Daud Ali: Thank you. That juxtaposition of research topics is intriguing. My talk will not be about Casper the Friendly Ghost. Today I'm going to be talking about a subject which has been touched on today, most recently by Summit himself in his paper where he was talking about, or began with the query from Gabriel Spiegel about how historians read texts and how they read what's beyond texts. This particular paper will be dealing actually perhaps consonant with the theme of this conference of going beyond the boundaries of the Nation State. I'll be dealing largely with parts of Southeast Asia in this talk. The paper that this talk is based on came out of an attempt many South Asian historians try their luck with thinking about South Asia in Southeast Asia, and usually I think it'd be fair to say those theorizations are considered quite problematic by people who actually work on Southeast Asia. I'm gonna be saying a little bit why that is because, before I get into my material, I'm just going to review the major paradigms that have been used to understand the relationship of South and Southeast Asia. For many people beyond the fields that we work in, it's the same thing anyway so it doesn't really matter. That's an inside joke. You'd have to know by being a South Asian historian you'll often find people who study Europe come up to you and say, "Oh, I'm really interested in learning about Southeast Asia." That's a bit like telling an American
historian, "You know, at some point I really would like to go visit Chile because it's part of America isn't it?" The original aim of this paper, following from work that I've done on early medieval Indian history, was to explore the roles that South Asian political ideas and practices played in the transformation of early South East Asian societies. The research however threw up some major analytical problems which challenged some of the assumptions that I began with. The most important of these was the difficulty of linking language practices and ideologies on the one hand and state structures and social formations on the other. My findings, which seemed clearly as relevant for South as for Southeast Asian history, suggest that the relations between cultural practice and society are highly complex and shifting. While this might seem like an entirely banal point I hope to show more precisely how such an analytical awareness may add a new perspective to the highly regarded theories of linguistic and cultural cosmopolitanism that are circulating now very commonly in the field. The main two (2) major approaches to thinking about the historical relations between South and Southeast Asia: an earlier generation of nationalist scholarship in India forwarded the idea of Hindu colonies in the Far East --I'm thinking here of R.C. Majumdar, H.B. Sarkar and others associated with what was called the Greater India Society -- of a vast empire as I say known as Greater India; the second following decolonization took a
softer approach, and this wasn't necessarily so much by Indian scholars, but by European scholars who'd studied Sanskrit -- the chief of which is George Sedez. Herejected

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the notion that Southeast Asia was colonized by Hindu kings in favor of the role of Brahmin advisors, ritual specialists, and merchants who transplanted Indian civilization in the region through a process known as Indianization. This idea was debated for many years and there were all sorts of discussions about the relative agency of various parties in

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this process of Indianization and cultural transmission. South East Asian historians argued -- not South Asian historians, but Southeast Asian historians -- argued that the theory of Indianization was to Indo-centric, and this is particularly in the nineteen sixties (1960s) and seventies (70s). It assumed the transplantation of a superior and dynamic civilization upon a relatively inert and hopelessly local one. Scholars like

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J.D. Casparasand O.W. Walters sought not so much to exclude Indian influences or Indic influences, as to show how local peoples have been able to absorb, translate, and re-contextualize such external elements for their own ends. What I actually facilitated, much more than the adoption of beliefs and practices, was the subsumption of indigenous

