

ATMOSPHERIC AND OCEANIC PROCESSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ONSET OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA MONSOON

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The onset and evolution of the 1998 South China Sea monsoon will be described using satellite data as well as observations collected during the IOP of SCSMEX. Two onset stages have been identified. The first is associated with the establishment of the southwesterly flow and frontal cloud structure over south China and the northern South China Sea around the second week of May. The second stage is associated with the development of deep convection over the central and northern South China Sea with a reversal of surface wind from easterlies to westerlies. The changes in atmospheric moisture, organization of convection and air-sea fluxes during those two stages are compared and contrast with climatology. Preliminary results from nested regional models will also be described.

Key words: *South China Sea, monsoon*