

Recollections of *Fadang* and *Fanihi*: The Taste and Smell of CHamoru Bygone Foods and the Challenge of Endangered Island Species

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Abstract

Pacific Islands have a high degree of biocultural diversity. On Guåhan (Guam), the CHamoru people's traditional knowledge, practices, and language developed in tandem with the island's biological diversity for over 3,500 years. Global processes such as colonization, globalization, and modernization put the island's biocultural diversity at risk. Two endemic species, the *fadang* and the *fanihi*, a cycad and a fruit bat, are threatened with extinction. Both *fadang* and *fanihi* are traditionally eaten as food. Open-ended interviews allowed participants to tell their stories of taste and smell, and their recollections preparing and sharing endemic dishes like the *titiyas fadang* and *kådu fanihi* with their elders. Endangered species conservation can play a role in preserving these practices alongside their emphasis on biodiversity protection. Recovery plans, inclusive of traditional practices, can protect this biocultural diversity. A council of traditional and scientific knowledge holders, grounded in the CHamoru value system, can guide its implementation.

A Story of Taste, Smell, and Sharing

For people growing up on a small Pacific island, the proximity of the ocean and the flora and fauna surrounding people's homes foster a connection to the land and sea. Stories of elders interweave a child's experiences with words of wisdom and knowledge, shaping a physical and spiritual relationships with the natural environment, honoring a holistic Indigenous worldview. One way of sharing this unique island culture is through the preparation and sharing of food. Children learn to husk coconuts and to fish at a young age. Communities share these foods of the land and the sea with their families, neighbors and at celebrations with the entire community.

Such is the experience of the CHamoru people of Guåhan (Guam), the most southern island of the Mariana Islands in the northwestern Pacific Ocean. One of the *manåmko'* (elders) in our neighborhood, Rosalind Pilar Paulino Dydasco, taught my children and I (Else Demeulenaere), how to grow and prepare certain traditional foods. CHamoru values surrounding food such as the practice of *chenchule'* (reciprocity) are paramount, and especially valued is *ka'lo yan fattoigue'*, bringing prepared food to

