

Cover: The procession that winds through Rota's tiny village of Songsong is the religious highlight of the island's annual fiesta. Photo by Carlos Viti.

# glimpses

## 13 In Search of Solitude

A rare glimpse into the hidden lives of two modern-day Robinson Crusoes. Tom Neale, a self-exiled hermit, and Tavi, a castaway from Denmark, both gave up promising careers to live alone on their own deserted Pacific islands. Their island lives are fascinating sagas of how man, disenchanted with society, finds contentment with himself and nature. By Bette Thompson.

## 61 A Tough Nut to Crack!

All hail the coconut; a sometimes impenetrable (to the uninitiated) fortress of nutrition, health, prosperity, comfort, happiness, warmth... Second only to the sardine can, the coconut is nearly impossible to open without the proper know-how. Juan Meno San Nicholas, a 68-year-old farmer and a veteran coconut cracker, demonstrates how he makes light work out of cracking one of nature's toughest nuts.



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An island where heritage and culture are still revered and yesterday is more important than tomorrow -- that's Rota. Although this tiny island is best known for its annual fiesta honoring its patron saint, its natural beauties, especially the Rotanese, are fascinating. By Ronn Ronck and Carlos Viti

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Politics on Guam is a unique blend of three cultures. Take the old Chamorro family ties, their generosity, love of food and drink and mix it with the Spanish flare for drama and arm waving and then add heaping portions of the American political scene and you have got, "Potluck Politicking."

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Was the 1884 murder of Angel de Pazos y Vela Hidalgo Guam's Spanish governor, the work of a lone assassin or the first step in an aborted Chamorro attempt to overthrow Spanish rule? By Larry Lawcock

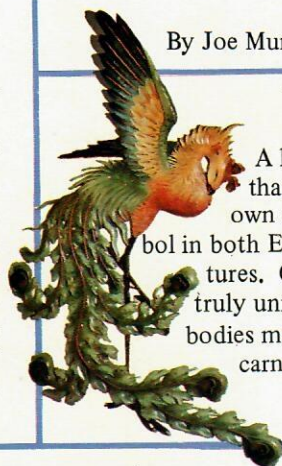
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## TENDAN DIKIKI SIHA

THOSE LITTLE STORES

More than last-minute sources of bread, milk, and beer, the tendan dikiki siha (little stores), are Micronesia's equivalent of Mom and Pop neighborhood stores and gentle reminders of how it was in the "pre supermarket" days. By Thomas Walsh Jr



## THE PHOENIX RISES

A legendary bird that rises from its own ashes, is a recurring symbol in both Eastern and Western cultures. One of the world's few truly universal myths, it embodies man's oldest dream, reincarnation. By Fred Foley

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To many first-time visitors, Singapore City of the Lion -- seems ready to rear up on its haunches and let out a roar. Surely, everything moves too fast. Yet, this tiny island nation thrives on speed, motion and diversity. By Linda Wilder

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## CONTRIBUTORS:

"Things are changing here," says a young Rotanese as he shows a first-time visitor around his tiny island home. "We're getting a new hotel and I hear they're going to fix the port so it can handle bigger ships and -" His words are interrupted by dynamite blasting foundations for Rota's new hotel. Developers have found Rota and some island residents are leery of checkbook-waving land speculators. Rota, long known as one of Micronesia's friendliest islands, (its annual fiesta is *the* social event in the Marianas) is explored in depth by **Ronn Ronck**, a newspaperman intimately familiar with Micronesia. Ronck, who writes a weekly column for the *Pacific Daily News' Islander* magazine, has been reporting on Micronesia for the last five years. "My trips to Rota keep getting better and better, a few more times and I might decide to stay," says Ronck. "The only thing I miss is fresh milk . . . I can last only so long on soft drinks and beer." **Carlos Viti**, who spent five days photographing Rota for *Glimpses*, claims he could survive solely on Rota's beer and goodwill. Viti, a staff photographer for the *Pacific Daily News*, first came to Micronesia in 1967 as a Peace Corps volunteer and has been "hooked ever since."

Another ex-Peace Corps volunteer, **Larry Lawcock**, became fascinated with the events surrounding the 1884 assassination of Guam's then-governor. For

"Assassination: A Question of Intent," Lawcock pried loose from the Spanish records collected at the University of Guam's Micronesia Area Research Center the true story of the Chamorro revolution of 1884. Lawcock, one of the growing number of public school teachers on Guam with a Ph.D., learned his Spanish on an 18-month University of New Mexico Ford Foundation funded internship in Caracas, Venezuela. **Barbara Boertzel**, who illustrated the story, has studied art at the Carnegie Mellon Institute, George Washington University and Hawaii's Bishop Museum.

