he first read it, but feels the words “captured our passion, infused pride, and confirmed our identity as Chamorros and navigators.” For Borja, this passage about what happened in 1742 in Tinian, reflected what one foreign observer saw and the fascination he had about a canoe’s agility. This moment captured Anson’s unconditional respect and admiration, that he wants to share it with the rest of the world. Using well-chosen words he describes who the Chamorros were 270 years ago, and their canoe, our *sakman* – the flying proa. Borja said, “we sailed with purpose and used heavens and wind and flight of birds to find our way. This highlights the work of our hands and understanding of nature, and the determination of our people; it gives credit to our ancestors for the simple gift that they gave us, and gives honor to our Chamorro people.”

For Borja, this “one sentence in history, tells the full story about ourselves. It was written about 270 years ago but was never intended for us to read – until now. This is our *sakman* story.” Reading this sentence made the group of builders feel proud, and some were overcome with emotion. Borja then ended his presentation with an adaptation of Anson’s words in Chamorro as a way to show solemn respect and gratitude to the ancestral spirits in the language they would understand – “so that they, too, can hear what was written about them, the simplicity and ingenuity of their invention, and so we can now give them the credit due them.”

Monica Okada asked what the plans and the presentation by Che’lu will be for FestPac 2016? Borja replied that it would be a great opportunity to bring their canoe to the Marianas. They will sail the canoe from San Diego to Hawaii and back, although there is nothing significant about visiting Hawaii. However, they are exploring an opportunity to sail to Acapulco which was the Spanish colony of New Spain where the Spanish galleons made their rounds during the years of the Manila Trade Route. Because that period brought missionaries, soldiers and other passengers a connection to Acapulco may lead to a connection with families left behind. Borja mentioned it is a trip of 1,300 nautical miles for about five or six days downwind. They may try to make that route, then move westward to Guam following the northern equatorial currents and be back in 2016 with all the Chamorros.



## **Closing**

To close Day One of the workshop, Nauta announced to the participants that on Day Two they will be reviewing the list they just produced, with the new additions. Guampedia will compile the new working list alphabetically in Chamorro with points of discussion. In addition, there will be two more presentations by Peter Perez, and Sandra Okada and Frank Cruz. She reminded the group that the workshop will be held in the afternoon at the Latte of Freedom.





## Day Two

**CHamoru Seafaring Lexicon Workshop**  
**27 July 2014**  
**Latte of Freedom Hall of Governors**  
**Ricardo J. Bordallo Governors Complex, Adelup**

### **Opening**

This second day of the workshop began with a blessing from Leonard Iriarte who used a chant that describes a group of people traveling to Saipan and starting anew.

Facilitator Rita Nauta reiterated the workshop's overall objective: To create a Marianas-centric Chamorro seafaring lexicon and to awaken and connect to a Chamorro ancestral heritage. She described the first day's effort as a definite awakening that was "nothing less than remarkable and amazing." She reported that of the 300 words from the previous day's working list, the group had only 100 words left to revisit. She reminded the group that Guampedia is trying to capture the workshop as much as possible but needs the participants to help hammer out the details and make corrections and complete the workshop objective. The words in the working list for Day Two were organized the night before in alphabetical order and the categories were maintained. In addition to going through the word list, Nauta announced there would be two other presentations.

### **Discussion of Terms**

Jeremy Cepeda assisted with entering the final words into the list after everyone's input and suggestions. Ignacio Camacho and Mina Sablan continued their roles as discussion facilitators. Camacho emphasized that the goal was to get the list done eventually – to listen to the comments and get a consensus about the different terms.

### **Break**



## Presentation Three

### *The 500 Sails Project*

Pete Perez

Che'lu, Inc.

Peter Perez began by introducing himself, declaring he had been involved with the San Diego group, though he himself did not help build the proa. He knew the Chamorro canoe needed to be rebuilt “as a symbol to recognize the Chamorros as builders of the fastest proas in the world.” Perez was motivated in this effort because of the perceived loss of Chamorro cultural heritage, the children’s lack of knowledge, and as a people, their lost ability to go to sea. He explained, while the Spanish era brought many changes, there are now generations of people who have never known the thrill of sailing the ocean in a boat made by their own hands.

