



Peter Bang

FAR ISLANDS

**A Documentary Account in
Black and White of FAR Islands
in Micronesia Over 30 Years**



Being strong is only like many sections of bamboo.

Strength does not depend on ones size.

Micronesian proverb



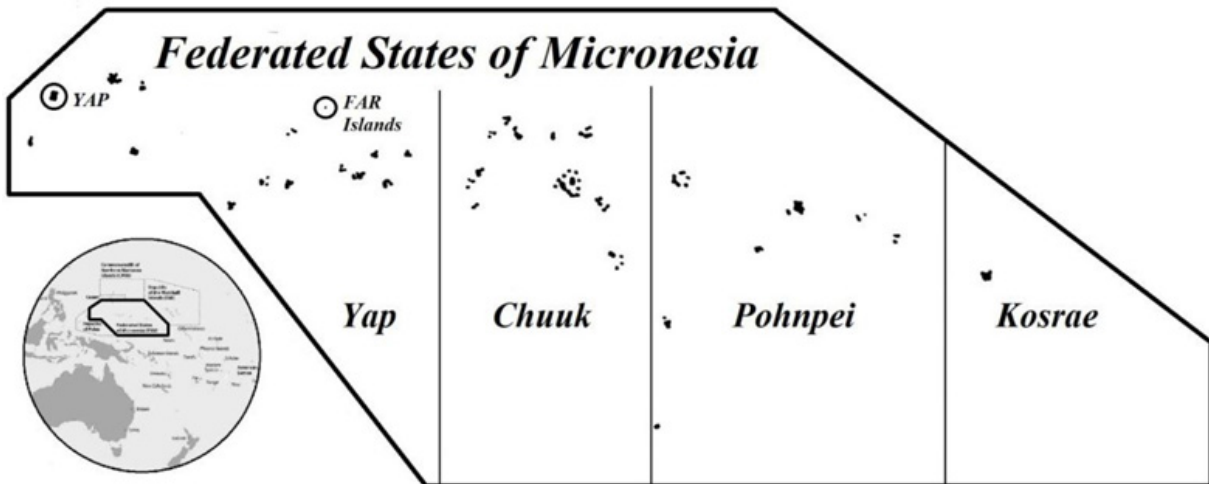
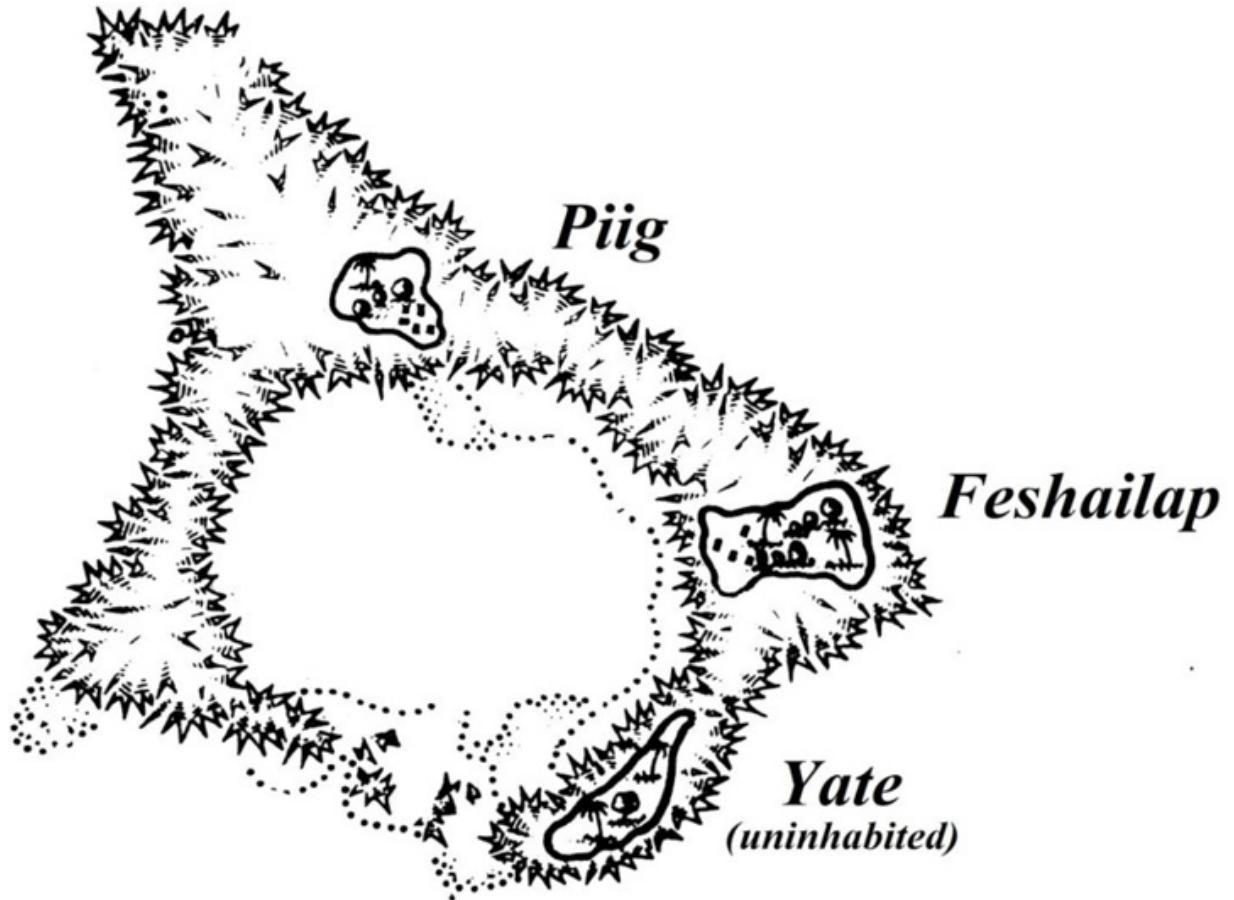