As both a long-time resident of Guam (since 1966) and as editor of the *Pacific Daily News*, **Joe Murphy** is in an excellent position to write about Guam's unique brand of politics. His "Pot Luck Politicking" is a colorful account of how Guam elects (and dethrones) its leaders.

An island of one's own . . . How many people have dreamed of "getting away from it all" and moving to their own deserted island? **Bette Thompson**, a freelance writer who spent two years sailing a yacht in the South Pacific, has written a moving account of two island hermits who turned their dreams into reality. Thompson, whose articles have appeared in the *New York Times*, *Off Duty*, *Bon Appetit* and other publications, explains her attraction to the hermits of "In Search of Solitude": "I felt for a moment - and only a moment -

that these men were my kindred spirits. However, after their tales of hurricanes, illness and dwindling food supplies, I was glad to return to my well-stocked yacht and set sail."

The phoenix, a legendary bird that is reborn from its own ashes, has long fascinated **Fred Foley**, a frequent contributor to *Glimpses*. His "Flight of the Phoenix" is the result of years of research which Foley describes as "not purely scientific." "Serendipity plays a large part in my research," explains Foley, "chance discovery is fun. I have a lot of friends around the world who know I'm a phoenix nut and they're always sending me new bits of information." Foley, an ex-Jesuit priest who lived and taught in Taiwan for more than 20 years and authored several books, is presently a professor of literature at the University of Guam.

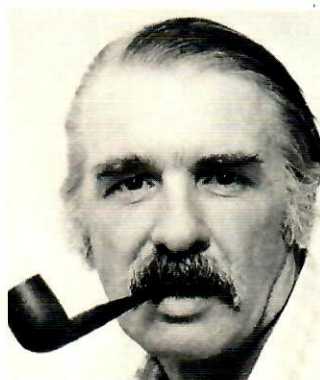
In "Singapore's Gentle Roar," **Linda Wilder** explores what she calls the "other" side of Singapore. "Singapore is a melting pot and I was fascinated with how the ingredients were mixed," reports Wilder. "It's a pity most tourists zip through the Lion City seeing only the traditional tourist sights." Wilder's version of Singapore doesn't ignore the "traditional" tourist sights but also includes an insider's report on the soul of Singapore.



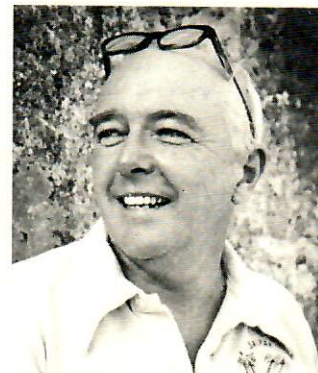
Ronn Ronck



Barbara Boertzel



Joe Murphy



Fred Foley



Carlos Viti



Larry Lawcock



Bette Thompson



Linda Wilder





*Story by Ronn Ronck, photos by Carlos Viti*

Each October, the people of Rota host a fiesta in honor of their patron, St. Francis de Borja.

# ROTA'S SILENT LEGACY



**R**ota is a Roman Catholic island - - there has only been one church here since the Europeans came - - and this annual celebration is an important community event. There is plenty of merriment and good food but this is primarily a religious fiesta and San Francisco is never forgotten.

A daily mass is said in his name and on the Sunday of the fiesta weekend his brown-robed statue is carried through the village of Songsong in a mile-long procession.

"Here in Rota," explains Father Louis Antonelli, "the church and the culture is united. That's what makes this island so different from Guam, for example. There the church is no longer the influence it once was and, as a result, much of the traditional Spanish Chamorro culture has been lost. If you separate the church from the culture you essentially destroy it."

"The Spanish Chamorro culture lives in Rota," he continued. "Most of the old customs still prevail and even the young people respect them."

**T**he first statue of St. Francis de Borja (1510-1572) may have arrived in Rota during the middle 1600's, brought over to the Spanish mission here begun by Father Diego Luis de San Vitores, a member of the Society of Jesus. Rota was then called Zarpana by the native Chamorros but Fr. San Vitores changed its name to Santa Ana to please the Queen Regent of Spain, Mariana de Austria. The Ladrone Islands, of which Zarpana was a part, had already been renamed the Mariana Islands. Santa Ana is lost to history. So is Zarpana. Rota, a corruption of Luta, is the official name today.