The *500 Sails Project* was basically a cultural presentation project – “a gift for our children and the future generations so they will not forget who they are, or so they will not forget they are islanders.” Perez believed that in restoring this maritime tradition the first step was to build the iconic sailboats. The construction of the *Saina* on Guam turned a lot of heads, and it got people thinking that if the people in San Diego were to also build a proa, it would make others understand they are one people, that Chamorros are one people wherever they are. Perez then added the next step would be building and putting sailing canoes in the hands of others and actually getting these vessels in the water.

Perez recounted that when he got to Saipan eight or ten years ago, he was envious of the Carolinians building and sailing canoes; he saw the work of the seafaring society, and was blown away by the image of the Chamorro “flying proa.” He got involved with the group, Sakman Chamorro, and became the liaison officer because he was not shy to talk to the press. The president was Noel Quitugua, the curator for the CNMI Museum. They were all passionate about building an actual proa, and they made some progress doing research and gathering information. They then went on to the next step promoting the Chamorro flying proa with a swim relay team to help bring awareness to the project and raise money. By the time Perez moved back to San Francisco, the organization had dissolved and they were not prepared to take more money for the project.

Perez then began collaborating with Mario Borja from the nonprofit Che'lu, Inc. in San Diego, and offered to give them the money raised if Borja could build the canoe. Borja had had a lot of trouble finding local support so the collaboration actually was beneficial. With a handful of dedicated fellow Chamorros, they began building the proa in a member’s front yard. Money was always an issue, though, as well as materials. There were no *lemmai* trees in San Diego, so they decided to use redwood. Redwood, Perez noted, was also the wood used by Hawaiians to build canoes, from trunks that floated to the islands by the currents. Redwood was also strong and would last long if taken care of properly. So in the course of a few years and thousands of dollars, the canoe was finally built.

Perez pointed out that the *500 Sails* project would construct traditional-style Chamorro canoes not of wood, but out of fiberglass, an innovation that would save time and money and increase production. The project itself was inspired by the story of the historic visit of the Spanish ship *San Pedro* to the Marianas in 1565. As the vessel approached the islands it was surrounded by 400 or 500 Chamorro canoes. According to Perez, if the *500 Sails* project can get 500 sails into the water, then it would be an unmistakable indicator that the Chamorros have their canoe-building tradition back. It started him thinking of what it would be like to have 500 sails out in the water.

Perez described they want to build canoe houses in Tanapag, Saipan. The idea would be if someone wants a canoe, they will be asked what they want to do with it, and other relevant questions. A 25- to 40-foot canoe would be built, depending on what was needed. The interested individual would pay only for the cost of materials, estimated at about \$2,000 to \$5,000. If the individual, for example, did not have a job

the costs would be scaled. Anyone who wants a canoe in exchange would have to give labor or money, and to show up and help build the vessel. The canoe would be built from fiberglass. Instructions would be given for determining sizes, hardware and other details, but the individual would also learn how to maintain the canoe, and invited to come back and help construct canoes for others.

The results of this project would basically be to:

- Strengthen Chamorro cultural identity
- Teach important, relevant skills
- Promote a local boat-building industry
- Enhance the tourist industry
- Instill a sense of community pride
- Provide firsthand experience of ancient Chamorro life
- Engage people in a positive activity
- Create a close knit community of sailors
- Foster respect of the maritime environment

Perez reported they already are getting a lot of positive support. There are four areas in Saipan where they could place the canoe houses, including Tanapag and Susupe. These are generally pieces of raw land, almost on the beach. They are also looking for grants from the CNMI Arts Council and a maritime traditions grant.

