

# *I Hinanao-ta, 500 Anos Our Journey, 500 Years*

## Introduction

The challenge of reading history is most heavily felt by those whose stories were written for them. Magellan's circumnavigation was the beginning of documented histories of the people of the Mariana Islands. For generations, those words dictated the perception of not only how the world knew the CHamoru people, but how the people of the Marianas learned of their ancestors as well.

On the 500th commemoration of Magellan's circumnavigation, I Hinanao-ta is eager to share with the world a holistic picture of our history by blending written historical accounts with indigenous stories and sources of knowledge. We live in an exciting time where learners are not satisfied with simply "reading between the lines." Now more than ever, the desire to produce a creative interpretation of history that represents us is embedded in this narrative.

"I Hinanao-ta, Our Journey," is a testament to the power of perspective. It is a step towards the world knowing who CHamorus are from CHamorus themselves.

# I Hinanao-ta, 500 Años Our Journey, 500 Years

## I Tinituhun (The Beginning) Creation Story

Our story begins with a sister and brother whose deaths were catalysts for life. Before there was an ocean to voyage, land to roam, and a sky to admire, there were Fo'na and Pontan. The two were supernatural forces charged with great power and were loyal to one another. Pontan, wise and forward-thinking, imagined a life for his sister beyond his existence. He envisioned for her a future of abundance, where her solitude could be peaceful.

As Pontan's life was nearing its end, Fo'na remained by her brother's side and listened for his last wishes. Drawing his final breaths, Pontan asked Fo'na to transform his body into the world we are entrusted with today. With a heart struck with grief, Fo'na carried out her brother's legacy by first creating light with his eyes - each becoming the sun and the moon. Next, she transformed his chest into the sky which became like a canvas painted with stars, clouds, and vibrant colors. She added to this brilliant sky by forming rainbows out of Pontan's eyebrows. Using Pontan's back, Fo'na began to form the earth. Continuing to harness her powers, she meticulously tended to the land until it became rich soil and limestone forests decorated with groves of coconut trees, gaosáli (torchwood) flowers, fadang (cycad trees), and more.

Fo'na looked around her and saw that Pontan's purpose had been fulfilled. She admired her brother's selflessness and mourned in his absence. While doing so, Fo'na's grief spilled out into the world. Her tears became the oceans and rivers, and as she cradled herself in the bay of an island, she longed for company. Fo'na decided to become one with the earth and transformed herself into a large rock. From this rock, human and animal life emerged to share in Fo'na's creation.

The humans journeyed beyond the bay and explored the world that came of Pontan and Fo'na's sacrifice. Time went by and eventually, civilizations formed. Knowledge of seafaring allowed for these skilled people to brave the open water in search of something inconceivably valuable: a place where life could be sustained.

Over 3,500 years ago, these navigators traveled great distances from island Southeast Asia and returned to the archipelago our ancestors called i tano' Laguas yan Gáni. These same people made the islands their home and would in turn become forebearers. Our ancestors cultivated rice, built remarkable latte stone structures, and spoke a language that has persevered. They lived harmoniously with the land and sea, respectfully indulging in the bounty of fish, fruit, and vegetables that the island provided.

Those that inhabited Guåhan had found their way back to their motherland and saw Fo'na in rock formation by the bay of a southern village they called Humåtak. Basking in the world she and Pontan had provided for them, our ancestors continued to tell their origin story and made offerings to show their gratitude.

To this day, it is believed that touching Fo'na, now referred to as Lasso' Fouha (Fouha Rock), can endow you with fertility. The sacrality of Lasso' Fouha has been protected through oral histories and is emerging as a place CHamorus can visit to feel connected to, or to show gratitude towards their ancestors. As soon as our ancestors stepped out of their sakman (seafaring vessels) and called this place home, they started a new journey, no longer as nomads of the sea, but as the Taotao Tåno' of the island of Guåhan.

Pacific seafarers would continue their journey as stewards of other islands throughout Oceania.

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## The Taotao Tãno' Encounter Three Spanish Ships

In March of 1521, the people of Guåhan were in the month of Umagahaf, as determined through their observation of the cycle of i pilan (the moon). Umagahaf occurred in the middle of fanomñakan (the dry season) and marked the time to harvest guatãfi (snapper fish) from within the reefs. The people of Guåhan would take to their galaides (outrigger canoes) in this time of the year in search of this seasonal fish. just as they had for thousands of years.