Finding that the residents of Rota were poor, Fr. San Vitores or one of his successors decided to install St. Francis, a patron saint of poor people, as the island's protector.

Rota's human history goes back further than the arrival of Fr. San Vitores, however. Some of it is wrapped up in layers of island myth that tell of a legendary man whose accomplishments link all of the southern Mariana Islands. His name was Taga: Taga the Great.

Although he was born on Guam, Taga the Great spent much of his life on Rota. It was here that he married and had his first child. And it was here that he began to earn his reputation as the strongest Chamorro ever. Later, he became a chief on Tinian.

Until Taga was born, legends say, his father was the strongest man on Guam. The father loved his son in the beginning

but that love turned to jealousy when he realized that Taga would someday be mightier than he was.

One night, Taga's father found his son on the beach hunting coconut crabs. The boy was lying on the sand with a torch in one hand and the other hand buried deep within a hole beneath a palm tree. "There's a crab in this hole," Taga told his father, "and I'm trying to get it out."

"Try shaking the tree," his father said with a laugh, "Maybe you can scare him out."

The boy pulled his hand out of the hole. "I can do better than that," he replied and put his hands around the trunk of the palm and pulled it up from the roots. He threw the palm aside and grabbed the frightened coconut crab.

"You're much too strong, Taga," his father said upon witnessing this show of strength. "If I let you grow up to be a man you'll try to kill me in order to become chief. Some of the people will support me and others will support you. I must kill you now to avoid civil war in the future."

The father picked up a big club and began chasing his son. Taga ran as fast as he could and finally came to a high cliff on the northern coast of Guam.

"You can't escape now," his father said as he approached from behind.

Since there was no other way to escape, Taga stepped back a few steps and then sprang forward and jumped. An ordinary man would have plunged to his death on the rocks below but Taga was far from ordinary. His powerful legs pushed him high into the air and he leaped all the way to Rota, 35 miles northeast of Guam. Some people say you can still see the footprints on Rota where he landed at Puntan Patgon.

Taga was soon adopted by a noble family on Rota and he grew up to become a great chief. He took a girl from Rota as his wife and they had a baby girl. He was well-loved by all according to the stories that parents still tell their children on Rota.

**A** great many European voyagers stopped at or passed close by the Ladrone Islands between Magellan's historic landing in 1521 and Fr. San Vitores. Loaisa arrived in 1526, Legazpi in 1565 and Thomas Cavendish - - the famous English pirate - - in 1588.

While these foreigners often took advantage of the islanders due to their superior firepower, the people of Rota got a chance to turn the table in 1600.

According to a contemporary account by Antonio de Morga, a ship named the

Santa Margarita was sailing from Manila when it encountered a typhoon at sea. It was forced to put in at Rota (still called Zarpana) during the storm and the ship was immediately attacked by the Chamorros.

The crewmembers were both tired and defenseless and the natives were victorious. A few of the Europeans were killed but most were captured by the local people and brought ashore. The wounded were patched up and the rest were allowed to freely explore the island.

Morga writes that the ship's cargo, including much gold, was distributed among the war party. The Chamorros wore the jewelry for awhile and then hung the necklaces and pendants from the tree branches to watch them sparkle in the sun.

One year later, a Spanish galleon named the Santo Tomas stopped at Rota en route to the Philippines and the captain was curious to find out what had happened to the Santa Margarita.

Five of the crewmembers from the plundered ship were soon rescued. The Chamorros told the captain that 21 more Spaniards were scattered throughout Rota but that it would take a couple of days to locate them all. The captain had no time to wait but he did allow a friar to remain on the island to attend to the spiritual needs of the stranded men.

If this was a Franciscan friar - - a Franciscan is known to have worked in Guam a few years earlier - - then this was the first time that the people of Rota heard about St. Francis. This, of course, was not the Jesuit St. Francis de Borja but St. Francis of Assisi.

The Chamorro people could not have distinguished between two different saints with the same name so Fr. San Vitores could have easily substituted the Jesuit saint for the Franciscan one. Such are the joys of historical speculation.

Fr. San Vitores did not arrive until June 15, 1668. Along with him came four other Jesuit priests, a lay brother and a handful of lay assistants. To insure his missionaries had protection, King Philip IV also dispatched Captain Juan de Santa Cruz and 32 Spanish soldiers from the Philippines to keep the priests out of trouble.

