

Acknowledgments

The editor initiated the process culminating in the publication of this volume by organising an invited session at the annual conference of the Australian Anthropological Society in Perth in October 2000. This session was to explore changing concepts of territoriality and patterns of land distribution in the Austronesian world. My thanks go to the conference organisers for providing this initial forum, and to the participants for their contributions.

Preliminary discussions identified land as a central concern in the traditional and modern lives of Austronesian-speaking peoples across the Asia Pacific, and revealed a number of common cultural themes in how the relationship between humans and the land is conceptualised in the region. I therefore proposed for these findings to be explored further in an intensive two-day workshop with a wide range of invited contributions to reflect some of the immense cultural diversity of the Austronesian world. Such a workshop was eventually held at The Australian National University in Canberra, on June 18-19, 2001. I would like to express my gratitude to the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (ANU) for hosting this event and contributing to the payment of participants' travel expenses.

The more vital debt to be acknowledged here, however, is of an intellectual kind. The editor would like to thank Professor James Fox, in particular for his advice and support throughout the inception and publication of this volume. More generally, the contributors, many of whom are his former students, are indebted to Prof. Fox for encouraging us to share and deepen our understandings of the varied cultures of the Austronesian world by way of systematic ethnological comparisons. The present volume should be seen as a further contribution to the hugely successful series of edited volumes published as a direct or indirect result of the Comparative Austronesian Project at the RSPAS, of which Prof. Fox was the main initiator.

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