

Projects within the scope of public works included improvements such as the construction of roads, public buildings and hospitals (Anttila, 1956:139). It is interesting to note that one of the public work projects dealt with fresh water. An aqueduct utilizing bamboo pipes was constructed to supply water to the main village on Saipan (Leon Guerrero, 1968:5). Such a project could have been initiated on Rota; however, no mention of such a system has been discovered in the existing literature.

The only other mention of fresh water during the German period came from Costenoble (1905:7). He related that there was seldom a water shortage on Saipan, "since the rain, which is frequent even in the dry season, is sufficient to fill the tanks which are set up near the houses, to catch the rain." It is probable that similar tanks were utilized as water catchments on Rota.

Perhaps the most significant influence on the Chamorro traditional practices during the German Period occurred in the concept of land ownership. Formerly, lands were considered to be owned or controlled by groups or clans. The Germans insisted upon a policy of individual ownership of land (Oliver, 1951:350). According to the Laws of 1893 concerning the Lease of Land in the Provinces, "Any native able to prove ownership of land would be able to register it in his name" (Fritz, 1904:78). However, Cockrum (1970:89) stated: "The Germans reissued new land deeds to people cultivating their lands, appropriating land not under cultivation for the government even though valid Spanish deeds were held."

In other words, a person could no longer simply occupy land and claim it. Formal laws concerning land use were instituted and a land survey program initiated. A homesteading program was developed and the formalization of ownership of land through registration procedures was established. The distinction between private and public lands became apparent and created questions regarding government ownership of land as late as the Trust Territory Administration (Hawaii Architects and Engineers, Inc. 1973:3).

Land considered government property was available for lease to colonists or entrepreneurs. However, regulations concerning leased land were strict. Prospective colonists were forbidden to buy or sell land. Although 25-year lease arrangements were possible, upon expiration of the lease, the lessee was subject to the government's terms for renewal or face forfeiture of an investment of time, money and labor. It seems that German colonists were not encouraged or offered much assistance in attempting to establish permanent settlements in the Pacific colonies.

According to Anttila, the Germans encouraged farming and animal husbandry during their administration. In fact, there were regulations requiring local people to plant new groves of coconuts to provide copra, the main economic product of the Marianas (Oliver,

1951:350). However, McKinney (1947:240) reported that the Chamorros preferred harvesting wild coconuts to planting new groves. It is interesting to note that during the German occupation, the Marianas were the least productive of all Germany's island groups. The majority of the copra in the Marianas was produced not by Chamorros, but rather by immigrant Carolinians (Cockrum, 1970:69-70).

Copra yield in the Northern Marianas reached its peak in 1903 (McKinney, 1947:88). However, destructive typhoons hit in 1904 and 1905, destroying the coconut trees. Accordingly, Rota's economic value to the German empire was severely reduced for some period of time.

We suggest that very little German influence was actually felt on Rota. The time span of the German administration in the Northern Marianas was relatively short. Many factors contributed to Rota's low profile: natural disasters; the vast distance separating the Mariana Islands from Germany; competition in trade and business from Japan; dissension in other parts of the German empire; and the lack of an adequate harbor on Rota.

Japanese Occupation

The Japanese mandated islands in the Western Pacific were a constant target for explorers from the outside world. Earlier explorers of Spanish and German heritage sought adventures in the Marianas islands as well as land claims for their mother countries. Many of these explorers reached the island of Rota and recognized the richness of its local environment. Some of these explorers left behind traces of their visits to the island.

The most notable physical improvements and developments on Rota, the evidence of which can still be seen on the landscape, were accomplished by the Japanese. Rotanese informants for the Rota Water Project related events that occurred on Rota during the Japanese era. Such recollections seem to be well retained in the minds of Rotanese people in the present day. According to informants, Japanese administrators indicated a commitment to the island through changes in its superstructure.

The Japanese recognized fresh water resources on Rota to be abundant. The availability of fresh water was fortunate, as much fresh water was needed in order to bring about improvements and developments on the island.

Sufficient water was required for maintaining the Japanese sugar cane and rice plantations. Bowers (1950:258), however, points out that although the Japanese produced rice on Rota in a well developed