In a report sent to Queen Mariana in 1669, Fr. San Vitores claimed to have baptized 13,000 islanders and to have given religious instruction to 20,000 others. He visited all of the inhabited Mariana Islands and assigned Fr. Pedro de Casanova to Rota.

The next century saw continual missionary work on Rota by the Jesuit fathers. In time, the entire island population was baptized and the faith became



more united here than anywhere else in the Marianas. The parish of San Francisco de Borja flourished.

**W**hile many singular events in the 18th century could be mentioned, one semi-historical event on Rota stands out. The Rotanese believe a miracle happened and they still celebrate its occurrence each September on a feast day known locally as Our Lady of the Lights.

"What I'm about to tell, took place in 1777," begins Melchor S. Mendiola as he sits in the kitchen of his house, a few hundred yards from the San Francisco Church. A former mayor of Rota (1950-1963), chief commissioner and district legislator, he is now president of the church council.

"According to tradition," he continues, "there were a few months during 1777 that you could not tell the difference between day and night. There were terrible earthquakes and typhoons. The priest finally decided to pray for a miracle. He called all the island's people into the San Francisco Church and asked them to start a novena to the Blessed Virgin Mary so that she might hear of their plight and make the sun come out again.

"The people of Rota began the novena in the middle of September and promised her that if she would take the darkness away the parish would show her their gratitude by establishing a special feast day each year in her honor. A few days after the novena began, the sky brightened up and the earthquakes eventually subsided.

"We have kept that promise and now, two centuries later, the people of Rota have a novena every September devoted to Our Lady of the Lights."

Mendiola rose from his seat, left the house, and walked over to the present San Francisco Church buildings, dedicated in 1957. To the right, as you face the main altar inside, is an oil painting on the wall. In front of it are three burning candles.

The painting depicts the Blessed Virgin Mary holding the Christ child. Both the child and his holy mother are holding candles as well. Each year during the feast day, this painting - - a copy of an older one now lost - - is removed from the wall and carried around the village in a religious procession similar to the one given St. Francis de Borja a month later.

"Rota," states Mendiola, "has never had a serious earthquake since 1777. Our Lady of the Lights continues to watch over her island."

**T**owards the end of the 19th century, King Carlos II expelled the Jesuits from

the Mariana Islands and gave this missionary area to the friars of the Order of St. Augustine. They were hard working missionaries but during the last quarter of this century the political situation in Spain cut down the number of religious vocations and the order could send very few members to the overseas mission. The Spanish government also began to lose interest in the Mariana Islands. These possessions had never yielded the economic wealth that Fr. San Vitores had promised the crown and these jewels got used to being neglected.

After the Spanish American War, Guam was acquired by the United States in 1898 under terms of the Treaty of Paris.

Rota and the rest of the Mariana Islands, however, became German territories. Two weeks after hostilities between the U.S. and Spain had ceased, the Spanish government signed a secret agreement which sold these possessions - - plus the Eastern and Western Carolines - - to Germany. Thus, while Guam now grew under the U.S. influence, Rota's culture took on German and, after 1917, Japanese characteristics.

Germany did not think of the Mariana Islands in strategic terms. Stock raising and agriculture were encouraged on Rota and government land was made available by lease to colonists. Unleased land was taken care of by the native population and each adult male was expected to farm a quarter-hectre. Copra exports were high in 1903 but never again would they reach that figure.

During the final years of the German administration, Japanese colonists began moving into the Marianas and the Germans encouraged them in their own economic endeavors. Many were employed by the Germans.

World War I started in August 1914.

Before the U.S. entered the war against Germany in April 1917, the Japanese worked out an agreement with Britain, France and Russia by which these powers agreed that Japan could take over German Micronesia should their side win the war. Japan was in a hurry to get this approval under the Secret Treaty of London before the U.S. declared war and could then participate in future peace talks. The Government of Japan knew that the U.S. would object and cause the German territories to be divided up. Thus, the U.S. could say very little in 1919 at the peace conference in Versailles. The League of Nations had already mandated the German island territories to Japan.

