

Remarks on “The ‘Indianization’ of Funan: An Economic History of Southeast Asia’s First State”

I am pleased to see that Kenneth Hall (*JSEAS*, Vol. 13, No. 1, pp. 81–106), as with some other historians, is taking into account the results of some of the recent archaeological research on Southeast Asia to help arrive at his new interpretation of the origin and history of Funan. Probably the major change in interpretation of early Southeast Asian history which has come about because of the archaeological results of the last twenty years has been that presented by Paul Wheatley in his presidential address at the Association for Asian Studies annual meeting in Chicago in April 1982. This address will soon be published in the *Journal of Asian Studies* and it would not be proper to reveal its message before its publication.

Hall did not go as far as he could have in his use of the recent archaeological literature, quite possibly because he, and most other historians, do not become acquainted with this literature soon after its publication. Mabbett’s recent review of the prehistoric sources for historians¹ should perhaps be brought up to date every four or five years. (I would like to mention that Mabbett’s presentation of the finds and interpretations of archaeologists working in Southeast Asia was very accurate.) Hall is probably better acquainted with archaeological publication, on Southeast Asia, than most historians as he is in personal communication with several of the archaeologists working in the area.

The one area where Hall is not up to date as far as this article is concerned is on the early development of Asian maritime trade. He sees this trade developing in stages: “First to develop was the India–Middle East route, expanding after Rome has established its *Pax Romanum* in the first century of the Christian era and corresponding to the diffusion of knowledge on the use of the monsoon winds for navigation” (p. 81). It is most likely that Southeast Asian sailors were trading with India long before this time.

While I have been hypothesizing for many years² that Southeast Asian sailors/traders were in contact with eastern India by at least early in the first millennium B.C. it is only in the last few years that there has been archaeological evidence supporting this hypothesis. The archaeological data strongly suggest that there was widespread communication, including trade, all around the shores of the South China Sea by 1000 B.C. This is indicated by the rapid spread of very distinctive jade ornaments, many elements of pottery decoration and manufacture, and carnelian and then a variety of glass beads, along the coast of northern and southern Vietnam, southeastern Taiwan, most of the

¹I. W. Mabbett, “The “Indianization” of Southeast Asia: Reflections on the Prehistoric Sources” (Part One), *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 8, 1 (March 1977): 1–14.

²Wilhelm G. Solheim II, “Southeast Asia and the West”, *Science* 157/3791 (1967): 900–901.

Philippines and, except for the jade ornaments, much of eastern Indonesia.³ While it has not yet been proven, the only known (and likely) source for the carnelian, and then later the various early glass beads, is the east coast of India around Madras. The carnelian beads start showing up in Philippine sites around 1000 B.C.⁴

Heretofore there has been an almost total communication gap between archaeologists and historians. I feel that we may soon close this gap and interpretations by specialists in both fields take into account the results of research in the other fields.

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³Wilhelm G. Solheim II, 'A Look at 'L'art préboudhique de la Chine et de l'Asie de Sud-Est et son influence en Océanie' forty years later", *Asian Perspectives* 22/2(1979): 198-99. Wilhelm G. Solheim II, "Philippine prehistory", in *The People and Art of the Philippines*, by Father Gariel Casal & Regalado Trota Jose, Jr., Eric S. Casino, George R. Ellis, and Wilhelm G. Solheim II (Los Angeles: Museum of Culture History, University of California, Los Angeles, 1981), pp. 44-49.

⁴Robert B. Fox, *The Tabon Caves* (Manila: Monograph of the National Museum, No. 1), pp. 136-37.