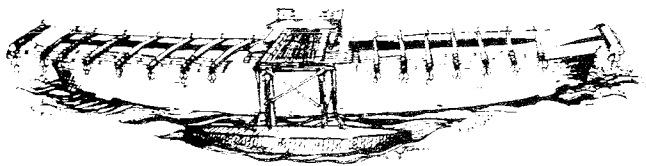


## Customs and Language

The customs and language of the people of Hatohobei are unique as they are derived from Carolinean ancestry. They have always been skilled canoe sailors and deep water fisherman. Many Hatohobei people today are professional seamen, operating their own field trip vessel, the Vincennes II, which makes regular trips to the Southwest Islands. This vessel is the only transportation available to these far-flung islands.



### CODE OF CONDUCT

Given the importance of this site to Palauans in terms of their history and culture and the concerns that exist in regard to its future, those visiting the site should not engage in any type of behavior or activity that disturbs the integrity of this site or diminishes the respect that should be accorded to it.

### PALAU HISTORIC PRESERVATION GUIDELINES

Because of the importance and sensitivity surrounding this and all historical registered sites, the Palau Historic Preservation Office would like to emphasize proper conduct for visiting a site through the following guidelines.

- 1) Remember to take everything you bring to the site with you when you leave.
- 2) Do not remove anything from the site. Although you may not think something is significant to the site, all pieces make up the whole.
- 3) Remember that many sites include culturally sensitive areas and therefore behavior should be always be respectful.

For additional information on this or any other Registered site, please contact:

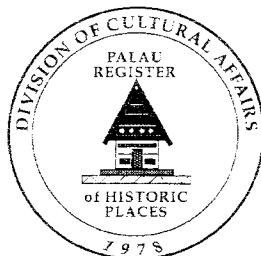
*Historic Preservation Office  
Division of Cultural Affairs  
Ministry of Community and  
Cultural Affairs*

PO Box 100

Koror, Palau 96940

Tel: 680-488-2489

e-mail: [Histpres@palaunet.com](mailto:Histpres@palaunet.com)



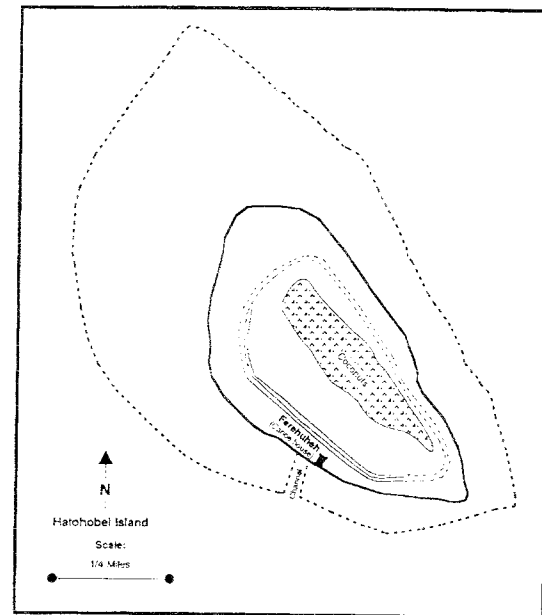
It is necessary to contact the state prior to travel for state government visitation permission:  
*Hatohobei State Office in Koror: 488-2218*

For travel information  
and road conditions contact  
*Palau Visitors Authority: 488-2793*

This brochure has been financed, in part, by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of Interior and the Palau Historic Preservation Program, Division of Cultural Affairs. However, the contents and opinions in the brochure do not necessarily reflect views or policies of the two agencies, nor does the mention of trade names or commercial products constitute endorsement or recommendation by them.

Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior prohibit discrimination in the departmental Federally Assisted Programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or disability. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity, or facility operated by a recipient of Federal assistance should write to: Director, Equal Opportunity Program, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, D.C. 20013-7127.

# FEREHUHEH DIANGEL *at Hatohobei*



## *A Canoe House in TOCHOBEI (Tobi)*

Site Registration Number B:TO-1:2

## Religious History of Tobi

The indigenous religion of Hatohobei (Tobi) was similar to the practices of other Caroline islands and involved the elements of nature, ghosts, and magic. Practitioners were special people in the community. Following the notorious experience with Captain Barnard and his crew (1833), some of the people of Tobi claimed to be able to make incantations that would attract European ships where the people could barter for iron and other goods. These men exercised their power in exchange for a share in the proceeds of bartering. Tobi had received a bad reputation for their treatment of the Holden group following publication of his book and few visitors sailed in the area until the German administration and the development of the phosphate mine on Angaur.

