

# Martinicans on the Path of their Ancestors!

From May 9th to the 22nd, the «KYTANGOMINGO EMA» (The Path of our Ancestors) adventure was held. Its aim was sailing on the routes the Amerindians used to take in the Caribbean. And what a success!

## The populating of the Amerindians in the Caribbean: a Mythical History that is Revisited Today.

Martinique and other islands of the Caribbean Sea were populated by Amerindians. They used to sail from island to island aboard dugouts known as "kanawas". The term "Kanawa Akayouman" means "the spirit of the ancestor grandfather snake". A map of the Caribbean has been drawn according to the Amerindian legend of the mythic snake founder of origins. The myth states that it was cut into pieces, every island being only a slice allowing to reconstitute the body of the big snake.

## Karisko Challenges the Waves of History.

It all began at the end of 2007 with the manufacturing, according to archaeological resources, of one of these legendary dugouts, and its handling by Karisko, an association that gathers the people keen on this sailing practice. In May 2008, the first crossing between Martinique and Dominique was made by means of paddling. Another stage of the adventure was launched in May 2009 on the segment Martinique-Antigua, islands that are 220 miles far from each other.



From May 9th to the 22nd, the members of the association sailed from Grenada to Martinique within a fifteen-day sea journey in minimum comfort conditions and continuous efforts. At the arrival at Marin Bay, there was no strong shout enough in chests to express the high relief and the enjoyment for having made the crossing successfully. However, these brave sailors have still a long way to go. Indeed, they have two segments to go through so as to reach their objectives: Venezuela / Grenada and Antigua / Puerto Rico.



## A cultural and sports initiative which gathers people.

This adventure was endowed with a symbolic and real dimension that brought the bound of brotherhood among the inhabitants of the region to the fore. In the Amerindian language, « Youmoulikou » means « brothers of a same nation ». The picture at the top reveals the joy of the members of the association and of the locals at each port of call, as well as the warm way they welcome them. Besides, the event had a remarkable cultural dimension. Indeed, the traditional dugout was exhibited in French Guiana within an Amerindian tribe before the beginning of the adventure, and all along the route in Grenada and up to St Vincent, attracting overall more than 2000 persons! From an educational point of view, we can say that this is a golden opportunity to fascinate the young inhabitants of this area by the history of their ancestors and to make them feel the bound that unites them.