

THE SERIES OF "CHINA'S MARITIME DEVELOPMENT"

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Authors: Zhang Ying, Mi Chenxi





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Preface

The Shang Dynasty (1600 BC-1046 BC) was founded as the first recorded Chinese dynasty, which is also called the Yin Dynasty (or Yin-Shang). It is in this period that the earliest records on marine activities were found, "The sea benefits fishery and salt production and facilitates water transport", which is the best portrayal of the understanding and utilization of the sea by ancient Chinese people.

After long-term development, marine fisheries, marine salt industry, ocean shipping and maritime trade became one of the major economic and social activities in ancient China.

The ancient Chinese governments formulated a unique management system for the sea by gradually strengthening administration of marine activities. In modern times, with the introduction of modern legal civilization, China also ushered in development of its marine legal system although it is still in the embryonic stage, which however, developed slowly subject to the domestic and international environment.

Not long after the People's Republic of China was founded, China attached great importance to building its legal system, and also brought building of its marine legal system to a rapid development stage. With vigorous development of the machine industry, China promulgated a series of regulations and laws on the sea, covering sea waters use and administration, marine resources exploration and protection, marine ecological environmental protection, maritime traffic safety, and marine scientific research, etc. Under the influence of the international law of the sea, China has established its marine legal system with the framework of UNCLOS as its basic pattern, to administrate different sea areas in accordance with their corresponding legal status and legal regime, which has played a vital role in safeguarding national maritime rights and interests, and standardizing the order of marine activities.

In accordance with the relevant provisions of international and Chinese laws, China enjoys extensive maritime rights and interests in its territorial seas, high seas, oceans and in the Polar Regions. In recent years, affected by historical, political, economic and other factors, China's surrounding oceans have seen frequent hot issues, and among them, the disputes over the Diaoyu Islands and the Huangye Island (Scarborough Shoal) have raised concerns both at home and abroad. To resolutely safeguard maritime rights and interests against any infringement and maintain stable relations with maritime neighbors for mutual development, China has always pursued the basic principle of peaceful settlement of maritime disputes to properly handle contradictions with the countries concerned, making active contributions to creating a peaceful and stable regional environment.

China has nearly 3 million square kilometers of waters under its jurisdiction. The vast blue territory carries China's hope to address the contradiction between population growth and resource scarcity, and achieve the goal of building a moderately prosperous society. In the future, China's marine legislation and rights safeguarding should harmonize with the international trends and its domestic situations to address relatively inadequate marine legislation and complex and challenging situations in safeguarding maritime rights, and provide solid support to protect national security, administrate marine exploration, maintain harmonious marine ecology and promote the development of the marine economy.

This book introduces the development of China's marine legal system and the progress of safeguarding its maritime rights from the development course and content of the law of the sea, the scope of maritime rights and interests, and hot issues on rights safeguarding, etc. The book is mainly composed by Mi Chenxi and Zhang Ying from the Office of the Law of the Sea of China Institute for Marine Affairs (CIMA) of the State Oceanic Administration. Wu Jilu, Zhang Dan and Shu Zhenya, to whom sincere thanks should be extended to, also provided valuable reference comments.

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