At the same time, a voyaging crew from the Spanish Empire was in the middle of an expedition in search of a trade route to the Malaku Islands in Indonesia. As these explorers entered their 533rd day of the voyage, they had run dangerously low on rations. Many crew members had died due to malnourishment and those who remained were forced to eat pieces of leather, softened by sea water, to survive.

The day on Guåhan was a normal one, when suddenly, as is said through oral history, the people in the southern village of Humatak spotted three foreign vessels on the horizon. The design of these ships was not like any they had seen from the other nearby islands. Intrigued by this, they boarded their galaides (outrigger canoes) to investigate. They used their lateen sails to swiftly move across the water, almost like dolphins jumping through the waves, speaking to a mastery of the winds and sea that had been cultivated by millennia of open ocean trade with neighboring islands. The explorers, so impressed by these vessels, named these islands Islas de las Velas Latinas, the Islands of the Lateen Sails.

Upon reaching the galleons, the islanders immediately climbed aboard the deck of the main flagship to welcome the visitors within their waters. As the two groups of people were attempting to communicate with one another, an altercation broke out between a member of the Spanish crew and a CHamoru, leading a crew member to strike the CHamoru with his sword, causing the other CHamorus to immediately jump overboard and back to their galaide. The CHamorus, seeing as they had suffered a grave offense by the Spanish, sought a form of recompense, as was common among their people to maintain peace. It was this common practice that prompted the CHamorus aboard the flagship to take the skiff that was attached to its side as they jumped off the ship.

While the CHamorus saw this as a fair exchange, the explorers, who were not familiar with the culture of the people, viewed this as an act of theft, leading them to pursue the CHamorus. The explorers followed with forty armed men. To take back the skiff, the explorers burned down over forty latte homes and killed seven CHamorus, taking their entrails with them as they returned to their ship, as was believed to cure ailments experienced by crew members.

The CHamorus pursued the explorers with close to 100 galaide. The CHamorus, at full speed surpassed that of the explorers, swiftly sailing between the ships to hurl rocks at the crew. Some of these CHamorus broke away from the attack to trade provisions with the explorers for beads, [this sequencing is confusing, would they have stopped attacking to conduct trade]but upon completing the trade, rejoined their people in the attack.

Distraught from deaths of close friends and family, the women aboard the galaide let out mournful cries and tore out their hair as they chased the galleons out of their home waters. The CHamorus pursued the explorers for about three miles, eventually turning around to sail back to shore once they were sure the ships would not return. As those aboard the ships ventured further from Guåhan's shores, Magellan himself, as Captain, renamed the islands Islas de Los Ladrones, the Island of Thieves. Meanwhile, CHamorus were relieved at the end of their bitter encounter. journey as stewards of other islands throughout Oceania.

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# IT aotao T ási'

## The People of the Sea

When Magellan's crew wandered into the Marianas, they encountered a civilization which had already existed for thousands of years. The CHamoru were interconnected with other island groups by the expanse of the ocean— what Epeli Hau'ofa called a sea of islands. The CHamoru people were not objects to be discovered. Rather, by 1521 they were a people with sustained contact with and knowledge of the outside world. One crew member aboard Magellan's ship, Andrés de San Martín, remarked that the CHamoru who stepped foot onto the deck of Magellan's galleon were "completely unawed" by what they saw aboard the vessel. As navigators, they had an intimate knowledge of stars, waves, clouds, swells, animals, and winds which guided them from one island to another. On land, it was an intricate knowledge of craftsmanship which helped create sakman and other vessels which could navigate long distances at incredible speeds.

For the Spanish crewmembers, these outrigger canoes were vastly different from their hulking, slow-moving ships in that their sails, made of intricately woven plant fibers, were not stationary, but could be moved from one end of the canoe to the other. This allowed CHamoru navigators to quickly maneuver their canoes with the wind. However, it is not just outrigger technology and seafaring knowledge which travelled far and wide, but language.

CHamorus share linguistic and cultural ties to communities across Oceania—a region four-fifths of the globe's oceanic surface. As early navigators travelled across the Pacific, they also brought with them many food staples we now share with many relatives across Oceania, such as lemmai, niyok, and the many varieties of root plants found among Pacific peoples such as suni, dāgu, and nika'.

