

## Japanese non-profit “Pasifika Renaissance” works to promote and preserve region’s heritage

By Bill Jaynes  
The Kaselehlie Press

April 8, 2015

**Pohnpei, FSM**—“Pasifika Renaissance” was established in September of 2014 as a nonprofit organization established in Japan in order to “preserve and promote cultural and historical heritage in the Pacific Islands to revitalize their traditional cultures and empower local communities.” Dr. Takuya Nagaoka, who served as a JICA volunteer in Pohnpei, Micronesia is the organization’s Executive Director.

Yesterday Pasifika Renaissance established a new YouTube site for the organization ([www.youtube.com/channel/UCnmyAfrAD0u4MpUF9jLgJag](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnmyAfrAD0u4MpUF9jLgJag)). It’s an unwieldy tag but worth checking out. Dr. Nagaoka says that after the site receives 500 fans they will be able to choose their own url.

Currently the YouTube site contains videos of performances by students at the recently held College of Micronesia-FSM Founding Day. Dr. Nagaoka says that he has also conducted interviews with elders in the community discussing history, tradition and culture. Those will be uploaded to the site as well.

The group also has a Facebook page which receives constant attention.

Though Dr. Nagaoka has spent several months in Pohnpei and soon will be heading to Yap, the organization’s purpose is not at all limited to the FSM. Pasifika Renaissance’s mission extends to the entire Pacific region.

“So much of the Pacific region’s history is stored in overseas institution,” he said. “One of our goals is to start to bring it back.”

Dr. Nagaoka said that people have been very open to his work here. There is keen interest, he said. He attributes some of that to his previous JICA work in Pohnpei and also to the fact that he speaks the language. But also, the people know that something must be done in order to preserve the tradition, culture and history of the FSM.

Though English is not the group’s first language, their brochure describes their mission and purpose best:

“Rapid modernization in post-war period has caused changes in life style and the decline of traditional cultures that had been inherited as wisdoms of people for hundreds of years in the Pacific Island nations. Accessible information on their cultures and histories by the local people are also largely limited. We believe that learning our own culture and history generates and enhances respect to one’s origin and identity and further creates the present and future culture based on the traditions.

“For the realization of such societies, Pasifika Renaissance engages in documentation and research of the cultures and histories, and also utilizing the results of those projects in education in order to contribute to Pacific Islanders’ revitalization (“renaissance”) of traditional cultures. In addition, we work for sharing various information, materials, and research results stored in overseas institutions. Furthermore, we promote preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage that could be of invaluable tourism resources, and utilizing them for “cultural tourism” that is one of the potential sectors to lead the economy in the Pacific Island countries.

“In addition to these activities in the Pacific Islands, Pasifika Renaissance



Yoshio Samuel (Born 1936, 79 years old) at Mand, from Pingelap, 2014



Rihko Meninzor (Born 1943, 72 years old) at Sapwuahfik, 2014

aims to promote cultural exchange and friendship between Japan and the Pacific Island countries and raise awareness like a renaissance inside those Japanese people who are involved in supporting or participating in our projects.”

and annual membership fees. It has several different types of memberships available.

They can be reached by email at [pasifika.renaissance@gmail.com](mailto:pasifika.renaissance@gmail.com).

The organization relies on donations

The Kaselehlie Press

Your Newspaper for Today and Tomorrow

P.O. Box 2222 Pohnpei, FM 96941  
ph:(691) 320-6547  
email: [Kpress@mail.fm](mailto:Kpress@mail.fm)

Bill Jaynes  
Managing Editor

**KPress is looking for dedicated correspondents in Pohnpei, Chuuk, Yap, and Kosrae. We will pay you for articles and collection of ads. Contact us at the numbers or email above.**

I want to have a 26 issue subscription sent by  
First Class Mail to:

**Pohnpei Address**  
Cost includes shipping \$35 for 26 issues

**Chuuk, Kosrae, Yap, or USA Address**  
Cost includes shipping \$50 for 26 issues

**International Address**  
Cost includes shipping \$100 for 26 issues

#### RECIPIENT

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_