

PALEO-VEGETATION ON THE EMERGED CONTINENTAL SHELF: POLLEN RECORD FROM THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

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The recent studies on dispersal dynamics and source areas of pollen from hemipelagic sediments recovered from continental slopes of the South China Sea reveal the types of vegetation on the exposed continental slopes at the last glaciation from 40 to 15 kaBP. At the glacial low stands of sea level, *Artemisia* (herb or shrub of temperate grassland) dominated grassland covered the northern continental shelf and tropical lowland rainforest and mangroves grew on the southern side i.e. Sunda Land. Consequently, the climate in the northern SCS must be much colder and drier during the last glacial time compared to the present. Sunda Land experienced only insignificant decrease in temperature and was not drier than today. The increased contrast between the northern and southern parts in the vegetational and climatic changes during the last glaciation probably resulted from the enhanced boreal winter monsoon, which gave rise to aridity to the northern shelf, but brought moisture to the southern side of the sea.