

A visit to the Independent State of Rapanui Dated: January 2, 2021

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As I arrived on this remote country in the South Pacific I realized how far I was from big crowded metropolis, and how close I am to the edge of the world.

The people seem very determined and with a practical purpose and approach to life. It is a small island with a population of five thousand people, most of which are natives and intermarried couples; it is a quilt of the world population.

They called themselves, the island and the language Rapanui.

Half a decade ago Rapanui was decolonized from the State of Chile through a political process brokered by the United Nations. Now, Rapanui is an independent state that embraces a democratic form of government. People have economic freedom and private enterprise. The currency is universal it recognizes currencies from all United Nations members.

The economy here is based on understanding how to best administer the habitat, the island and the planet. It is a process of nature: humans are an integral, albeit powerful part. We are dependent on nature's integrity. Environmental awareness in policymaking is a constitutional mandate.

A barrier reef is under construction, it will serve to subdue rising ocean. The ocean territory is 400 square miles. A major export is sustainable fishing to international markets.

Re-cultivation and reforestation through proper irrigation and crop rotation have restored the island native plants and crops. Energy is produced through wind, solar and tidal technology. Horses and electric vehicles are the primary means of transportation.

The greatest natural resource of Rapanui is its unique archeology; the immense and grand display of monolithic statues, the Moai, carved in stone, adorns the entire island. The exquisite petroglyphs carved into the bedrock are a testimony to time, legacy and heritage.

There are several hundred sites in active restoration. In an inspiring fashion the Rapanui government has engaged its own people to work collectively with foreign universities and technical institutions to participate in this process.

For instance, Harvard University is currently partnering with the Rapanui University to restore four sites, which will take five years to complete. As a result a wealth of knowledge is gathered through careful scientific processes, ranging from engineering, architecture, archeology, art, anthropology, geology, astrology, agriculture, environment, and economics.

The partnership between Rapanui and foreign institutions has produced skilled jobs for the local population. It is the first time since the end of colonization from Chile that the population is benefiting from their archeological heritage.

Tourism accounts for a great part of the island's income has increased incrementally since independence eight years ago.

Tourists may not visit for more than 30 days. Departure is mandatory. Special visas, for extended stays, are granted to diplomats and their families, professionals with specific duties and students. Immigration is strictly enforced.

The island's infrastructure has been upgraded. However, the island cannot sustain augmentation of population by means of uncontrolled immigration. As a result, the population is educated, and in constant knowledge of how small and fragile their environment is. The people are in full action to protect it.

The health system is based on partnerships with international medical institutions. Professors train students from small Pacific nations in the local Rapanui University hospital. These newly trained doctors return to provide medical care in their own communities.

Integral to the medical school is a research center for minerals found only on Rapanui, such as the drug Rapanume©, used in organ transplants. It is patented and licensed to pharmaceutical corporations.

The principle behind the Rapanui democracy is to revitalize the cultural strength. I learned that the people elect a Bi-Chamber Parliament, The Great Senate and The Great House of Peoples. The Rapanui Parliament is the supreme legislative authority.

General elections are held for the House and for the Senate. Each member of the Legislature represents one of thirteen districts, in which the island is divided.

Only ethnic Rapanui are allowed to run for the government office and vote. The party that receives the most popular votes, forms “the Executive Power”, that determines policy.

The *Ariki Hakatere*, the “prime minister”, is the presiding head of the Government, elected by popular vote. The *Ariki Henua*, is the non-hereditary, “king”, head of state, whose position is largely ceremonial with cultural and traditional significance.

A group of advisers, the General Counsel, it is composed of thirteen government Ministries. The Counsel is charged with debating key policy issues and recommending action by the executive branch.

Members of the other parties are represented in the Parliament, as an opposition vote. Decisions about key issues are made by popular referendum vote only.

Voting is a right, a responsibility and a requirement.

The Judicial Powers are represented by the Ministry of Justice whose duties are to execute the laws and statues set forth by the constitution of the Independent State of Rapanui.

The result is a government that reflects a broad range of political opinions, all of which have a voice in the debates about key government issues and policies.

At the graduation ceremonies “Ariki Henua” makes a presentation.

“ In 10 years we went from being a territory of Chile, to becoming a small independent nation. And, we have turned barren lands into forests. Today, we are drinking our own orange juice, wearing cotton grown on the island. Our self-sufficiency is much stronger today.

The key to this is that the Rapanui people are working together peacefully and collaborating globally.”

On this island, on this date, the world seems to have a chance to overcome human vices; that are centered in the over exploitation of the planet and people, and the globalization of disease and poverty.

There is an overriding sense in the air in Rapanui, a synergy of this spiritual place, and humanity; yet there is no organized religion. The people seem to coexist in peace and respect.

Rapanui is a speck of land isolated, inhabited, located below the tropic of Capricorn, five hours flight from Sur- America or Tahiti.

This land promises a world of wisdom. It is for everybody to visit and appreciate.

Reasoning is being, and being is human, and human is you and me. We are all interdependent of each other and nature.

*Santi Hitorangi
Rapanui*