

## Research Report May-June 2014

Peter and Barbara Black

### Documenting Ramari Hatohobei, the Tobian language, a severely endangered Micronesian language

May 9 – June 7, 2014

**Documenting Ramari Hatohobei:** The second of three research trips under the small grant awarded by the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme, took place in May-June 2014.

The goal of this project is to provide a resource base of well-documented Tobian language use. This resource base, intended for the use of the Tobian community and for use by linguists, will consist of video records of people speaking the language in various contexts and covering various topics. This second research trip was very productive with only two to three days lost to illness.

While in Palau, we met with the Governor, the Delegate, and other elected officials of Hatohobei State to discuss the status of this project. And Peter Black discussed the project—its purposes and its ongoing direction and status—at a community meeting held in the village.

Twenty speakers were filmed, discussing a number of different topics and telling some very interesting stories. Thirty-two separate videos were made during this month. We were also put in touch with a researcher who worked in Palau in 2009-2010 and who has agreed to share her recordings for the use of this project.

We met with the volunteers—Paulina Theodore, Nixon Andrew, Cheryl Patris, Sharon Patris, Mary Yangilmau—who have offered to film videos and make recordings while we are absent from Palau. We discussed guidelines for producing useful material and reviewed the use of equipment. Cheryl is working on a project to illustrate three Tobian stories for use with children in the community.

HOPE, as the host organization for this project, provided invaluable support services to us during our visit.

Our third research trip to Palau, and the last called for by this project, will be in September-October of this year. During that trip, we will fill in any identified gaps in the material collected to the extent possible and we will attempt to record some of those Tobian speakers who have been unavailable during our first two trips. We will also demonstrate the Tobian dictionary which we are now developing for the use of the community. That dictionary will be handed over to the community for further development, maintenance, and distribution later in the year.