

THE NOMENCLATURE OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ISLANDS IN ANCIENT CHINA

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ABSTRACT: The thesis studies the ancient place names recorded in Chinese ancient maps, such as Shanhu Zhou, Changsha, Shitang, Qianlichangsha, Jiuruleizhou, Shixingshitang, Wanlishitang, Wanlichangti, Changshahai, Shitanghai, Nanoqi, Hongmaoqian, Dongsha, Hongmaoqian, and more than 100 folk place names recorded in Geng Lu Bu and some finding reports. After that, it points out that the former representing the colony of coral reef are general place names and the latter representing the individual coral reefs are particular place names. Both of them set up the place name system of the South China Sea Islands in ancient China. It also points out that it is the Chinese people who first name the South China Sea Islands before west colonialists invaded the islands, and nine place names of it: Aba, Nanyit Island, Sincow Islands, Subi Reef, Lankian Cay, London Reef, Passukeak, Thitu Island, and Duncan Island, which were used by the west colonialists are transliteration place names of Chinese folk place names. Lastly, the paper draws the conclusion that the nomenclature of the South China Sea Islands in ancient China provides the strongest evidence that the South China Sea Islands are parts of China.

KEY WORDS: China, the South China Sea Islands, ancient place name, folk place name

The South China Sea Islands are first found and named by Chinese people. The islands' name were recorded in ancient Chinese books, or spread far and wide among the masses.

I. THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ISLANDS' ANCIENT PLACE NAMES RECORDED IN ANCIENT BOOKS AND MAPS

Early in Han Dynasty, the Chinese navigation was very flourishing. China's fleets had

come to Sir Lanka after crossing the South China Sea, so the South China Sea Islands were found on the way. The fact had been recorded both in Kang Tai's book, "Fu Nan Chuan", published in the period of Three Kingdoms, and Fei Yuan's book, "Guang Zhou Ji", published in Jin Dynasty. The former says: "In the Zhang Sea, reach the coral bank, the bottom are rocks, corals are growing in it." The latter says: "Coral banks, at the South above 500 Li (1/2 mile) of Tong Guan, someone at the sea, and get the corals." Now, people has proved that place named the Zhang Sea in Kang Tai's book is just the South China Sea, and the islands named Coral Banks in Fei Yuan's book just the South China Sea Islands. All these show that the Coral Banks are the earliest names scientifically named for the South China Sea Islands by Chinese people.

From Song Dynasty on, the Chinese seamen used compass in their navigation, which made things convenient for them to sail the South Chinese Sea and know more about the islands. As a result the ancient place names, such as Changsha and Shitang which are the reflection of the South China Sea's landforms, and special place names formed. For instance, the book "Song Hui Yao Ji Gao" said: "People go to Canton, if driven into the Shitang, it will never reach Canton", and said: "(nation of Zhen Li Fu)••• Wishing go to China... reach Zhan Cheng for few days, ten days for across the sea. At the SE side there is Wanli Shitang, this sea is deep or shallow no rule, currents and rocks, boats into this areas drown about 70%–80%, no coastal hills can be seen, than reach Jiao Zhi, five days more reach Qinzhou and Lianzhou." According to direction, the Wanli Shitang just is the Nansha Islands. From Song Dynasty on, Chinese people named the other islands in the South China Sea as Shitang in their books and maps because the South China Sea have atoll landforms. Shitang, meaning a pool surrounded with stones, is the local place name of atoll.

In South Song Dynasty, Zhou Qufei in: "Ling Wai Dai Da" said: "at the SW of the four districts of Nanhai, the larger one named the ocean of Jiao Zhi, where three currents contacted, high waves were divided into three, one flowed to the east, into the endness, called the Eastern Large Ocean•••" Someone said "there are Changsha and Shitang about several ten thousand Li, and ended to the endness. Sometime the boat are blown by the strong west wind to the Eastern Large Ocean, where the voice of the waves loudly, but suddenly leave that place by strong eastern wind". The Ocean of Jiao Zhi is Just the South China Sea lying to the southeast of the Hainan Islands. Because of lying to the west of the Eastern Large Sea, Changsha and Shitang should just the South China Sea Islands. It is the Chinese people who first think that the South China Sea Islands are made up of the Changsha, composed of sand islands, and Shitang, of atolls.

