

Hundian and Suwu: A Fresh Look at the Emergence of Funan

Sumio FUKAMI*

Prologue

The earliest states to emerge from the existing documentation regarding the process of state formation in early Southeast Asia are Linyi (林邑) and Funan (扶南), both of which, as their names imply, appear in Chinese documents.

It has already been ascertained that Linyi's emergence as an independent state toward the end of the second century CE was made possible by Chinese influence — not in the sense that Linyi was established under Chinese auspices, but as a result of the complex repetition of submission and rebellion that characterized the response of local power centres thrown up by China's intrusion into the region (Yamagata 2001). As for Funan, on the other hand, the idea that its emergence as a state was made possible by the “Indianization” of Southeast Asia has been widely held. This hypothesis, which cites the central figure in Chinese accounts of the emergence of Funan, Hundian (混填), as being of Indian Brahmin origin, based on the assertion that the name is a local

* Faculty of International Studies and Liberal Arts, St. Andrew's University

Key words : Funan, Hundian, Suwu, Indianization, State formation

transliteration of the Sanskrit name Kaundinya (see, for example, Coedes 1980: 69; Ishizawa 1998: 98), has become one of the primary foundations for the “Indianization” thesis — namely, that state formation in early Southeast Asia was made possible by the extension of Indian influence to the region in the first-second centuries CE.

However, not everyone is in agreement with the view that Hundian came to Funan from India, and the present paper will therefore begin by investigating the pros and cons of this thesis. The materials on which the investigation will be based are the reports of the two emissaries, Kang Tai (康泰) and Zhu Ying (朱応), who had been sent on a mission to Funan in the early 3rd century CE, during the Three Kingdoms period in China, by Lu Dai (呂岱), governor of Jiaozhou (交州) in the Kingdom of Wu (吳). Although the reports themselves have been lost, parts of them have come down to us thanks to their having been reprinted in subsequent works such as the *Taiping yulan* (太平御覽). The various discrepancies in the transliteration of names such as those of Hundian and Liuye (柳葉) have been dealt with conclusively by Sugimoto (1956), and in this paper I propose to follow his analysis.

1. Was Hundian Originally from India?

Accounts of the founding of Funan are to be found in Kang Tai’s *Account of Foreign Lands in the Period of the Kingdom of Wu* (吳時外國伝) [hereafter *Account of Foreign Lands*], cited in *juan* (卷) 347 of the *Taiping yulan*, and also in the “History of Funan” (扶南伝) section of official histories including the *Book of Southern Qi* (南齊書), the *Book of Liang* (梁書), and the *Book of Jin* (晉書). *The History of the Southern Dynasties* (南史) account will not be considered here since it is no more than a rehash of the account given in the

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Book of Liang. The *New Book of Tang* (新唐書) also contains a “History of Funan”, but the story of the kingdom’s founding is omitted.

Listed in the chronological order of the dynasties themselves, the *Book of Jin* would come first, followed by the *Book of Southern Qi* and *Book of Liang*, respectively. However, with regard to the actual compilation of the Histories, the order becomes that given in the previous paragraph, namely *Book of Southern Qi*, *Book of Liang*, and *Book of Jin*. Needless to say, the *Account of Foreign Lands* is the oldest of all, but the *Taiping yulan* in which it is reprinted post-dates the *Book of Jin*.

The story of the founding of Funan as described in the *Account of Foreign Lands* goes as follows:

The original sovereign of Funan was a queen named Liuye. There was once a man named Hundian of the country of Mofu (摸跖国) who was exceedingly devout, his heart never wavering in its dedication to his god. Moved by his devotion, his god appeared to him in a dream and gave him a bow, ordering him to board a merchant ship and set sail across the ocean. The next morning after waking Hundian went to the temple where he found a bow at the foot of the holy tree. He then boarded a large merchant ship and set sail. His god caused a wind to blow so that he would be carried to the shores of Funan. Although [the ruler of Funan] Liuye tried to seize the ship, Hundian shot an arrow from his sacred bow that pierced her ship and caused her to surrender. Thus Hundian was able to reach Funan.

