

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Brij Vilash Lal, grandson of a *girmitiya*, was born in the remote, pre-modern village of Tabia on the island of Vanua Levu. After high school in Labasa, he received his tertiary education at the University of the South Pacific, the University of British Columbia, and The Australian National University. He has been an academic all his adult life. He was awarded the inaugural Distinguished Pacific Scholar Medal by the UNESCO-sponsored International Council for the Study of the Pacific Islands and the Centenary Medal of the Government of Australia for his contribution to the Humanities there. A Fellow of the Australian Humanities Academy and an Officer of the Order of Fiji, he was honoured by the Fiji Millennium Committee for his scholarship and named as one of seventy-five people who helped shape Fiji's 20th-century history. Recently, he was selected as the only living of five distinguished historians of the Pacific Islands to have made significant contributions 'Beyond the Ivory Tower.' Dr Lal also played a practical role in the recent affairs of Fiji as a member of the Fiji Constitution Review Commission whose report formed the basis of the now-abrogated but once widely praised 1997 Constitution. He has been a staunch critic of coups in Fiji. Dubbed a 'Trouble Maker' by some and 'Conscience of the Nation' by others, he was deported from Fiji by the military regime in November 2009. Dr Lal has been at The Australian National University since 1990 where he is a Professor of Pacific and Asian History. He is married to the Environmental and Resource Economist Padma Narsey Lal, and they have two grown up children, Yogi and Niraj. Apart from work, his abiding passions include exploring the Australian bush with friends and, when time permits, following the game of cricket.