

Caroline Islands

Pacific Islands

Teaching the Bahá'í Faith

Bahá'í Geography – Caroline Islands

Caroline Islands

The Caroline Islands include about 500 small coral islands, mostly low atolls with some high islands, in the middle of the North Pacific about 2,000 km east of the Philippines, and extending over 3,540 km.

Caroline Islands in Micronesia





Caroline Islands

Micronesia

Micronesia includes the Mariana Islands (with Guam) to the north, the Marshall Islands to the East, and the Caroline Islands: Palau, Yap, Truk (now Chu'uk), Ponape (now Pohnpei) and Kusaie (now Kosrae).



Micronesia

Colonisation of Micronesia

They were originally part of the Spanish East Indies ruled from the Philippines, ceded to the Germans in 1899 after Spain lost the Spanish-American war, taken over by the Japanese in 1914 during World War I to become the South Seas Mandate under the League of Nations, and given by the United Nations to the United States as the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands after World War II. Some were heavily fought over during the war. Imagine being born Spanish, then German, then Japanese and finally American without leaving home.

Micronesia

The Micronesian peoples speak a variety of local languages, with English now the common language. The indigenous beliefs included a supreme being called "Yalafar" and an evil spirit called "Can", although many are now Christian. They lived on fish, many kinds of bananas, and swamp or purple taro, a starchy tuber with "elephant ear" leaves.



Garden
with
taro



Yap
traditional
house



Decolonisation of Micronesia

Guam became a major military base and is still American. Palau became the Republic of Palau in 1994. The Northern Mariana Islands became a U.S. Protectorate. The Marshall Islands became a republic, and the other four groups became the Federated States of Micronesia in 1986.

Palau

Palau is an archipelago of about 340 islands with an area of 466 km². The main island is Koror with the main city, and the capital Ngerulmud is on Babeldaob. The population today is about 18,000. The Rock Islands of Palau were declared a UNESCO World Heritage site in 2012.

PALAU



Kayangel Islands

Palau Islands

Melekeok

Koror

Philippine Sea

Sonsorol Islands

Pulo Anna Is.

Merir Is.

Tobi Is.

Helen Is.

NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN

50 km

Palau



Palau
and
Yap



Palau



Palau

coral
reef



Palau



Palau



Palau



Palau

airport



Palau
Koror
harbour



Palau

Koror
main
street





Kayangel Atoll, Palau

Palau

Kayanggel
Atoll

1.2 km²
pop. 54



Palau

Kayanggel
Atoll

1.2 km²
pop. 54



Palau

Kayangel
Atoll

main
street



Palau

Kayangal
Atoll

traffic
signs
(no cars)



Palau

Kayangal
Atoll

1.2 km²
pop. 54



Palau

Kayangel
Atoll

school



Palau

Kayangel
Atoll

1.2 km²
pop. 54

typhoon
tree
(shelter
from waves)