Perez then showed slides that depicted the building process. He stated the needs are basically to have a place to build the canoe and a work table large enough for creating the fiberglass pieces that will be bent around a frame. They would use layers of close cell foam and fiberglass, with resin to pull the material flat, creating an amazingly solid material. The pieces would be shaped and then cut into about one-inch thick pieces of durable resin reinforced glass fibers. The finished shape would then be hand laminated so the hull can hold its shape. The shape of the hull will be based on the drawings done for George Anson from the 1742 expedition. So far, they have been able to develop the hull but not the outrigger. Perez added they would like to get a grant to start a new vessel.

A participant asked how long it took to finish this hull. Perez answered that it took about seven days. When they were done with that, they just needed to cut bamboo pieces and assemble everything together, a process that took about another three days. They will work on the prototype at the canoe house in Saipan and try and find a way to make the process faster and produce canoe hulls in various sizes from five feet to eighty feet, all exact to the Anson drawing. Perez suggested it would be better to start by building one canoe, and then to mass produce better versions using molds. With better molds or forms they can cut down construction time from seven to about three days, and to make the process cheaper.

A participant commented that the Hagåtña Restoration Authority is pushing to build three canoe houses within the Hagåtña area, and working with the Guam Department of Education to use the canoe houses as part of learning. Perez responded that this strategy of teaching children helps them – not only will it teach them to build a canoe, but also will teach them pride of ownership, as well as pride of craftsmanship. He added that the canoe house walls from the *500 Sails project* are going to be lined with history, with Hurao's speech and other documents that describe sailing and navigation.

Perez also mentioned that everyone who agrees to obtain a canoe through the project will have to go through a boating safety program and swimming program. They will not allow anyone to own a canoe who do not know how to swim or know boating safety. After all, they will need to know how to swim back so they do not get killed at sea. Perez added they hope to get sponsors to give proas to schools, but they will not give them unless the schools have demonstrated they can teach the program and that they can store the vessel properly.

Perez reiterated the estimated costs for these canoes is between \$2,000 to \$5,000 and will allow the owner to do simple things like fishing or go to some of the other islands. The other advantage is there is no pollution because there is no gas requirement. Perez noted this is how the Chamorro ancestors lived.

A participant commented that there are some canoes already, but they cost about \$8,000. Perez replied that this method used in the *500 Sails* project is cheaper. Another participant asked if Perez's group has approached the Guam Preservation Trust who usually offers larger grants for these kinds of projects. Perez replied that one of his goals is to interest the seafaring community so they can do the same thing for their kids. He added he would love to talk to more people about money because this project will not happen with just personal donations.

Perez stated that they can make canoes of 40 feet, 33 feet or even 25 feet. They will be doing more experiments to come up with other sizes that work. A participant then asked if perhaps an 18-foot vessel would be considered, something that could easily be transported in a pickup truck. Perez answered that that is a possibility. With the prototype they will be able to find solutions for other practical issues, such as trying to find a way to transport the canoe poles. They are interested in having the project completed by 2021, the 500th anniversary of Ferdinand Magellan's arrival. There will be celebrations in Spain and even a vessel re-enacting this voyage. Perez added tongue in cheek that he it would "love to greet them with proas showing black sails to give the message, 'Look what you did to us!!'...and then steal a boat."



## Presentation Four

### *International Sustainable Sea Transport in the Pacific Talanoa (Conference)*

Sandra Iseke Okada

Board Treasurer, Traditions Affirming our Seafaring Ancestry (TASA), Ta'tasi Guam

Frank Cruz

President, Traditions About Seafaring Islands (TASI)

CAHA Board Chair Monica Okada provided some background for the presentation and why Sandra Okada and Frank Cruz went to Suva, Fiji for the 2nd International Sustainable Sea Transport in the Pacific Talanoa. Monica Okada Guzman was in communication with the University of the South Pacific via the Secretariat of the Pacific where a *talanoa*, or gathering, was going to be held on sustainable sea transport. The purpose of the *talanoa* was to “bring together key stakeholders with an interest in heritage, culture, seafaring, science, vessel design, economics, policy, regulation, and industry to celebrate Oceania’s seafaring heritage and progress planning towards a sustainable seafaring future.”