When the Angaur mine opened in 1909, there was a need for laborers and men from Tobi were recruited. At the time there were enough men on Tobi for a certain percentage of them to leave for jobs without upsetting the pattern of life on Tobi. The population of Tobi was remarkable in its variation. At the time of Holden, it was estimated that there were 75 people on the island. Seventy-five years later, at the beginning of the German period, there were about 968 people (1909 census). After the visit of Thilenius in 1909, an epidemic broke out and approximately 200 people

died 6 months later.

One of the people to be taken to Angaur by the German medical team after the epidemic was the chief of the community. In his absence a subordinate chief took over the ritual functions. This divided the island into two factions, one favoring the absent chief and another supporting the new chief. This conflict led to questioning of some basic concepts and traditions. When combined with the secularizing influences of the Germans and the growing experience of "expatriate" Tobians in Koror and Angaur, many of the traditional beliefs were discarded.

After WWI, Japan took over the schools and intensified the campaign against traditional beliefs. Simultaneously, in Koror, Catholic missionaries were proselytizing to many migrated Tobians. The Japanese brought in many diseases and the population started decreasing. While not usually fatal, many of the diseases made the women infertile and by 1925 only one woman on Tobi was able to have children.

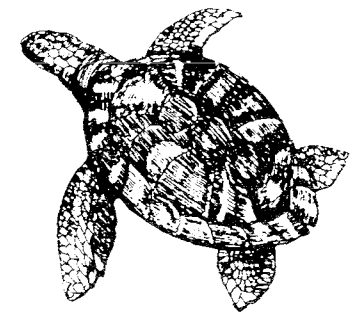
This was the situation when a young man, Echang, returned to Tobi after being immersed in Catholic beliefs. He returned and organized a movement that led to the final destruction of the old traditional shrines and customs. Taboos were removed and the traditional rights of the chief were scrapped.

## Significance

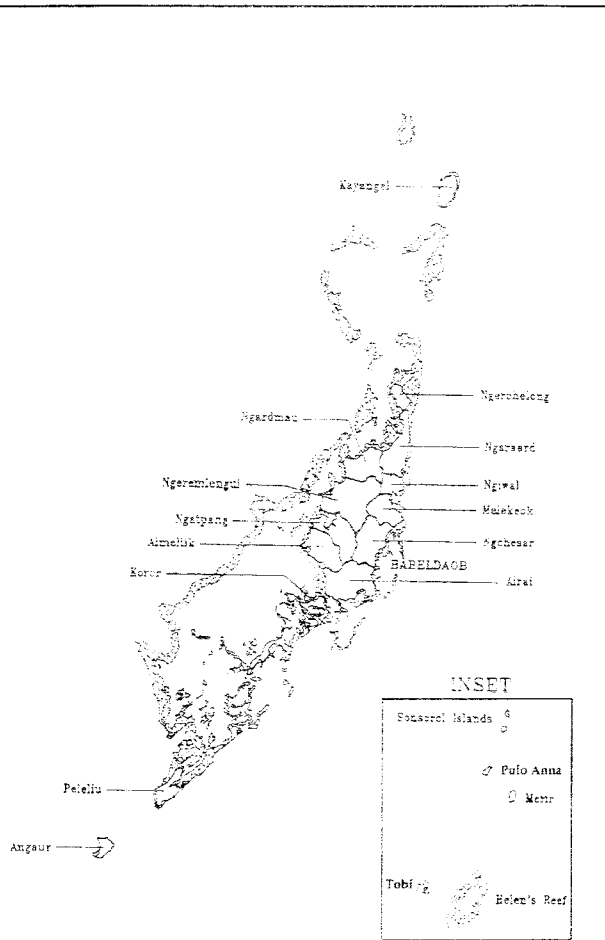
The Ferehuheh is a place situated on the north of the landing place of Hatohobei and has a dimension of 48ft. x 45ft., that sits to the south corner of Iporu. This place is on the eastern sea shore of Hatohobei. The Ferepehengkak (Rosalind L Hunter-Anderson calls it Ferepangahi in her book *Archaeological Investigations in the Southwest Islands of Palau*), Hatohobei's Chiefs meeting house is to the north of Ferehuheh. Today part of the Ferehuheh is buried with dirt from the excavation of phosphate when the Japanese mined phosphate there. The Japanese mined the phosphate inland and brought it to the shore line and then loaded it onto small boats and brought it to the ships that were anchored in deeper water.

Ferehuheh is the vernacular name for a canoe shelter or house. This place is sacred because it is where the chiefs of Hatohobei meet to discuss and mull over the messages from the gods. When the chiefs would gather here, a god would come down from the heavens and get into one of the men. The chief would then speak a different language not known to the rest of the people of Hatohobei and the chiefs would disseminate the message to the people. The god's name is Ruhoireng.

The Ferehuheh is situated on the water's edge, so part of it has been destroyed by waves that continuously batter the shore line.



© Belau National Museum, 1998.



The States of Sonsorol and Tobi are some 180 miles south-west of the main archipelago.



© Belau National Museum, 1998.