Palau

traditional
house
with
storyboard



Palau

mangroves



Palau

Rock
Islands
World
Heritage
Site



Palau

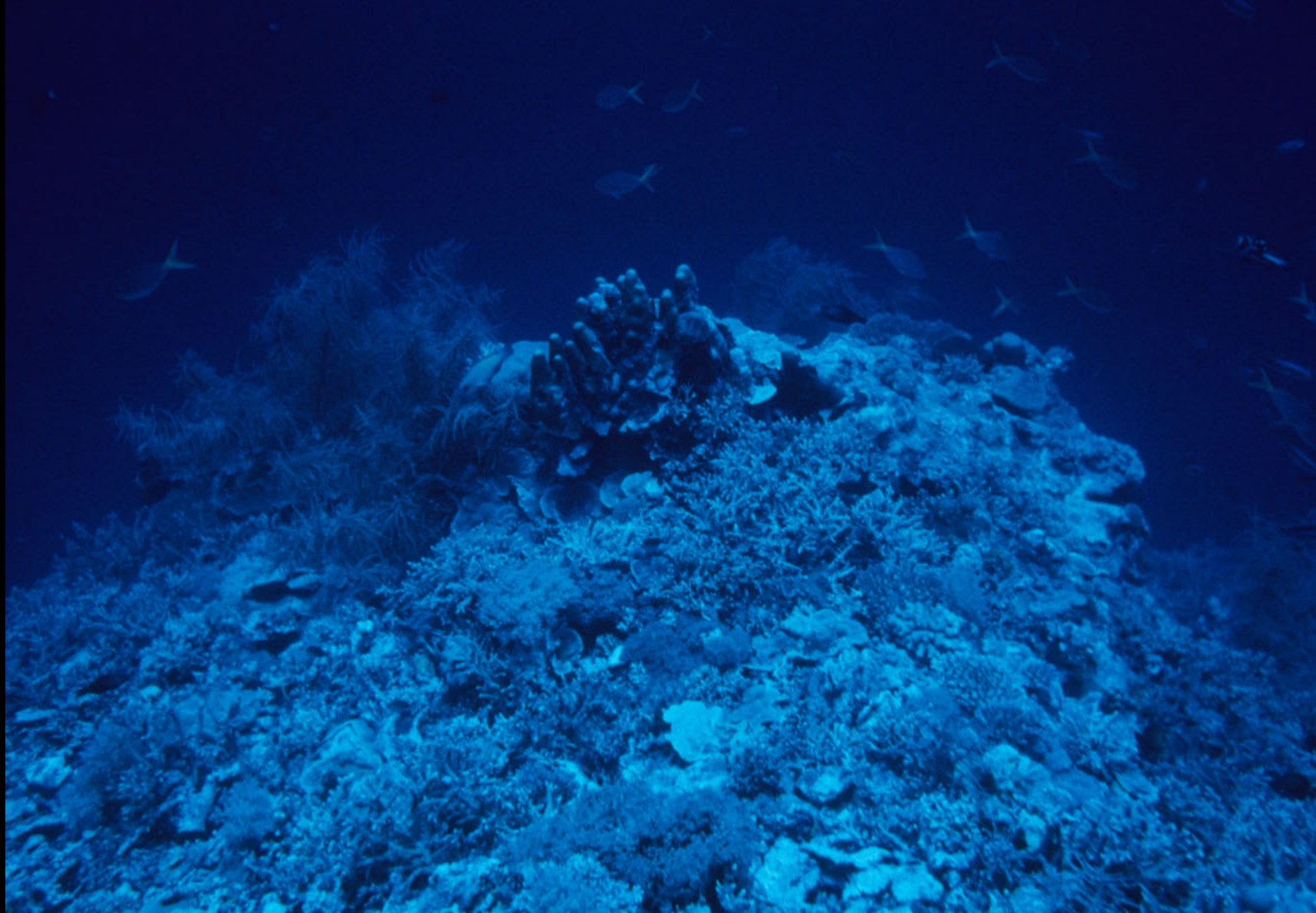
Rock
Islands
World
Heritage
Site

marine
lake



Palau

coral
reefs



Palau
coral
reefs

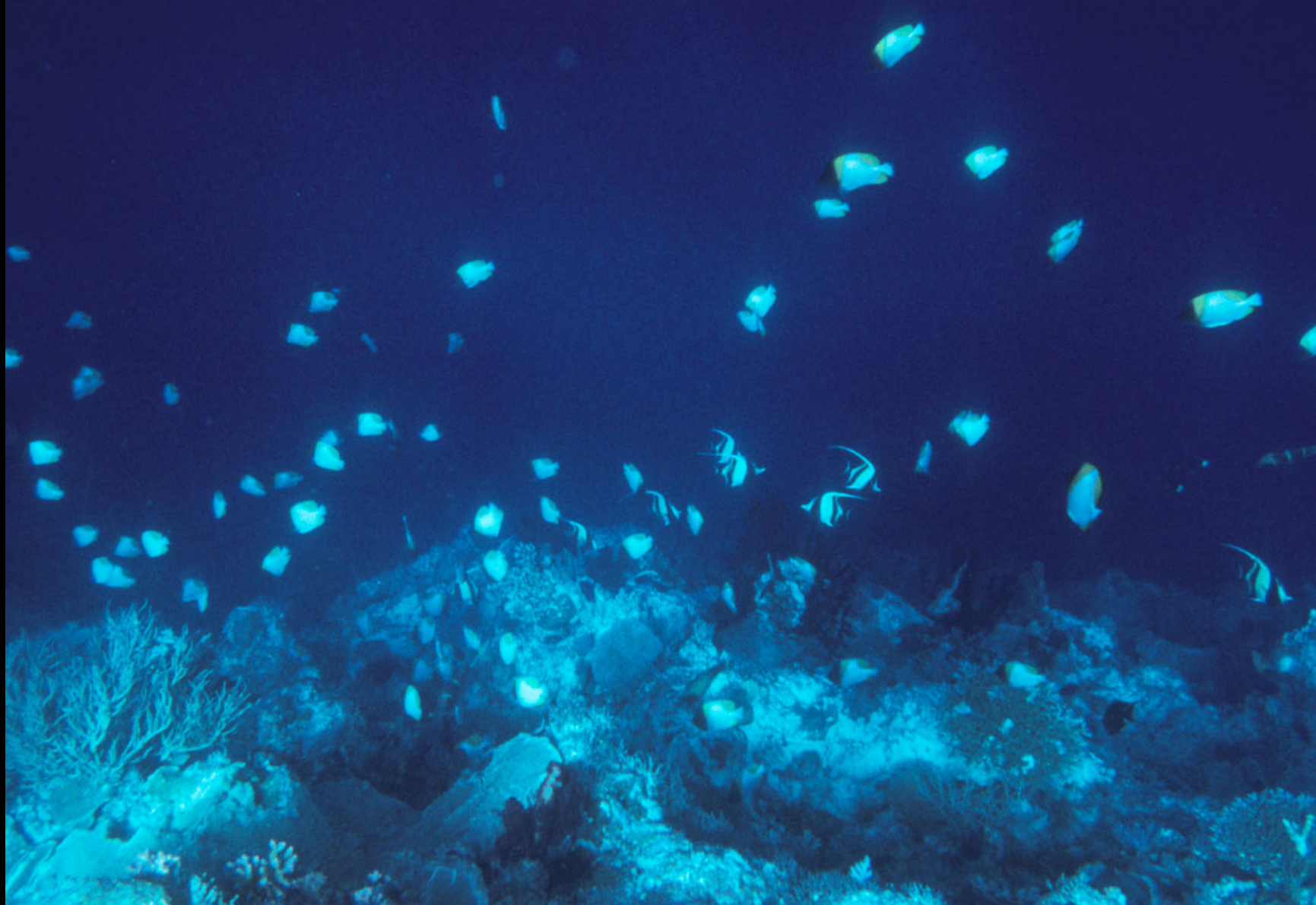


Palau
coral
reefs



Palau

coral
reefs

