

《历史文献佐证中国对中国南海的立场》

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China marks its National Maritime Day today. On July 11 more than 600 years ago, the Ming Dynasty navigator Zheng He set sail on his first long-distance voyage to the west Pacific and the Indian Ocean.

His nautical chart and other maps from the 13th century show China's historical claim to South China Sea. The Nautical Charts of Zheng He is the earliest surviving collection of nautical maps in the world. The Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha islands appear in these maps. The South China Sea islands were also charted in the official maps during the Qing Dynasty.

"Chinese people came to know the islands in the South China Sea as early as in China's Han Dynasty, about 2,000 years ago. And the Chinese government began its administration of the islands from the Tang and Song Dynasty," said Wu Shicun, president of National Institute for South China Sea Studies.

"So we always say that China was the first country to discover, name, and make the South China Sea Islands part of its territory, as well as exercised administrative jurisdiction over them. No other countries in the region besides China could provide such abundant historical materials."