CHamoru seafarers were devoted students of the ocean, and could navigate to sister islands based on, among many things, the shape and pattern of tides and swells. So dedicated were they to seafaring that, among all the gold, silver, and other riches the Spanish ships held for trade, what our ancestors sought most were iron nails and other sharp-tipped objects which they traded in exchange for water, foods, guáfak, and live birds.

While the Spanish were quick to marvel at the speed and ingenuity of CHamoru sea vessels, at later points during Spain's colonizing mission, canoes were vilified due to the threats they posed to the stability of the Spanish order. During the Chamorro-Spanish Wars, for instance, Spanish priests and soldiers destroyed canoes and forbade their construction fearing the military and logistical advantages they provided to the CHamoru rebellion.

Like many other Pacific Island communities affected by colonization, knowledge of seafaring dwindled in the Marianas. The Spanish fought to keep CHamoru from the ocean, knowing that the seas meant freedom and the mobility to connect with other island peoples. However, traditional seafaring knowledge has persevered through time and hardship with the help of our neighbors from the Poluwat and Satawal atolls. The Master Micronesian navigator, Mau Piailug has helped pave the way for a CHamoru seafaring revival, so that future generations can take to the ocean once again.

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# I Hinanao-ta, 500 Años Our Journey, 500 Years

## I Taotao Tãno' The People of the Land

The relationship that CHamoru people have with the land is one of interconnectedness and respect. Our ancestors were not taught to see land as an individually-owned commodity. Instead, they coexisted with nature and saw themselves as givers just as much as they were takers, protecting and witnessing it as an invaluable force.

Knowledge of the land as both a resource and a connection to life beyond us is seen across many indigenous cultures. Our ancestors, for example, looked to the trongkon niyok (coconut tree) as the tree of life and skillfully utilized every part of it. Additionally, the trongkon nunu (banyan trees) were respected as ancestral homes to the taotaomo'na (the people of before). It was natural for CHamorus to be raised knowing the function and vitality of their land.

History tells us that Spanish expansionism came with the naming and thus claiming of land. While our ancestors referred to themselves as I Taotao Tãno, or the people of the land, Spaniards who sought to either conquer land for economic gain or evangelize its people first took to naming it as a means of procuring ownership. In these times of early encounters, European cartographers placed our island on a world map that painted us first as remarkable seafarers, then thieves, and finally an archipelago that honored a queen (Mariana) who had only heard about us in written letters.

From 1565 to 1815, Guåhan was a critical juncture for the Crown of Castille's Manila Galleon Trade Route. as Ships leaving Manila would depart for Mexico loaded with spices, porcelain, silk, ivory and other goods from China. On their return, the ships are said to have carried at least one-third of the silver extracted from Peru, as well as other parts of the Americas. The route was so prosperous and expansive that it is referred to by historians as "The Dawn of the Global Economy," and "The Birth of Globalization."

Although the trade route was lucrative, the voyages were treacherous. With a mortality rate of approximately 50-percent, the likelihood of malnutrition, starvation, and infection was also a persistent threat to the 400-person crews living in cramped quarters. The crew members that did manage to survive were often scurvy-ridden and infested with a number of common diseases. The Marianas proved necessary to the galleon route as a site where captains could replenish their stores of water, food, and other necessities. However, Guahan was much more than a strategic location.

The responsibility that CHamorus felt to tend to the land was interwoven into the fabric of their society. The land and its people, believed to be formed through the love and sacrifice of siblings Fo'na and Pontan, was also managed by clans overseen by siblings -- a Maga'lahi and a Maga'håga. CHamoru society was comprised of a three-tiered caste system, the Matao (highest ranking), Achå'ot, and Manåchang. They lived along the coastline and were skilled fishermen. The Manåchang caste lived inland and were skilled agriculturalists. Furthermore, as a matrilineal society, land was passed down through a mother's bloodline and as a result, much of CHamoru culture was reflective of this high regard for both women and land: providers of life.

