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PREFACE

This book outlines the main trends in the past, present and possible futures of the diverse and stimulating societies of the world's most scattered region. The main focus is on the Pacific Islands today, but much of what happens today is conditioned in varying degrees by what happened yesterday, both within the Pacific and beyond. Much of what happens tomorrow will be influenced by forces which are already in operation.

The final section includes basic facts about each Pacific Islands nation or territory; a select list of Pacific Islands organizations and services; notes on journals and films relevant to Pacific studies; a bibliography and index.

The chapters aim to be self-contained, so that readers interested in particular topics can go straight to them.

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The South Pacific is big place - incredibly vast and blue, covering 11 million square miles stretching from the top of Australia to the Hawaiian Islands. Celebrated by artists and writers, from Paul Gauguin to James Michener, these thousands of tiny coral and volcanic-stone dots are home to fascinating peoples and cultures. Samoa is one of the South Pacific's best kept secrets. Unassuming, unsullied, and stunningly beautiful, it lies in the heart of Polynesia, about half way between New Zealand and Hawaii. This topographically beautiful archipelago of ten tropical islands was born in a dramatic volcanic uprising, creating pointed toothy peaks and rugged rock islands.