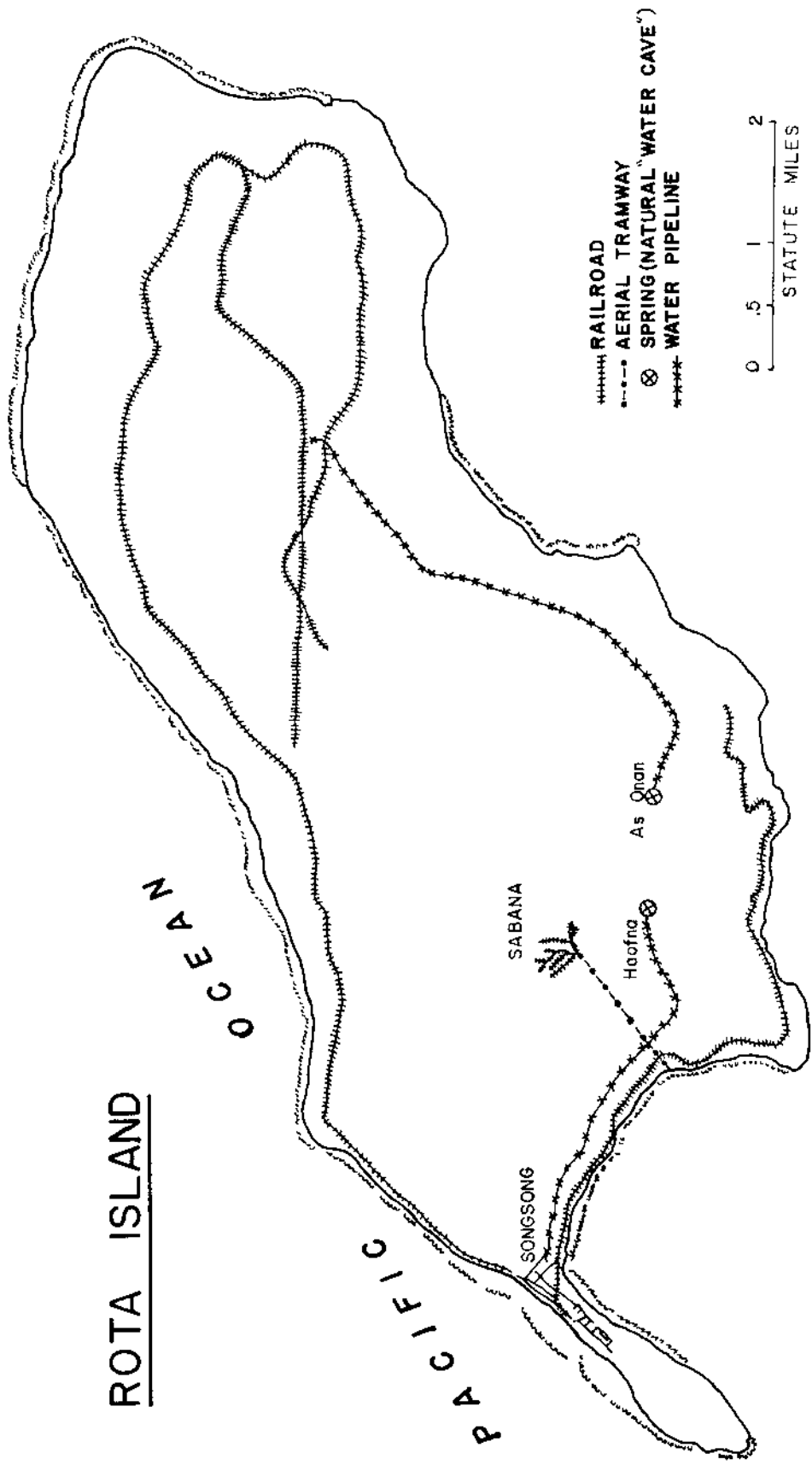


Illustration 6. Map of railroad, aerial tramway, spring and water pipelines.

industry, a lack of surface streams and the rapid draining qualities of the soil served to limit great expansion of the rice industry.³ At any rate, the water supply systems built by the Japanese on Rota, particularly the system that provides piped water to the village of Songsong, is still being utilized in the present day.

Our informants told us that Rota has a significant supply of fresh water, possibly even more fresh water than is available on other islands in the Northern Marianas. Rotanese informants commented that Rota's water is sweeter and tastier than fresh water available on other islands of the Marianas chain. Various types of fresh water are available on Rota. Prior to the Japanese administration, streams, ocean springs, wells and rain water were used by the Rotanese for drinking and for all other purposes.

Fresh running springs and streams were situated in locations removed from villages, in many cases. People in some areas had to walk a long distance in order to obtain good drinking water, but such water was deemed pure and satisfying. Rotanese informants stated that fresh water springs and streams are particularly abundant in the southeastern and northeastern sections of the Talaghaya area of Rota. Not until Japanese times was a means employed of obtaining water from the springs via the water caves by piping. Hoafna and As Onan are the two largest named water caves hooked up to the piping system. Reports have revealed the capability of the fresh water supplied by these caves to be estimated at approximately 700,000 gallons per day (Dela Cruz and Kapileo, 1972).

Water streams originate from overflows of springs between Hoafna and As Onan. The streams flow down cliff lines and spread out into various stream flows and drain into the ocean. In some of these streams, the Japanese built concrete dikes to help prevent soil from being washed away by the running streams. Of these various flowing streams, only two were utilized to supply water to the village of Songsong.

Economic interests of the Japanese predominated in the mandated islands. It was extremely important to obtain water for the plantations; however, no written accounts exist regarding the means by which watering of the crops was carried out. It is presumed that the location of the sugar and rice plantations had to be in close proximity

³While sugar milling was extremely important on Rota, there were problems with the rice operation, as exemplified by the report of a rice pest on Rota (U.S. Commercial Company, 1946:Report No. 6, 1ff). In the same volume is included Report No. 1, "Results of Investigations and Experiments on the Soils of Rota", indicating active interest by the U.S. in post-war Rota's agricultural potential.

to fresh water springs and streams. It is probably correct to assume that at this time water pipelines were installed.

History: The Japanese era in the Marianas. Rota and other German south sea islands were first taken into the custody of Japan in October of 1915. But, properly speaking, the Japanese had already established a toehold in the Marianas during the final years of the German administration. In the last years of the German occupation, Japanese colonists had begun entering the Marianas. The Germans actually encouraged initial Japanese economic endeavors by employing a number of such Japanese colonists (Ronck and Viti, 1977:22). The Mandate Commission of the League of Nations formally placed the German possessions in the Western Pacific under Japan's authority following the signing of the Versailles Peace Treaty on June 28, 1919.

As the new government came into being, the Governor (or Director) of the South Seas Bureau (Nanyo Cho) oversaw the control of the Japanese mandated islands, with Koror island in Palau as the headquarters. Souder explains (n.d.:3):

The governor was responsible to the chief of the South Seas Bureau under the Minister of Greater East Asia. He was also under the minister of Communications with regard to post and telegraph; the Minister of Finance in matters of currency, banking, and customs duty; the Minister of Commerce and Industry in regards to the weights and measures. The Governor could issue necessary ordinances ("Tyorie" South Seas Bureau Ordinances) with penal clauses, but in practice all important matters were regulated by Imperial Ordinance.

The general objective of the Japanese during their reign over the mandated islands was to strengthen Japanese power and control of defense and administration in the Territory. The Japanese naval forces headquarters was established in Truk; garrisons were located on Saipan, Palau, Yap, Ponape, and Jaluit (Great Britain-Naval Intelligence Division, 1945:338). The arrangement was temporary, as the plan was to observe existing German laws and customs. According to the 1945 Naval Intelligence Report, a civilian administration was drawn up in 1918, but the Navy essentially still held control. Japanese naval forces were withdrawn beginning in 1921. In 1922, a system of government was inaugurated which lasted up until 1945.

However, on November 5, 1943, the major districts were redefined to three in number, with headquarters for the eastern area on Truk and the western headquarters established at Palau. We do not have sources at hand that describe details of the decrease of the districts in number; it is presumed that the districts of Ponape and

Jaluit were merged within Truk district to form a single administrative unit, and that Yap district was incorporated with Palau. The third district was centered around Saipan. The emergence of these districts may have corresponded with the establishment of a naval dictatorship in contrast to the earlier civilian government. A vice admiral was appointed to the position of governor of the Nanyo Cho (Souder, n.d.:3). Written evidence of details of the local administration is not available.

The South Seas Government appointed administrative leaders for each branch of government. The duties of the branch administrators included the securing of all laws and regulations. Branch Administrators also had to oversee the conduct of other administrators within the former six districts. Saipan was then the capital of administration for all the islands in the Marianas. Native "local" could serve in the capacities of district heads and village heads. Such rights were bestowed on them according to the "Rules of the Native Officials", established in 1922. Such officials' duties primarily were to report to their branch administrators and to oversee the maintenance of laws and regulations among other members of the community. District heads and village heads were responsible to report all activities in the community which followed the letter of the law, both local and imperial. Branch administrators utilized the local officials to get work done. Local officials received moderate salaries, according to the wage scale of the period. Other details of the government as reconstructed from rescued accounts are elaborated upon by the Naval Intelligence report, 1945.