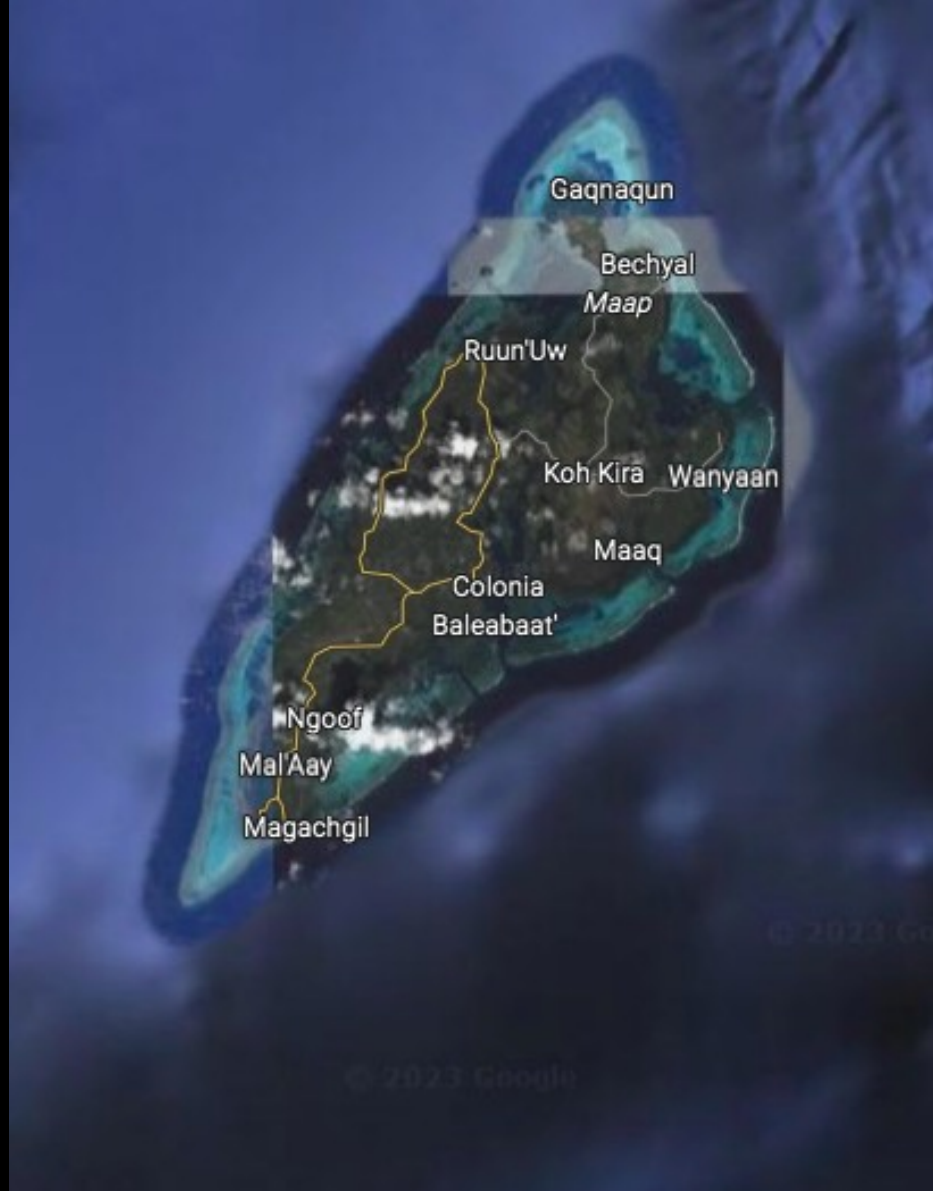


Yap

Yap State includes four main islands within a common coral reef, mostly rolling hills of savanna and dense vegetation in the valleys. The area is 98 km² and highest elevation 178 m. The Yapese have maintained the strongest indigenous culture in Micronesia.



Yap



Yap



Yap



Yap



Yap



Yap



Yap



Yap



Yap



Yap



Yap

In addition to shell money, the Yapese had a large stone coinage up to 2 metres in diameter and nearly 5 tonnes, with a hole in the middle, quarried in the Palau Islands 300 km to the south and transported by rafts behind canoes. They were not moved but just changed ownership.

