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## Social Integration in Majapahit as Seen in an Old Javanese Court Narrative

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This paper looks into some of the factors that may have contributed to the social integration of Majapahit by analyzing the Old Javanese narrative *Deśawarnana* (*DW*). In particular, close attention will be paid to how the Singhasāri–Majapahit dynastic genealogy and the Phālguna–Caitra annual court festival are narrated in the text to point out their significance.

Majapahit is regarded as one of the quintessential Indianized states in the history of Southeast Asia. The kingdom was founded in 1293 by Wijaya, the son-in-law of the last king of Singhasāri Kṛtanagara, after defeating a Kadir



Figure Panatran Temple Complex, Located in Blitar, East Java. This Hindu Sanctuary Was Visited by Majapahit's Royals as the Kingdom's State Temple.

rebel prince and driving out the Mongols. On his accession to the throne, Wijaya took the name Kṛtarājasa, which incorporated parts of his Singhasāri predecessors' names, thus establishing Majapahit as the rightful successor to Singhasāri. The kingdom reached its apogee in the mid-fourteenth century under the reign of king Rājasanagara (1350–1389). Its sphere of influence extended to the coastal areas of Sumatra, Kalimantan, and eastern parts of Indonesia, even though its area of direct control was limited mostly to eastern Java, Madura, and Bali. In its court, the clergy practiced Śaivism, Vaishnavism, and Buddhism, and literary works were produced by poets in Old Javanese based on literary traditions of Indian origin. This is remarkable considering the fact that the fourteenth century saw the rapid expansion of Theravada Buddhist Ayutthaya at the expense of the Indianized Angkor in mainland Southeast Asia as well as the emergence of Islamic polities on the island of Sumatra.

As a state ascending in the later stage of the “classical” period of Southeast Asian history, Majapahit also represents a major departure from the precedent Indianized states in Indonesia. For one thing, the deepening of social integration has been well studied, particularly from the economic and administrative points of view. This paper will focus on the cultural aspect of social integration by analyzing the contemporaneous literary work *DW*.

The *DW*, formerly known as Nāgarakṛtāgama, was a narrative work composed in 1365 by the court poet Mpu Prapañca, a contemporary of king Rājasanagara. The work is, in essence, the poet's eulogy to the king, also known under his infant name Hayam Wuruk. The text consists of 98 cantos or 384 stanzas, and is classified under the genre called *kakawin*, as it is written in a metric format of Indian influence. The *DW*, which means “description of the country”, is aptly named, as the poet recorded the life of people both in the court and the country during his visits to parts of east Java and attendance at royal functions.

With regard to cultural aspects of social consolidation, there are two points of interest that will be dealt with in this paper. The first concerns the consolidation of the king's power as the focal point of social consolidation, while the second concerns the king's interaction with the common people through a number of royal tours and the annual court festival.

In the narrative of the *DW*, the consolidation of the king's power is represented in the form of a dynastic genealogy and the divinization of the king. During one of the royal tours in which he participated, the poet personally paid a visit to an aged Buddhist monk, who recounted the genealogy of the Singhasāri–Majapahit kings, originating from Rajāsa, the first king of Singhasāri, through Kṛtarājasa to the current king of Majapahit. The monk's account, which includes eight royal persons including king Rājasanagara's mother as queen regent, is remarkable, because for the first time in the history of Indonesia, or even of Southeast Asia, a dynastic genealogy with this degree of depth and coherence was presented. Before Majapahit, the kingdom of Matram in central Java, in spite of its well-known designation of Sañjaya dynasty, in fact lacked a regular dynastic genealogy, whereas later kingdoms in east Java could not sufficiently develop one. In this sense, the *DW* may be considered to be a forerunner of court chronicles that emerged in the following centuries, including Thai Phongsawadan, Burmese Yazawin, Malay Hikayat, and Javanese Babad.

The poet also describes king Rājasanagara as a manifestation of several deities. It must be noted that his divinization is not limited to a particular deity, as the king is described as the supreme being in more than one denominations. Nevertheless, obviously Śiva and the Buddha were considered the most important, clearly demonstrated in a scene of the annual court festival where two groups of Śaivite and Buddhist priests were actively engaged in the extolment of the king.

Both the dynastic genealogy and the divinization of the king contributed to the strengthening of kingship, which in turn became the focal point of social integration. This is consistent with what we have learnt from the

studies on economic and administrative aspects of Majapahit, which have revealed the increasingly direct control of the king over tax revenue at the expense of local landed leaders. The strengthening of kingship, however, does not necessarily mean the king's control of people was enforced through the increased use of coercion. On the contrary, the *DW* shows that there were occasions of amicable interaction between the king and common people, which are marked in the narrative by a number of royal tours and the annual court festival.