Pre-War Rota. Written accounts vary considerable in their discussions of Rota's pre-war villages according to names and locations. Apparently there were eight villages on Rota during the Japanese administration. Souder (n.d.:2) reports that the principle village of Rota was Songsong (or Rota village), located at Sosanjaya Bay, and that it had approximately 250 buildings. The other villages that he mentions include Teteto village, located west-northwest of the airfield, and the sugar mill village (unnamed) southwest of Songsong village. In 1944, during the bombing of Rota, all of the buildings in Songsong were demolished; extensive damages were felt in the other two villages, as well. In the sugar mill village there were 120 buildings; these buildings were completely destroyed during the bombing. Little is known about the village of Teteto. Those structures or buildings existing prior to the war likely also were destroyed during the bombing. Souder also names a sugar mill village on Sosanjaya Bay, southeast of Songsong, and four other small scattered villages. According to Souder, all of these villages and the buildings within them were demolished during World War II.

Piper (1946:43) reports the following villages for Rota: Rota village, the Japanese mining village of Sabana, and the Japanese village of Shinaparu. He also writes of the former villages of

Rota and Sonson, the former villages of Shinaparu and Taruka, and the native village of Oginao.

There was one other village, according to the writings of Emerick (1958). A village called Tatacho existed prior to World War II. In this particular village, local Rotanese were relocated by the Japanese. Illustration No. 1 shows the location of the village of Tatacho (also spelled Tatachog in some accounts) during the Japanese administration. Souder (n.d.) cites the following population figures for Rota during Japanese times:

The total population of Rota in 1936 was 5,590, which included 4,729 Japanese, 68 Koreans, 787 Chamorro natives, four Kanaka natives and two foreigners. Some 1,400 people lived in Songsong village. The others were scattered around the island on various farms and small villages. Most of the Japanese occupants had been on Rota since 1930.

Songsong village seems to have been one of the original dwelling areas of the Chamorros on Rota. Informants mentioned long residencies in Songsong village to members of the field research team, and this is corroborated by Bowers (1950:181). According to Bowers, at the beginning of Japanese times, Songsong was an isolated village populated by some 480 persons who were primarily subsistence agriculturalists. There was only one store. Except for the fact that the Germans built the coral surfaced streets, the village had changed little in fifty (50) years. Then between 1931-34, the Japanese established policies of land exploitation, relocating of local Rotanese from Songsong village to Tatacho village. Emerick (1958) revealed that the Rotanese who held valid land titles during the German administration in Songsong were given lots in Tatacho by the Japanese of the same shape and size as their former lots in Songsong.⁴

Members of the Rota Project field research team visited the site of Tatacho village. No one lives in this location now, and the concrete structures are slowly eroding away as the jungle advances to reclaim its former land area. Although it is difficult to walk among the ruins owing to thick jungle growth, members of the research team could identify wells that were a central part of the village during its existence. Field team members also found their way up the steps and into the remains of the village church.

⁴It should be noted that the Rotanese cultivated fertile farming areas on the southwestern coast during their residency in Songsong. In being relocated to lands on the western coast in and around Tatacho, they were removed to poorer lands.



Photo 15. Ruins of Tatacho village.

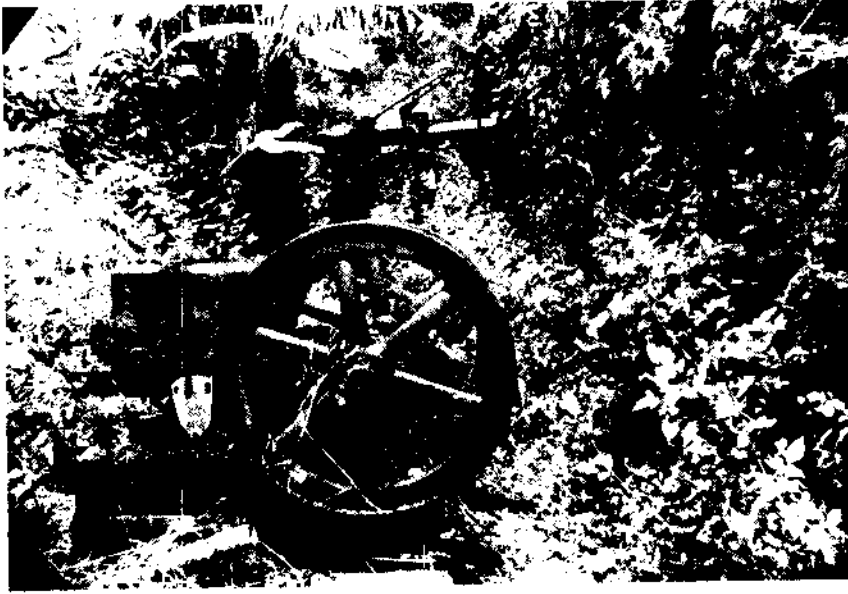


Photo 16. Japanese pump situated at the water cave, no longer in use.



Photo 17. Plate attached to the pump.

The Confidential Report on the Japanese Mandate provides the following information about water on Rota (1943:176):

A small stream on the eastern side of the island provides good water. Two or three wells at the village (village name not given) provide brackish water. Rainwater is collected in concrete tanks with capacities of five to twenty-five (25) tons.

There are two matanhanum "water caves" on Rota that are fed from natural springs. One of the caves is large, the other is small. The caves are situated in the Talaghaya area about 700 feet above sea level. The Japanese developed a piping system to transport the water from the caves into Songsong village, but apparently not until after the Rotanese living in Songsong were relocated to Tatacho village. Illustration No. 6 shows the connections of four inch pipelines which transported the water from the water caves to the village. One of the caves, called Matanhanum, is located in the southwestern savanna area, continuously supplying water to the village of Songsong. The other cave, the smaller one, is located in the northeastern surface area, supplying water to the Sinapalo area of Rota.

Photo No. 19 shows the manner in which the pipelines were connected. The pipelines coming from both caves do not cross or meet. They each have separate supply systems. The pipelines connecting to Songsong may have been extended through Songsong to the sugar mill village; the pipelines connected to Sinapalo were probably utilized for watering the sugar crops on the plantation.

After the Rotanese were relocated, Japanese sugar workers settle into the village of Songsong in order to be close to their work at the sugar mill. The village of Songsong had adequate water resources made available to the village after the piping system from the water cave was built. Houses in Songsong village also had concrete tanks that were used as water catchments. Built by the Japanese, these tanks held a capacity of two to 25 tons of water.

