

Young Researcher Overseas Visits Program for Vitalizing Brain Circulation:

Triangulation Project for the Understanding of Asia and Africa Areas

2012 Activity Report

27th Feb-17th Mar, 2012 (19days)

Dispatch Place: University of Hawai'i at Manoa

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1. Research Theme

The purpose of the study is to understanding and analyze the structure and social function of oral tradition culture in the republic of Palau, Micronesia through observing people's ordinary practice of their traditional culture. The study mainly focuses on the three topics below:

- (1) Observation and analysis people's oral tradition practiced in modern Palau society
- (2) Analysis of the system of succession of the oral tradition in Palau
- (3) Historical examination of culture surrounding the oral tradition in Palau

2. Dispatch Details: 27th Feb-17th Mar, 2012 (19days)

This goal of this dispatch was to pursue the activities listed below:

- (1) Interviewing with professor Christine Yano (Department of Anthropology)
- (2) Interviewing with professor William Feltz (East West Center)
- (3) Exchange of ideas and discussion with students (Ph.D. Candidates) from the East West Center
- (4) Participation in regular seminars of the East West Center
- (5) Acquisition of documents and articles related to arts, oral tradition, and traditional culture in the Pacific area owned by Sinclair library and Hamilton library in the University of Hawai'i at Manoa campus
- (6) Interviews with Palauan individuals living in Hawai'i

The focus of the interview with professor Christian Yano was guidance on my next fieldwork, which I am planning to conduct from April to December in 2012. She also provided suggestions on how to analyze field data and advice from a music-anthropological view.



Photo1: The East West Center



Photo2: UH campus at Manoa

3. Experience

Through this dispatch, I had the opportunity to discuss with a number of professors and students engaged in Pacific studies and anthropological study at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa. My discussion with a student researching traditional chants in China (Ph.D. Candidate from East West Center) was especially stimulating. We are planning to continue to deepen discussions of our respective research through independent seminars etc.

In my interviews of Palauans living in Hawai'i, I tried to ask about the Palauan community activities in Hawai'i, and how they maintain their network with relatives living in Palau. I will be continue to conduct interviews of this population to deepen my understanding of how the young generation of Palauan's who have chosen to immigrate to Hawai'i plan to keep traditional customs in their everyday lives.

4. Achievements and Evaluation

Fortunately, during this dispatch, I had a chance to interact with more professors and students than expected, and my stay was a fruitful one. I am proud of say that I accomplished almost all of the goals of this dispatch. However I could not give a seminar presentation because of a schedule alteration. Furthermore, I still need to continue to my efforts to get relevant documents from each library. As such, these two tasks, presentation of my study results and acquisition of documents, are going to be a priority for my next dispatch.



Photo3: Sinclair Library



Photo4: Hamilton Library

5. Challenges and objectives for the 2012-2013 dispatch

Hereafter, I will pursue fieldwork during April to December in 2012 from a new perspective and by taking advantage of my new network with the researchers whom I met at the UH. In particular, I need to make up for my lack of sufficient analysis of the current political and economic status of Palau, which was pointed out by the professors and students whom I met at UH during this dispatch. Specifically, I am planning to analyze (1) the traditional ritual spaces where oral narratives and traditional chants are practiced. (2) the local gift economy system. (3) changing clan structures and family relations. (4) the history of cultural policy and policy to protect the oral tradition in Palau.

During my next dispatch to UH in 2013, I plan to present my study results as a starting point for discussion. In addition, I am planning to complete my document acquisition.