Under the Japanese administration, Rota and the other Mariana Islands that it controlled became important territories. This was quite a different situation than had existed in the past when Spain and





Germany ruled the islands. The Japanese were culturally an island people and they viewed Micronesia not as separate territories but as an actual part of Japan. They also saw the Marianas as economic and strategic properties.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese war planes attacked the U.S. Naval fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii and forced the United States into World War II. On December 9, Japanese troops from Saipan came ashore at Guam and the island's Naval governor had no choice but to surrender. Guam remained under Japanese control until July 21, 1944.

Unlike the local Chamorros on Guam, the Japanese did not consider the native populations of Rota, Saipan and Tinian to be the enemy. They spoke Japanese and had adopted many Japanese customs. Their lifestyle changed very little during the early war years.

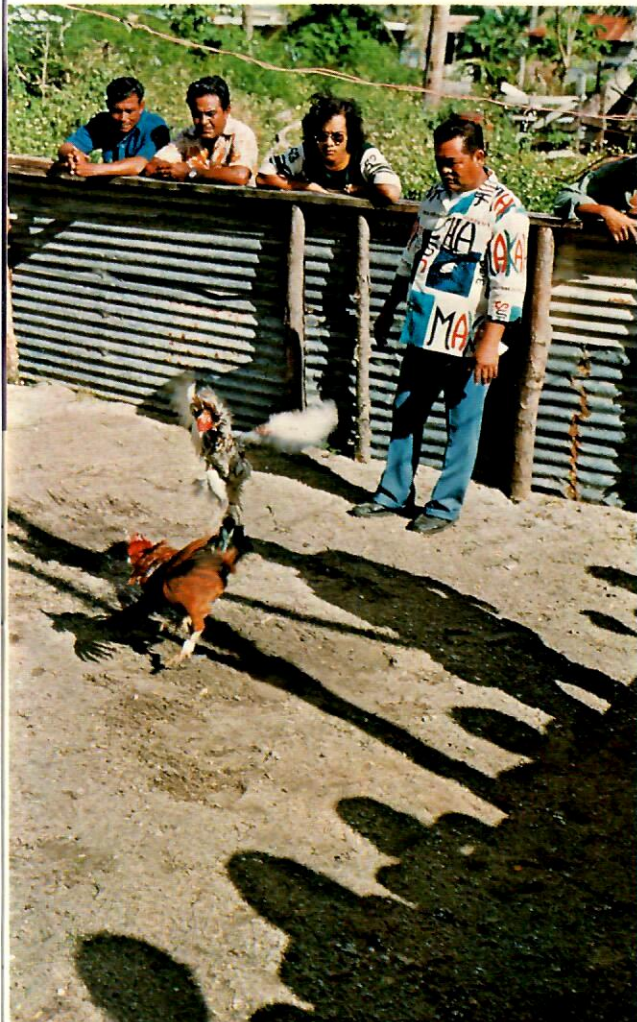
Rota was affected least of all the Southern Mariana Islands since very few Japanese troops were quartered there. Protection for Rota came from the 29,000 soldiers on Saipan and the 10,000 on Tinian.

When the American plans were being drawn up for the invasion of the Marianas, Rota hardly rated. Most of the coast was inaccessible, there were poor anchorage facilities, only one airfield, and little fortification. It was to receive regular bombing to keep the enemy pinned down but otherwise it was to be ignored. The Americans were more interested in liberating Guam and using Saipan and Tinian to spring future attacks against Japan by air. The B-29 which dropped the atom bomb on Hiroshima was launched from Tinian on August 6, 1945.

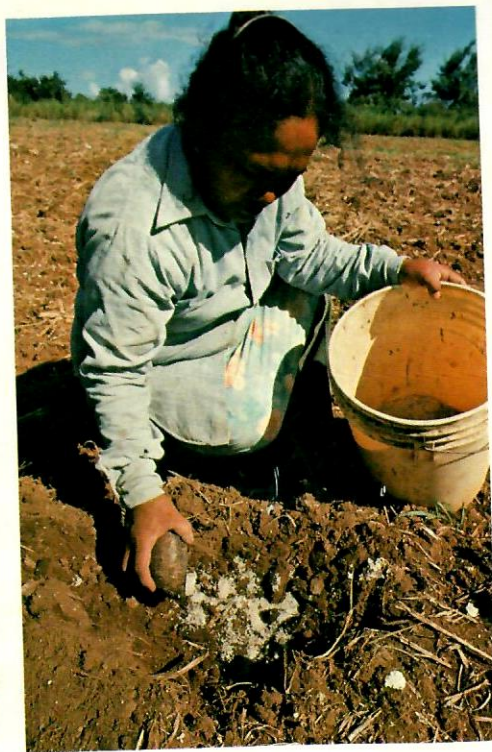
The American troops did not begin to occupy Rota until September 1945, over a year after the liberation of Guam. The Japanese and other foreigners were then put into camps while the Chamorros were brought together into three temporary villages. Most were kept at the Songsong site but others were gathered at Onginao on the northwest coast and As Malete on the south coast.

