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PACIFIC SCIENCE BOARD
22 September 1949

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Capt. P. G. Hale
Office of Island Governments
Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
Department of the Navy
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Capt. Hale:

Please find enclosed a copy of Alexander Spoehr's Project for Anthropological Research on Saipan. This is to be treated as a special project under the SIM program and, therefore, I sincerely hope that it may be possible for Dr. Spoehr to receive transportation assistance at no extra charge when he has to travel between islands in connection with his work, on the same basis that other SIM participants have been assisted by the Navy Department.

I also hope that it may be arranged for him to be accompanied by some extra baggage on the Breckenridge when it sails in October. The baggage which he desires to take may be described as follows: one locker (100 lbs.) of household equipment - electric iron, etc., one case (150 lbs.) of archaeological and ethnological equipment - surveying instruments, etc., and three bicycles (crated).

It is my understanding that the boat on which we hope you can obtain his transportation will go to Saipan as well as Guam. If this is not the case, I should like to inform Dr. Spoehr as to how the transit arrangement is generally taken care of and whether any additional expense would be involved.

In view of the fact that he is making the trip out with his family on a reimbursable basis, I would appreciate receiving information as to the anticipated cost of the tickets for Dr. Spoehr, his wife, and two children.

Many thanks for your help in this matter.

8 SEP 1949

Sincerely yours,

Harold J. Coolidge

Attachment

19 September 1949

PROJECT FOR ANTHROPOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON SAIPAN

Alexander Spoehr
 Curator of Oceanic Ethnology
 Chicago Natural History Museum

The proposed project deals with two sets of problems, lying in the related fields of (a) ethnology and (b) archaeology. These two sets of problems are outlined separately below.

A. Ethnology. The ethnological problems in turn lie in two major fields of anthropological inquiry: the study of social structure; and the study of culture change.

- (1) It is proposed first to make a detailed study of the present social organization of the native community on Saipan, in order to obtain a clear picture of this community as a social type, that can be contrasted with other Micronesian populations. Full use will be made of Joseph and Murray's data (essentially psychological) and of Gallahue's earlier USCC report on economic conditions in the Marianas. The project will complement and not duplicate this previous work. Attention will then be directed to the problem of change in native social organization. Native life on Saipan was completely disrupted by the invasion by American forces during the war. The question arises as to the process by which community life has reformed and the probable direction of change in social organization in the future. A detailed examination of family and local organization, of the status system, of religious organization and what survives of native magical practices, and of economic organization will be made to ascertain the direction of change. These aspects of social organization will be analyzed as a set of functionally related variables in a changing social system. The relation of administrative policy and practice to current change will also be investigated. If it proves feasible, the study will be extended to the Chamorro community on Tinian. It would be desirable also to conduct some comparative work on Guam, though it is very doubtful whether present conditions make such extension of the study practical.
- (2) A related problem in determining the processes of change that are at work today in the Marianas relates to the factors in native culture that govern the acceptance, modification, or rejection of new beliefs, attitudes, ideas, techniques, and other culture elements introduced into the group from outside sources. What are the mechanics of the diffusion process on Saipan today? Who are the innovators and who are the resisters and what is their relation to the social organization and to other cultural factors?

The communication channels of the Saipan community with the outside world can be isolated, the content flowing through these channels analyzed, and the relatively small size of the community makes it possible to observe the effects of the communication process as it works in the society. The problem is of practical importance in that it relates directly to the ability to predict what administrative proposals will be accepted and acted upon by the native residents of Saipan.

- B. Archaeology. The Marianas are on the fringe of the rice-agriculture, pottery making culture that penetrated into Micronesia from Malaysia in pre-historic times. The archaeological problem is to reconstruct this early cultural flow into western Micronesia and to throw as much light as possible on the peopling of this part of the Pacific. Although Thompson has reported on what is known of the archaeology of the Marianas, no systematic archaeological excavations in the modern sense have been made in the Marianas. Archaeological remains are abundant, even with the disturbance caused by the war. It is proposed to make a series of stratigraphic tests on Saipan, as well as to map thoroughly the archaeological sites of the island. If it proves possible, supplementary stratigraphic tests should be made on Tinian, Rota, and Guam, though it is understood that practical considerations may make this impossible. Also, as the pre-historic cultural influences that reached the Marianas must have funnelled through the Palaus, it would be desirable to follow up the work on Saipan with a short period of work in the Palaus to determine what cultural link existed between this island group and the Marianas.
- C. Procedure. The ethnological program would be conducted first, the last months being devoted to the archaeological work. I would plan to commence by acquiring a working knowledge of the Chamorro language, as the type of project outlined above demands a degree of proficiency in understanding the native tongue. Work would be conducted among both the Chamorro and non-Chamorro people on Saipan. I would expect to cooperate with administrative officials in such ways as my knowledge and training may prove helpful.
- For the archaeological work, a small crew of native workmen would be employed and paid for from expedition funds. In order to conduct the archaeological work it will be necessary to bring with me approximately 150 pounds of equipment, consisting primarily of surveying instruments, photographic equipment, special excavation tools, and material necessary to process the archaeological finds.

Very truly yours,

Sincerely yours,

Harold A. G. [Signature]

Attachment

cc: Cmdr. Lee H. [Signature]