Informants for the Rota Water Project mentioned that the village of Songsong had wells prior to World War II. Such wells served as primary water resources for Songsong until the pipeline system from the water cave was prepared. According to our informants, people living in Songsong before the war who could afford to pay for wells had such wells dug outside their homes for private use. Public wells were also constructed. The water in these wells was clean and potable. People reported that they used the water for all necessary purposes. There were many ways to keep the well water clean. Wells had cement sides that stood at least two feet above ground level so that children could not play in the water. People also placed

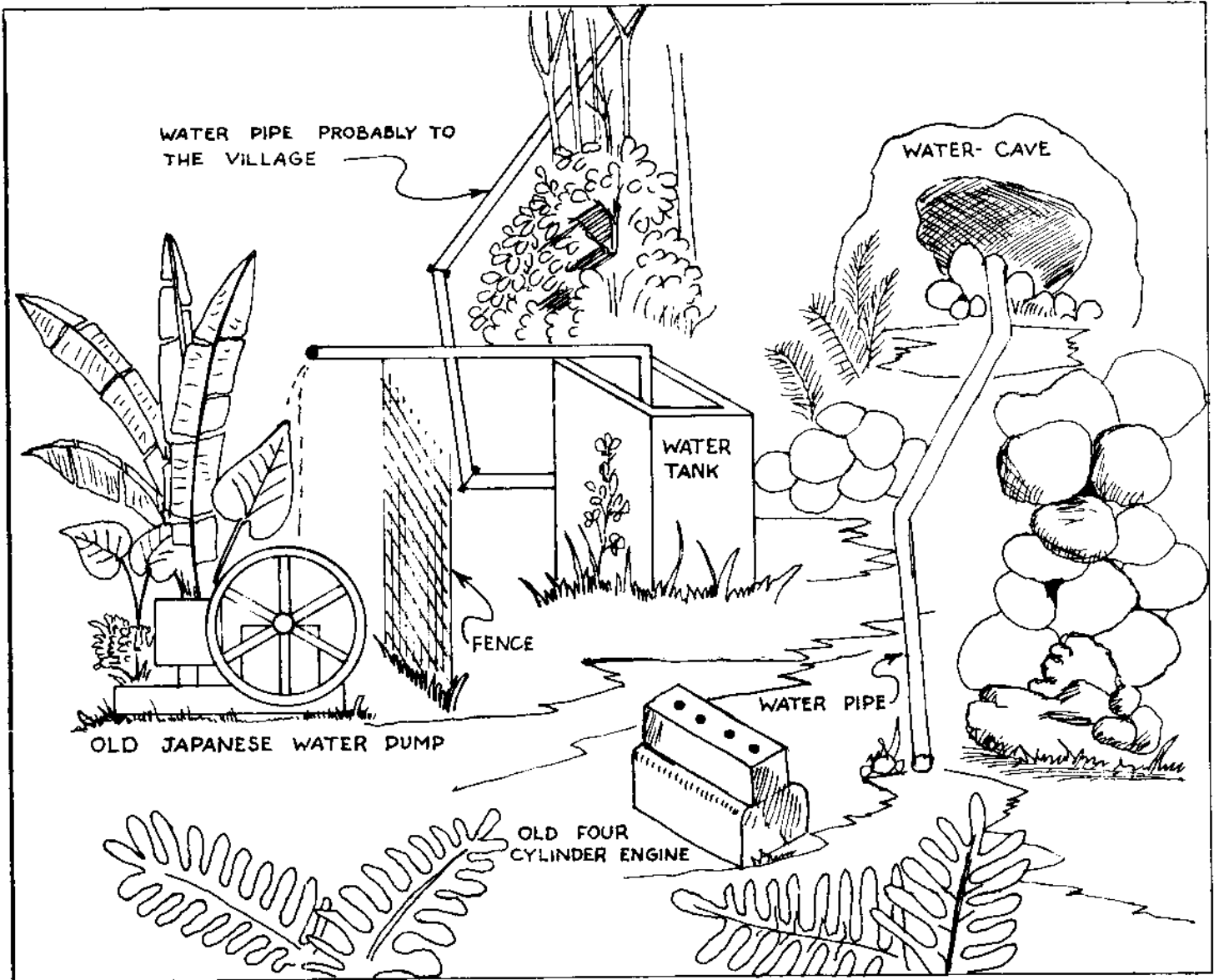


Illustration 7. Drawing of Matanhanum, the water cave.



Photo 18. The water cave.



Photo 19. Pipeline from water cave.

covers made of wood or the like over their wells so that dirt could not act as a contaminant. Illustration No. 4 show the depth of a well from ground level. Old wells still standing demonstrate the differential allowed in the construction design to protect the well from the entrance of dirt.

Water sources for the Rotanese in Tatacho village were built by the Japanese. Informants who could recall the Japanese administration mentioned that six hanum tupu 'cement wells' were dug by the Japanese in Tatacho village, in various locations so that they were convenient and accessible to everyone who lived in the village. One such well measured by the research team was 1.17 meters in diameter. Most of the wells, we were told, were approximately 20 to 25 feet deep. The well water was potable; people who lived in Tatacho reported that they used it as a primary resource because it was convenient. However, in terms of taste, they preferred water collected from water seeps near to the beach. Illustration No. 5 and Photo No. 31 show examples of the types of wells that were dug in the village of Tatacho, including the structure and depth of the wells, and a side view of a typical well.

Some local people reported that they were not satisfied with using the water that the wells provided. Also, the wells simply did not supply enough water for all of Tatacho's population. Many of these people, according to our Rotanese informants, walked to the coastal areas to obtain ocean spring water. They also walked up to the water cave in order to obtain good, satisfying drinking water. During the many times that these people walked for water, such walking events became social activities, according in our informants. Tatacho residents walked in groups to the water cave.

While Rota was being bombed in World War II, the Rotanese living in Tatacho had no choice but to rely to a great extent upon water from the ocean springs. Water was in short supply in the wells of the village, and the ocean spring water was closer to Tatacho village than the water cave was. Many informants commented to the research team that they recalled being afraid to go for water because of the danger from the bombs being dropped on Rota. But their comments were made without rancor.

Ronck (1977:22) offers a possible explanation as to why Rotanese people might view the Japanese occupation in matter-of-fact terms. During the Japanese administration of Micronesia, Rota, as well as the other islands of the Marianas, became important territories; this had not been the case in Spanish and German times. Micronesia was not viewed as a number of separate administrative territories, but at actually a part of the Japanese empire. Ronck suggests that this was because the Japanese were also, culturally, island people. The Japanese viewed the Mariana islands as being of economic and strategic importance. People of the Northern Marianas, particularly, had learned

to speak the Japanese language and had acquired many Japanese practices and customs.

In the early years of the war, it is suggested that life on Rota changed very little for local people. Ronck takes the point of view that Rota was the least affected of all of the Northern Mariana islands, because very few Japanese troops were actually quartered on the island. Protection for Rota was provided by the 29,000 soldiers on Saipan and the 10,000 stationed on Tinian. As the American plans for invasion of the Marianas were prepared, Rota received little attention.