Yap
stone
money



Yap

stone
money



Yap

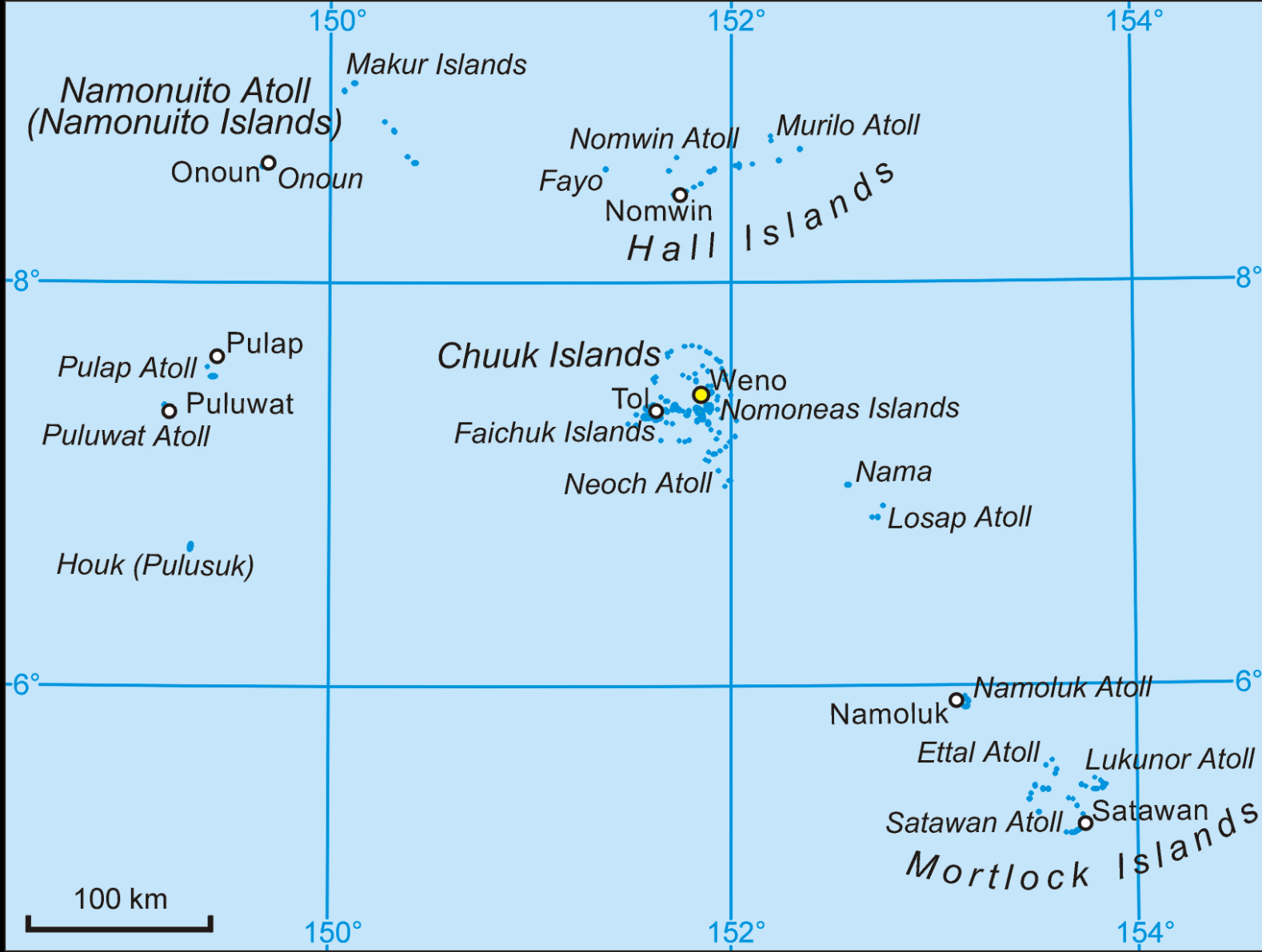
stone
money



Chu'uk

Chu'uk, formerly Truk, is one of four states in the Federated States of Micronesia, with several island groups and a population today of 50,000 on 120 km². Most people live on Chuuk Lagoon, including the capital on Weno Island. It was a Japanese naval base during World War II and there are sunken Japanese warships in the lagoon. The language is Chuukese.

