

Joseph Joaquin

Cultural Resources Specialist
The Tohono O'odham Nation

joseph.joaquin@tonation-
nsn.gov
520.383.3622

.... I want to thank the people responsible for putting this thing on today and to talk and to share with you a little bit about our people (the Tohono O'odham) and the issue that we've discussed all morning – research.

We do a lot of that today ... all over. Hearing all of you people talk about (research) from the tribes this morning and from the staff and (faculty) coming this afternoon – you know, I guess that's what makes the world turn.

I want to say a little about our place (Tohono O'odham Nation). I'll introduce myself again – I'm Joe Joaquin, the Cultural Resources Specialist for the Tohono O'odham Nation. A little history about our nation: long ago we came to this land – we were brought here – put here. Our nation's capitol (Sells, Arizona) is about 60 miles down the road southwest from here. We have 2.8 million acres that we call our nation's lands. Our land is divided into 11 districts – they are working on a 12th district. (On June 12, 2013, the Hia-Ced O'odham District officials were sworn-in and the Hia-Ced District was officially recognized as the 12th district of the Tohono O'odham Nation.

Read more at

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/06/30/extinct-no-more-hia-ced-oodham-officially-join-tohono-oodham-nation-150209>

....

We do a lot with these things (research) that you people out there ... the little paper they sent out (indicating) that we are going to be talking to undergraduate students and graduate students ... I am hoping that all of you are in that class somewhere. I went to a gathering one time in Mexico with traditional medicine people. And, I saw all these ladies come in and I said, "All these people, are they traditional medicine people?" Pretty soon this guy got up there and started talking to the ladies and they started to leave. There were 20 of them. They left. I asked the guy later, "How come these guys have to leave?" OK, they are not medicine men. They are just here to see how they use the facial creams to use to beauty themselves.

So they are not traditional medicine people. That's what I am saying. I hope all of you are here to learn something today.

But you know, going back in history ... In history, our Creator we call **I'itoi**, brought us up from the underworld many, many, many, many years ago – put us on our lands that we call today our land. And with that land out there – if you haven't been out there you should look at it – some people from here in Tucson never know where Sells is or the Tohono O'odham Nation is – but it's out there. And it's beautiful land. Bout our ancestors had to learn how to live on the land – with patience and everything else -- research to know what this plant is, or to know what this thing could be used for. All these little things that we live on today made us survive to what we are today. This thing is what we call research in our language – the O'odham way. (Mr. Joaquin identifies this concept in the Tohono O'odham language). Learn from these things and this is how you share the world that you live in – all of you.

And so, that's how we came to be today – and with the coming of the Europeans, again, more research came in. Our people never really know what research meant. When I came into this, what we call the political world out there – in '89, I was elected to the Legislative Council in Sells (which I really didn't want to be). But the elders – I had to listen to them – “ok, we'll put you in there and you will be the spokesperson. And when I got there, there was talk about research that had been going on out there. But nobody ever got any reports. I asked where were the reports from all these things these people (outside researchers) are supposed to be doing. Are they returning them so you guys know what's going on? We have people coming in and doing this, that research this, and that Where are the reports? They weren't giving them to the Nation or to the tribe then. So, all that stuff never got back to them.

Today, after this, they started to talk about, “well we have to do something about it – how can we better control what's going on here for people that come in here and want to do this and research this and our people. But it took them a long time to do that and finally this thing came out the other day, and it's called the research code. And now it's out there for comments and whenever this thing comes back and our people agree to what's in here, then we'll have our research code. Then we will have guidelines to go by.¹

Our office used to handle all these things when we established the office in 1997. And everything that had to do with our work came to use and we had to review and everything else and try to work with these people. Not much research, but more or less people coming in to do their – to make reports on what they have seen or what they are doing out there. We needed to know all that stuff. But we wanted copies of those things that go back. How you do it, I don't care. Because every time there's an administrative change, a new chairman, or new staff, or new council people, things change like everywhere else. Our government, again, is set up like the United States government. It has three branches and so we have to work with all that these people that we deal with.

¹ The Tohono O'odham Nation has since adopted its Research Code, enacted and codified as 17 Tohono O'odham Code Chapter 8 by Resolution No. 13-165, effective May 23, 2013.

We as the Cultural Affairs Office, fall under the Executive Branch. The Legislative Branch has its own thing which we have to answer to. And there are eleven committees out there – different committees. If any of you want to go out there and do research on whatever it is, you need to send a letter to the Chairman. The Chairman will get it and he'll look at it and say, "We'll give it to the Council." The Council will look at it and it goes to a committee. If it has to do with agriculture, it goes to (the) agriculture (committee.) If it has to do with culture, it goes to the cultural committee – natural resources – it goes to the natural resources committee. All these things and then they follow through, and then you come back and you get – if it's approved, then you come and do work with the committee that they assign you to work with --- -- whatever it is you do your research on.

There's also another part to this whole thing about research – us guys here are stuck in the middle. We say, okay, we're there trying to protect our way of life – because as we always say in our language – (native language), which means "Our way of life is our strength." And we have to protect this. We at the Cultural Affairs Office work both sides of the fence. You have to say, okay, will this be beneficial to our people or is it just to benefit whoever is doing the research? We've got to weigh those things. So sometimes it gets kind of mucky in the waters – muddy. But again, we're not the decision makers, just a program. The Council makes the decision to, when they get through with the research and bring it back, it goes to them and the report is made to them and then it goes out. A lot of times, if it deals with a lot of things "public," they are the ones (the public) that put these people in power. They are the ones that should be hearing a lot of things first. I always say, you tell the people.