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concepts and practices under new terminology. Walters for example, argued that the Hindu concept of Bhakti was grafted onto the local cult of what he called "the man of prowess," creating a new status for overlordship and thereby effectively bringing persistent indigenous beliefs into sharper focus. This scholarship, with its far more complex theories of cultural interaction, has rightly left an indelible mark on the field of Southeast Asian history. Walter's ideas came under various criticisms from Southeast Asian historians themselves because there was a strong notion of an embedded, I suppose, essence of what it was to be Southeast Asian: higher status of women; a whole series of things; wet rice agriculture; and a whole realm of of historical characteristics that were deemed to be quintessentially Southeast Asian. You could expect that those types of theories have come under criticism from all sorts of directions. The direction of criticism that I want to take up has recently been forwarded by Sheldon Pollack in his really important book The Language of the Gods in the World of Men, where he has kind of accused O.W. Walters and other scholars of being civilizationist and indigenist. Pollack argues that indigenous historiography is deeply flawed in its projection of an a-historical and unitary essence back into history. More pointedly, he suggests that Walter's theory of the persistence of the indigenous ideas through the process of Indianization is both empirically unjustified and theoretically misguided. This is really what I want to take up in this paper. Pollack asserts that as far as the key conceptions that underwrote many South East Asian polities like
Universal Sovereignty and Bhakti, there is a lot of Indian evidence but not much on the side of Southeast Asia. In fact, Pollock continues, it is from the Sanskrit evidence that Walters derives much of his interpretation of Southeast Asian kingship and political systems more generally. Perhaps most profoundly Pollack accuses Walters of presuming that a particular historical thought-world could exist somehow separated from the language in which it is embodied. For Pollock, Sanskrit -- the fact that many of the sources for these early polities is in Sanskrit -- suggests that the ideas that circulated in these world would have to come from Sanskrit. Which is to say, Sanskrit itself could never signify anything but Sanskrit ideas not local ideas, because language embodies thought processes. As we know, Pollock provides his own account of this transformation what he calls a transculturation in Southeast Asia. He does so against the backdrop of his wider theory of Sanskrit literary culture which begins from the observation that about three hundred (300) A.D., classical Sanskrit poetry or Kavya quite suddenly became the preferred public proclamatory and prestige language at the courts of South and Southeast Asia. For Pollock, the rise of Sanskrit Kavya was a cultural phenomenon so remarkable and consequential that it required an entirely new theoretical language. Pollock calls this formation the Sanskrit Cosmopolis, a world in which per during, and non-localized and universalizing political claims
were articulated in a grammatically regularized language. A key feature of cosmopolitan language used in these inscriptions according to Pollack was a neat division of linguistic labor between Sanskrit and local languages proclamatory inscriptions tended to relegate everyday or documentary discourse to local languages, while Sanskrit Kavya was used for the rhetorical parts of inscriptions. Essentially, in a land grant you would have the king's genealogy and his claim to some sort of moral and royal excellence in the language of Sanskrit. The actual material transfer of the material arrangements and legal elements of that record were supposed to be, according to Pollock, in some local language, not in the prestige language of Sanskrit. The effect of this was to emphasize the superordinate and universal quality of Sanskrit and to link political power and aesthetic expression. The Sanskrit Cosmopolis left a strong imprint on the rise of self-consciously -- this is a really important, before I go on, a really important point that he makes about the universalizing nature of Sanskrit. Since I see some people from my class here, I want to emphasize how important that is. So, what I'm saying about this is that modern national identities are usually founded on the idea that language and place are somehow inextricably related. I see students shaking
their head. You're going to fail! Sanskrit and these pre modern languages that had universal qualities, according to Pollack, are powerful precisely because they are not localized. That's a really important observation he makes, which has been a huge contribution to the field of how we want to understand Sanskrit in history. Sanskrit never understood itself as the language of India. That is

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a terrible impoverishment of Sanskrit's own perception of itself. It was something far greater. It was the language of the world. It was the language of the gods. This is an incredibly important observation, but of course this is an ideology in Sanskrit, and I wouldn't confuse that with its actual reality and neither would Professor Pollock. Another important part of this theory of the Sanskrit Cosmopolisis

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that Sanskrit left a very strong imprint on the rise of self-consciously regional vernacular languages in the first half of the second millennium. Pollock argues that these literatures, whether in South Asia or beyond were self-consciously patterned on the cosmopolitan prototype. Sanskrit being Sanskrit. Sanskrit in other words, taught vernacular languages how to be literary. This is hugely controversial