The act of taking from or venturing through the land was and continues to be a sacred exchange; usually involving asking permission from either those who tend to the land, or the spirits of the land in the absence of a clear caretaker. On the one hand, CHamorus mastered sustainability and knew how to properly maximize their natural resources to not be wasteful while not overharvesting to maintain balance. On the other hand, Magellan and subsequent European crews found little else they could exploit from the Marianas (aside from the land and people). One account by a crewman aboard Magellan's ship bemoans how the crew "saw no sign of gold."

The Spanish and CHamoru peoples' conflicting views of Guahan's lands remained throughout the first 100 years of the Galleon Trades operation. In 1668, this tension only grew stronger as CHamorus faced a new period of Spanish colonization fueled by the religious fervor of Father Diego Luis de San Vitores.

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## Catholic Missionization led by Father Diego Luis de San Vitores

On June 16, 1668 more than two hundred CHamoru men lined Hagåtña bay with spears, eager to know what an anchored ship, later identified as the San Diego galleon, was doing in their waters. Fatahurno, a headman amongst the warriors, was approached by Father Luis de Medina and his accompanying interpreter on the shore. Bearing gifts of iron, Medina was successfully granted a meeting with Maga'låhi Kepuha -- the high chief of Hagåtña.

As Medina and his interpreter were escorted to Kepuha's home, Pedro, a Christian Visayan Filipino survivor of a shipwreck near Saipan thirty years prior, climbed aboard the San Diego galleon. He brought aboard with him his two-year-old CHamoru daughter and asked a Jesuit priest to baptize her. This priest was Father Diego Luis de San Vitores. After baptizing the infant, San Vitores gave her the name Mariana and referred to the archipelago as Las Islas Mariana in honor of his queen. San Vitores proceeded in his mission to evangelize the Mariana Islands and expand Spain's colonial rule as a catechist on his team.

Meanwhile in Kepuha's home, Medina not only approached the Maga'låhi with gifts of iron and a velvet hat, but with a proposition regarding the Catholic mission as well. Kepuha was open to hearing their intentions and had allowed them to stay the night as his guests. The next morning, San Vitores came ashore and began his work by conducting mass near the ocean. Tactical with his actions, San Vitores erected a cross and preached his first sermon to those in attendance using the CHamoru language. The following week, the San Diego galleon departed for the Philippines, leaving San Vitores, Medina, and about fifty other men composed of soldiers, catechists, and priests to the CHamorus for what was expected to be a year until the next galleon was to arrive.

The missionaries found themselves in the face of a thriving culture that was in stark contrast to that of Catholic doctrine. Throughout the island, there were Guma' Uritao (Bachelor Houses) where the male elders of clans would congregate with young boys to educate them. Mothers sent their sons to the Guma' of their family, and thus entrusted their elder relatives with the responsibility of teaching them to become skilled canoe builders, navigators, stone carvers, deep ocean fishermen and responsible community members.

Within the Guma', sexual exploration was encouraged and discussed with the ma'uritao (young women) who frequented. Gathering at the Guma' Uritao fostered a safe space for CHamoru youth to mature in the presence of the opposite sex and their elders. However, the Spanish missionaries saw the Guma' as a place where sin and corruption, specifically premarital sex, defiled the youth.

San Vitores prioritized the abolishment of the Guma' Uritao, restructuring the CHamoru perception of premarital sex and the customs used to transmit knowledge between generations. The Spaniards also witnessed the makeup of CHamoru unions. Marriages were arranged by leaders and functioned as a binding of clans and a means of social mobility in which divorce was acceptable.

The CHamoru way of life was peaceful yet it did not shy away from expression. Disputes within marriages and amongst clans were handled publicly. Infidelity committed by the husband, for example, was met with a loss of property and a burning of his crops carried out by the female relatives of the wife. If the wife on the other hand committed adultery, then the husband could kill her lover. What the CHamorus viewed as necessary acts of aggression meant to restore peace were viewed by the Spanish as uncivilized and disrespectful to the sacrality of marriage.

Upon witnessing these customs, the missionaries were instructed to disperse throughout villages and baptize CHamorus. Chief Kepuha had agreed to give San Vitores land which he used to establish the first Catholic church in the Marianas. Kepuha then became the first CHamoru to be baptized on Guahan soil. Although his reasonings for giving San Vitores land remain a topic of contention today, Kepuha had become an ally to the Spaniards and in doing so made Hagåtña the base of their mission. San Vitores then sent out priests to other islands throughout the Marianas.