Ronck outlines the reasons (1977:25):

Most of the coast was inaccessible, there were poor anchorage facilities, there was only one airfield, and few Japanese fortifications. Regular bombing of Rota was mindful of the American presence, but it was to be of moderate nature and duration. Guam, Saipan and Tinian received marked attention. American troops finally occupied Rota in September 1945. This, of course, was over a year after the liberation of Guam.

The Japanese will be long remembered by the Rotanese. They were the first administrators of the mandated islands who brought about long lasting changes in terms of physical developments on Rota. Some of the remains from Japanese times are presently undergoing restoration on Rota. Such remains include the ruins of the sugar mill, the old sugarcane train, the aerial tramway towers, the hospital, coastal gun emplacements (the one near to Songsong village is locally known as "the canyon", a Chamorro pronunciation of the English word cannon). These remains are being preserved for the purposes of better understanding of previous cultural influences on Rota. Bowers (1950:262) includes in his publication a photograph of the ruins of the sugar mill just outside of Songsong village (reproduced in this report, Photo No. 20).

The sugar cane train was utilized by the Japanese to transport sugar from the plantation to the mill. Illustration No. 6 (also after Bowers, 1950:263) shows that the railroad tracks began at the Sinapalo area in the northeastern section of Rota, making a loop extending in the same general area. From there sugar was transported to the mill, then to the docks for export.⁵ The same diagram shows the primary and secondary roads,

⁵Bowers, (1950:277) says sugar manufacture was maintained by subsidy and based on non-native workers, low wages, and primitive methods of cultivation. Gallahue (1946:4) also makes some negative remarks about Rota's sugar industry: "However, there are strong indications that Rota did not prove economically suitable for sugarcane production on the scale which was attempted and much of the land, even prior to the beginning of the war, was allowed to lie idle or to return to other growth".

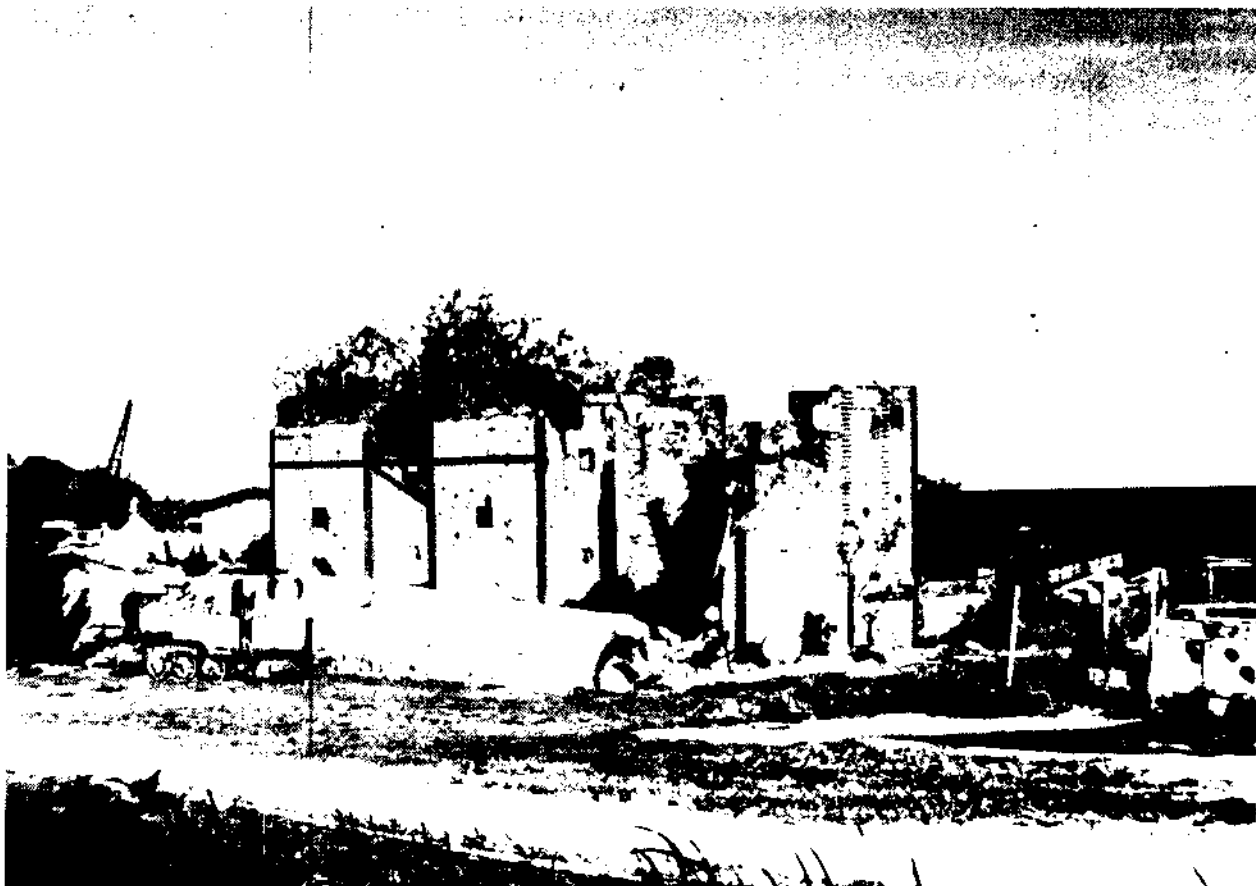


Photo 20. Ruins of the sugar mill near Songsong village.



Photo 21. Ruins of the aerial tramway.



Photo 22. Japanese toilet.