All of the Mariana Islands except Rota reverted to Navy rule in 1952. Rota remained under the Department of the Interior along with the rest of the Trust Territory islands. In July 1962, the Mariana Islands were returned to the Department of Interior and Rota was finally re-united with its neighbors and became a sub-district.

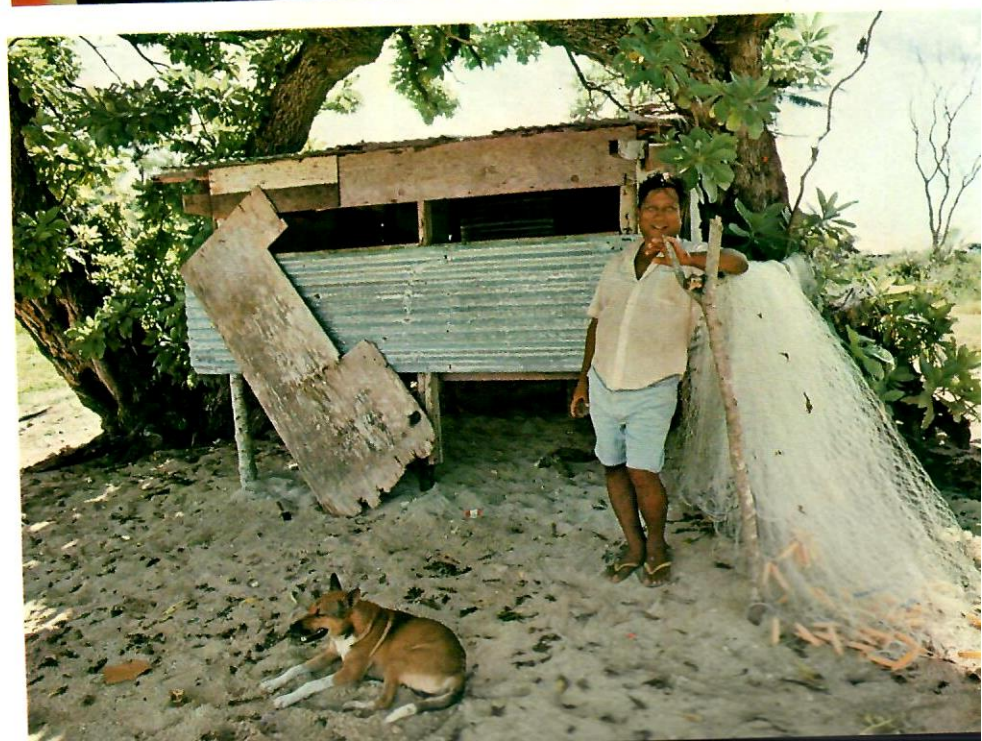
Negotiations for a change in the political status of the Trust Territory islands began officially in 1969. The original intent on both sides was to keep all of







*Rota's people are its most valuable asset. Visitors are instantly welcomed with a smile and a wave. Fiercely proud of their Chamorro heritage, many Rotanese are working to retain their cultural wealth. Says one young islander, "I don't want to see our local culture destroyed. Rota has retained the basic Chamorro way of doing things and I hope this never changes. I'm proud of Rota and proud of being from Rota."*







the districts in one political entity but in 1972 the Marianas indicated that it wanted closer ties with the U.S. than the other districts.

Separate talks led to a Commonwealth Covenant which the district's residents approved by referendum. The covenant bill was passed by both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate and signed by President Gerald Ford on March 24, 1976. The 14,000 people in the district will be members of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas - - and American citizens - - when the United Nations Trusteeship is terminated, possibly in the 1980's.

In the meantime, though, Rota will probably change very little from what visitors saw during the San Francisco Fiesta. Outside development by the Japanese will certainly continue but the pace of life will remain slow and quiet. A new period of growth is coming to Rota but it will always be a "country island" when compared with Guam and Saipan.