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in India because anyone who studied Indian history knows that typically the narrative of the rise of the vernaculars is a narrative which connects the rise of vernacular languages in medieval India with popular upsurge in one form or another. So, this was considered to be quite
controversial when he put this forward. In the context of Southeast Asia the Sanskrit Cosmopolis might seem recidivist, actually rehabilitating as it were, older

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notions of greater India or India's cultural empire. But such a conclusion would be hasty because Pollock is emphatic too to remind us that the adoption of Sanskrit by the courts of South and Southeast Asia did not represent either a Hinduization or an Indianization of these regions, but only a participation in the cosmopolitan culture of Sanskrit itself. A world where the claims of self-identification, representation and sovereignty were

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articulated in a common poetic language. He notes that Sanskrit influences in the region did not arrive through military presence, through political subordination, material exploitation, or even through substantial Indian settlements. Paradoxically in Pollack's understanding, though Sanskrit Kavya was a discourse of power, it was not spread through the vectors of power. Pollock's theory of cosmopolitanism is particularly interesting when set against the background of recent, or

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perhaps not so recent theories of state formation in South and Southeast Asia. This is because these studies have provided their own equally compelling critique of Indianization theory. The influential reassessments of the nature and structure of early Southeast Asian states over the last thirty (30) years, along with an emphasis on local, long-term historical development partly derived from archaeology, have involved serious reconsideration of
the idea of Indianization. Particularly important has been the work of Hermann Kulke, who drawing on his extensive work in Orissa, suggested that the experiences of local societies receiving the impetus towards state formation by Indianizing elites was not unique to Southeast Asia, but also happened in South Asia itself. The markers of what is called Indianization in the history of Southeast Asia: the appearance of Sanskrit inscriptions; Hindu temples; social stratification; and the spread of intensive wet rice agriculture; -- because these all seem to be markers of Indianization in Southeast Asia -- they appear simultaneously in South Asia itself in many regions. For Kulke, this suggested a social nearness or convergence on both sides of the Bay of Bengal. He's here pushing toward something which is quite interesting, which is to think of the Oceanic region of the Bay of Bengal as a key area that one might focus on rather than two (2) independently related subcultures -- a continent and an archipelago, or other parts of the great Eurasian landmass. The intellectuals and scribes who form the conduit of Sanskrit Kavya and the Pallava-skrit (sp) to Indonesia in four hundred (400) CE where thus not civilizing emissaries or agents of powerful South Indian kingdoms, but arrive with experience at nascently formed, princely courts which had shared similar backgrounds and faced similar problems in establishing authority. This led Kulke to postulate a social convergence between these regions which made them part of the same rather than different historical developments. Drawing additionally on a neglected line of
inquiry outlined by Dick Kasparas (sp) in the nineteen eighties (1980s), in which he proposed in lieu of a theory of Indianization, a complicated network of relations between various parts of each of these two (2) great regions and between them. Kulke suggested that once the regions were viewed in this manner, it was clear that Sanskritic culture did not reach Southeast Asia through any moment of transplantation, but through a continuous and complex set of relations within and between these regions in processes which linked both sides of the Bay of Bengal. It is notable that Kulke's theory of social circulation, networks and convergence, clearly in some ways provides a complement to Pollock's Sanskrit Cosmopolis. But how well, if at all, do these theories really fit, and is there any other way of approaching the problem? In the remainder of this paper, I'll review the evidence of early Indonesian inscriptions to evaluate different forms of localizing political discourse in Sanskrit and their implications for a cosmopolis in Southeast Asia. So, I have a map here of parts of Southeast Asia. We see the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, and Borneo. But before beginning and getting into the evidence and some of the inscriptions, it's worth noting just how important Southeast Asia has been for Pollock's theory of cosmopolitanism. At one (1) level he wants to argue that Sanskrit is cosmopolitan and the best way to do that is to show Sanskrit's vast proliferation outside
of India. Southeast Asia, it turns out, forms the most compelling body of evidence for him as well, because most Sanskrit inscriptions -- any epigraphist will tell you -- within the subcontinent don't really fit Pollock's model. There are only about two (2) or three (3) areas which actually produce this idea of the division of linguistic labor between, on the one hand, the poetic parts of the inscription being in Sanskrit and the quotidian or legal parts of the inscriptions being in a local language. All of North Indian epigraphy is entirely in Sanskrit from the Gupta Period down through the twelfth (12th) century. So, that doesn't fit Pollock's theory at all. Some parts of the Deccan but many parts of Southeast Asia apparently fit this. The evidence is varied however, in Southeast Asia. The areas that fit it most well are in Cambodia, what's called the Khmer-speaking regions or the great empire of Angkor. There we see a kind of matching linguistic division of labor he wants to imagine seems to be evident in the inscriptions. That is, OKhmer is generally reserved for the documentary parts of inscriptions and the poetic parts of inscriptions are largely in Sanskrit. But when we come to the archipelagic area it's quite different. There are few bilingual records at all. So, the whole idea of a division of labor doesn't come into it. There are a few notable exceptions, but most of the inscriptions are either monolingual Sanskrit inscriptions or monolingual Old Malay or Old Javanese inscriptions. Among the earliest of the inscriptions are those found in the southwestern portion
of Borneo and Western Java. Southwestern Borneo. This is not a map made for this talk so I can't show you the sights and I want to. But, Southwestern Borneo. It should be Southeastern Borneo. I