The Pacific region, with its many islands separated by miles of ocean, presents a unique situation regarding sea transport issues, concerns and policies. Guzman said who best to send to this gathering than actual practitioners. So with funding from the United States consulate, Sandra Okada from TASA and Frank Cruz from TASI were given the opportunity to attend the *talanoa* and talk about children and women in our seafaring community of Guam.

Sandra Okada explained that a large part of the conference covered the topic of sustainability in the Pacific region and the active effort by the Global Ocean Commission to have the United Nations include in their September General Assembly meeting a review of the current Convention of the Sea that was passed in 1982, but was never ratified by the United States. The push now is to get the UN to look at these treaties from the 1982 agreement and to call for high seas protection and to secure ocean health.

Okada then presented two short video clips, the first explaining the current condition of the ocean and the reason for efforts to protect and sustain the ocean and its resources; the second video was from the Global Ocean Commission explaining their mission. She explained that several participants, as voyagers, had a separate *talanoa* roundtable discussion to put together 150,000 signatures for the petition to the United Nations. She added that the link for the petition is on the TASA website and that she would like to share it on [guampedia.com](http://guampedia.com). As of 26 July 2014, there were 98,000 signatures. Okada declared that Pacific voyagers have accepted the challenge and will try to spread the word for this important issue.

Facilitator Ignacio Camacho added that the process of signing the petition is as simple as clicking on the link to get the full message and the letter that will be sent to the Secretary General. It would move faster if everyone who signed tagged five friends who also tag five friends, and so on.

Frank Cruz, president of TASI, remarked on how important it was for all of us to work together on these different issues, that we cannot work on them individually. He showed a slideshow of some of the participants. He explained that this *talanoa* was a loosely organized gathering of voyagers who made a collaborative effort to link, network, share information and stories of voyages and their challenges. They included people from New Zealand, the Solomon Islands, and Vanuatu. There were women navigators, too, with each participant bringing different areas of expertise and experiences to the table.

Cruz said that there will be an International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) World Conservation Congress in September 2016 in Hawaii (the World Conservation Congress meets every four years). They would like to sail three canoes to this convention and bring the message that Pacific islanders have a strong tradition of conservation, and are the most severely affected by climate change.

There is another IUCN World Parks Congress that will be held 12-19 November 2014 in Sydney, Australia. Cruz stated that Guam seafarers have been invited to join the voyage anywhere from its initial point in Fiji or further along in Vanuatu, all the way to Australia where there will be three canoes from Fiji, Cook Islands and New Zealand. The sail plan is to go from Rarotonga, to Apia, Vanuatu, Brisbane then to Sydney Harbor. Cruz believed to take the opportunity to join in this endeavor all we need is to have a message to be delivered and to communicate with the right people. They have no money to bring people, so participants will have to find their own means to get there. It is an over 6,000 mile journey, and they will actually start sailing in late August or early September in order to be there by November. The World Parks Congress only meets every ten years, the last meeting was in South Africa. The event in Australia will be a huge event, and for some, this will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have a voice and participate in this congress.

Cruz said that they have formed a loose organization to serve as a mechanism to get as many seafarers to FestPac 2016 on Guam. The nations that are invited to FestPac have discretion over who they will bring and, often, seafarers are not included. So the group would like to find an independent mechanism to include seafaring so they can be highlighted when they come to Guam. When IUCN has their meeting in Hawaii in September 2016, Cruz mentioned they would like to have the other groups ship their canoes here, and then together sail to Hawaii. Cruz added, the other commitment in 2016 is another forum that will bring in the rest of Micronesia to join this loosely formalized alliance of seafarers.

Cruz closed his presentation with a video, *Tiempon Somnak 2014*, which depicted children from the Hurao Academy learning about traditional canoes and navigation.

Cunningham asked Cruz what kind of wood is used in canoes from Fiji? Cruz answered that Fijian canoes use *ifit* (ifil) – their canoes are strong and sail through the water and can be used to ram into other canoes.



