

Liu-k'iu and “Liu-k'iu Hypotheses”

Cheng-sheng Tu

ABSTRACT

The so-called “Liu-k'iu Hypotheses” relates to the arguments in medieval Chinese classics on the geographical location and whereabouts of the state of Liu-k'iu, whether it's referencing the modern day Okinawa, derived from the narrative developed since Ming and Qing Dynasties, or Taiwan, or both, this is a topic of intense discussion of the past a century and half without a definite conclusion to this day, and an ongoing one in the field of history.

It is however, a small topic embodied in the grand scope of history as it doesn't confine itself within the realm of academia, it also invokes disputes as far as realpolitik is concerned. The classic references of the invasion of Sui Empire in *Book of Sui* not only filled the historical void left since historical records on Taiwan and Okinawa, in a sense it also affects the sovereignty and territorial claims concerning China, Japan and Taiwan. This unique phenomenon has consequently reflected on the education and the development of historical viewpoints of these nations.

Through exploring their origins and dissecting the academic disciplines and fundamental methods involved in forming their respective narratives, as well as discovering the hidden agendas within the subconsciousness, this thesis is a study of the major three hypotheses concerning this issue, the “okinawa hypothesis”, “the Taiwan hypothesis”, and the “hybrid hypothesis”.

The argument, from a political point of view, it can be determined imminently. As for academic aspiration, without the evidences of new and unseen materials, it remains unsolved. This thesis does not take sides, conversely it aims to reflect the complexity and intrinsically involved in this historical argument.

Due to the unfamiliarity and taboo imbued in the Chinese tradition towards sea and ocean, the studies have been scarce and opaque in the past. If my actual standpoint is to be rendered, I would say that we don't have to forcibly pinpoint the exact location before Ming Dynasty.

Keywords: Liu-k'iu, Liu-k'iu Hypotheses, Southern Islands, The Surface and Intrinsically of History