want Southeastern Borneo and Western Java. Those are the earliest inscriptions we have. There are these footprint inscriptions in a place called Kutai in Borneo of a king named Purnavarman (sp), and there are these so-called yupa inscriptions of sacrificial pillars associated with a king named Mulavarman. These records share several features linguistically and paleographically, and are generally ascribed to the late fifth (5th) century. Both sets of inscriptions are entirely in Sanskrit verse and in the Pallava Grantha script. We can talk about that if you're interested during the Q&A. In them we find kings with Sanskritized names ending with the suffix Varman. The inscriptions use a number of generic terms in Sanskrit meaning King, to refer to these men. Words like: Avinipati (sp), Maripati (sp), Narendra (sp), Raja (sp). They also associate the rule of each of these kings with a city, a negara. They record gifts to Brahmins and refer to Indic deities and religious ideas. Both Mulavarman and Purnavarman (sp) are praised for having defeated rival kings in battle. They used terms like raja avi raja (sp). The
terms seem to suggest, as the term raja avi raja (sp) itself implies, the existence of some sort of regularized hierarchy among subordinate rulers. The rendering of tribute or karada is mentioned, and Kings being loyal to one another, as opposed to being refractory, is also explicitly mentioned. The ideal idealization of the monarch's feet and the mention of royal paraphernalia, like banners, suggests the presence of at least some rudimentary political protocols and court rituals common elsewhere in the Sanskrit Cosmopolis. But given the paucity of epigraphic evidence, we cannot be certain about this. It may be concluded then that some elements of Indic political culture existed in these kingdoms in a configuration similar to that found in other parts of the Indian subcontinent. Pollock makes a big deal out of this; you could take these inscriptions, you could put them in Orissa, you could put them in Gujarat, you could put them in South India [and] they'd be identical. There's nothing to identify them in any way as being where they are. That supports again his argument about the universality of Sanskrit, and this cosmopolitan viewpoint. There are these inscriptions that have been looked at in the fifth (5th) century. They are dated to the fifth (5th) century. For many years the appearance of Sanskrit inscriptions in the fifth (5th) century Borneo and Java was assumed to be the commencement of Indian contact.
with insular Southeast Asia. But archaeologists in the last twenty (20) years have been able to show that these inscriptions emerged only after regular exchange with the Indian subcontinent had become the rule. That is, there have been material remains found in these areas which suggest longer term contact with India. What led to the rather sudden appearance of these Sanskrit inscriptions in the fifth (5th) century and a new spurt of cultural transformation must be sought as O.W. Walters first suggested in