"Qiong Guan Zhi" said: "In the east there are Qianli Changsha and Wanli Shitang, all surrounded by waters." Wang Xiangzhi in his book "Yu Di Ji Sheng" said "Ji Yang is a re-

gion of high mountains. Peaks and mountains are beautiful... in its outer part there are Wuli, Sumi, Jilang districts, the opposite is Zhancheng, in the west is Zhenla. Jiaozhi, at the east are Qianli Changsha, and Wanli Shitang, thousand Li are the sky and water, as only in one color.” Jiyang is just the Zhan County in the Hainan Islands. Qianli Changsha and Wanli Shitang lying to the east of it are the South China Sea. It is the earliest place name which called the South China Sea Islands as Qianli Changsha and Wanli Shitang.

In Yuan Dynasty, Wang Daiyuan in his book said: “The bone of Shitang beginning at Chaozhou, distribution like a snake, across the sea, reach the countries, general called Wanli Shitang. In my mind, there are not only Wanli (i.e. ten thousand Li) long, ... its ranges can be clearly seem, one to Jave, one to Bornio, Culi and Timor, one to the west ocean and Kunlun. ” Wang Daiyuan used the words “the bone of Shitang” and “Shitang’ ranges” to link up the Wanli Shitang and pointed out that the bone of Shitang lies from Chaozhou to Java, Bornio (Kalimanton), Culi Timor and Kunlun. Therefore, the Wanli Shitang is just the South China Sea Islands composed of the Dongshe Islands, the Xisha Islands, the Zhongsha Islands and the Nansha Islands. It is Wang Daiyuan who is the first people call all the South China Sea Islands as the Wanli Shitang.

In North Song Dynasty, the book “ Wu Jing Zhong Yao” said: “ Nanhaijun of Guangzhou... order to the navel to built a trip to observe the sea ... 200 Li to Tun Moon... from the mountain of Tun Moon used the east wind, sailing SW for seven days to Jiuruluochou, three days after than reach the Zhanbulao Mountain.” According to the trip’s voyage, we can say that the Jiuruluochou, the special place name first given by the Chinese people to name a part of the South China Sea Islands, is the Xisha Islands.

In Ming Dynasty, Zhenghe set the record of navigation for seven times, which let the Chinese people know more about the South China Sea Islands. Besides the place name of Changsha and Shitang, ancient maps of the South China Sea Islands have been discovered in Chinese ancient books.

In Zhenghe Navigation Map, Shixing Shitang, Shitang and Wansheng Shitangyu were marked. According to position and symbols in the map, we can say that Shixing Shitang, showed with points and circles on the east of the map, are the Zhongsha Islands, Shitang, on the west, are Xisha Islands, and Wansheng Shitangyu, on the southeast, the Nansha Islands.

Gu Jie in his book “Hai Cha Yu Lu” said: “Qianli Shitang lies at the Yazhou Sea, out of the land about 700 Li, its banks lower than the sea level about 8–9 feet. Ships must be driven far from the banks, or enter it will never leave. Wanli Changti, at its south, here cur-

rents are strong, ships coming into it will never leave.” According to distance, depth and physical environment, people can say that Qianli Shitang are the Zhongsha Islands, and Wanli Changti, the Nansha Islands. Qianli Shitang and Wanli Changti, as place names, were first recorded in Chinese ancient book. Because the words Wanli Changti could not be found in the other ancient book, it may be a mistake about Wanli Changsha.

Wang Ai in his book “Hai Yu” said: “Wanli Changsha lies at the SE of Wanli Shitang, that is the sand flow river of the southwest foreign lands, wind and sands are strong, in the good weather it like looks the snow fields, if the boat enter its regions, and cannot be leaved, but must helped by strong eastern wind than boats can leave the bank.” It is the “Hai Yu” in which Wanli Changsha was first recorded. According to the description in the book, Wanli Changsha is just the Nansha Islands.

In Qing Dynasty, the Chinese people visited the South China Sea Islands more frequently and knew more about it than before. As a result, the map which divided the South China Sea Islands into four groups, and the place name of Dongsha which is still used in modern times and influenced the naming of the other islands in the South China Sea came out.