A people's culture resides in the hearts and in the soul of its people. But if you do not tell the stories - if you do not sing the songs and if you do not speak the language - the culture will cease to exist. Our islands, our culture, our traditions, our language, our food, our history and our values are vital to uniting us as a people, it's the foundations upon which we build our identity. People without knowledge of their past, origin and culture is like a tree without root. Our children are tomorrow carriers of our cultural heritage. What we teach our children becomes a part of their identity. Teachers who love teaching, teach children to love learning.

Inspired by spoken words of Uwapei elders and cultural
teachers



FAR Island ~ Faraulep Atoll



Contents

Map

Back then

Three decades later

Yap

The sea voyage

Outer islands

FAR Island

Disappearing islands

The Birds Island

The last coral garden

Typhoon

A lone frigatebird

State of emergency

Bibliography



Back then ...

When I first visited Faraulep Atoll three decades ago people on the outer islands in the State of Yap lived much like their ancestors had done for centuries. Contact with the outside world was limited. It was difficult and took time to get there. The only official connection was a ship that belonged to the small island state and served the outer islands only about once every two months.

Back then, FAR Islands was probably the closest one could get to a paradise on Earth. The white sandy beaches were the epitome of a tropical island dream; the islands were covered with coconut palms and other trees that covered the island's interior and made it a wild and dense jungle.



I was adopted into Pius Mopiy's, who was the island's best fisherman and very helpful and hospitable. In addition to my adoptive father Pius, the family comprised of my mother Meggi and grandmother Mariana and the kids Angie, Pius, Cypriano, Vicky, Rophei and Tom & Jerry.



Family portrait from 1986. From left to right: Mariana (grandmother), Angie, Pius, Meggi (mother), the little boy standing in front of Meggi is Jerry, then Tom. Above Tom is Cypriano. At the far right Vicky and Pius Mopiy (father). Rophei, baby of 6 months, sleeping in the hut (not pictured).





Daily life in the village on Feshailap.



The people of FAR Islands lived a sustainable life and had a rich culture. Their ancestors had survived on the tiny isolated atoll for centuries.