**"T**oday's" Rota is a compact community. The 1970 census revealed that all of the island's inhabitants lived in Songsong, grouped in 160 households. A new housing sub-division has now been opened northeast of the main village and a completely new village site near the airfield is planned for the future. Such a village would provide housing closer to the island's prime farm lands.

"Right now the average wait for homesteading land is about one year," explains Misael Ogo, the surveyor-in-charge of the land management office in Rota. "That's much too long but we're short handed. We've only got one crew of four surveyers."

According to Ogo, the U.S. military has no retention land on Rota but 70 percent of the total acreage does belong to the government; including much of the Sabana Plateau.

"That's the best farmland," he says, "because of its cool climate and rainfall. We get about 80 inches of rain on the coast per year and 120 inches in the high places."

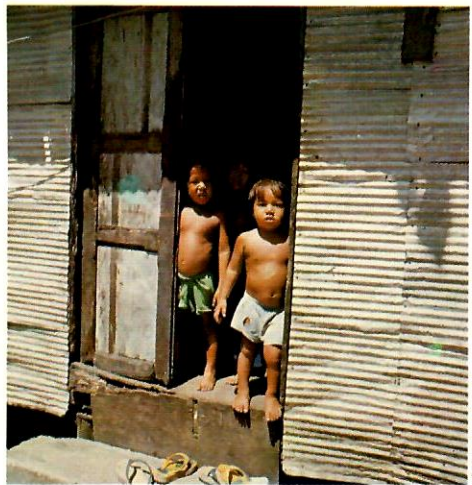
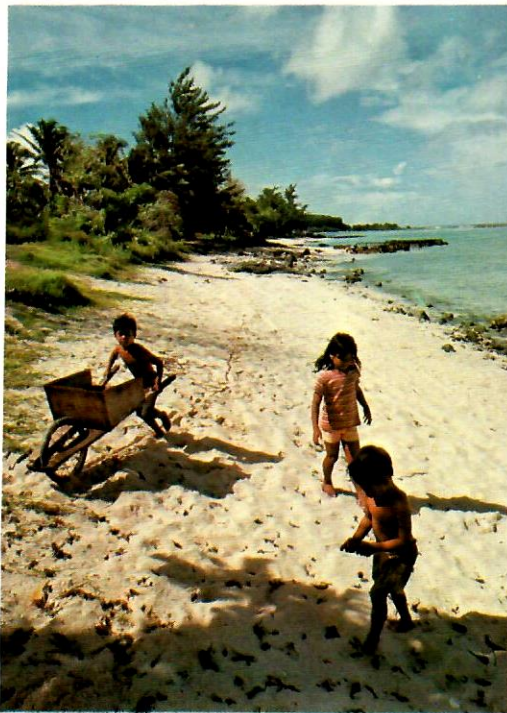
Rota's climate usually measures in the middle or high 80's during the day and in the low 70's at night. The relative humidity is between 75 and 100 percent. The primary dry season lasts from January through April and the rainy season from mid-July to mid-November.

During the dry season, the trade winds - - blowing from the east or northeast - - are strong and constant. The trade winds often break during the rainy months and the island has continual thunder show-





*Tide pools, sandy beaches and crystal clear waters may help Rota win the tourist trade that many of the island leaders are presently courting. Rotanese welcome tourism and its benefits as long as it leaves their island unspoiled.*



WALSH



ers depending on the particular year.

Almost every household on Rota is linked to others by kinship and these relatives share in economic resources; particularly in the non-commercial subsistence crops like yams, dry taro and sweet potatoes. There is much more sharing here than in Guam among Chamorro family groups.

The people of Rota supply a demand from Guam to produce fruits and vegetables. Close to two dozen varieties are exported. The primary commercial crops are watermelon, bell peppers, cucumbers and tomatoes. Because of the export value to Guam, these items are not available in local stores. No meat is exported - - "Rota Beef" is notoriously tough - - and poultry and eggs are usually imported from Guam.

Nearly every household on Rota contains one member of the family who holds a registered contract to agricultural property.

Due to the fact that Rota does not have a protected anchorage, staples like rice, sugar, flour and salt must be flown in. This makes the products sold in stores relatively expensive. During the San Francisco Fiesta, a 50-pound sack of rice was priced at \$19. The store owner said that it has gone up as far as \$25 per sack in the past. Although cultivated in the Marianas Islands before World War II, rice must now be imported from the U.S. mainland and Australia.

