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# Remembering Our Ancestors



Praying for the deceased after WWII. Courtesy of the Micronesia Area Research Center

Every November 2nd, the island's Catholics observe All Souls Day. Family members and friends prepare sometimes weeks in advance, cleaning graves and adorning them with flowers or mementos. When the day finally arrives, schools, agencies, and organizations throughout the island shut down so that families are able to visit the graves of their loved ones and pray for them through the celebration of mass. This usually becomes a whole day event as many families visit more than one cemetery. This is an especially important cultural event as it not only reminds us of those that have passed, but reconnects us with one another as we meet up with other relatives throughout the day.

Although this celebration is a Catholic one, this deep respect for those that have passed is one that goes back thousands of

years. The concept of ancestor worship was a central guiding principle in ancient CHamoru/Chamorro society. Ancestral worship is tied to the idea that when a person dies they do not leave the world, but remain in some spiritual form. Ancient CHamorus/Chamorros believed their dead relatives returned as *manganiti* or *taotaomo'na*, spirits which played a large role in either protecting the living and ensuring they lived safe and prosperous lives, or bringing doom, illness and bad luck to them. Therefore, even after a person passed away, a relationship of respect had to be maintained with their memory and spirit.

The most known ancient practice associated with this worship was the keeping of the [skulls and other bones](#) of their ancestors inside the house. When a family member died,

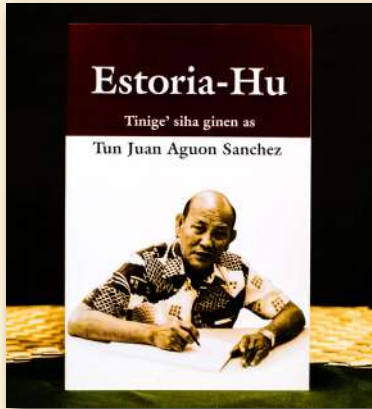
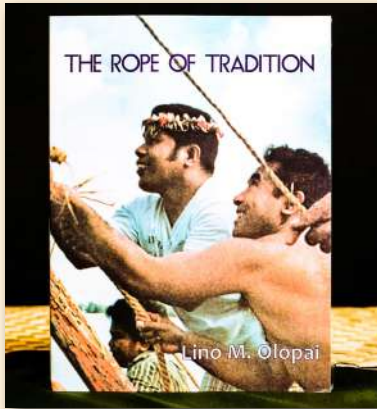
they were buried underneath the *latte* structure. After time had passed and the body had decomposed, the skulls would be exhumed, cleaned, and displayed inside the home. This was done so that the family could possess a physical connection to their loved ones, similar to how we keep photos of our departed loved ones in our homes today. Members of the family would often beseech the skulls of particular ancestors to ask for their assistance in specific circumstances. For example, if you were going fishing, you would ask the skull of an ancestor renowned for fishing to guide your vessel and give you good fortune in your catch.

Click here to read more about the history of this deep connection our people of the Marianas share with our [ancestors](#).

# Guampedia Heritage Gift Guide

We know how stressful the holiday season can be, especially when it comes to finding the perfect gifts for friends and family. To help reduce some of that shopping stress, shown below are a few items featured on our newly redesigned Heritage Gift Shop. We also have three special [Holiday Balutan Bundles](#). These bundles have a limited supply so make sure you get them before they're gone! Just click on the images of the items and be directed to their product page. Or you can click [here](#) and explore our [Heritage Gift Shop](#) for yourself!

## Northern Marianas Humanities Council Books



## Ben "Sinahi" Del Rosario

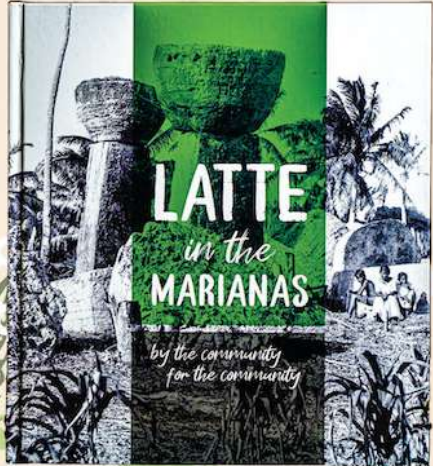


## Jill Benavente





# Magof Nochebuena!

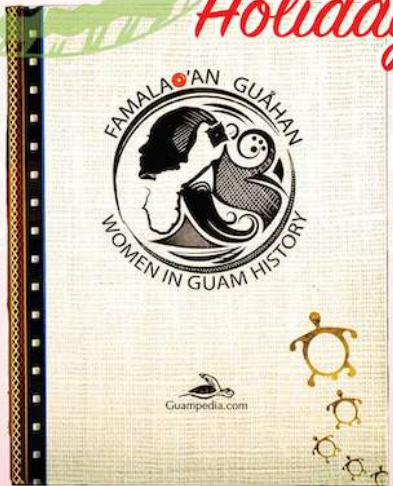


with purchase of book  
*Latte in the Marianas*

free set of  
postcards

[Guampediashop.com](http://Guampediashop.com)

## Holiday Balutan Bundles



with purchase of book  
*Famala'ån Guåhan*

free set of  
postcards



# Historical Highlights

## Typhoon Karen Hits Guam

On November 11, 1962, Typhoon Karen hit the island of Guåhan. With wind gusts estimated up to 185 mph, nearly all island homes were damaged or destroyed and many utility and communications buildings were left crippled. As a result of this disaster, 11 people died and at least 45,000 people were left homeless. The federal aid provided in the aftermath of the typhoon helped rebuild the island and increased the use of concrete for homes and other structures.



Damage from Typhoon Karen's storm surge in Asan, Guam. Photo by Lyle Fisher, U.S. Air Force.

## German Naturalist Makes CHamou/Chamorro Glossary

Chamorro (Chamisso 1821)	English translation of the German	German (Chamisso 1821)	Remarks
guminim	drinking	Trinken	In modern Chamorro, at least, <i>gumimen</i> .
gumupu	fly (inf.)	Fliegen	
haali	dig up the root	Die Wurzel ausgraben	
haani	day (indef.)	Ein Tag	comment on Chamisso's rendering of the glotta
hadju	trunk of tree, wood	Baumstamm, Holz	

*Vokabularium Der Dialekte Chamori. Courtesy of the Micronesia Area Research Center*

In November 1817, the Russian naval vessel *Rurik*, commanded by Otto von Kotzebue, arrived on Guam. This vessel was in the middle of a circumnavigation voyage from 1815 to 1818. Aboard the ship was Adelbert von Chamisso, a German naturalist. During their stay on Guam, Chamisso assembled a glossary of 181 CHamoru/Chamorro words and their German translations. Many of these words have since become obsolete in the language today. Click here to read [Chamisso's glossary](#), translated in English by Alexander Kerr.

## Independence in Micronesia



On November 3, 1986, the Micronesian islands of Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap gained independence as the [Federated States of Micronesia](#) under the Compact of Free Association with the United States.

*Seal of the Federated States of Micronesia (Left)  
Flag of the Federated States of Micronesia (Right)*