Baptism was initially seen as something exclusively bestowed upon the Matao; but this was because San Vitores strategically sought to baptize the headmen of the clans which he knew would serve as an example rewarded in material goods to the rest of their clan members. The baptismal spread had begun with high born clan members eventually targeting infants and elders who were close to death.

This process was quickly carried out by the missionaries and such sudden changes to culture were met with mixed responses. Within just six weeks, CHamorus saw the destruction of the skulls of their ancestors, the baptizing of their leaders and most valued community members (elders and youth), and an open critique of their way of life. Tensions arose in the month of August when priests in Guahan, Saipan, and Tinian were wounded by CHamorus. Additionally, Choco, a Chinese man who had settled down in Guahan's southern village of Pa'a, had played a crucial role in leading the CHamoru resistance. Choco began spreading word that the deaths of CHamoru infants and elders was attributed to the holy water used to conduct baptisms. In response to this, San Vitores visited Pa'a with the intent of baptizing Choco. He arrived with a military commander and armed soldiers; displaying a firm confrontation to be witnessed by the village.

In February of 1669, the Dulce Nombre de Maria in Hagåtña was formally established. Kepuha was given the title Don Juan Quipuha and was referred to as the protector of the Hagåtña mission. Around the same time, a seminary called the Colegio de San Juan de Letran, was built and the Spanish mission had then infiltrated the CHamoru educational system. Kepuha died shortly after the church's dedication and was given a Christian burial to his family's dismay.

Kepuha II, who felt strongly that his father should have been traditionally laid to rest with his ancestors, was angered by this and sought out Maga'låhi Hurao - another high ranking Matao of Hagåtña who had been gathering forces for the resistance. Hurao and other chiefs on the island, namely Matåpang of Tomhom, had been baptized but began to question the changing fabric of CHamoru society. Highly criticized for living with a divorced woman, Kepuha II grew frustrated with the missionaries to the point where during a confrontation with San Vitores he expressed that it would be "better to burn in hell than to extinguish the flame of passion."

In June, the Acapulco galleon San Jose arrived and brought soldiers equipped with firearms and ammunition. After a few days, San Vitores along with catechist Lorenzo de Morales, took the San Jose to Tinian and Saipan. In Saipan, CHamorus had held San Vitores and Lorenzo prisoner, leaving them to the Guma' Uritao who were threatening to execute San Vitores. Eventually they set them free and the two left for Anatahan in August. Lorenzo and San Vitores split up, baptizing infants in different villages and continuing their mission. A newborn child had died in the presence of Lorenzo and the CHamorus immediately retaliated, killing him and making him the first martyr of their mission. As San Vitores looked for Lorenzo only to be met with the news of his death, a volcano erupted allowing him to escape.

The next two years were riddled with disputes, alliances, and more forceful mission efforts throughout Guahan and the Northern Mariana Islands. Hurao's efforts to gather resistance supporters was gaining and after briefly being held prisoner by Spanish soldiers, he gathered 2,000 warriors and led the first organized attack against them on September 11, 1671. The attack lasted for eight days and allies, like Choco and Kepuha II, had begun to overwhelm the Spaniards. However, a catastrophic typhoon hit Guahan and left CHamoru forces weakened.

In April 1672, Maga'låhi Matåpang of Tomhom was visited by San Vitores who had heard of Matåpang's newborn daughter. San Vitores insisted that she be baptized to which Matåpang angrily refused. At this point, baptism was rendered unpopular and converted CHamorus began to resist the missionaries much more openly. Matåpang left to find a warrior also named Hurao with the plan to kill San Vitores. Once Matåpang left his home, San Vitores entered and baptized Matåpang's daughter without his consent while Pedro Calungsod stood guard. Upon returning, Matåpang and Hurao saw this and felt betrayed. They proceeded to hurl lances towards Calungsod and San Vitores, injuring them and leaving them defenseless. Matåpang and Hurao loaded them onto a proa and disposed of their bodies over Tomhom's reef.

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## A Battle of Sovereignty/Independence

In the spring of 1672, Maga'lahi Matápang of Tomhom fled hurriedly to the Northern Marianas in the wake of his assassination of the leading missionary in Guam, Father Diego Luis de San Vitores. This assassination was a culmination of growing tensions between CHamoru leaders and the growing Spanish presence. The surge in aggression on both sides led to a war that would last nearly 25 years. During this CHamoru rebellion, survival for the CHamoru people was dependent on their ability to retreat, re-strategize, and resist.