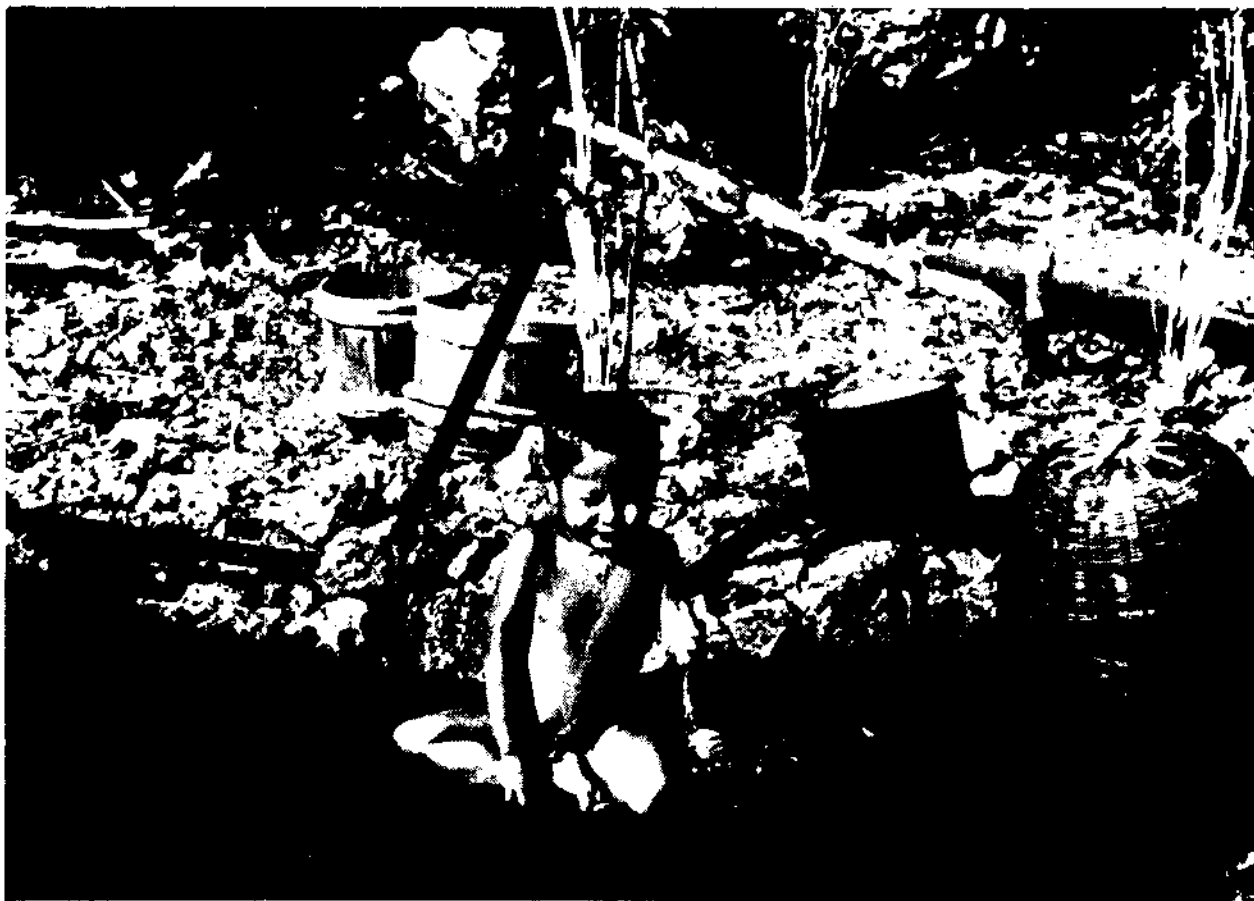


Photo 23. Child bathing in wartime Rota.

the aerial tramway line, and spring, and the water pipeline to Songsong.

The aerial tramway towers were utilized to transport phosphate from the mines located on the eastern slopes of Rota down to the ships waiting below in Tetnon area for the purposes of facilitating exports. During a six year period between 1938-43 the mines produced an annual average of 37,000 tons which was exported to Japan (Physical Development Master Plan 1978:11). The mine was located in the eastern section of the Sabana area in Rota.

There are no written accounts or other documented evidence that we are aware of to substantiate one other accomplishment of the Japanese. It was a community bath or public bath located in Songsong village. Recollections of the bath were shared with us by many of the elderly people of Rota. These elderly people would have observed activities in and around such a public bath. The following information about the public bath is based on interviews with informants.

Between 1935 and 1938, the Japanese built a community bath in District Two in Songsong village. Only a portion of the original structure is currently visible. The bath house on Rota was probably built around the same time that water was piped from the water cave into the village of Songsong. According to our informants, this community bath was constructed as a business enterprise for the purposes of sanitation, hygiene, and the well-being of the people. It has been suggested that the Japanese were concerned about the health of all people in the mandated islands. Because the mandated islands were situated in a temperate zone, tropical diseases could persist. Frequent bathing was an excellent preventive health measure.

Everyone who wanted to could bathe in the community bath, according to some of our informants. People had to pay to bathe, however, because it was a business enterprise. They paid 10¢ or whatever they could afford in order to bathe in it. If they did not have any money and wanted to bathe in the bath house, they could make prior arrangements with the business owner to pay later. People did not have to seek permission to bathe if they could pay for using facility.

Despite the fact that everyone was welcomed to bathe in the community bath, according to some of our informants, most of the Rotanese-Chamorros felt negative responses from the Japanese whenever they bathed in the bath house. The Chamorros did not feel comfortable bathing there. Those Chamorros who bathed regularly had close ties of friendship with some of the Japanese, or were persons of economic means.

The development and construction of a road system on Rota was begun by the Germans. However, the contemporary system of main roads was elaborated upon by the Japanese to facilitate travel around the

island. Ox cart paths were established along the coast and in areas close to farms. The Japanese probably constructed such transportation systems in all of the mandated islands for the purpose of economic development. Japanese-built rice and sugar cane road systems were extremely important to transport sugar cane and rice from the plantations to the sugar mill and then to dockside. On Rota, two main roads were utilized during the Japanese era. Illustration No. 2 shows the location of the primary and a secondary road on Rota in 1937. The primary road was the main roadway system utilized by both the Rotanese and the Japanese to traverse the island. The secondary road was utilized for access to ranch areas located in remote areas of the island. The Japanese expended a considerable amount of money and effort in the construction of these roads. The roads were built to withstand long utilization, and are still used today.

The original airfield on Rota extended 225 feet in width and 5,130 feet in length. This airfield was constructed by the Japanese prior to World War II. It was used extensively for arrivals and departures of their small one passenger fighter planes during and after the second World War. Being constructed of compacted coral, it suffered extensive damages from the heavy bombardment of Rota toward the end of World War II. Expansion of the airfield is being carried on as this report is printed. Rota is currently serviced by small twin engine and DC-6 aircraft. The airfield is located approximately 11 miles east of the village of Songsong on the Sinapalo Plateau.

Post World War II

American troops did not occupy Rota until September 1945. This was over a year after Guam's liberation. Upon the American occupation of Rota, Japanese residents and other foreigners were put into retention camps while the Chamorros of Rota were encouraged to resettle in three temporary villages.

According to Gallahue (1946:9) the population of Rota was 862 people as of July 15, 1946. They were all Chamorros, except for a few Koreans who had married Chamorro wives, and one Carolinian. Rota's postwar population included 187 households, averaging 4.6 persons per household. The population and their places of residence were described by Gallahue: "The population is centered in three post-war villages, Onginao, on the northwest coast, with 126 families, As Malete on the south coast with 54 families, and Songsong Bihu on the south side of the isthmus toward the west end of the island with 7 families". Gallahue pointed out that all of these villages were makeshift villages, having been built out of scrap materials which the local people had managed to salvage from various sources, especially from abandoned villaged formerly occupied by the Japanese.



Photo 24. Housing, wartime Rota.