Chu'uk State



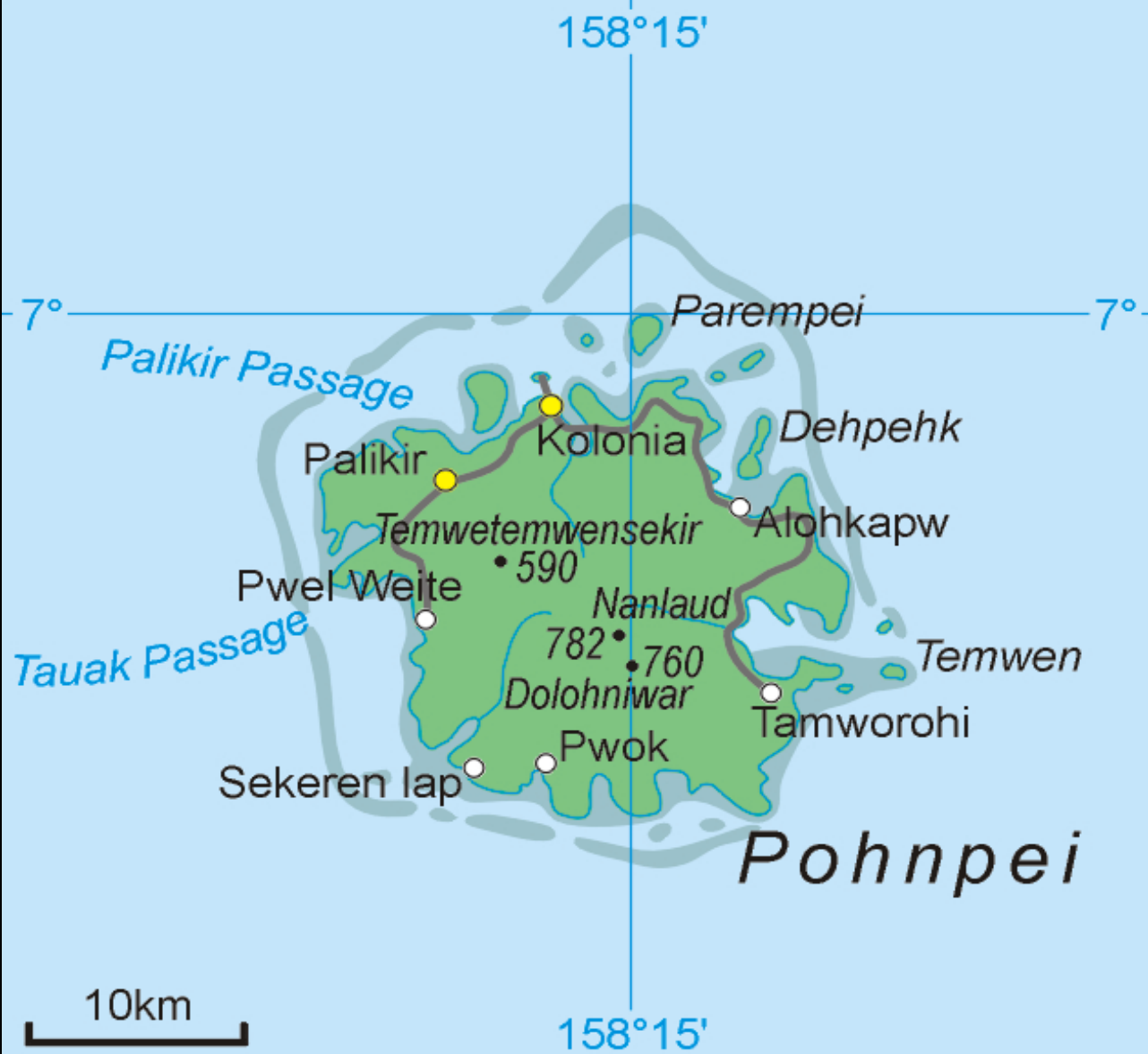
Chu'uk



Pohnpei

Pohnpei (Ponape) is an island state in the Federated States of Micronesia. Kolonia is the state capital, and Palikir is the FSM capital. The main island is 334 km² and reaches 782 m, with a population of 37,000. There are megaliths and the ruined city of Nan Madol on artificial islands off the eastern shore, dating to the 8th-9th century. Rainfall reaches 7,600 mm in the mountains, supporting its rich biodiversity.