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the reorganization of inter-regional trade networks between Chinese and West Asian ports between the fifth (5th) and seventh (7th) centuries in which the insular ports came to replace those associated with Funan and Champa. So there is a kind of land based trade route to China which goes through parts of Thailand and the Malay Peninsula which doesn't get into Southeast Asia, and this ends for various reasons about the fifth (5th) century. That's exactly when

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we start to see inscriptions appearing in Indonesia. This is documented in fact by Chinese accounts. Reorganization of trade networks between Chinese and West Asian ports between the fifth (5th) and seventh (7th) centuries in which the insular reports came to replace those associate Funan

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and Champa as conduits for the flow of goods from West Asia to China. More than this, goods sourced in insular Southeast Asia, particularly aromatics and resins, came to replace certain West Asian commodities in Chinese markets, giving traditional chiefdoms in coastal towns the
impetus to develop state structures. Most scholars have pointed out however, that it would probably be hasty to consider these small kingdoms empires or even states, in the sense usually implied by such terms. While the inscriptions suggest that there was an attempt to subordinate rival rulers and even extract tribute from them, there is no evidence of the collection of taxes nor any kind of regularized relations between the different town courts and their hinterland areas. Although something must have been going on to source commodities. Chinese sources mentioned a number of kingdoms in the region who sent emissaries or even paid tribute. But the Chinese evidence on Southeast Asia is problematic because like many historical sources, they tended to see in Southeast Asia, images of themselves. This has been pointed out by many historians that the Chinese sources tend to see major states from all the people they deal with, no matter what the types of states that might have actually been on the ground. The archaeological evidence of the kingdoms of Mulavarman and Purnavarman is incredibly sparse, almost non-existent in the case of Borneo and somewhat better in the case of Java where continuous settlement has been documented from the early centuries at the Buni Complex. What is significant for our purposes however, is that when incipient state structures do emerge in the sixth (6th) century coastal regions as a result of trade dynamics, the palpable evidence is Indic Sanskrit inscriptions and Vishnuva and Buddhist sculpture. The adoption of Indic political
terminology, royal rituals, and religious practices was surely given the existing contact with South Asia; a deliberate policy no doubt partly motivated by the need to gain dominance over local rivals. Micksik (sp) has pointed out that the absence of any local language in these early inscriptions suggests a transformation of policies almost entirely confined to the elite. If this indeed was the scenario, we may rightly question the degree to

which these concepts and practices, and the practices represented in them in the inscriptions, had effective social reference in early Borneo and Java. It is difficult, in other words, to decide whether usages of the terms like lamsha, kula, negara, pura, which are all important terms in Sanskrit, reflect new social phenomena or mat onto existing realities. The newly acquired vocabulary rituals and paraphernalia which accompany this status may

have had little significance for the workings of these political systems being grafted, as it were, under social realities very different from those that produced them. Whatever the rhetoric of these inscriptions in reality, Purnavarman and Mulavarman may have remained primus inter pares among local leaders, with the difference that they now claimed putative chuthiya status in the prestige language of Sanskrit. If we compare these inscriptions with the earliest inscriptions

