

## Editor's Note on the Inaugural Issue

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I am pleased to announce the publication of the inaugural issue of the *Okinawan Journal of Island Studies (OJIS)*. *OJIS* reflects the goal of the Research Institute for Islands and Sustainability (RIIS) to broaden the research scope from Okinawa to island communities globally. With a new editorial board and internationally accredited members from various disciplines and locales on the advisory board, *OJIS* annually publishes rigorously peer-reviewed scholarly articles, book reviews, interviews, and creative work on islands in the areas of humanities and social sciences. In order to respond to the need for international scholarly exchange in a timely manner and to increase its readership widely, *OJIS* is published both in print and as an open access online journal.

Reflecting the core mission of RIIS, *OJIS* joins the international dialogue on islands as its focus and locus of study while maintaining its fulcrum *in Okinawa* as the critical crossroads to carry on the intellectual genealogy of the *International Journal of Okinawan Studies (IJOS)*, previously published by the International Institute for Okinawan Studies (IIOS). In March 2010, the founding director, Katsunori Yamazato, successfully realized its premier issue “with aims to do research on Okinawa and areas that have a close relationship with Okinawa” (4). Further, a commitment to “serve as the intellectual bridge for international studies on Okinawa in the Asia-Pacific region” (2010, 4) in delivering its mission in the age of postmodernism and postcolonialism contoured the journal's pivotal moment in international Okinawan studies. A sense of responsibility to serve such a role encouraged the journal to engage with “a wider range of topics as long as those topics are related to the problems Okinawa faces or the regions discussed are related to Okinawa” in order to respond to the demand to be “inclusive of more diverse topics for Okinawan Studies” (Kina, 2015a, i).

What lies in the expansion to greater inclusivity is a sharpened sense of connectedness and overlapping projects that evolved in *IJOS* across disciplines and geographic locations. For instance, in *IJOS*'s history, particularly noteworthy contributions were made by editors and guest editors, such as Kazuyuki Tomiyama's special issue on the environment (2011), Kazuko Takemura's special issue on women and globalization (2011), Gary Y. Okihiro's special issue on islands (2012), Masayoshi Shibatani's special issue on Ryukyuan languages (2013), and Ikue Kina's special topic on current perspectives and praxis in Okinawan studies (2015), among others.

The considerations by previous editors highlight the complexities of the issues in Okinawa that pertain to other international communities as well as the scholarly developments in Okinawan studies that defy containment or disciplinary boundaries. Indicated by the journal's trajectory is an evolution in a creative sense and scholarship in motion.

The objective of *OJIS* is to bring island interests to the fore and to put island agency at the center of its endeavor; it is to engage with our place and communities in and outside of academia and to contemporaneously be their bridge. Such efforts resonate with the University of the Ryukyus' new slogan "Island Wisdom, for the World, for the Future" in celebration of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its establishment this very year. Instilling in us a sense of responsibility, *OJIS* pays deliberate attention to geographical characteristics and islanders' subjectivity in order to destabilize the peripheral imagery of the dominant ideology. A well-respected Oceania scholar, Teresia K. Teaiwa (1969–2017), reminds us that "we sweat and cry saltwater, so we know the ocean is really in our blood" (quoted in Hau'ofa, 2008, 41). The quote poses profound ways of understanding self in "our sea of islands" (Hau'ofa, 1993) and in the "world of islands" (Baldacchino, 2013, 1), from which our sense of place arises.

We welcome exchanges of multiple perspectives, serious discussions, and debates that provide impetus and strive for a development of scholarship, policy making, and community building toward a more sustainable and decolonial future.

On behalf of the editorial committee, I express a deep appreciation for the board of editors and advisory members of *IJOS*, whose vision of Okinawa as a site with rich potential for robust research has been passed on to *OJIS*. Furthermore, I express my most ardent gratitude to the distinguished contributors, advisory board members, and editors at the Kenyusha Printing Co., Ltd, whose support has made this inaugural issue possible.

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