There are little green guys that run around out there (the Border Patrol). You tell them one thing and it goes out the other ear. I say go to the District Council or you go to the community. There are 76 communities in these eleven districts. Go to those guys first if you are going to do something. Then do it. Not just to the Council and sit there and listen to whatever they say and then you turn around and do the opposite. It doesn't work that way. Then you get into trouble.

You know, these are the things I see out there, when I go out there in the field and try to tell these guys – by they little green men, I mean the Border Patrol. Because they run all over the land. We have medicine plants – these things out there they need to be taken care of and we don't want them to know anything else. This is what we again call "trying to protect our intellectual properties." But that again is already out there from long ago. Those are the things that again come to our office and we have to deal with these things to see who we allow or what is this person going to do with all these things. It's there, sometimes they come to us and say, "how can this, how can that?" If you look at the bookshelf in some of these bookstores or libraries – long ago nobody asked permission to do all these things. So they are already there. And I personally know some of the people that came to the communities, sat there and did their research without telling the communities and now I see these guys are great professors, doctors. What did the community get; what did the nation get – nothing. So these are the things we have to guard against about trying to do research or move on.

I know there's a good side to the story. There are things that we need to know. This is why I always believe in the community college that got started out there (Tohono O'odham Community College) – that they would be the ones to move things along. Like it was said earlier, somebody mentioned getting involved in a lot of these things our people need out there. They are the best to know. They are the ones that lived there – out there every day to know what is going on. But I don't want to discourage you people from not going out there, if you want to do those things. It's good – you have to learn to build trust if you are going to deal with anybody out there. And these are the things that I tell the Border Patrol guys. I use them as an example because they are out there now. There are people on this side that like what you are doing – and this side – they don't want you here. So you got to learn these things and deal with to get along. Get everybody to side up with you. If you are doing a good thing – be able to share. It took me a long time to get the trust of these guys down the road right here at the Arizona State Museum. I didn't start the whole thing that went on. I came in later and it took me five years to find and build the trust with the people I work with now. Those are the things that are very important. You have to be honest with these guys. You have to tell them the truth. If you're going to do anything out there, be honest about it. Because those are the things that will help you with whatever you need to know. The people will help you more. It's good, the young lady said here – coming together – working together. That's the only way anything is ever going to move forward from both sides. You learn – we learn. Those are the things that bind us together.

We go back to the language. Are we going to lose our language? What's going to happen? When that world changes, I tell the young people – when the world changes and the language is gone – you are just like the rest of these people. You will be like when the border went up and the O'odham on this side were people without a land – strangers in their own homeland – because nobody wanted to accept them. Are you going to be like that out there? You might be a U.S. citizen, like they always ask you, but you can't say you are O'odham because you can't speak the language. And that's what counts – is the language. That makes you who you are. It distinguishes you from everybody else. All of us sitting here, members of some tribe or nation, have their own ways of doing things – their own language and things are done the way it was brought up in their area. But again, you know, we get into all these little things about who we are, and I'm not going to be a part of this or a part of that. And this is what sometimes causes problems amongst our people. So we try to learn from each other like today – gathered here today to hear each other out. And it was good to hear all these people talk about some of these things – how they handle all these things out there in their world – because again, we go back to the world, the creation world, and how things were supposed to be set. So many things are coming; many things are still going to change.

But we as educators have to make sure that our young people understand all these things – because that's how they are going to have to look at the world – in a different way – but hang on to who they are. And it's important – language is very important to us.

History – today I'm supposed to be down there, talking about the Kino history which we are doing now – reading up on all of his notes and everything else that involves part of our

lands out there – back in the 1600's and 1500's. And we learn from that you know – what they thought and what the O'odham thought – and how they communicated to work together. And this is history for us too.

But in order to understand a lot of these things you have to go back. You have to go back and think of what do I tell my grandkids. You have to think of your great grandpa, the words he gave me and I'm passing on to you – because that's the only way you will learn to understand.

Long ago, we were told “don't give out any of this information to anybody – what is here is yours.” It's going out into the world and then nobody knows what's going to happen to it. Nobody knows what will come back to you and how it's going to hurt you in the long run. I tried to relate this message to my grandkids, you know. Because it will. So, my 12-year-old, he started to sing and learn the traditions of both sides. They are from the Gila River Indian Community and I'm from down here (Tohono O'odham). It's a combination of both traditions that he is trying to learn. And these are the things that I said: we have to pass on to our young people, the language also. A little bit different but he understands both.

So you know, hopefully, everything else that is going to affect us down the road will come out of this thing when they get through with it (the Tohono O'odham Research protocol). You are welcome to come and visit our lands and talk to us, that's the only way you are going to learn – if you want to learn anything about our people out there, and/or what else we do out there. There are certain things we can't let go; we can't share with you people. We can share other things that are beneficial to us. There's some that particularly pertain to the tribe itself. Even with the women and men. Those are things that have to be guarded by us. And so, I wanted to say again – leave you with a word – if we come together and share out thoughts and be honest and respect the ways of our people – we respect your ways and you respect our ways and we get along together. All right? Thank you.