

## *Editorial*

Change invites reflection, and as this issue of *The Contemporary Pacific* marks a change in editorship, this is an appropriate time to reflect on the past and future of the journal. Our first four years have been highly successful, and the awards for best new journal from the Association of American Publishers and for excellence in design and production from the Association of American University Presses have been gratifying. However, those of us involved in the day-to-day workings of the journal take special pride in the quality of scholarship published in each issue, including the special issues on the Fiji coups and the Bougainville crisis. Our commitment to interdisciplinary studies has allowed us to present articles on a variety of topics ranging from environmental change to academic freedom, from the dilemmas of development to questions of autonomy and independence for island states, from contested symbols of nationalism to the invention of tradition, from the meaning of chiefly status in the Solomons to race relations and indigenous resurgence in New Zealand. Our dialogue section has proven a forum for lively commentary on the study of women in the Pacific, the practice of history on local pasts, the politics of scholarship, and the struggle for sovereignty in places such as Hawai'i and Palau. Our review sections have offered insightful evaluations of recent publications and timely, informative summaries of political developments in the region; our resource guides have identified library holdings and specialized collections and have provided scholarly bibliographies on selected topics.

This issue of *The Contemporary Pacific* holds to the patterns of excellence established during the tenure of our first editor, Brij Lal. We offer the scholarly analyses of John Overton, Caroline Ralston, Ramesh Thakur, and R. Gerard Ward, including abstracts of these main articles for the first time. We also offer the impassioned views of Konai Helu-Thaman and Albert Wendt and the thoughtful writing of a number of Pacific specialists on current political events and recent publications. In short, we remain committed to providing a responsible, scholarly vehicle for the exchange of ideas on contemporary developments in the Pacific Islands. At the same time, we expect that our future offerings will reflect wider

intellectual concerns involving the cultures and contexts of knowledge systems, the varieties of discourse, and the plurality of possible meanings and interpretations given to events in the region.

Recent appointments to our editorial board enrich an already impressive community of scholars committed to extending the boundaries of knowledge and understanding in the Pacific Islands area. We are pleased that invitations to join the board have been accepted by Sitiveni Halapua, director of the East-West Center's Pacific Islands Development Program, Vilsoni Hereniko of the University of Hawai'i Center for Pacific Islands Studies, and Letitia Hickson, also of the Center for Pacific Islands Studies, who takes over as book review editor. It is also important to cite here those who have made special efforts in behalf of the journal during this time of change. Robert C. Kiste, chair of our editorial board and director of the University of Hawai'i Center for Pacific Islands Studies, applied a gentle, guiding hand, while Terence Wesley-Smith, associate editor, and Linley Chapman, manuscript editor, managed administrative matters and contributed significantly to a smooth, efficient transition. Two other constituencies deserve recognition. They are the invisible cadre of anonymous reviewers who assist us in maintaining standards, and all the authors who have submitted articles for consideration. Without both of these groups, we would not have a journal. We thank them and encourage them to continue their efforts.

As announced earlier, Brij Lal continues his affiliation with the journal, from his position at the Australian National University, as corresponding editor. Likewise, Don Rubinstein, who contributed substantially to our early development, will continue, since his move to the University of Guam, as an international correspondent. We are delighted too, to announce that Konai Helu-Thaman, pro vice chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, has accepted our invitation to become an international correspondent.

Memories also inform this reflection on the journal's past and future. I remember the eighth annual Pacific History Association conference in Guam in December 1990, a gathering ably organized by Don Rubinstein. As part of that conference, whose dynamics heralded some of the now ongoing trends in the field of Pacific scholarship, Karen Nero of the University of California at Irvine and I organized a panel on island historiography. We sought to encourage performances and presentations that addressed the variety of historical expressions in the Pacific and the

equally varied sources of knowledge on which those expressions might be based. In the sessions that evolved from our panel, people from within and beyond the Pacific spoke, danced, chanted, read, or acted out their different histories in a shared present. In many ways, those sessions were as much about the present as the past. The collective effect was to scandalize some, confuse others, and perhaps inspire the imagination or strengthen the resolve of a few. For me, the different performances and presentations underscored a point made earlier by Greg Denning in the inaugural issue of *The Contemporary Pacific*. In a dialogue piece entitled "History in the Pacific," he wrote that the practice of history in the region needs to be inclusive of vernacular understandings and responsive to local sources of expertise. Although concerned primarily with history, Denning speaks to the practitioners of any and all modes of scholarly inquiry in the Pacific. True scholarship in the region requires an open cross-cultural exchange of ideas that does not privilege or reify one perspective to the exclusion of others. There is much to learn about the ways in which we have come to know and regard one another. We here at Mānoa will continue to promote a deeper awareness of the many, varied, complex, and sometimes troubling ties that bind us all in this time and place called the contemporary Pacific.

DAVID HANLON