of Sumatra which appear about one hundred (100) years later in the seventh (7th) century and are associated with the now famous and comparatively richly researched maritime empire
Srivijaya, the differences are striking. Most of these inscriptions associated with Srivijaya had been found in the regions of Palembang in southeastern Sumatra. There you can see Palembang is actually on this map. This is the presumed center of the state for most historians. These early inscriptions have been found with three (3) really important epigraphs, one (1) of which is dated to the eighth (8th) century. They constitute essentially the bulk of evidence for the state of Srivijaya. It's been noted that this epigraphic legacy is remarkably thin by any standards for a state whose existence is said to span nearly five hundred (500) years and that without the external evidence of the Chinese, Arab, and Indian sources it would be difficult indeed to conclude on the basis of a epigraphy, that Srivijaya was vastly different from these earlier states of Purnavarman and Mulavarman. Yet the differences in the inscriptions are substantial and significant. The majority of the seventh (7th) century inscriptions in Srivijaya are not in Sanskrit, they are in Old Malay. They contain extensive Sanskrit vocabulary. The most important of these records is undoubtedly something called the Telaga Batu Inscription or the Sabokingking Inscription, which a picture of us here. It's an amazing inscription dated reliably on paleographic grounds to about six hundred eighty-six (686) A.D. Abbreviated versions of this very inscription, the inscription you're looking at, have been found in Kota Kapur, on the island of Bangka, in Jambi
province, and at Palas Pasemah and Bunkak in Lampung Bunkak Province. There are about three versions of it, suggesting some form like the Ashokan Inscriptions of a centralized communication network between Palembang and outlying regions. The inscription, and this is what's so fascinating about this inscription, is not a praise inscription, it is not a legal document exactly, like we find in India, but it's a curse. It takes the form of a curse and it's in the voice of the king. It's directed towards potential malefactors and subordinates who are disloyal to him. The inscription is uttered in the voice of an unidentified Srivijayan king, warning a list of officials and subordinates against disobedience and treachery through an elaborate curse which was to be drunk by all of the people who heard the curse. The inscription begins with several sentences in an Austronesian language, which is not to this date been definitively identified, but which seems to include the words of the curse itself. Dick Kasperas surmised that the peculiar stele in which the inscription was carved -- a sort of upright tablet or headstone crowned by snake hoods with a bottom lip and a spout -- may have been used to produce the imprecation water referred to in the text. In other words, water was poured over the stone, drained in that spout that you see at the bottom there, and imbibed by various officials. If they were disloyal, this water was to activate the curse and they would die. While the water or poison-drinking rituals
are not unknown in early Indian sources, they are typically associated with ordeals and oaths resolving uncertainty and providing purification and legal matters, and don’t appear in political contexts at all. So, this is a kind of totally unique thing. Historians have naturally used these inscriptions to reconstruct the structure of the Srivijaya state, which by all accounts seems to have been much more complex in its organization than any previous polity in the archipelago. Putting aside older interpretations of a great empire, more recent formulations have seen the Srivijaya state as a small, but dynamic, maritime kingdom with central and district organization. Herrmann Kulke, in an important reassessment of the epigraphical evidence relying heavily on this inscription here, has suggested that Srivijaya had a central core composed of a palace and its immediate urban environment that was surrounded by a series of concentric rings of decreasing authority and political control; a hinterland area where the center shared authority with local chiefs and geographically more distant and outlying regions beyond the Musi River system, which local polities were either subdued, but not annexed by the military power at the center, and who had some sort of loyalty to the king. Ultimately, according to Kulke, Srivijaya's reluctance or inability to consolidate itself into a more centralized structure, may have allowed it to outlive many more centralized empires in the region. The Telaga Batu Inscription
is addressed to a large class of officials frequently encountered in South Asian epigraphy, including the Yuvaraja, Rajput, Upati (sp), Nayaka, Dunda Nayaka, Senapati. These are all types of kings, royal figures, military people, merchants, Choktas (sp) and Boktas (sp). I mean, that's quite amazing. These are figures in medieval inscriptions which are kind of local militias or police that essentially work for the state. While many of the Sanskrit names for officials are well known from contemporary Indian epigraphy, and may have been of uncertain reality in various contexts, even within South Asia, the list is unlikely to have been an entirely rootless imposition on local political structures. Because of the fact that the Sanskrit terms unlike the earlier inscriptions from Java and Borneo are interspersed with local Indonesian Old Malay terms such as datu (sp), marsi haji (sp) hulum haji (sp). I have a list here of some of the lexical distribution in these inscriptions: hulum tuhan (sp), hu havam (sp). You even have a Sanskrit and Old Malay compound haji prathaya (sp). So, the hierarchy, institutions and concepts represented in the inscription and its cognates constitute a kind of hybrid political vocabulary with a complex distribution of Sanskrit and Old Malay lexical items throughout. While many of the men reporting to the king are given Sanskrit titles, where we find a differentiation of roles quite typical of South Asian court societies, certain groups -
ship masters for example and particular servants and relations who enjoy great intimacy and physical proximity to the king's

