

Breaking the Cycle of Colonialism

In the beginning, when all things are as one, there exist a brother and a sister, si Puntan yan si Fu'uña. Together they inhabit an infinite and limitless Universe. When the time comes for Puntan to pass into another stage of existence, He calls on His Sister Fu'uña, and asks that She create from His body, the land. Fu'uña agrees, knowing that Her fulfillment of this last wish will be the greatest act of love that She can offer Her brother. When Her work is finally completed, Fu'uña steps back to see what has been made, and realizes that it is also Her time to pass. From where She stands, Her body becomes clay, and from this clay, we are born.

This is the history of how our people, known today as the Chamoru, came to be. It is the story of our creation, our beginnings. Within it is contained the values and lessons of our culture, cultivated by thousands and thousands of generations. This empowerment of the woman as caretaker of the land is a lesson in love: of how to care for each other, as family, and to treat with honor and respect the land of our birth. Moreover, it is a testimony of our people that has survived despite hundreds of years of colonization and genocide and war; it is a living history that has continued through the disasters of Spanish Influenza and Nuclear Fallout.

However, this very precious and significant history is today faced with a serious threat: the New World Order, and, in other words, Worldwide Western Hegemony. Much like those dreadful acts that were executed throughout the New World against too many of our indigenous sistren and brethren to mention here, the body of our sacred brother, si Puntan, is being severed limb to limb, mutilated by an Empire that is in endless pursuit to seek new economic markets to reap profit from.

Micronesia, the Mariana Islands, this place of our birth, is crying out in agony. Of these unspeakable atrocities many have chosen to simply turn their backs, to shut their eyes, to close their ears, and to absolve themselves of any semblance of moral conscience. Do not be mistaken on this: consent to any war fought for the empty promise of justice, is by nature, unjust. Acceptance of a superficial harmony brought about through the subjugation of others, is enslavement disguised as peace.

The high price for this has been a massive death among the living; a living death for the masses. But not all of us have been bludgeoned to deafness. We who remember from where we have come, can hear, and even more significant, we can sense what is happening. Here we sit today, the daughters and sons of these islands known as the Marianas, here we sit before you who are present at the United Nations, a symbol of hope for international peace, to safeguard our basic human right to self-determination, to freedom—freedom to be; to love; to live; and most of all, freedom to collectively remember our past, and create our future. The testimonies presented today are stories that have too often been kept out of sight, and therefore, out of mind. It is history as

told through us who live it. Because more than anything, our people seek an end to this chaos of war. We have been victimized by its madness for way too long. With the intensifying situation in our part of the world, this immense military buildup promised by the United States, we are able to see with a clear vision what the potential is: worldwide destruction, or a world coming together into consciousness.

Our administering power, the US, has promised this international body that the self-determination of our people will not be denied. We have come here today because through the unity of nations, this international body holds the power of voice to break the cycle of colonialism. In this noble endeavor, the indigenous voice must be present, must be an equal voice, because it is the wisdom of our heritage, our diverse cultures that are being systematically destroyed for the sake of up keeping colonial order. We have returned from this fire of destruction, in small numbers, one by one. At first, it may seem that we are too few a number to remember, and thus too easy to forget. But as this fire intensifies on a global scale and can no longer be ignored, then it will be realized that our indigenous faces have, this whole time, reflected the fate of the world.

And so I end this story with an anonymous quote: "If moderation means slowing up in the move for freedom and capitulating to the whims and caprices of the guardians of a deadening status quo, then moderation is a tragic vice which all people of goodwill must condemn."

*– Sinangan Si Fanai Castro Ginnen I Chamoru
Cultural Development and Research Institute*