

## Research Report October-November 2013

Peter and Barbara Black

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

October 24 – November 20, 2013

**Documenting Ramari Hatohobei:** The first of three research trips under the small grant awarded by the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme, took place in October-November 2013.

The goal of Peter and Barbara's project is to provide a resource base of well documented Tobian language use. This resource base will consist of video records of people speaking the language in various contexts and covering various topics. With the exception of several days lost to Typhoon Haiyan and then illness, the trip was quite productive.

Fifteen speakers were filmed, discussing a number of different topics and telling several very interesting stories. The ongoing Bible translation project provided a rewarding context for the production of linguistic material.

While in Palau, we met with the Governor and many other elected officials of Hatohobei State to discuss the status and direction of the project. Many people offered advice and assistance. Fellow researchers with interests in Ramari Hatohobei, David Tibbetts and Esther van den Berg, agreed to share materials.

Especially important was the offer by four people, Paulina Theodore, Nixon Andrew, Cheryl Patris, and Sharon Patris, to film videos while Peter and Barbara are absent from Palau. They were each given information about the use of the recording equipment and the guidelines for producing linguistically useful video material. HOPE will manage the equipment for this part of the project and will ensure that the material collected by these volunteers is sent to Far Haparim for annotation and transcription. Cheryl undertook to develop illustrations for three Tobian stories, already translated, that can be formatted for use with children. These stories will be prepared for distribution to the community later in the project year.

HOPE, as the host organization for this project, provided support services to Peter and Barbara during their visit.

Peter and Barbara's second research trip to Palau will be in May of 2014. During this trip, they will continue to work with members of the Tobian community to gather Tobian language in a variety of contexts and covering a variety of subjects, including humorous stories and anecdotes. They will put a priority on time spent with older members of the community.