Our ancestors did not engage in a full-scale war. The war waged against the Spanish was instead marked by sporadic outbursts of organized resistance by individual clans who viewed this as ritual retaliation. On many occasions throughout the war, the forces of the Spanish dwindled. But upon each glimmer of victory by the CHamorus, a new ship arrived to bolster the ranks of soldiers present and restock arms and supplies.

CHamorus were at a crossroads: either build alliances with neighboring clans or ally with a foreign power. Despite the overwhelming threat these foreign forces placed upon the livelihood of the CHamoru people, many came to the aid of the Spanish. This was done by way of providing rations to the missions or volunteering to fight alongside the soldiers against their CHamoru brothers and sisters. One such man was Hineti, later baptized as Ignacio. Hineti was a man born to the lowest caste in the ancient CHamoru hierarchy, the manâchang. In 1684, the Spanish Governor of Guam, Quiroga, took a large fraction of soldiers with him to Saipan after hearing of sightings of Maga'lahi Matápang, leaving the missionaries on Guam susceptible to attack. Seeking a way to ensure the prosperity of his clan, Hineti militarized his fellow clan members to defend the Spanish mission against his fellow CHamoru until Quiroga's return.

The bulk of casualties were not from war but rather from an array of diseases that were compounded by a practice found throughout Spain's New World Empire: the reduction. Before the initiation of the militant reducciones, CHamoru clans went into deep hiding in the halom tano' and other difficult places to settle across the Mariana Islands. It was not until the 1680s that Spanish conquistadors led by Quiroga forcibly resettled natives from all islands of the Marianas into five, Church-centered villages: Hagåtña, Humatak, Hågat, Inalåhan, and Pågu. By the end of the century, CHamorus had to reckon with a new threat. In 1668, the estimated population was between 30,000 to 60,000; In 1705, that number was reduced drastically to 3500.

CHamorus on either side of the CHamoru-Spanish War had to think deeply about their future. Like the CHamorus who first fled to the jungles at the sound of gunfire nearly 25 years earlier, the CHamorus at the end of the war had to bide their time and do what they could to survive. During the period of reconstruction following the war and the ascendancy of Spanish power, CHamorus strived to maintain their worldviews and culture and embedded them into the new religion and Spanish ways of life thrust upon them.

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## Period of Rebuilding

By the end of the CHamoru-Spanish War in the early 1700's, CHamorus throughout the Mariana Islands were forced to move from their homes into several new districts throughout the island of Guahan. During this time of total Spanish governance, life for the CHamorus seemed unrecognizable from what it was just a century prior. In the effort to establish a colony in the image of Spanish society, the reconstruction of Guahan began. This transition ultimately ended many of the practices of a culture cultivated within their homeland islands for over 2,000 years.

In spite of onerous assimilationist policies, CHamoru people continued to integrate their values and beliefs in the new world order. No longer were rebellions against the Spanish fought on fields by warriors, but instead were waged during daily life by everyday CHamorus.

This can be heard no better than in the language that fell from the tongues of the people. The CHamorus were faced with an unprecedented influx of new words from the Spanish language that had to be quickly adopted in order to describe a world changing just as fast. The CHamorus made these words their own, regardless of their origin, by both pronouncing them in ways that felt natural and by speaking them in their traditional grammar structure. Spanish words such as mesa and carne were spoken as lamasa (table) and kâtne (meat). Although the language sounded Spanish, as a son or daughter of Guam spoke it, it became CHamoru.

The CHamorus experienced the first significant threat to their culture after the abolishment of the Guma' Uritao by Fr. Diego Luis de San Vitores. While the Catholic mission initially moved to extinguish the seemingly pagan practices of the CHamorus, it had inadvertently caused the end of an entire system of education whose knowledge was built upon thousands of years of practice in navigation, stonework, and oral history.

As the CHamorus were gathered into these new villages, their solution to the newfound absence of a cultural institution was found in the fields of the family ranches that they kept separate from their residence, called a lancho. Learning survival skills in the lancho replaced the Guma' Uritao's where young CHamorus could speak their language, learn traditional practices, and instill an education of key cultural values outside the watch of priests and soldiers.