Chen Lun Jiong in his book “Hai Guo Wen Jian Lu” (in 1730) said: “NanO Qi, at the SE of NanO, is small and flat coral reef island, with deep slopes surrounded, water grass are growing there spread 10 feet long, the harbour has bars... sever Gengwater route to NanO...., in the south of NanO Qi, there is a sand bars spreading to the Kwangtung Sea then being stoped by an ocean, it is called the head of Wanli Changsha. When the sand banks occurred again and spread to Hainan Wanzhou, it is called Wanli Changsha. In the south of the sand banks, a reef coral occured, spread to the Qizhou Ocean. it is called Qianli Shitang. According to navigation and Physical environment, we can say that NanO Qi is the Dongsha Islands. It is the Chinese people who first called the Dongsha Islands as NanO Qi, a special place name.

The book, “Zhi Nan Zheng Fa”, said: “NanO has a low island, they have trees, there is a small island at the eastern side, there is a sand bar like the tail, just like the form of Wanli Changsha. nearly and clearly seen, there is a harbour at the south side, the bottom are silts. Passing this low mountain, take care in the SW side where the current are strong, passing the central gate is good for boats. In the NW side there are banks, NE side are slope of sand... the sand tail at the east, where the currents are flow to the east, must be remember it.” According to the book, NanO Qi is the Dongsha Islands.

There are 69 navigation maps drawn by the Chinese sea men in the book. “A STUDY

ON ANCIENT NAVIGATION”, written by Zhang Yi. The sixth–ninth map, which says similarly to the book “Zhi Nan Zheng Fa”, that ships can pass through the central gate, and there are banks in the north side of it, is the most exhaustive one in all NanO Qi maps, or the Dongsha Islands Maps, and you can see Fig.1.

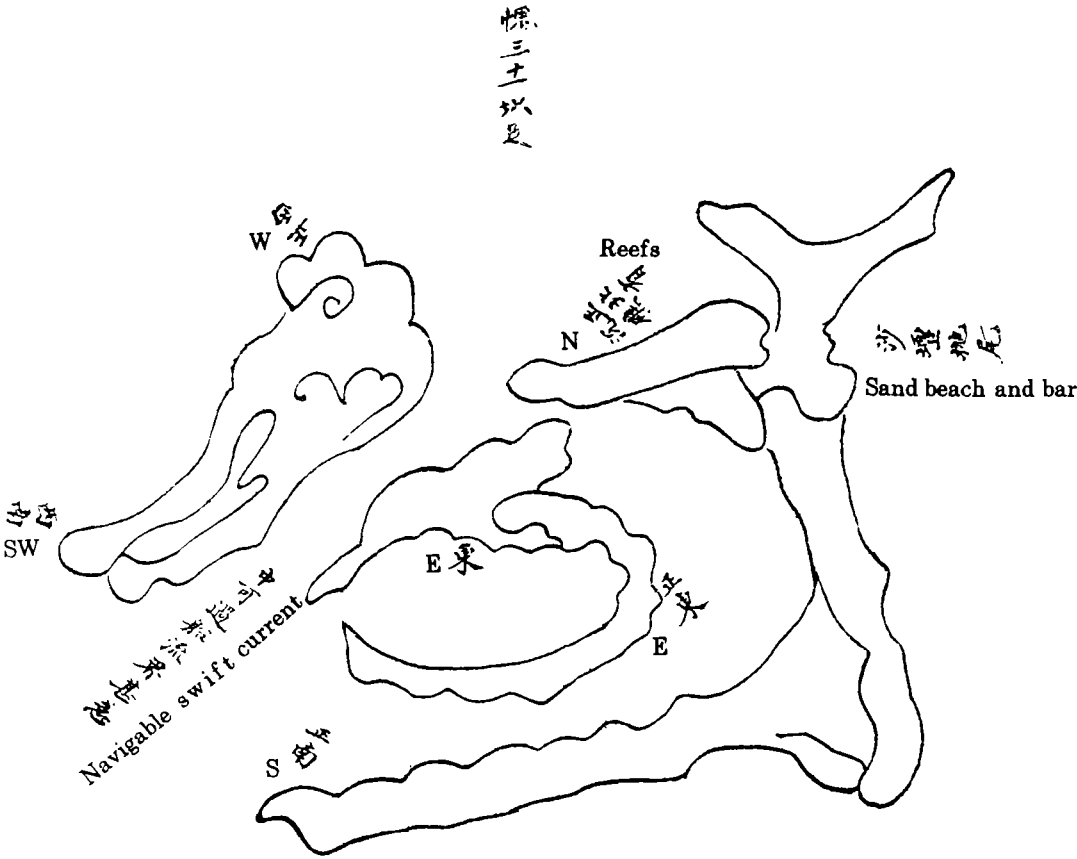


Fig.1 The ancient map of the Dongsha Islands (the Qing Dynasty)

