

Research Report February 2010

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While in Palau in February 2010, we continued to work on issues related to the Tobian Language Project: Documenting Ramari Hatohobei, the Tobian Language. See <http://www.friendsoftobi.org/wordweek/tobianlanguageproject.html>.

Our project is designed to map and try to understand the changes that have taken place in Tobian over the last 40 years. In 1968, E.M. Quackenbush reported his database of almost 600 words* from each of 17 dialects (including Tobian) that form the chain of related languages described in his dissertation, [From Sonsorol to Truk: A dialect chain \(University of Michigan, 1968\)](#). The initial phase of this project is to collect the same Tobian words in 2009-2010—from a speaker of “Old Tobian” and from a speaker of modern Tobian.

In February 2010, we

- continued work begun in 2006 collecting Tobian words, sentences, stories, and prayers.
- continued work (approximately 35 hours) recording contemporary versions of words collected by E.M. Quackenbush referred to above (through No. 222). Mr. Isauro Andrew donated his services as a speaker of both contemporary and old Tobian. Working with Peter W. Black and Barbara W. Black, Mr. Andrew provided spelling, pronunciation, and occasional emendations.
- [Fiyongori Horofati: The Story of Horofati](#). In February 2010 in Koror, Isauro Andrew told this story to Peter Black in English and then in Tobian. Mr. Andrew then recorded the story in Tobian.

We met with the elected officials of Hatohobei State, local members of the Friends of Tobi Island board of directors, and members of the Friends of Tobi Island Advisory Board to discuss directions for current and future research and other ways in which FOTI might develop and use its resources for the benefit of the people of Tobi.

The mission of the Friends of Tobi Island, a Hawaii non-profit corporation, is to collaborate with the people of Tobi to develop resources, enhance communication, and support community building initiatives. A particular emphasis is on documenting Ramari Hatohobei, a threatened language, as a central plank in a program for the repatriation of Tobian cultural heritage. Supporting and maintaining the Friends of Tobi Island website and email list is a primary focus.