Most Rota businesses are family-run operations except for cases such as leased hotels and the Air Micronesia branch in Songsong. There are less than 30 retail enterprises confined to variety stores, bars, gas stations and service outlets.

Of all the livelihoods on Rota, government employment reaches deepest into the community and at least half the island households have a family member working for the Trust Territory Government. Employees tend to remain at their jobs for long periods of time since there are fewer positions than applicants and the jobs are highly coveted.

At the request of the Congress of Micronesia - - established in 1965 as the lawmaking body for the U.S. Trust Territory - - the firm of Hawaii Architects & Engineers, Inc., studied the various islands and put together master plans for economic development.

The Rota Master Plan was finished in 1972 and published in 1973. It recommended that the West harbor be improved, a sewage system constructed, roads resurfaced, urban areas expanded and a more

efficient infrastructure plan implemented. The potential for tourist development was also explored.

Besides its economic future, Rota is also concerned about its political prospects. The island has traditionally taken a back seat to Saipan in regards to district matters such as funding and leaders are worried that this situation might continue.

With the emergence of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, representatives from Rota, Tinian and the other small islands are trying to insure adequate participation in the new government structure. A Constitutional Convention was held last fall to iron out the difficulties. Saipan had 25 delegates to the convention, Rota 8 and Tinian 5. One member spoke for the inhabited islands north of Tinian. Benjamin T. Manglona, a senator from Rota who was chosen one of his island's representatives at the talks, was elected first vice president of the convention.

"We came with an open mind," Manglona said at the opening session. "We do not believe that our people were always fairly treated by the leaders from Saipan." Later he explained that "the people of Rota have never been given the opportunity to determine their own choices. We just had to live with whatever they decided to give us. Most of the department leaders here (in Saipan) dictate to their counterparts on Rota without giving them the opportunity to even be a part of it."

Earlier, during the San Francisco Fiesta last October, Manglona said that he wasn't so much worried by Rota's political future - - "we'll get it straightened out" - - as the economic one.

"Our top priority here," he explains, "is to fix up our West dock. We got \$500,000 in federal funds to repair our East dock after Typhoon Pamela but we're going to use this money instead to enlarge our West dock as all the planners have recommended. Added to this is a \$100,000 grant from the Trust Territory to widen the channel."

Manglona believes that Rota's second economic priority should be development of a good airport. Plans call for the existing runway to be widened from its present 225 feet to 500 feet and lengthened to 7,000 feet. Night lights and a new terminal building are also being considered.

"Agricultural development will probably always be our primary source of income," Manglona says, "and I think that production can be improved with better tractor service to outlying farms. We also need to update our marketing procedures and for this the local legislature has appropriated \$30,000 to install

a marketing consultant on Guam. I'd like to see Rota farmers expand their commercial crops beyond watermelons and cucumbers."

Manglona believes tourist development is natural for Rota because of its relatively quiet atmosphere. He favors the new Japanese hotel being built beneath the Wedding Cake and hopes that other residents will take advantage of the jobs a tourist industry could provide.

One islander already involved in the tourist business is Tom Mendiola whose Latte Enterprises, Inc. owns the Rota Hotel and is researching farming and fishing support activities on the island. He favors a controlled tourist development but feels that projects such as hotels should be at least 51 percent owned by local people.

"I don't want to see the local culture destroyed from the outside," he says. "Rota has retained the basic Chamorro way of doing things and I hope this never changes. I'm proud of Rota and proud of being from Rota."

This island pride that nearly all residents of Rota share was very much in evidence during the San Francisco Fiesta. Old fashioned Chamorro hospitality - - only it's never been old fashioned in Rota - - made the weekend extra special for off-island visitors who doubled the population of 1,300.

Saturday's highlights included a morning mass at which the fiesta's queen was crowned and the afternoon procession of San Francisco de Borja. Partying went on throughout the night. On Sunday, Bishop Felixberto Flores from Guam said a pontifical mass and the main fiesta meal was held at noon in the social hall across the street from the church. The meal was accompanied by music from bands flown over from Guam and other entertainment.

Reigning at the San Francisco Fiesta was Queen Lilian Manglona, a pretty 17-year old who was born and raised in Rota.

"I now go to Notre Dame High School on Guam," Queen Lilian explains as she takes a bite of coconut crab. "But I like my home more. The pace in Rota is slower and the people here seem more friendly. I love coming back. There's a sign near the airport that says it all: Luta Mas Mauleg. Do you know what that means?"

Sure do. Rota is Best.