Despite initially serving as a key component in assimilation into Spanish life, the Catholic Church was strategically leveraged by CHamorus to ensure that cultural practices and values were practiced in an unassuming way. This can be observed in the establishment of the local role of techa', or prayer leader, to preserve a place of power for women within this new social hierarchy. The techa' was a role normally held by the oldest woman in the village. In her capacity as techa' she would have authority within each village's church, second only to the priest. Within this normally patriarchal institution, the CHamorus, through their actions in the Church, were able to maintain a sense of gender cooperation and equality that reflected the roles of the eldest daughter and son in ancient clan leadership.

This spread of foreign influence had moved into the homes of the CHamorus as well. In addition to new technologies and diet, the Spanish had also brought with them their legends and folklores. These stories included mermaids and duende, characters that were never a part of the CHamoru culture. These stories were told in the houses of many CHamoru families but were tweaked with each retelling to reflect traditional values and customs.

This can be seen in the retelling of the legend of Sirena. The original story served as a cautionary tale for children to obey their parents, seeing that Sirena refused to obey her mother and was consequently cursed by her to become half fish. CHamorus, however, have extracted a secondary lesson which is for parents to understand the weight of their words and the influence they have on the lives of their children. This lesson in childcare is one that is consistent with Fray Juan Probe's observations and descriptive accounts of the CHamoru people before the CHamoru-Spanish War.

The CHamorus ingenuity and adaptability, amidst overwhelming pressures to conform to a foreign way of life, ensured that key components of their traditional knowledge would continue to guide their people into this new journey just as it had for thousands of years. These lessons would continue to guide the people, even as they faced an emerging threat to their livelihood in the mid-1800s, one that did not discriminate by race or religion: the plague.

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## A Plague from CHamoru Memory Returns The 1855 Smallpox Epidemic: Yo'ámte (CHamoru Healers) on the Frontlines

Throughout one of the darkest crises in CHamoru history, which killed nearly 60% (5,542 inhabitants) of Guam's population, it was during this time that its natives, government officials, and the Church turned to a trusted source of medical aid, the yo'ámte. Our yo'ámte were front liners against a virulent disease that debilitated its victims with severe fatigues, fevers, and pus-filled lesions covering the body.

In 1845, a decade before the smallpox epidemic, Governor Santa Maria referred to our ancient yo'ámte as "the real people who practice medicine here." Yo'ámte concocted a plethora of ámot (indigenous medicine) to treat a variety of ailments including those labeled chetnot maípe (unexplained illnesses). Yo'ámte created ámot using hale and hágon siha (roots and leaves) from native plants from private gardens and the halom tano' (jungle). Our ancestors possessed valuable medical knowledge, and in the time of smallpox, they found ways to innovate and explore new methods of treatment. As an old CHamoru saying from Saipan goes: "Ha ná'i háo gi as Yu'os chetnot-mu, para un espiha ámot-mu" (God gave you the sickness for you to look for the medicine).

In the spring of 1856, the Edward L. Frost, an American schooner, anchored in Apra Harbor, Marianas, carrying onboard prominent businessmen, Spanish mariners, Filipino crewmen, and the corpse of a man who died of a plague CHamorus experienced a century ago: smallpox. In the days that followed the ship's arrival, an island resident exhibited signs of the viral disease. Because the virus was extremely contagious, Governor de la Corte initiated containment policies against the disease including home quarantines, isolation zones, and the construction of medical facilities (camarines) in Familanan, Maigu, Malessó, Humâtak, and Inalâhan. Amidst this epidemic, the Spanish administration did not have an acting medical officer or an active vaccination board, so the role of the suruhana cannot be overlooked.

Despite the introduction of Western medicine and practices, Spanish and Church leaders relied on CHamoru knowledge on medicine before, during, and after the time of smallpox. In an 1875 account, Dr. Dimas Corral, one of the first Spanish doctors to practice in the Marianas, sought the aid and consultation of our yo'ámte to use "the plants of the country" to create indigenous medicines for sailors infirmed at the Colegio de San Juan de Letran.