The book published in 1826, “Hai Lu” says: “You need four or five days to sail southwest from Wanshan to Hongmaoqian, where there are Shadan about five metres under water”. According to voyage, the depth and width of the sea, we can say that Hongmaoqian is just the Zhongsha Islands. The book also says: “Seamen spent five or six days by ships from Lusong to Dongsha, then one day more to the Dangan Mountain which is tens Li far from Wanshan and Guangzhou. Because the islands lie to the east of Wanshan, it is named Dongsha.” It is the Chinese people who first used direction and the word of SHA to name the South China Sea Islands.

In the Four Sea General Map (see Fig.2), you can see words, such as Qi, Shatou,

Changsha, Qizhouyang, and Shitang, in fact, Qi, or NanO Qi is the Dongsha Islands; Shato, meaning the head, or one end, of the islands, which beginning at the Dongsha islands, is the Dongsha Islands; Qizhouyang recorded in the west of the map is the Xisha Islands; Changsha, lying between Shatou and Qizhouyang, is the Zhongsha Islands. It is the Chinese people who divided the South China Sea Islands into four groups of islands which were recorded in the Four Sea General Map.

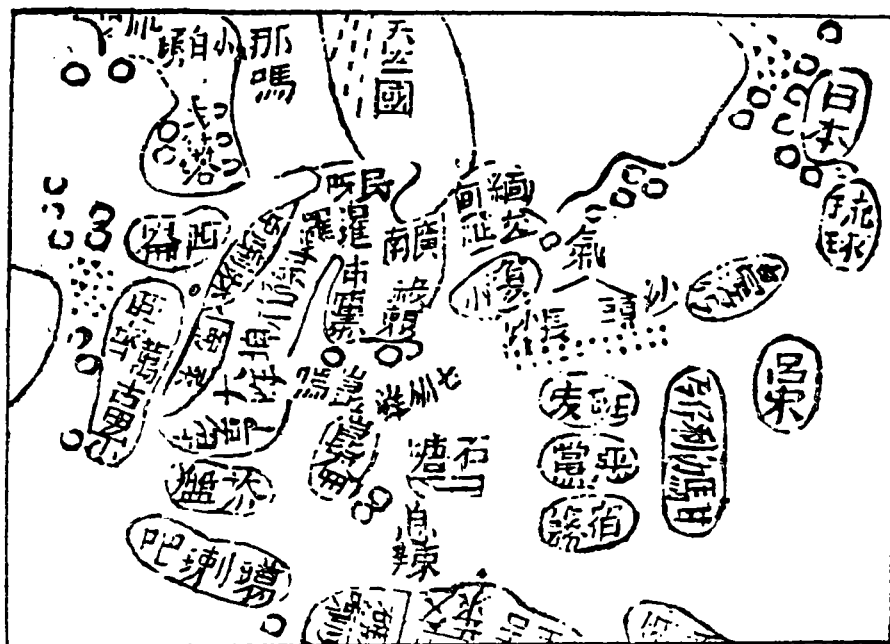


Fig.2 A part of the Four Seas General Map (from Cheng Lun-Jong, the Qing Dynasty)

II. THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ISLANDS' FOLK PLACE NAMES RECORDED IN GENG LU BU

“Gen Lu Bu” is a kind of navigation Confucian classics composed by seamen in the Sailing Boat Period. There are many place names of the South China Sea Islands in “Geng Lu Bu”. Because these place names are written down in dialect, they are folk place names. Some studies show that from Ming Dynasty on, the South China Sea Islands’ folk place names appeared in Genglu Bu, which means that the folk place names is a part of the place name system of the South China Sea Islands in ancient China.