The *DW* narrates a number of royal tours that the king initiated. Undoubtedly these tours had administrative purposes, such as “stock-taking” of resources and “weeding out” of the causes of potential unrest. However, it must be also noted that the *DW* indicates several moments where the king and his retinue interacted joyfully with common people. In other words, if the strengthening of kingship consolidated the society in a vertical direction, royal tours worked horizontally.

Another occasion for this horizontal consolidation of the society was the annual court festival. The festival began in Phālguna, the last month of the traditional Javanese year, and ended in Caitra, the first month of the next year. The festival celebrated not only the beginning of a new year but also a good harvest, as the period coincides with the end of a productive rainy season. The narrative tells that the marketplace was inundated with harvested produce and other products, both domestic and imported. The festival ended with a communal feast, in which both the leaders and the common people participated, and the king also played a role in the merrymaking that followed the feast. From the *DW*'s descriptions, it appears that while economically the festival functioned as an occasion for gathering and distributing resources across the kingdom, socially it helped integrate people as one community.

The *DW* clearly indicates that Majapahit had reached a higher level of social integration, to which ‘vertical’ enforcement of kingship and ‘horizontal’ interaction between the king and common people contributed. It is possible to argue that Majapahit may not be a *mandala* state, as defined by Wolters, where the leader's charisma is the primary source of social integration and his or her death leads to the rapid disintegration of the kingdom. Majapahit did experience rebellions and power division, yet these instances of turmoil should not stop us from recognizing the degree of the development of social integration in Majapahit.

Finally it must be noted that the description of the festival appears at the very end of the text, which indicates the poet's intention may have been to place the festive scene as the highlight of the narrative. The festival was characterized by the abundance of goods available in Majapahit, either produced domestically or imported from outside Java. The importation of prestigious foreign goods was made possible, in part, by the existence of an international trade network, to which the *DW* refers specifically. The text explains that Majapahit was a major hub of the network because Java was the only country that was equal to India (Jambudvīpa), and consequently it enjoyed the presence of religious experts of Indian origin.

The *DW*'s narrative reveals that the legitimacy of Majapahit rested substantially on its Indic ideology and the perception of India as the center of Indic civilization. The importance of the perceived religious orientation of India may explain why Majapahit could remain “Indianized” well into the fourteenth century and then not in the following centuries. In conclusion, this paper argues that cultural factors were deeply embedded in the process of king's political legitimization in such a way that they contributed to the kingdom's social integration.

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### Sanskritized Imperialism and State Integration in Early Medieval North India (c. 950–200)

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Recent historiographies often describe the history of the post-Gupta and early medieval periods as the process of regional state formation by looking at the historical changes in local societies [Chattopadhyaya 2012; Kulke 1993; Kapur 2002; Sheikh 2010; Lieberman 2009]. However, those regional states which gained independence from the declining imperial powers in the 10th century, namely the Pratihāras, Pālas, and Rāṣṭrakūṭas, did not consider unifying the regions as their political goals, and neither did they adopt the vernaculars (*deśī*) as their official languages; rather, they adopted Sanskrit, and often aimed at conquering the whole world, which often means the whole India (Bhāratavarṣa), as their ultimate purpose, just as the former imperial powers did. In the *Dharmaśāstras*, *Purāṇas*, the Epics, and other Sanskrit texts of Brahmanism in this period, ideal kings are depicted as a *samrāj* or *cakravartin* who subjugates all the kings of the world. The aforementioned ultimate purpose of the so-called regional states of this period was apparently based on this kind of ideology, a 'Sanskritized imperialism', so to speak. This paper tries to clarify the political meanings of their declaration of being world conquerors (*samrāj* or *cakravartin*) in the Sanskrit ecumene of the 10th to 12th centuries by investigating the narrative on legitimized kingship recorded in the

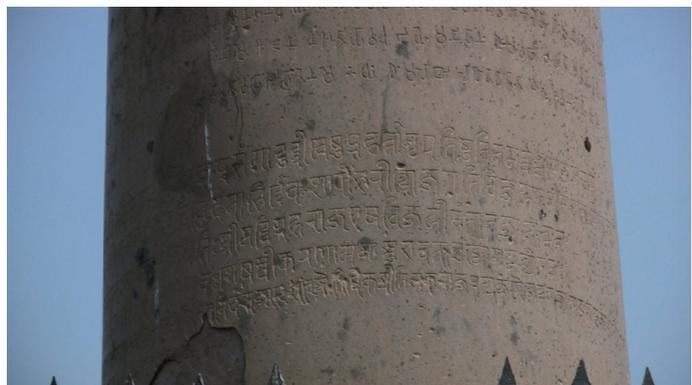


Figure Delhi-Topra Inscription of Vighraharāja IV of the Cāhamānas, Dated VS 1220, Which Is Engraved in Nāgarī on the Lower Part of the Pillar, While the Upper Inscription Is the Edicts of Aśoka.