## Discussion of Terms

Nauta then got the participants back on track with developing the lexicon. Because the workshop was almost over but there were still about 80 words left to discuss, she suggested that the list could probably be worked on some more and modified within a specified time frame. A survey could be used for people to log in their comments. She added that this did not have to be done in isolation, people could work together and discuss the words, input their comments so the list can be compiled, and then there will be a document that everyone can review. The workshop group can set some parameters.

Nauta explained continuing this discussion outside the workshop should be an option because this lexicon is so important. Before it is published we can have more time to add more ideas and details, as people input their annotations or describe how they derived specific terms. She suggested to get a consensus about the terms perhaps there could be another seafaring meeting.

Cunningham said this is a good idea, adding that one area that definitely needs some discussion is the Chamorro names for the directional stars. He proffered that Rosa Palomo, Leonard Iriarte, Jeremy Cepeda and other interested in doing this form a committee and submit names for the directional stars.

Cruz stated that before Manny Sikau passed away, they did have some proposed names and perhaps these could be a start. They as a group can go through some of the different issues regarding these names and come to a consensus. Nauta suggested that the rest of the terms on the working list be tabled for now. Palomo added she would gladly assist in this process but needs someone to help explain the concepts behind the seafaring terms. Mario Borja agreed to participate in these discussions as well for the rest of the week while he was on-island.



## Presentation Five

### *Puntan Layak: Points of Sail*

Mario Borja

Master Carver/Advisor, Che'lu, Inc.

Mario Borja began his second presentation for the workshop by pointing out that the work done at this workshop will generate an important and purposeful product. He recounted that when the Che'lu group completed building their canoe in San Diego, they wanted almost immediately to take it out into the water and be a part of San Diego Bay. Like little children, they started riding the canoe, but then something went wrong and they had to go back to shore. Borja said, with these traditional canoes there is no owner's manual. However, through this workshop and the building of that *sakman*, "we are building that owner's manual – through the lexicon, through the stories and through history." And, he added, there is still so much more that needs to be included.

Borja recalled they had an instructor to teach their group the points of sail – the course of a sailboat in relation to the direction of the wind. They had 110 minutes of instruction about sailing. On the first day, three members of the group went out and were able to sail five miles, then successfully shunt (*lailai*) and maneuver the vessel back to shore – it was like a day of play. The group had done well, but then, they became complacent.

One day, they took the canoe out into Mission Bay – Peter Perez's wife was out with them on the water. They went downwind, but not too fast. They wondered why with the wind behind them they were not moving as fast as they thought they should. So they turned upwind and saw they began to move faster. They came across again, ran aback and soon the wind was in the other direction. They quickly lost the *lucha* (outrigger) in about two feet of water. They dropped the sail and everyone jumped over to equalize or right the canoe, and they almost lost it. Borja explained, in maneuvering the canoe, they went in one direction into the wind, then to another direction and the canoe started to pick up speed. It was exhilarating to feel the speed with the *lucha* splashing water. While they were going into the wind at an angle they did not understand why they were speeding up. Borja said they had to stop and try to understand how the speed could be determined by the angle they were sailing with respect to the direction of the wind – i.e., the points of sail.

Borja stated the purpose of this exercise was to learn about the effect of wind on the *layak* (sail) and to efficiently harness the force of the wind to move the canoe. The points to consider in this process is where the wind is, the direction of travel, and how to trim the sail. He added, if these basic things are understood, then it makes for a more enjoyable experience out on the water.

Borja explained, with the *sakman* as a vessel of reference, by design the wind is always on the outrigger or windward side. The points of sail, therefore, are with respect to this side of the canoe and the position of the sail is considered with respect to the canoe's longitudinal centerline. The wind has to be behind the sail to give forward momentum.

Borja then described the points of sail, or *puntan layak* as the areas on a clock – imagining the wind is blowing at 12:00, and surmising all directions with respect to 12:00. This is also a no sail zone, which is directly into the wind.