Yo'ámte, however, kept their recipes secret from Spanish officials because obtaining ingredients from the halom tano', the sacred dwelling place of the taotaomo'na, would have upset the spirits. Therefore, Spanish officials like Corral must have relied on the cooperation of our native healers and willfully sought their knowledge. The status of the yo'ámte is a revered position in CHamoru society, and it is a living tradition that exists today. The yo'ámte of today have used recipes for ámot passed down for hundreds of years.

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# *J Hinanao-ta, 500 Años Our Journey, 500 Years*

## CHamorus Encounter A New Foreign Power in the Marianas

At the end of the smallpox epidemic, the CHamoru population declined nearly sixty percent. Similar to the period following the CHamoru Spanish War about 150 years earlier, CHamorus had to strive to preserve their cultural values and ways of life. The CHamoru's of this post-pandemic era were to once again to be affected by great change to their livelihood. A Spanish Royal decree of 1885 granted increased democratic institutions for the CHamorus through the governacillio (elected mayors).

A rising political class was gaining power in the Marianas. However, in February 1898, in an ocean on the other side of the world, the CHamoru people would experience the effects of an explosion aboard an American second-class battleship, the USS Maine in Havana, Cuba and start a war between the Spanish and the United States.

This war would result in an offensive assault on Guåhan and other indigenous peoples under the Spanish crown. The CHamorus residing in Sumay heard canon fire from the USS Charleston as it docked in Apra Harbor. Many remained unaware of the fact that the visiting American sailors escorted the Spanish governor, military officials, and troops on board as prisoners of war.

With the Spanish's contact and administration over Guåhan for over 300 years represented by their flag was lowered down for the last time, American sailors raised their star-spangled flag while their anthem resounded in the background. Far from the Pacific in a continent bordering the Atlantic, Americans initiated negotiations in Paris, France to secure the transfer of the territories of Spain's empire, without any CHamorus present. For the first time in hundreds of years, Guåhan was separated politically from her brother islands in the Northern Marianas.

Guåhan was the only Mariana Island transferred to the U.S. Although Guåhan became a U.S. territory, the civil rights and liberties guaranteed and protected by the U.S. Constitution and the nation it represented did not follow its flag as it flew over Guåhan. Nonetheless, the CHamoru people had a natural desire for freedom and liberty. It was this desire that prompted some CHamorus to flee to the halom tãno' like their ancestors before them. It was also that desire that empowered our ancestors to openly protest in the early years of a new regime by petitioning a U.S. Naval regime and a governing body thousands of miles from their shores.

In the increasing global era of the twentieth century, the people of Guam would face new obstacles and struggles that directly challenged their sovereignty and way of life, but like our ancestors before them, the CHamoru people learned to resist and adapt to maintain their identity.

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## Continuity of I Hinanao-ta Sigi Mo'na Konsigi I Hinanao-ta (Continuing our Journey)

As we commemorate the 500 Year Anniversary of the first recorded successful circumnavigation voyage around the world, it becomes near impossible to overlook the true weight of history in our lives today. Upon the arrival of these Spanish vessels on the shores of Guåhan, the journeys of the CHamoru and Spanish peoples would forever be intertwined. Forged by expedition and strengthened by trade, the relationship between the Mariana Islands and Spain would undergo countless conflicts and compromises with tragedies and triumphs experienced on both sides.

In nearly all aspects of CHamoru culture the legacy of Spain's influence is undeniable, from language to religion, music to food. We, as CHamoru however, do not acknowledge that this influence makes our culture any less CHamoru. Rather, we understand that this relationship demonstrates that our culture is unquestionably alive and thriving. Hearing our history from the voices of our own people instills in us a deeper appreciation for the ingenuity of our ancestors in incorporating ancient traditions and customs into adopted foreign practices as well as their sheer resiliency in holding steadfast to values whose importance could not be compromised.

The CHamoru term for ancestor, taotaomo'na, comes from the joining of two words, taotao, meaning people, and mo'na, meaning front. In its literal translation; "the people of the front." As we, the CHamoru people of today, share the stories of our ancestors, we bring with it our belief that those from the past are not merely characters written in books whose lives exist only in those pages of history. Rather, they are the leaders standing before us, constantly at the forefront of our minds, paving the way along a continually unfolding journey that is as resilient and vigorous today as the day they began telling their story with their first mark on the shores of Guåhan thousands of years ago.



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