Pohnpei



Pohnpei



Pohnpei State





Pohnpei State

Pohnpei

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Pohnpei

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Kolonia
Pohnpei



Pohnpei



Pohnpei



Pohnpei



Pohnpei



Pohnpei



Pohnpei

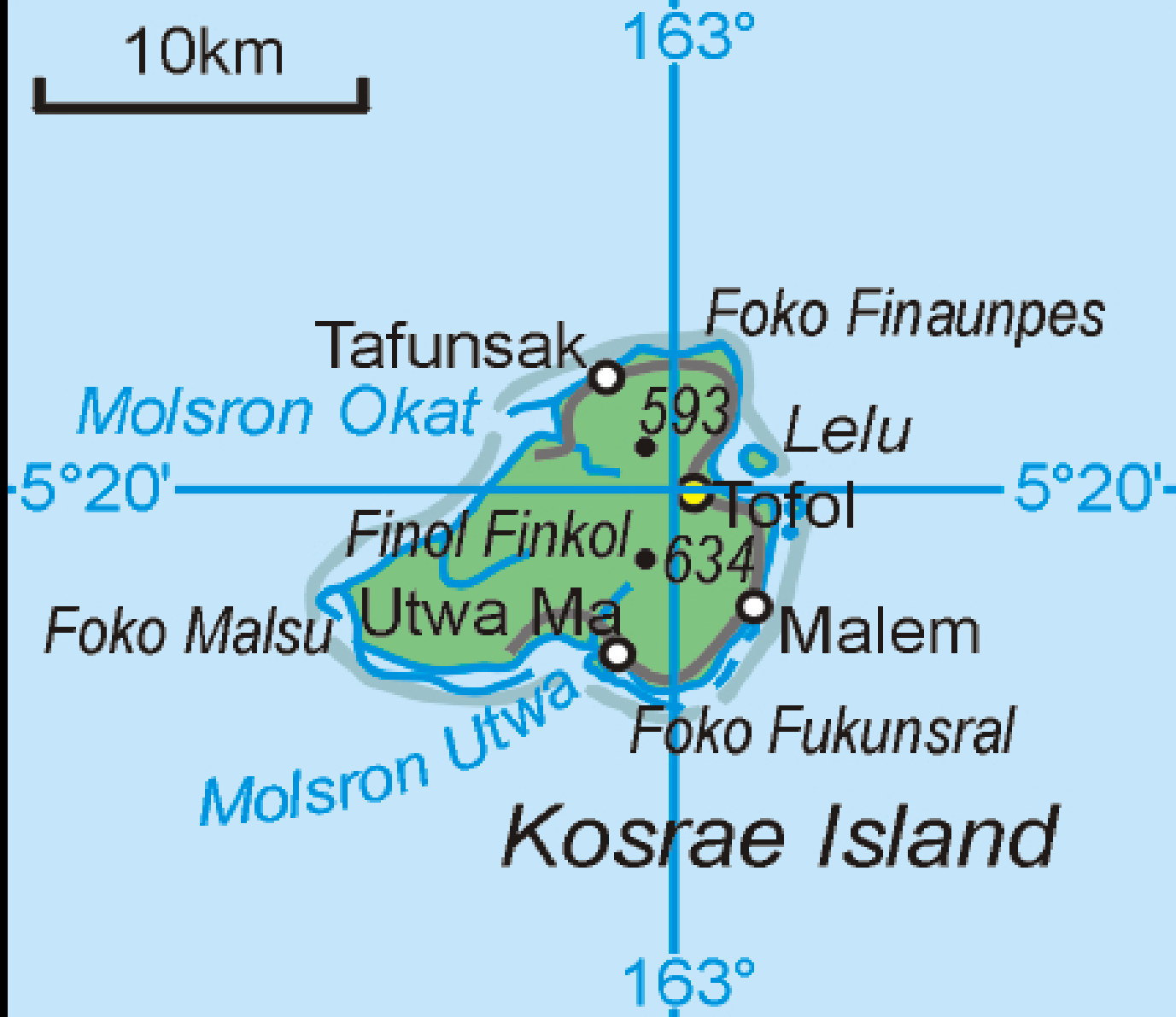
Trochus
shell
market



Kosrae

Kosrae, formerly Kusaie, is a volcanic island and the easternmost state in the Federated States of Micronesia, with an area of 110 km², an altitude of 634 meters, and a population of 6,600. It was fortified by the Japanese during World War II but saw no fighting.