The first item we need to be concerned about here is Hundian’s point of departure. While the *Account of Foreign Lands* gives the name of his homeland as “Mofuguo”, the *Book of Southern Qi* has “Jiguo” (激国), the *Book of Liang*

mentions a “Jiaoguo (徼國; foreign country) to the south”, and the *Book of Jin* merely says “a foreign country” (外國). While the *Book of Liang*’s “Jiaoguo” carries the meaning of “foreign country”, it is no more specific about the location of this country than is the *Book of Jin*. The *Book of Liang*, however, is noteworthy for adding the information that the country was located “to the south” of Funan. (The *Book of Southern Qi*’s “Jiguo” was probably no more than a mistaken transcription of “Jiaoguo”).

As we have seen, the only account to identify the country of Hundian’s birth is the *Account of Foreign Lands*, which gives its name as “Mofuguo”. Although the name does not appear anywhere else, some scholars, citing the problem of mistranscription that commonly affects Chinese texts, have identified it with a country that appears later on in the *Account of Foreign Lands*. *Juan* 787 of the *Taiping yulan* mentions a certain “Hengdieguo” (橫跌國), described as being “to the southeast of Yubo (優鉞), its city prosperous and happy, though less so than that of Yubo.” (Some versions give the “*fu*” (跌) of Mofuguo in place of the “*die*” (跌) of Hengdieguo; indeed, the two characters are highly similar, differing by only one stroke.) Concerning Yubo, in the same *Account of Foreign Lands* (cited in *juan* 787 of the *Taiping yulan*) we read that “Yubo is located some 5000 *li* (里) to the southeast of Tianzhu (天竺; India). Its land is fertile, its city walls, curiosities and social customs similar to those of Tianzhu.”

Sugimoto, rather than adhering to the general assumption that either Hengdieguo or Mofuguo is a mistranscription of the other, suggests another possibility, namely that both names are in fact mistaken renderings of the “Danzhiguo” (擔秩國) that is described in Kang Tai’s *History of Funan* (扶南傳), contained in *juan* 1 of another Chinese text, the *Shuijing zhu* (水經注). (Although the present essay follows the *Shuijing zhu* text, it should be

noted that Kang Tai's original title, *Customs of Funan* (扶南土俗), was mistakenly rendered as *History of Funan* by the author of the *Shuijing zhu*.) *Danzhiguo* corresponds to Tamralipti at the mouth of the Ganges River. Sugimoto's assertion implicitly rejects Pelliot's thesis that Hengdieguo should be located either on the Malay Peninsula or on the island of Sumatra. (Sugimoto 1956: 339) The possibility that Sugimoto's assertion is correct cannot be denied. However, it is based on no more than the fact that place-names written with highly-similar Chinese characters appear in works attributed to the same author, Kang Tai, and seems to stem primarily from a desire to locate Mofuguo in India.

With regard to the location of Hengdieguo and Yubo, there are no clues beyond those given in the sources cited above. While it is clear that Yubo was within the Indian cultural sphere, the fact that sources place it 5000 li to the southeast of "Tianzhu" suggests that it must have been considerably distant, at least from the centre of Tianzhu. Hengdieguo was still further to the southeast, and it is not clear from the available sources whether or not it should be placed within the Indian cultural sphere; it therefore seems reasonable to identify it with one or another of the countries either of the Malay Peninsula or of the island of Sumatra. Such a conclusion would also tally with the *Book of Liang's* assertion that Hundian's homeland was a country to the south of Funan although, unfortunately, the basis for its assertion is not made clear. It should also be remembered that the identification of Mofuguo with Hengdieguo, like its identification with Danzhiguo, is based on no more than the similarity of the characters used for the place-names mentioned in the *Account of Foreign Lands*.