Photo 25. Freshwater facilities, wartime Rota.

Gallahue (1946:37) describes the situation of post-war Rota as follows:

(Prior to the war), Rota used much the same type of capital goods as Saipan. Virtually every native household had their bull cart, plow, fosinos' hoes' and fishing nets, which they used to supply their own needs. These were lost during the war. Chamorros on Rota particularly need fosinos and fishing nets. They have plenty of bull carts for the present, as they picked up extras which were left behind by the Japanese repatriates. Most enterprises using capital goods were operated by the Japanese prior to the war. Chamorros are capable, willing, and anxious to take over many of the enterprises formerly run by the Japanese which are now needed to supply Chamorro needs. They require some assistance in doing so.

Gallahue explained that electricity and water were being supplied to the Rotanese by the military at the time of his writing. Transportation, too, had been severely disrupted. Before the war, the narrow gauge railway built by the sugar company also served as a means of public transportation. A few Chamorros on Saipan had automobiles, but on Rota most of the people depended on bicycles, buldcarts or other forms of private transportation. Gallahue made the following recommendations for Rota: "Chamorros on Rota need rice, flour, sugar, soya, canned fish, meats, coffee, and tea. And . . . numerous household wares. . . pots, pans, pottery, china, cuttlery, beds, mattresses, lamps, mirrors, kerosene or other illuminating oil." He stated that at least 150 new houses were needed for the Chamorros on Rota. Every family needed a new house; not one family lived in the same house they occupied prior to the war. None of the prewar houses were left, and few, if any, of the temporary houses were suitable for continued living. Very little material from the current houses was suitable for re-use. According to Gallahue, "cement is needed, also lumber, hardware, pipe, tile, sheet iron, and sundry other building materials."

Although the island of Rota recovered well from damages sustained during World War II, natural disasters such as typhoons have wreaked considerable havoc on Rota in the post-war years. McMurrough reported in Guam's Pacific Journal on November 16, 1967, that the Journal was collecting donations of such items as clothing, shoes, bedding, household items, and kitchen utensils for the residents of Rota who had just been hit by Typhoon Gilda, the worst typhoon since 1946. Thirty to fifty families on Rota lost homes and all their possessions. Residents sought refuge in Tonga Cave, at the foot of the cliff bordering the village to the north (MARC Vertical File). Likewise, on Christmas Day 1963, gusts of up to 120 knots (Typhoon Susan) bought damages to most homes and severe damage to crops. Members of the 79th Air Rescue and Recovery Squadron and the 54th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron flew a rescue mission to Rota, bringing in rice, canned milk, clothing, canned goods, and building materials. Thirty-seven families were left homeless (MARC

Vertical File). The difficulties encountered by Rota residents during Typhoon Pamela were outlined in the Pacific Daily News, June 1, 1976:22 as follows:

During the storm, 600-700 persons spent 40 hours in a huge cave on the outskirts of the village of Songsong. Seven other families took refuge in a priest's home which had been built about 1800 but was strong enough to withstand the tremendous winds. Six homes on the island were destroyed and another 86 suffered from light to heavy damage. It is estimated that \$500,000.00 damage was done to crops on Rota and perhaps an equal amount to other types of damage (MARC Vertical File).

American administrative authority in the Northern Marianas has changed hand several times since 1945. The U. S. Navy was first given responsibility for administering the islands. The Department of Interior took over administration after the Navy for a short period.

In 1952, Navy rule was returned to all islands of the Marianas except Rota. Rota remained in the hands of the United States Department of the Interior, along with all of the other islands of the Trust Territory. In July 1962, the rest of the Marianas Islands were turned over to the Department of the Interior once again. Rota was finally re-united with its cultural neighbors in the political realm.

It may be safe to assume that administrative handling of Rota from 1945 until the early 1960s was rather haphazard. However, during the early 1960s, relationships between the U.S.A. and the U.S. Trust Territory were altered significantly. Decisions were made at the highest levels of administration to accelerate the social, economic and political development of all of Micronesia, which, of course, included Rota and the Northern Marianas. The annual appropriation of the U.S. Congress for the Trust Territory has increased from \$7.5 million in 1962 to approximately \$66 million (Nevin, 1977:81,30). Significant budget increases were allotted the Northern Marianas, as well. These expended revenues have brought about many changes across the face of Micronesia.

The Congress of Micronesia in the early 1970's requested that master plans for economic development for all islands in the Trust Territory be produced. The Rota Master Plan was generated in 1972 and published in 1973. Among other recommendations, the Plan states that Rota's West Harbor should be improved, that urban areas of the island be expanded, that considerable road repairs were needed, and that an island-wide sewage system was required. The Plan also addresses the issue of the development of Rota's tourist industry. Many of the Plan's recommendations were adopted and are now being implemented on Rota.



Photo 26. Water well, no longer in use.

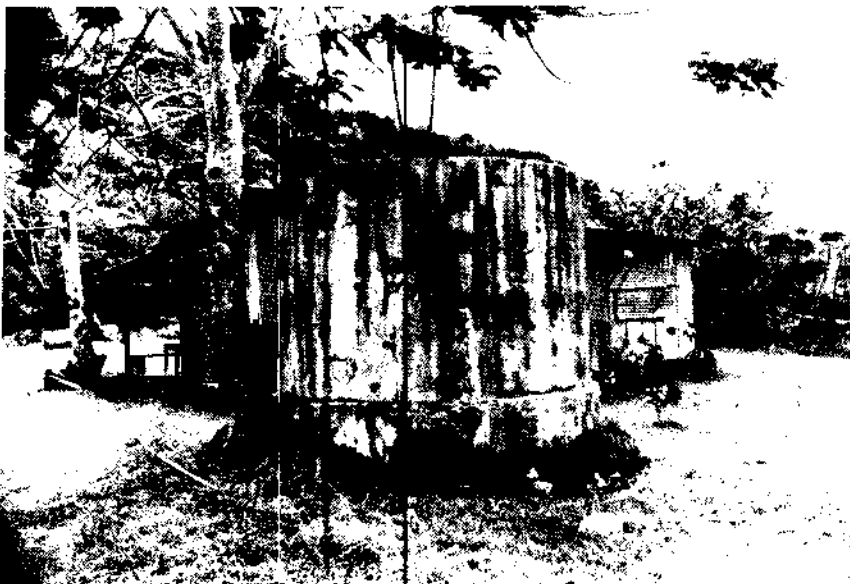


Photo 27. Ruins of water catchment.