Kosrae



Kosrae



The Pacific Islands

*A party speaking their languages, severed, holy, sanctified and filled with the love of God, must turn their faces to and travel through the three great island groups of the Pacific Ocean—Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia, and the islands attached to these groups, such as New Guinea, Borneo, Java, Sumatra, Philippine Islands, Solomon Islands, Fiji Islands, New Hebrides, Loyalty Islands, New Caledonia, Bismarck Archipelago, Ceram, Celebes, Friendly Islands, Samoa Islands, Society Islands, **Caroline Islands**, Low Archipelago, Marquesas, Hawaiian Islands, Gilbert Islands, Moluccas, Marshall Islands, Timor and the other islands.*

(‘Abdu’l-Bahá, *Tablets of the Divine Plan*. Tablet to the Bahá’ís of the United States and Canada, 11 April 1916)

Knight of Bahá'u'lláh

Virginia Breaks (1906-1993), originally from Indiana, moved to Hawaii in 1941 as a university research assistant, and then to University of California at Berkeley to earn a Masters Degree in Public Health Statistics, and to San Francisco, where she became a Bahá'í in 1947. She attended the Intercontinental Teaching Conference in Chicago in 1953 and heard the list of goals.

Virginia Breaks

Departure from
San Francisco
airport 1953



Virginia Breaks

"Looking back it seems to me that events in my life were preparing me for the Caroline Islands, even before I accepted the Faith of Bahá'u'lláh. It was there that the Caroline Islands were mentioned as one of the 131 places where there were no Bahá'ís. That name went right to my heart."

(Virginia Breaks, quoted in Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 191)

Virginia Breaks



Virginia Breaks

1963



Virginia Breaks

Since a job was a requirement to be allowed to settle there, she managed to find one with the Department of Public Health. She arrived on the island of Moen, Truk (now Chu'uk Islands), on 16 November 1953. There were no hotels and the only accommodation was Quonset huts left by the U.S. Army. Travel between islands was by boat or WWII seaplanes. Teaching was slow. The first Caroline Islander accepted the Faith in 1960.



Virginia Breaks, Pohnpei 1972

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Virginia Breaks

"Maybe it would be a good thing if every one on the home front could be in a virgin area for a while - a virgin area where they couldn't talk freely about the Faith. Maybe then they would begin to appreciate what it means to be at home where you are so free."

(Virginia Breaks, quoted in Earl Redman, *The Knights of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 192)

Letter to Virginia Breaks

"...the Guardian sincerely hopes you will be able to devote more time to the teaching of the native people, so that a goodly number may become firm in the Faith. He feels that this vast territory, which has been spiritually asleep for so long and is now awakening, and he hopes through your diligent efforts, many may find the light of Divine Guidance."

(letter on behalf of the Guardian, 6 May 1956, [The Bahá'í World In Memoriam 1992-1997](#). p.103)

Virginia Breaks

Virginia moved and taught across Micronesia, including on Saipan in the Mariana Islands, and settled in Pohnpei in 1970. She was an Auxiliary Board member for 20 years. Virginia helped to meet the goal of translating the Bahá'í writings into the Micronesian Kusaiean language.

Teaching
on
Pohnpei



Teaching results

Among those Virginia taught, Betra Majmeto, the first Marshallese Bahá'í, became an Auxiliary Board Member and then a Continental Counsellor. Rose Mackwelung from Kosrae became a member of the first National Spiritual Assembly of the North West Pacific.



Virginia Breaks

To keep up her spiritual strength and maintain a wider perspective, Virginia attended international teaching conferences in Japan in 1955, Kampala in 1958, Manila in 1959, and the World Congress in 1963, as well as going on pilgrimage in 1962. When Amatu'l-Bahá Rúhíyyih Khánúm visited the Pacific in 1984, Virginia took her around Pohnpei and Chu'uk. She remained at her post in the Caroline Islands as the Guardian requested, and passed away at age 87 on Yap on 8 December 1993.

Virginia Breaks

DEEPLY SADDENED PASSING MUCH LOVED KNIGHT
BAHA'U'LLAH VIRGINIA BREAKS. HER PROMPT
RESPONSE GUARDIAN'S CALL TEN YEAR WORLD
CRUSADE, FORTY YEARS UNINTERRUPTED
SERVICE CAROLINE ISLANDS, CONSTANT
DEVOTION AND EXEMPLARY SELF-ABNEGATION
HAVE EARNED HER UNIQUE DISTINCTION ANNALS
FAITH. ASSURE ARDENT PRAYERS HOLY SHRINES
PROGRESS HER NOBLE SOUL DIVINE WORLDS.

Universal House of Justice, December 8, 1993