



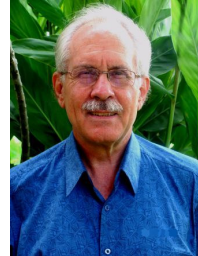
ACM & NALANDA-SRIWIJAYA CENTRE, ISEAS  
Joint Lecture Series

## Sanskrit in the Archipelago: Translation, Vernacularization and Translocal Identity

Date: Tuesday, 21 June 2011  
Time: 4.00 pm – 5.30 pm  
Venue: ISEAS Seminar Room II

### About the Speaker

**Professor Thomas M Hunter**  
Faculty of Letters  
Udayana University  
Denpasar, Bali  
Indonesia



Thomas M Hunter earned his PhD in Linguistics from the University of Michigan. He currently teaches courses in Sanskrit and Old Javanese for the Faculty of Letters of Udayana University in Denpasar. He has been a Fellow of the National Endowment for the Humanities (1996), the Institute for Advanced Study at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (2003-4) and the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin (2006-7). His research interests include the role of language in early state formation of Southeast Asia, and postcolonial studies in modern Indonesian literature.

### About the Lecture

In this seminar presentation, Professor Hunter will first review a paper he wrote for a conference on “Translation in the Malay-Indonesian archipelago” (2002) that stands at the beginning of his work on the impact of Sanskrit on languages like Old Javanese, Old Malay and Old Balinese. He views these languages as products of complex translocal processes that can be fruitfully studied by applying sociolinguistic methodologies and understandings to the study of history.



## Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Nalanda - Sriwijaya Centre

In his seminar paper he began to explore those processes in terms of Pollock's claims for a "Sanskrit cosmopolis" or "Sanskrit ecumene" (1996) and the development of "cosmopolitan vernacular" languages (1998) within the same socio-cultural zones at the end of the first millennium CE. He first looked at the development of Sanskrit-Prakrit diglossia in India, then turned to the early literary history of the archipelago, and developed terms like "em-bhāṣā-ment" to describe the raising of local languages to a status equal, or nearly equal to that of Sanskrit. In that paper, now revised as a submission to the American Oriental Society, he give evidence from the inscriptional record to support his claim that processes of "embhasament" were first pioneered in the institutions of religious pedagogy of Śrīwijaya, then further developed on Java as Old Javanese began to be moulded into a literary language capable of projecting the ethos and charisma of the court cultures of ancient Mataram. In later work growing out of the paper "Sanskrit in the Archipelago" he turned his attention to the influence of the Indian tradition of commentaries on the "didactic" mode of translation that was favoured for over a millennium in the Buddhist and Shaiva religious institutions of the archipelago. He also further developed his work on the influence of Indian metres, figures and tropes on the aesthetics of the *kakawin* genre of Old Javanese literature. In more recent work he has begun to problematize Pollock's claims for the continuing role of Sanskrit as the dominant mode of discourse in diglossic sociolinguistic contexts of Southeast Asia, noting that Hunter's term "embhasament" fits more closely with a model developed by Daud Ali (2011) that looks at the degree to which Sanskrit signifiers are "embricated" in languages like the Old Malay of the Śrīwijayan inscriptions. In this seminar presentation, Professor Hunter hopes to open up further discussion on the role of language and sociolinguistic processes like code-switching in the study of the premodern history of Southeast Asia.

*You are cordially invited to this Lecture.*