All this would seem to suggest that the identification of Hundian's home

country with India is no more than a possibility, and that it would be far more fruitful to follow the directions given in the *Book of Liang* and seek for its real identity among the lands to the south of Funan. The natural corollary to such a line of reasoning would be that the emergence of Funan as a kingdom was a result not of the “Indianization” of the region, but of political alignments taking place within Southeast Asia itself.

The possibility that Hundian hailed not from India but from somewhere south of Funan has already been put forward by Ikuta, based on his reading of the *Book of Liang* text, and he proposed the Malay Peninsula as the most likely possibility. As further evidence in support of his case, Ikuta notes that the wearing of the poncho-like garment (貫頭衣) that Hundian is said by the *Book of Liang* (and also by the *Book of Southern Qi*) to have introduced to Funan had already been described in the “Accounts of Southern Barbarians” (南蠻伝) in the *Book of Later Han* (後漢書) as being representative of the cultures of Southeast Asia: “the people of Jiaozhi [交趾; present-day northern Vietnam] are known for their custom of passing their head through [a hole made in] a piece of cloth”. (Ikuta 1984: 168) Although Ikuta does not refer to it himself, one might also cite the section on Yue (粵) in the “Treatise on Geography” (地理志) of the *Book of Han* (漢書), in which it is noted that it was also a custom of the island of Hainan for people to “wear a single piece of cloth, in the centre of which they cut a hole through which to pass their head”.

Ikuta further points out that the name “Kunḍungga” found on the Kutai inscriptions in East Kalimantan sounds extremely similar to “Hundian”. According to the inscriptions, which can be dated to somewhere between the late 4th and early 5th centuries CE, Kunḍungga was the grandfather of the king who ordered the inscriptions made, Mūlavarman, and Ikuta considers the name as

“evidently of Indonesian origin”. Krom, on the other hand, while finding it impossible to assert definitively that the name Kuṇḍungga is of either Indian or Indonesian origin, allows that a highly similar name, Kuṇḍung, may be found in Indonesia. (Krom 1931: 73) Krom’s main concern is not with the original pronunciation of the name Hundian, and Ikuta also does not seem to be overly concerned with proving that the name Hundian derives from Kuṇḍungga; yet the fact remains that there exists a local Southeast Asian name of Austronesian origin which sounds very similar to the name Hundian.

Sugimoto has ventured the hypothesis that the original of Hundian is not the generally accepted Kaṇḍinya but Kuṇḍina, but it too is of Sanskrit origin. Krom has suggested (1931: 73) that the name Kuṇḍukūra found in a Pallava inscription must also be accepted as a possible origin for Kuṇḍungga. However, all these theories using Indian names are based on the assumption that Hundian was of Indian origin, and naturally cannot serve as evidence of his true origin.

The theory that Hundian was of priestly Brahmin stock is a creation of later scholars and is not to be found in any of the contemporary sources. The evidence for his having been some kind of priest, possibly a Brahmin, is not totally lacking — the *Account of Foreign Lands*, as we have seen, describes him as being “exceedingly devout, his heart never wavering in its dedication to God.” (好事神，一心不懈), while the *Book of Liang* describes him as one who “attended upon the gods and spirits” (事鬼神者). Unfortunately, these hypotheses are all based on the assumption that “Hundian” was the Chinese transcription of Kaṇḍinya, derived from the passage in the *Book of Liang’s* “History of Funan” according to which there had been a king of Funan in the late 4th century named Qiaochenru (僑陳如) who had formerly been of the

Brahmin caste in India (天竺婆羅門); Qiaochenru is held by these scholars to have been the Chinese transcription of Kaundinya. Only if one accepts the case that Kaundinya was the original of “Hundian” does it become possible to conclude that Hundian himself was a Brahmin.

All of this suggests that the evidence for Hundian having been of Indian origin is by no means strong, and that there is ample reason to assert that he in fact came from somewhere south of Funan such as the Malay Peninsula. This would in turn provide evidence for the case that the emergence of Funan as a state predated the arrival of Indian civilization in the Southeast Asian region, and that it was the product of local, not imported factors.

