



University of the South Pacific Marshall Islands campus Director Dr. Irene Taafaki distributes copies of the Contemporary Pacific to weavers Susan Jieta, Patsy Hermon, Ashken Binat, and Terse Timothy. Inset, the cover of Contemporary Pacific, which features detail of one of the jaki-ed. Photo: Karen Earnshaw

# Jaki-ed weavers star in latest Pacific journal

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Marshallese weavers and their jaki-ed are celebrated in the current issue of The Contemporary Pacific, a Journal of Island Affairs, published by University of Hawaii Press. Photographs of Terse Timothy, Susan Jieta, Patsy Hermon, and Ashken Binat and their clothing mats are scattered throughout the publication, with a note in the front stating: "The art featured in this issue can be viewed in full color in the online version..."

This use of the word 'art' in this statement is hugely significant. One of the key goals of the jaki-ed revival program, begun in 2006 by Maria Fowler and University of the South Pacific Director Dr. Irene Taafaki, was to take what was seen as a handicraft and show it for what it really is: Art.

"With the patronage of Iroj Michael Kabua as well as that of the Bernice Pauahi Bishop Museum in Honolulu (we) have been collaborating on projects and activities to ensure the revival and contemporization of jaki-ed," Taafaki states in the Journal. "Basing designs on their own creative vision, weavers now use traditional patterns as inspiration for modern expressions." She continues that the USP-coordinated program allows weavers to share the cultural knowledge and customs associated with the fine mats, while also building a creative industry.

Accompanying the various photographs are pocket descriptions of the weavers: "Susan Jieta is from Majej (Mejit) Island. While in her twenties, Su-

san began weaving with a local women's group and in 2007 she was introduced to the intricacies of jaki-ed through the USP program."

And another with a photo of Patsy Hermon: "The bokwoj (literally, to embrace) overlay that covers the seams and attaches the jous (heart) and inin (border) of the mat is made from atat, which is harvested from outer islands. Bokwoj symbolizes a parental embrace safe-guarding the bonds of love, peace, and harmony among members of a jowi (clan)."

To see and read all of the jaki-ed material in the Journal, which is published twice a year, you can visit their web site at <http://www.uhpress.hawaii.edu/t-the-contemporary-pacific.aspx>.

**AMENDMENT**

Whereas the current RMI Constitution makes no provision for a balance of gender in the Nitijela, be it therefore proposed the following amendment to the Constitution:

Five seats to be reserved for women in the Marshall Islands Nitijela. The highest female vote-getter in each of the following voting districts to be seated in the Nitijela: Majuro, Kwajalein, Ailinglaplap, Arno and Jaluit. The five seats to be included in the current 33. In the remaining 28 electoral districts candidacy will be open to both male and female candidates and winners determined by plurality.

I am in favor of this amendment.  
 I am not in favor of this amendment.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Island: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Cut out this form and submit to The Journal with a photo ID.



Young ladies from Namu clean up on the back road in Uliga. Photo: Hilary Hosia

## Great job of keeping conference area clean

The bi-annual youth conference hosted by Uliga Protestant Church has served as a wonderful example of inter-island accommodation and, as many of us who live here have witnessed, a great example of holding a responsible conference.

Despite a regular feeding schedule, replete with foam cups, plates and utensils, 100 percent of the potential debris was "policed" up, stuffed into plastic trash bags, and hauled away from the conference area.

The attending youth are to be congratulated for setting a great example to all of us.

