

# 'Sacred isles: Islands as sites of religious, spiritual, or supernatural exception', a special section of *Folk, Knowledge, Place*

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Around the world, small islands are typically regarded as spaces of social, cultural, political, environmental, or economic exception. Relative attributes of island spatiality such as small size, clear borders formed by the coastline, and isolation from other land areas all encourage people to conceive of and maintain small islands as highly distinct places. These same attributes also make small islands excellent places for the spatialisation of religious, spiritual, or otherwise supernatural characteristics.

Many significant religious sites are located on small islands, benefiting from the sense of separation and exclusion from the mundane and ordinary world that islandness provides. Some islands are the birthplaces, homes, or burial places of saints, spirits, or deities. Other islands are the sites of miraculous occurrences or places where one may encounter the sacred. As a result, these islands may come to host important monasteries, churches, temples, or shrines, which further encourage pilgrimages and cultural tourism. Religious, cultural heritage, natural heritage, and patriotic values often coincide on small islands. World religions have produced 'sacred islands', but so too have numerous locally, nationally, or regionally rooted beliefs. Some islands have only recently come to be seen as sacred, while others have been deemed sacred for centuries or millennia. Some sacred islands can be visited with ease, some can be visited with difficulty, and others exist only beyond the reach of ordinary humans.

This special section of *Folk, Knowledge, Place* considers the ways in which sacredness, island place, and localised and spatialised ways of knowing interact. Papers may focus on a single island case, may compare multiple islands, or may focus on theoretical or conceptual issues, but all papers are expected to address the journal's theme of the mutual construction of culture, understanding, and environment. This special section will form part of *Folk, Knowledge, Place*'s periodic section on 'Spaces of the sacred'.

*Folk, Knowledge, Place* (<https://folkknowledgeplace.org>) is a new, web-based, non-fee charging open access journal at the intersection of folklore and human geography. The journal is global in scope and has its institutional home at South China University of Technology's School of Foreign Languages. It is planned for this special section to be published in November 2024, but individual papers will be published online early access as and when they complete the peer review and editorial process. Authors should e-mail their full papers to guest editor Henry Johnson ([henry.johnson@otago.ac.nz](mailto:henry.johnson@otago.ac.nz)) by 12 November 2023 at the latest, using 'Sacred isles' as the title of their e-mail. Authors may choose to send abstracts to the guest editor for review in advance if they wish. Papers

will undergo initial guest editorial review, after which selected authors will have an opportunity to make revisions prior to formal submission of papers to the journal itself.

Manuscripts should be between 3,000-10,000 words (including references). All manuscripts must be prepared in accordance with the journal's submission guidelines: <http://folkknowledgeplace.org/submission-guidelines/>. Submissions will take place through the journal's ordinary online submission system, which is currently under construction. Papers will only be published if they pass editorial review and double-blind peer review. It is hoped that authors will contribute the journal's scholarly community by agreeing to review one or more other submissions to the journal.

For more information about the special section, please contact guest editor Henry Johnson ([henry.johnson@otago.ac.nz](mailto:henry.johnson@otago.ac.nz)). For more information about the journal, please contact co-Editor-in-Chief Adam Grydehøj ([agrydehoj@islanddynamics.org](mailto:agrydehoj@islanddynamics.org)).