2. Suwu's Mission to Tianzhu

As further evidence for the assertion that Funan's emergence as a state predated the arrival of Indian civilization, the visit to India (Tianzhu) of a member of the kingdom's ruling family, a man named in Chinese texts as Suwu (蘇物), may be cited. Both the “History of Central Tianzhuguo” (中天竺國傳) included in *juan* 54 of the *Book of Liang* and Kang Tai's *History of Funan* in *juan* 1 of the *Shuijing zhu* (see appendices 5-7) give an account of a mission to Tianzhu by a royal personage of Funan named Suwu that may be summarized as follows below. Regarding these materials, it may be assumed that the *Book of Liang's* account is derived from Kang Tai's *Customs of Funan*, together with that given in his *Account of Foreign Lands*.

A man of Tanguo (譚國) named Jiaxiangli (家翔梨), whose wanderings in the course of his trading activities in Tianzhu and other countries brought him to Funan. The king of Funan, Fanzhan (范旃), was intrigued by his stories of Tianzhu and sent a member of his family, Suwu, to visit

that country. After leaving Funan, Suwu went first to Tougouli (投拘利) (or Gouli 拘利), from where he set sail across a large bay in a northwesterly direction. Calling at several countries lying along the shores of the bay, he finally arrived a little more than a year later at Danzhi at the mouth of the Ganges River, from where he sailed upriver until he reached the capital of Tianzhu. The king of Tianzhu was highly surprised to receive a visit from a country so far away beyond the sea. After showing Suwu the sights of his country, he presented him with four Yuezhi (月氏) horses as a gift to King Fanzhan, and dispatched two emissaries, named Chen and Song, to accompany him home in order to transmit his respects to the king. Although Jiaxiangli had told Fanzhan that a return visit to Tianzhu could be made in the space of three years, it was in fact four years before Suwu finally returned from his voyage. Since Kang Tai was at that time in Funan, he was able to receive a detailed report about Tianzhu from the emissaries Chen and Song.

Since Kang Tai's mission to Funan can be dated to between 225 and 230 CE, Suwu's return trip to India must have taken place some time in the 220s.

Leaving aside the problem of whether it is correct to identify Tougouli (or Gouli) with Takuapa, there seems little doubt that it must have been somewhere in either the central or the northern section of the Malay Peninsula. From here, we learn, Suwu traversed the northern reaches of the Bay of Bengal, reaching the mouth of the Ganges something over a year later. We may safely go along with the standard theories that identify the town straddling the river's mouth, "Danzhi", with the Tamralipti that appears in later accounts such as that of Fa Xian (法顯) and Yi Jing (義淨) as, respectively, Duomalidi (多摩梨帝) and Danmalidi (耽摩立底). The identity of the city named here

as the “capital of Tianzhu” is not clear, but it may well have been Mathura, a centre of communications and of commercial and cultural activities lying in the middle reaches of the Ganges River.

The preceding narrative is significant for two reasons. In the first place, it demonstrates that there had been little contact between Funan and Tianzhu prior to that time. Jiaxiangli’s account of his trip to Tianzhu to King Fanzhan, set out in Appendix 6, would suggest that Fanzhan had had little knowledge of the country. In addition, Fanzhan’s query as to how long it would take to make a return trip suggests that he had no idea even of how distant Tianzhu was from Funan. That the journey was not regularly undertaken is clear from Jiaxiangli’s reply that three years would be sufficient when Suwu’s trip in fact required four years. The king of Tianzhu himself, moreover, is recorded as having been astonished at the visit of an emissary from so distant a country, and to have accorded Suwu special treatment as a result.

We can surmise from these facts that Funan’s elevation to the centre of the Southeast Asian trading network, thus attracting visits from the Chinese envoys Zhu Ying and Kang Tai, could not have been a result of its connections to either India or China. Although the details remain unclear, there is no doubt that its emergence as an independent state was made possible by converging factors within Southeast Asia itself.