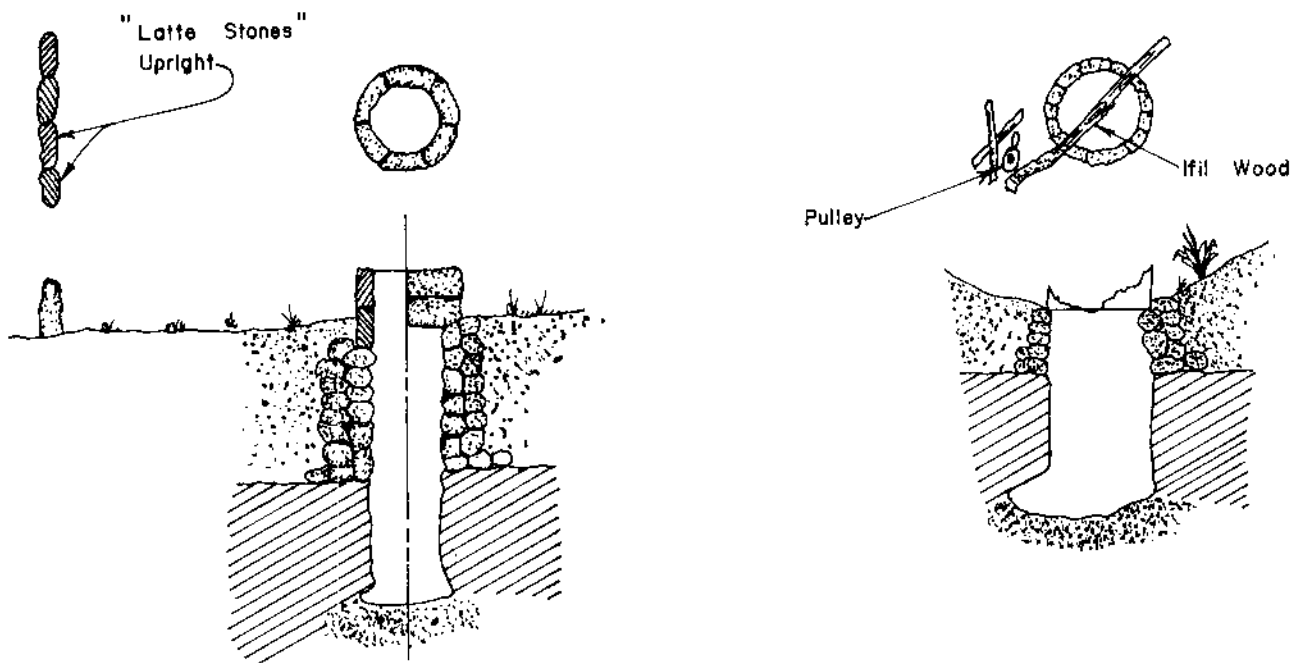


Illustration 8. Water wells.



Photo 28. Water well no longer in use.

Reconstruction work at Rota's airport has just been completed including an extension of the length of the runway. Federal funding made possible the construction of a new terminal building. Rota's harbor is also being enlarged to make possible more ready shipping of Rota's agricultural products to Guam as exports.

At present, the majority of Rota's people live in Songsong village. The 1970 census enumerated 160 households in the village. A new housing subdivision just northeast of the main village now has homesteaders residing on those lands. A completely new village site has been designated on land lying near the airfield "for the future". Such a village would offer Rotanese the advantage of a site very near to their ranchlands.

Rota business endeavors are family owned and operated. There are some 30 small retail enterprises on Rota at present, including variety stores, gas stations, snack shops, and bars. Ronck and Viti (1977:29) report that at least half of the island's families have one of their kin working for the local government in some capacity.

Social, economic and political conditions are changing Rota from an isolated island to that of an accessible tourist destination, with visitors coming principally from Japan via Saipan or Guam. Japanese tourists on Rota usually stay at the Pau-Pau, a new resort hotel built by Japanese investors about a mile away from Songsong village on the peninsula. Residents of Guam find Rota to be a convenient and pleasant weekend hideaway. If visitors from Guam do not camp out or stay with relatives or friends, they commonly stay at one of the two small but comfortable hotels located in Songsong village proper. Sights of interest for visitors to Rota include Tonga Cave typhoon shelter, the old sugar cane train, the wartime gun emplacements and bunkers, the water cave, the swimming hole, the Peace Memorial up on the Sabana, the prehistoric latte stone quarry at As Nieves, other latte sets such as the one at Muchon site, and the like.

It is important to note that Rota is upon the threshold of a major change in its political status. Opening negotiations for changes in the political situation of the islands of Micronesia were begun officially in 1969. The Mariana islands as a group, including Rota but excluding Guam, opted for separate status with close ties to the U.S.A. as early as 1972. A Commonwealth Covenant was produced and affirmed by public referendum. The Covenant bill, after winning approval in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the Senate, was signed into law by President Gerald Ford on March 24, 1976. The approximately 14,000 people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas will enjoy all the rights and privileges of the Commonwealth agreement as soon as the United Nations Trusteeship is terminated.

And yet, Ronck and Viti (1977) characterize Rota as . . ."an island where heritage and culture are still revered and where yesterday



Photo 29. Tinaha.

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Photo 30. Contemporary water catchment system.

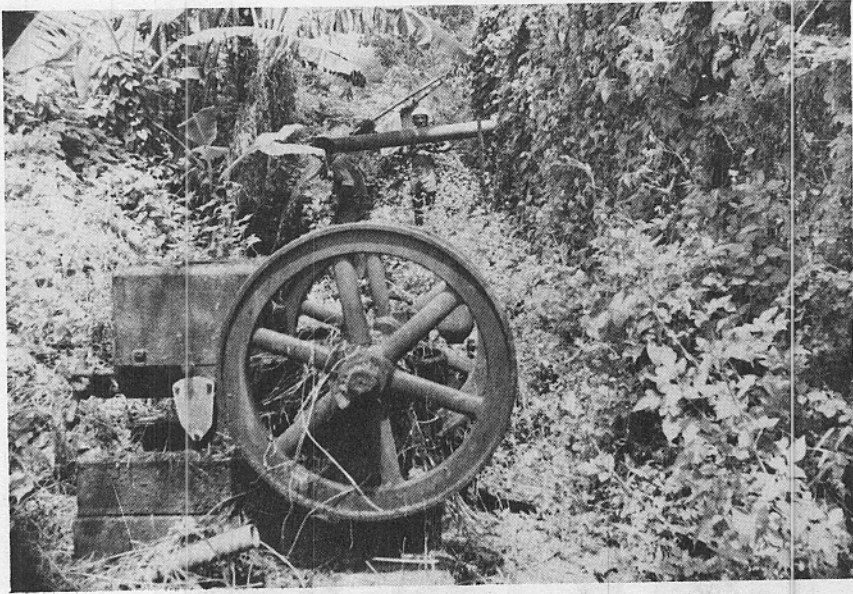


Photo 16. Japanese pump situated at the water cave, no longer in use.



Photo 17. Plate attached to the pump.