

C.N.M.I ARCHIVES ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE

INTERVIEWEE
MRS. MARIA CRUZ

INTERVIEWER
MR. HERBERT DEL ROSARIO

DATE
OCT. 13, 1994

LOCATION
AGING CENTER, TINIAN

TRANSCRIBED AND TRANSLATED BY
DAVID R. OMAR
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ENGLISH TRANSLATION

10TH CASSETTE

INTRODUCTION

Hafa Adai, Good morning, today is October 13, 1994, and also we are on the beautiful island of Tinian, at Aging Center, also known as Sentrun Man Amko. Today I am very happy to announce that our visitor Madam Maria Quichocho, will be sharing her stories of experiences, Madam Maria Cruz, from Japanese time experiences, wartime and today the American administration.

Q. 1. The question, I will ask you Tan Maria is, Did you go to school in the Japanese time?

A. Yes

Q. 2. What grades did you attend Madam?

A. First grade only.

Q. 3. First grade? Did you remember, when you were in school, I know you attended 1st grade only, but was it on Saipan, in the Japanese time?

A. No, on Rota.

Q. 4. On Rota? Was there any Rotanese teaching at school, that you can think of?

A. Yes

Q. 5. Yes? Who? Did you remember or forgot?

A. Mannet Matud, Tun Mannet Matud.

Q. 6. Tun Mannet? When you were in school on Rota, was there only Chamorro school? Or was there also school for Japanese children?

A. I only attended chamorro school.

Q. 7. Chamorro right? What industries or company were on Rota, when you were there? Like sugarcane company or,

A. Sugarcane Company and Cotton.

Q. 8. Cotton right? Did you remember your means of transportation, before? Did you have cars like today, or bull carts or train or what?

A. There were all those, train and cars like today, but our transportations were bull carts.

Q. 9. Bull carts right? Where did most of the locals worked on Rota? Nowadays our people work in government sectors, in the companies and other sectors, others what work did they do?

A. The chamorros mostly worked in places like,

Q. 10. Their farms?

A. In their farms and some worked as happy labors, or when the Okinawans had contracts, they called the chamorros to work in the contract.

Q. 11. Madam was your living good, before? Was the economy good? Was life good? What I mean is that, were the merchandise goods cheap and were local foods abundance?

A. Yes, a lot of chamorro food.

Q. 12. Chamorro right? So the life in the past was good?

A. Good but today is better.

Q. 13. So today is better? Did the Japanese give the chamorros opportunity to practice their religions, like the American gives us today, in other words, it didn't stop the natives going to church on Sundays, X-mas or in fiestas, like here in Tinian, San Jose Fiesta, island peoples patron, so in the Japanese time, did they stop the locals in this practice?

A. They just let them.

Q. 14. Now let's get into wartime, Where were you Madam, when there was war in the Marianas, Rota?

A. Yes in Rota

Q.15. In Rota right? In the past two weeks, I was in Rota and I knew there wasn't much war, in Rota, but I think the Americans bombed Rota, so where did you and your families hide, in the wartime?

A. We went up to Askodo, on the cliff.

Q.16. Cliff?

A. Mountain, and we hid in the cave.

Q. 17. With your mom and dad?

A. No, my dad had passed away. My mom and my brothers and sisters.

Q. 18. What moment did you remember the most in the war? How old were you Madam, in the wartime?

A. Ten years old.

Q.19. Three?

A. TEN!!!!

Q. 20. Ten? So you can remember some, right? What moment, incident, in the war, you remembered the most? Even though, there wasn't much war activities on Rota.

A. As for me, at that time, I didn't know, how to be scared, but I was not scared. When I saw them entered the cave, I followed, when the bomb was dropped and the smoke went into the cave, everyone screamed and cried, but I was still not scared.

Q. 21. So you were not scared? So the war was there quiet a while? It affected Rota and the people?

A. Yes

Q.22. So none in your family got injured or wounded, in the war?

A. None

Q.23. None? What were you eating, during the war?

A. Breadfruit, sweet potatoes

Q.24. And what were you drinking?

A. Water from the spring and well

Q. 25. How Madam?

A. From the mountain we went down, my brother/sister usually goes down to the beach, where the well was and get water for us, up the mountain.

Q.26. Did anyone remember, if my locals helped the military, either the Americans or the Japanese, after the war? Did you remember any?

A. I honestly don't remember.

Q. 27. Well, let's get into the Chamorro customs, land inheritance or Traditional marriage, which one do you prefer, lands or marriage?

A. Even though, even though about the land inheritance.

Q. 28. Your families, just the same, on Rota and here on Tinian, what custom did you practice in dealing of family lands distributions? Is it male siblings only, or distributed evenly?

A. As for me, I love all my kids. So therefore, I want all of them to have equal share. But in the case, where there is left over, then I think, it will be given to the one, who took care of me, throughout my lifetime.

Q. 29. To inherit it, right?

A. Cause all of them already have their share and therefore all is pretty much set.

Q. 30. Why Madam, do you think that we have a lot of family disputes, in regards to lands matter, What is your opinion on these situations?

A. The origins of these kinds of situations is that many people have big personal interests, their main interests is self on top of everything. Maybe all he or she wants is him or her self only.

Q. 31. Ok, well our story goes well this morning, so do you have anymore to add on, about our culture or your experiences? Anymore about land transactions, in the Japanese time or today? Or the conflicts of our customs and culture verses the American laws.

A. Well the Americans have good laws.

Q. 32. Good?

A. Hm.....

Q. 33. Good opportunity right? Equal opportunities are given to the people, right? So that's all you have to say?

A. Ya, I am not so ready yet to think of more to say, I only responded to whatever you asked.

Closing: Anyway, Thank you very much Tan Maria, for the time you spent with us telling us the history of your experiences. When everything, in the story is compiled and completed, a copy will be given to you or be placed in the Aging Center, so that your children and the children of Tinian and visitors will see our Chamorro customs. Until then Thank You.....

You are welcome.....