The second point worthy of note is that the voyage from the central or northern part of the Malay Peninsula along the coast of the Bay of Bengal and across to the mouth of the Ganges is said to have taken Suwu as long as a year or more. Since a month or at most two months would be sufficient for a ship making use of the monsoon winds to make the crossing, even a return trip could be easily made within the space of a year; it would therefore seem that

local ships had yet to begin making use of the monsoon's seasonal winds. The previous point regarding the lack of relations between Funan and Tianzhu would also support this contention, since use of the monsoon would surely have made relations between the two considerably easier.

Kang Tai's *Account of Foreign Lands* also contains an account of Funan's ships (see Appendix 8). A large one is said to have been capable of carrying 100 men, and to have been propelled by the use of long and short oars and poles. We may assume that Suwu's voyage to Tianzhu was made in such a ship; the fact that no mention is made of a sail being used is further evidence that local ships had yet to begin making use of the monsoon.

As a final word on this topic, it may be added that the *Account of Foreign Lands* makes it clear that Kang Tai was aware of the existence of the monsoon and of how it could be used to facilitate long-distance sea travel (see Appendix 9). A passage in his account which notes that, by making use of the "timely wind" (時風), a ship equipped with seven sails could sail from "the island of Jianadiao" (迦那調州) to the "Kingdom of Daqin" (大秦) in just over a month is clearly a reference to the monsoon. Although "the island of Jianadiao" has yet to be positively identified, the "Kingdom of Daqin" referred to the Roman Empire, particularly its eastern reaches. This account would thus seem to be relating hearsay concerning the conditions of the Arabian Sea area. It is clear, moreover, from the well-known *Periplus of the Erythrean Sea* that monsoon sailing had become commonplace in the Arabian Sea area as early as the first century CE. (Shitomi 1999)

Conclusions

While it may be impossible to entirely discount the theory that Hundian, the

founder of the kingdom of Funan, came originally from India, the likelihood of his having hailed from within Southeast Asia is also undisputable. We know, for example, from the account of Suwu's trip to Tianzhu in the early 3rd century that there had been few dealings between the two countries prior to that time. It may thus be logically argued that the emergence of Funan as one of the earliest Southeast Asian states and its rise to become the hub of the local trading network were the result of changes taking place within the region itself rather than of any direct Indian influence. Once this possibility is accepted, the "Indianization" thesis, in the sense that states began to emerge in the Southeast Asian region as a direct result of Indian cultural impact, consequently becomes groundless.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Kang Tai, *Account of Foreign Lands in the Period of the Kingdom of Wu* (呉時外国伝), cited in *juan* 347 of *Taiping yulan* (太平御覽):

扶南之先，女人為王，名柳葉。有摸趺国人字混慎，好事神，一心不懈。神感至意，夜夢人賜神弓一張，教載賈人舶入海。混慎晨入廟，於神樹下得弓，便載大船入海。神廻風令至扶南。柳葉欲劫取之。混慎举神弓而射焉，貫船通度。柳葉懼伏，混慎因至扶南。

Appendix 2: *Book of Southern Qi* (南齊書), *juan* 58, “History of Funanguo” (扶南国伝):

扶南国在日南之南，大海西蠻中，広袤三千余里。有大江水西流入海。其先有女人為王，名柳葉。又有激国人混填，夢神賜弓二張，教乘舶入海。混填晨起，於神廟樹下得弓，即乘舶向扶南。柳葉見舶，率衆欲禦之，混填举弓遥射，貫船一面，通中人，柳葉怖遂降。混填娶以為妻。惡其裸露形体，乃暈布貫其首。遂治其国，子孫相伝。〔後略〕

Appendix 3: *Book of Liang* (梁書), *juan* 54, “History of Funanguo” (扶南国伝):

扶南国俗本裸体，身被髮，不制衣裝。以女人為王，号曰柳葉，年少壯健，有似男子。其南有徼国，有事鬼神者，字混填。夢神賜之弓，乘賈人舶入海。

混填晨起，即詣廟，於神樹下得弓。便依夢乘船入海，遂入扶南外邑。柳葉人衆見船至，欲取之。混填即張弓射其船，穿度一面，矢及侍者。柳葉大懼，拳衆降混填。混填乃教柳葉穿布貫頭，形不復露。遂治其國，納柳葉為妻，生子分王七邑。其後王混盤況，以詐力間諸邑，令相疑阻，因拳兵攻併之。