Borja referred the group to a diagram of the *puntan layak* based on the areas of the clock, with the Chamorro terms used by Che'lu:

| Hour Direction | Chamorro         | English                |
|----------------|------------------|------------------------|
| 12:00          | Chenglung mǎnglo | Into the wind/In Irons |
| 1:30           | Chin mǎnglo      | Closed Hauled          |
| 1:30-2:30      | Hijot mǎnglo     | Close Reach            |
| 2:30-3:30      | Luchan mǎnglo    | Beam Reach             |
| 3:30-5:00      | Chinenik mǎnglo  | Broad Reach            |
| 5:00-7:00      | Finalâgun mǎnglo | Running                |
| 7:00-8:30      | Chinenik mǎnglo  | Broad Reach            |
| 8:30-9:30      | Luchan mǎnglo    | Beam Reach             |
| 9:30-10:30     | Hijot mǎnglo     | Close Reach            |
| 10:30          | Chin mǎnglo      | Closed Hauled          |

These terms are commonly used in sailing, but for outrigger canoes, there are some special considerations because of the design of the canoe.

Borja recounted in this story, he was in an area he described as *chenglung mǎnglo*, and found he was not going anywhere because he was facing the wind. By changing the direction a little bit, the sail would start to flutter, and once he got to the other clock positions, the canoe sped up. In the position of sailing into the wind, the *layak* is luffing, or fluttering. The *sakman* stalls, steering is lost as the wind pushes the *sakman* backwards.

At *chin mǎnglo*, with the *layak* at 0 degrees, this is closest the canoe can get to the limits of the wind; at about 1:30 and 10:30 with the sailboat at 40 degrees off center, the sail can be trimmed to fill with wind. Borja pointed out that he noticed that some sailboats run at 40 degrees off center. While that probably is true Borja wants to test the limits of the *sakman* and find out how close it can get to the wind.

Using the canoe model, Borja showed the positioning at *hijot mǎnglo* with the *layak* at 15 degrees. At *luchan mǎnglo* with the sail at 45 degrees, this could be the fastest speed orientation. At *chinenik mǎnglo*, the canoe is sailing partially downwind. By 60-75 degrees, this represents a slower point of sailing. At *finalâgun*, or 75-90 degrees, the canoe is sailing directly downwind, or running.

Borja then described the term true wind (*mǎnglo tano tasi*): the wind you feel on the *sakman* when the *sakman* is standing still; when you feel wind on face, that is true wind. If you are on the *sakman*, and there is no wind, the wind on your front is due to your motion. He also mentioned the term head wind (*mǎnglo finana*), and apparent wind (*mǎnglo hinanao*), which is the wind in the area and the wind you feel as you are moving – i.e., the actual flow of air acting on a sail, or the wind the sailor feels on a moving vessel. He provided a formula for understanding these concepts:

apparent wind (a) = true wind (t) + head wind (h)

head wind = v (velocity of canoe)

a = t + v

transposing the equation, t = a - v

Borja added that to maximize the forward speed, the best position is to have the best apparent wind, i.e., the wind that goes over the *layak*. He added, this is something that cannot be seen, but rather, is something that is felt.

Borja then continued by using a model of a canoe, placed on a table with a small fan blowing to recreate the wind. He explained, the canoe cannot go into the wind; the apparent wind will be zero, and nothing can be done with the sail. This, he described, is going as close as one can to the no sail zone. In the close reach position, you can actually see that is the fastest or speediest position. Borja said he found that in Mission Bay, if he ran into the wind, and maneuvered a little bit, he would start to speed up. He was not sure what exact zone he was in, but when he started to go when the wind was across beam, this provided adequate speed, but when he moved the sail towards the 3:30 to 5:00 position, he did not go faster.

Borja explained, if you are going into the wind (using a rubber band to demonstrate this), you cannot be moving faster than the wind. But what if you are moving away from the wind? “The bigger your apparent wind will be and therefore, the bigger the performance. It is some effect between the upper layer of the sail and the inner layer of the sail; the pressure is less than the inner side and will tend to lift it – that is where the ‘flying proa’ image occurs.”