There are 106 folk place names in “Geng Lu Bu”. Twenty-eight of them composed of the Xisha Islands. They are Donghai (东海), Gandou (干豆), Shitang (石塘), Sansi (三峙), Erquan (二圈), Sanquan (三圈), Maozhu (猫注), Qushou (曲手), Daquan (大圈), Yinsi (银峙), Yinyumen (银屿门), Maoxingsi (猫兴峙), Banlusi (半路峙), Weisi (尾峙), Baisizai (白

峙仔), Hongcaomen (红草门), Shuangfan (双帆), Chuanyan (船岩), Chuanyanwei (船岩尾), Qiliansi (七连峙), Dalang (大郎), Quanzai (圈仔), Hongcao (红草), Quanfu (全复), Baxinlang (八辛郎), Laocu (老粗), Laocudamen (老粗大门), and Sijiangmen (四江门). Seventy-eight of them compose of the Nansha Islands. They are Beihai (北海), Shuangsi (双峙), Hongcaoqianpai (红草浅排), Quandiansha (犬殿沙), Tiesi (铁峙), Xianpai (线排), Luokong (罗孔), Luokongzai (罗孔仔), Huoai (火哀), Kugui (裤归), Sanjiaosha (三角沙), Shuangmen (双门), Wufengsha (五风沙), Duanjie (断节), Niaochuansha (鸟串沙), Niucheying (牛车英), Jiaopo (脚坡), Shuangdan (双担), Yulin (鱼鳞), Dongtuyixin (东头乙辛), Houteng (蜚藤), Haigongsha (海公沙), Tongjinsi (铜金峙), Chouwei (丑未), Tiesiqianpai (铁寺浅排), Shuanghuang (双黄), Huangshanmasi (黄山马峙), Niuersha (牛鞭沙), Laoniulao (劳牛劳), Nanyi (南乙), Chenggou (成3钩), Chenggouxian (称钩线), Mujing (目镜), Shenkuang (深筐), Boji (簸箕), Tongzhong (铜钟), Haikouxian (海口线), Daguangxing (大光星), Guangxingzai (光星仔), Shigongli (石公厘), Shilong (石龙), Wubai'er (五白二), Danjie (单节), Moguaxian (墨瓜线), Eluomen (恶落门), Liumensha (六门沙), Wumiexian (无乜线), Ranqinsi (染青寺), Shipan (石盘), Shangwu (上武), Datongchou (大铜统), Tongchongzai (铜銃仔), Danongbi (大弄鼻), Nongbizai (弄鼻仔), Niaozaishi (鸟仔峙), Xituyixin (西头乙辛), Nanyixianzhai (南乙线仔), Lusha (禄沙), Xianpaishou (线排首), Yinguo (银锅), Jiuzhang (九章), Gongshixian (贡土线), Guaobeixian (高杯丝), Nailuojiao (奈罗角), Tiexian (铁线), Nailuoshazai (奈罗沙仔), Nailuosi (奈罗峙), Banluxian (半路线), Guogaisi (锅盖峙), Huangshamadong (黄山马东), Nailuoxiasi (奈罗下峙), Xibeijiao (西北角), Langkou (浪口), Niaoyuding (鸟鱼锭), Wufengtou (五风头), and Wufengwei (王风尾). Ail above folk place names recorded in "Geng Lu Bu" are given by the fishermen of Hainan Islands to islands, sand bars, reefs, and beaches in the South China Sea Islands.

III. THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ISLAND FOLK PLACE NAMES RECORDED IN THE FINDINGS REPORTS

In 1973, a fact finding mission composed of different administrative departments was set up. The fact finding mission wrote a report based on visiting the old fishermen in the Qionghai County and investigating the Xisha Islands. In the report, there are a lot of the South China Sea Islands' folk place names which were well preserved in Hainan dialect.

In the report, there are twenty-seven folk place names recorded while fishery production in the Xisha Islands is recorded. They are Maozhu (猫驻), Maoxing (猫兴), Chuanan (船暗), Changsi (长峙), Shisi (石峙), Sansi (三峙), Hongcaoyi (红草一), Hongcaoer (红草二), Hongcaoshan (红草三), Xianzhuo (仙桌), Sankuang (三筐), Erkuang (二筐), Sankuangdalang (三筐大郎), Dakuang (大筐), Baisizai (白峙仔), Banlu (半路), Weifeng (尾峰), Kuangzaishi (筐仔峙), Yuansi (圆峙), Laocu (老粗), Sijiang (四江), Dasangjiao (大三

脚), Shisi (石峙), Quangfu (全富), Yinsi (银峙), Yagong (鸭公), and Qiliandao (七连岛).