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person: his intimates, his servants, his slaves, but also women of the royal household - retain Old Malay designations. This is a kind of consistent lexical pattern. Fundamental political building blocks like the royal residence the kuluthwan (sp), karatuwan (sp), chief Datu and village area, the vanua (sp), were expressed through presumably long-standing Old Malay terms while other primarily newpolitical

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divisions were indicated by Sanskrit words like mundala (sp), sumyada (sp), and bumi (sp). Categories of servants or slaves coexisted, which are again a Malay term, coexisted not only with the diverse functional hierarchies of offices, but with family and lineage units expressed by Sanskrit words: cumumguthravumsha (sp). Datus could be held by varieties of Lords with princely designations drawn

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from the Sanskrit lexicon whose local connotations are far from clear. Affiliative and dispositional vocabulary remains equally mixed, with words for concepts like disloyalty, tita bhakti - "tita" is a privative in Old Malay - and traitor, drohaka, being taken from Sanskrit usage. The inscription warns against the use of artificial means of controlling people, vashikarana (sp), and spells, manthra (sp) using well-known Sanskrit
phrases. But the more important words for the curse, an imprecation, constituted by the body of the inscription itself, are indigenous terms. Other concepts like the command and delegation of power use both Old Malay and Sanskrit, and still other Sanskritic terms seem to denote meanings not at all widespread in South Asian epigraphy. In other words, there are some ideas in Sanskrit which you can find parallels for in South Asia. In short, the evidence of the Telega Batu inscription indicates a deep entanglement of Sanskrit cosmopolitan elements with local usage. Even taking into account the existence of seventh (7th) century Sanskrit verse epigraphs, surviving in fragments which are found in South Sumatra and the famous Legore Inscription associated with Srivijaya the eighth (8th) century, the evidence suggests firstly that the political culture and expressive registers of Srivijaya were decidedly not derived solely from Sanskrit. The picture is far more complex and calls for the sort of study that people working on lexical distribution of terms in Old Khmer have carried out in a statistical database recently. That's actually a really wonderful study. While Sanskrit words denote some of the most quotidian elements of everyday administrative material culture, some of the most exalted and highly symbolic terminology was expressed in indigenous vocabulary. A precise inversion
of Pollock’s idea of the Sanskrit Cosmopolis with the more symbolic language being reserved for Old Malay and the quotidian political language being expressed in Sanskrit. If the early inscriptions of Java and Borneo are compared with those of Srivijaya and Sumatra, it'll be noticed that the earlier records present in a way a more exalted and pristine, if somewhat spare political rhetoric; one that might be largely indistinguishable, to follow Pollock's

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claim, from from their South Asian counterparts. Yet the political reality behind such records was undoubtedly quite different from that of the later Sumatra inscriptions. Indeed the early inscription seemed to represent a political rhetoric at one (1) level apparently misaligned with the social contexts in which they functioned. This of course does not diminish their utility. Sanskrit and its world clearly functioned as a source of prestige, but one that was perhaps not

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calibrated for the society in which it functioned and thus was effectively blunt in its social implications when compared to the more embedded Sanskritized vocabulary found in Old Malay. Indeed, Sanskritic discourse, precisely because of its rootless and transposable universality, could function as a rhetorical storehouse for social formations of considerable variety. The corpus of Srivijaya inscriptions indicates