Appendix 4: *Book of Jin* (晉書), *juan* 97, “History of Funanguo” (扶南国傳):

扶南西去林邑三千余里，在海中大灣中，其境廣袤三千里。有城邑宮室。人皆醜黑，拳髮裸身，跣行。性質直，不為寇盜。以耕種為務，一歲種，三歲穫。又好雕文刻縷。食器多以銀為之。貢賦以金銀珠香。亦有書記府庫，文字有類於胡。喪葬婚姻略同林邑。其王本是女子字葉柳。時有外國人混潰者，先事神，夢神賜之弓，又教載舶入海。混潰且詣神祠得弓，遂隨賈人泛海至扶南外邑。葉柳率衆禦之，混潰擧弓，葉柳懼，遂降之。於是混潰納以為妻，而據其國。後胤衰微，子孫不紹，其將范尋復世王扶南矣。〔後略〕

Appendix 5: *Book of Liang* (梁書), *juan* 54, History of Central Tianzhuguo (中天竺國傳):

〔前略〕魏晉世絕不復通，唯吳時，扶南王范旃，遣親人蘇物使其國。從扶南發，投拘利口，循海大灣中，正西北入，歷灣邊數國，可一年余，到天竺江口，逆水行七千里，乃至焉。天竺王驚曰，海濱極遠，猶有此人，即呼令觀視國內，仍差陳宋等二人，以月氏馬四匹報旃，遺物等還，積四年方至。其時吳遣中郎康泰使扶南，及見陳宋等，具問天竺土俗，云佻道所興國也，〔後略〕

Appendix 6: Kang Tai, *History of Funan* (扶南傳), in *juan* 1 of *Shuijing zhu* (水經注)

昔范旃時，有潭楊國人翔梨，嘗從其本國到天竺，展轉流賈至扶南，為旃說天竺土俗，道法流通，金寶委積，山川饒沃，姿其所欲，左右大國世尊重之。旃問之，今去何時可到，幾時可迴。梨言，天竺去此可三万余里，往還可三年，踰及行，四年方返，以為天地之中也。

Appendix 7: Kang Tai, *History of Funan*, in *juan* 1 of *Shuijing zhu*:

發拘利口，入大灣中，正西北入，可一年余，得天竺江口，名恒水。江口有

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国号擔秩，属天竺，遣黄門字興為擔秩王。

Appendix 8: Kang Tai, *Account of Foreign Lands in the Period of the Kingdom of Wu*, cited in *juan 769 of Taiping yulan*:

扶南国伐木為船，長者十二尋，廣六尺，頭尾似魚，皆以鉄鑷露裝，大者載百人，有長短橈及撐各一，從頭至尾約有五十人或四十余人隨船大小，行則用長橈，坐則用短橈，水淺乃用篙，皆撐上应声如一。

Appendix 9: Kang Tai, *Account of Foreign Lands in the Period of the Kingdom of Wu*, cited in *juan 771 of Taiping yulan*:

從迦那調洲，乘大舶，張七帆，時風一月余日，乃入大秦国。

要旨

扶南建国説話の主人公混填がインド出身であるとの説を否定しざることは難しいとしても、その出身地を東南アジアとみる説の蓋然性が高いといふことができる。また蘇物のインド往来のありさまによって、3世紀はじめころの扶南はインドとの関係が希薄であったことがわかる。とすれば、扶南という東南アジアにおける初期国家の形成、およびこれが3世紀当時東南アジア交易ネットワークの中心に位置したことは、インドの直接的な影響によるのではなく、東南アジア自体における何らかの動きの結果によるものと考えべきである。すなわちインド文明との接触の結果として東南アジアに国家が形成されたという意味での「インド化」論は根拠をもたないのである。