There are also forty-nine folk place names recorded while three fishing routes are recorded in the report.

The eastern route, in proper order, is composed of Hongcaosi (红草峙), Luokong (罗孔), Houteng (虻藤), Yulin (鱼鳞), Shiliang (石良), Dongtouyixin (东头乙辛), Wukong (五孔), Duanjie (断节), Shuangdan (双担), Niaochuan (鸟串), Shuangmen (双门), Huoai (火埃), Sanjiao (三角), Haigong (海公), Yingguo (银锅), Kudang (裤裆), Tongguo (铜锅), and Shilong (石龙).

The western route, in proper order, is composed of Laoniulao (劳牛劳), Shangwu (尚戊), Shipan (石盘), Tongchongzai (铜銃仔), Datongchong (大铜銃), Nongbizai (弄鼻仔), Danongbi (大弄鼻), Niozaisi (鸟仔峙), and Xitouyixin (西头乙辛).

The southern route is composed of Chenggou (称钩), Gouxian (钩线), Guihanxian (鬼喊线), Jiuzhangtou (九章头), Nuxingsi (女星峙), Chiguaxian (赤瓜线), Changxian (长线), Nanmen (南门), Dongmen (东门), Heluomen (荷落门), Liumen (六门), Wumixian (无乜门), Yinjingchan (银镜铲), Shenkuang (深筐), Boji (簸箕), Tongzhong (铜钟), Guangxingzai (光星仔), Daguangxing (大光星), Shigongli (石公厘), Wubaier (五百二), Danji (丹积), and Muoguanxian (黑瓜线).

There are all together 76 folk place names recorded in the report. Twenty-two of them are never seen in Geng Lu Bu.

IV. THE TOPONOMY SIGNIFICANCE ON NAMING THE SOUTH CHINA SEA ISLANDS IN ANCIENT CHINA

There are many ancient place names in Chinese ancient books and maps. Some of them are general terms of the whole islands in the South China Sea, some are special terms of one or two islands. Sometimes, people used the same place names to name the different islands. Even so, all of them are general place names of coral reefs in the South China Sea. The folk place names both recorded in Geng Lu Bu and the report are the particular place names of individual coral island, sand bar, and reef except that a few names are the general place names of the whole coral islands, sand bars, and reefs. We can set up a South China Sea Islands place name system by relating the ancient place names and folk place names to each other.

In 1968, the sea chart department of the English Navy published a book of INTRO-

DUCTION TO THE CHINA SEA which says: "You can find fishermen who came from Hainan Islands in every islands, and they lived on sea slugs, mesons and shellfishes.... An island, named Sin Cowe, is said by the fisherman to the about 30 miles to southward of Namyit." Sin Cowe and Namyit, the first two place names recorded in foreign book, are the folk place names of Jinghong Island and Hongxiu Island named by Hainan Islands' fishermen. In the book, the island of Storm Wind, written by a Japanese in 1940, there are 10 folk place names of Shuangsi (双峙), Tiesi (铁峙), Hongcaosi (红草峙), Luokong (罗孔), Niaozaizi (鸟仔峙), Tongzhangsi (同章峙), Disansi (第三峙), Huangshanmasi (黄山马峙), and Disi (第峙), and maps drawn based on the materials provided by the fishermen. All above show that it is the Chinese people who named the South China Sea Islands before they gave names to the islands without authorization, Some studies show that at least 9 folk place names have been translated by the west (see Table 1).

Table 1 Folk place names translated by the West

English place name	Chinese folk place name	Hainan dialect
Itu Aba	黄山马	Uiduave
Namyit Island	南乙, 南密	Namyit, Namit
Simcove Island	称钩	Sivnguo
Thitu Island	铁峙	Hi Du
Subi Reef	丑未	Suivi
Lankian Cay	铜金	Ddanggim
London Reet	铜铤	Ddangsong
Passukeak	白峙仔	Beisingia
Duancan Island	三脚	Daha

* Provided by Huang Xunying, Hainan Teachers' College.

All above draw the conclusion that the nomenclature of the South China Sea Islands in ancient China provide the strongest evidence that the South China Sea Islands are parts of China.

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