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a world in which Sanskrit terminology had taken a much firmer hold on political reality, not as a rootless prestige object, but a vocabulary translated and imbricated into local discursive contexts bearing considerably more semantic weight in social reality. Old Malay cannot be said
to have functioned, at this point, as a cosmopolitan or literized vernacular in Pollock's sense, where local languages come into literary existence through the adoption and localization of Sanskrit models, as in the case of Old Javanese. The Old Malay inscriptions are not inverse and do not try to occupy the place of poetry. Nor is there any clear evidence to demonstrate a vernacularized literization of Old Malay from a prehistory of Indic or Khmer cosmopolitanism in Sumatra. Yet there is a certain sense in which the appearance of Sanskrit in the region does seem to bring with it a sea-change in political practice. A change best indicated by the Telega Batu inscription. While

this important record and its cognates have effectively been seen in the manner of Indian copper plates is revealing a kind of state structure composed of ranks and functions, scholars have tended to pass over its most distinctive feature. In contrast to the thousands of royal inscriptions and land grants from South and Southeast Asia with their prashatis (sp) followed by the legal aspects of the inscriptions, the Telega Batu Inscription

seems to have an explicitly performative or constitutive element for political action as a sort of oath. It served the explicit function of binding servants and subordinating them to the king. By imbibing water that passed across the inscribed face of the stele, the text of the inscription, the individuals pledged loyalty and made themselves subject to the power of its words. The Telega Batu Inscription then served as something like a charter or a constitution for
the politico-economic relationships in early Srivijaya. What is perhaps most significant about this document, from the vantage point of the concerns here, is that it seems to be forging an entirely new political dispensation; one in which older but hitherto undocumented social identities and relationships marked by terms like datu, haji, hulun, take on new social being indicated at the very least by the fact of their first appearance in the historical record.

It is indeed significant that the first epigraphical evidence of such presumably pre-existing elements of political culture occurs precisely at the historical juncture of the new. Here is Pollack is right to stress the watershed of Sanskrit in the region and to raise questions about any strong claims to ancient sedimented and realities. Existing political terminologies clearly gained a new being through their imbrication and alignment with the Sanskrit based language of political identity which had been circulating in the region. The relations being forged in this inscription between the traditional roles of the datu and the haji cannot be understood, in other words, without appreciating the importance of hitherto un-thematized concepts of affiliation -like bhukti or droha. But at the same token, Sanskrit in seventh (7th) century Sumatra does not simply impose itself as a seamless, self-referential sign system.

Indeed,

the significant point may be that in the end, Sanskrit's career in Srivijaya seems to have stimulated the local rather than effaced it. The analogies above have suggested two related
points. First, that the apportioning of symbolic and quotidian functions to Sanskrit and local languages respectively is too simple a paradigm for epigraphic reality either in South Asia or beyond, but particularly in the case of Southeast Asian epigraphy. Sanskrit in Southeast Asia was hardly

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reserved for the exclusively eternal rhetorical claims. It also articulated quotidian material ones particularly as a language of formal affiliation among elites where it rubbed shoulders with and stimulated the development of other existing vocabularies of power. Southeast Asian languages, by the same token, very often took part in the ongoing construction of symbolic registers and terminologies of lordship from the very outset, as is very clear from the Srivijaya epigraphs. My

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second point, and perhaps more importantly, Sanskrit as a set of discursive claims and symbolic practices did not express a single set of meanings or have an inevitable set of implications for a given thought world and its relationship to social structures. The comparison between the inscriptions of early Java and Borneo to those of Sumatra suggests that various elements of Sanskrit cosmopolitanism could function very differently in

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divergent political environments. The relevant point is perhaps that expressive registers, literary formations, and ideologies in their journeys across social landscapes, articulate with social realities in different ways. Indeed, language should be conceived, to use the insight of
Volosinov, not as a monological utterance, but an unstable and multivalent sign system. Despite its cosmopolitan transposability, Sanskrit in Southeast Asia gained its ideological traction and local meanings through a diversity of relationships with existing ideologies and language practices. The examples presented demonstrate clearly that there were different ways in which localization could work in the process of Sanskrit trans-culturation. In the end, Walter's approach may be more helpful than Pollock would have us believe and I hope here to have vindicated him. Thank you.