A participant then asked about where the “sweet spot” would be on the sail? Borja replied that this would be with respect to the true wind to get the faster speed at beam reach. He explained, if wind pressure is constant and the sail area is big, there will be a big force. With a big sail it is critical to know the points of sail to be able to maximize and ensure the safety of the crew. If the canoe goes downwind, it is easy to make the canoe “run aback” – with the danger of the canoe tipping over. If the canoe is downwind, Borja said, then the sail should be maneuvered about 15 or 10 degrees off of center and this should be okay. It is important to understand the orientation of the canoe to the wind, so that the force of the wind can be maximized.

Frank Cruz added, when sailing downwind, there is a different way to position the sail itself, so you can take the pressure off the front of the canoe. Borja pointed out, though, that the wind is still pushing from behind. However, Cruz said, you can change the direction of the sail to compensate for that.

Borja closed by emphasizing that he wanted to share this information about what he and crew had experienced so that others could learn from their mistake.



## Discussion of Terms

After Borja's presentation, the workshop group continued discussing the terms for the lexicon, with a particular focus on certain Carolinian words that are used in traditional seafaring and navigation. The intention was to eventually come up with Chamorro equivalents of these terms for the lexicon. The group also wanted to start discussing Chamorro names for the important stars used in navigation, including the North Star (Polaris).

Another area of more intense discussion was the use of directional terms. Cunningham pointed out the difference in perspective when it came to the directional points of north, south, east and west, and the Chamorro terms *lāgu*, *hāya*, *kāttan* and *luchan*. For Chamorros direction was based on the orientation of the individual to the land or sea, and not the cardinal directions as understood in the western compass. There were also differences noted on each of the Mariana Islands, and even among people on Guam, what these directional terms described.

It was decided that a committee with representatives of the different seafaring groups and other interested individuals would meet to help put these words for directions and stars together. Cunningham declared his trust in the individuals and that this approach would be a good way to get this list going. Another participant asked if others from the Northern Mariana Islands and other Micronesian islands would be included in this process and communicated with about its progress. Cruz pointed out that to wait for all these individuals to meet would take too much time. However, the group could consider using teleconferencing as a way to keep lines of communication open.

Another participant asked if maybe *techas*, or traditional prayer leaders, could be included in this discussion, since they have prayers and songs and words that could be used to describe some of the heavenly bodies and stars. It was pointed out by Iriarte, however, that most of the songs used by *techas* do not refer to particular star names, although there are frequent references to the stars.

Iriarte further suggested that the group develop a methodology for doing this part, identify who has the necessary data and then get together. Cruz suggested meeting the following day, starting with who was available to participate and resume the work begun at this workshop.





## Closing

Nauta stated that Guampedia will work to document the proceedings, and publish them while the group is deliberating the list of terms. The working list can be emailed in Microsoft Excel format with the listings from 2009 and 2014, and whatever new terms have been brought up. She also asked the group to think about how they would like the lexicon to be formatted, and that they would need to provide sources and citations for some of these terms. This would help people know where information about these terms came from and give them validity. Nauta also proposed that these workshop participants serve as peer reviewers of the finished documents once they are compiled.

Nauta then asked that presenters please submit an electronic copy of their slides and presentations as well as short bios so that Guampedia can produce as complete a work as possible. Guampedia also wants to include electronic copies of the handouts used in this workshop in the final e-publication. She proposed that the next two weeks will be used to produce the report, then the FestPac seafaring committee can do a final review, and hopefully have everything online in three weeks. Shannon Murphy, Guampedia Managing Editor, will be the point of contact.

Cunningham made one last note, pointing out the late Senator Ben Pangelinan had been an important part of the seafaring society here on Guam and was someone who spoke about seafaring with passion and deep emotion.

Nauta again thanked the participants, the CAHA staff including Sherrie Barcinas and Mark Duenas, and the Guam Museum Foundation for the use of the Hall of Governors.



## 12<sup>TH</sup> FESTIVAL OF PACIFIC ARTS

*"What we own, what we have, what we share ~ United Voice of the Pacific"*  
*"Hāfa Iyo-ta, Hāfa Guinahā-ta, Hāfa Ta Pātte ~ Dinanña' Sunidu Siha Giya Pasifiku"*

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