



## Research paper

# Late Miocene provenance change on the eastern margin of the Yinggehai-Song Hong Basin, South China Sea: Evidence from U–Pb dating and Hf isotope analyses of detrital zircons



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## ABSTRACT

Understanding the provenance of the reservoir in a sedimentary basin is of great importance in hydrocarbon exploration and production. The Yinggehai-Song Hong Basin is one of the most important Cenozoic petroliferous basins in the South China Sea. To better understand the provenance characteristics of the Upper Miocene Huangliu Formation (Tortonian-Messinian) on the eastern margin of the basin and test the influence of uplift of the Tibetan Plateau in the South China Sea, 172 single zircons from two sandstone samples in the Lingtou gas field were dated by U–Pb chronometer, and 54 of these grains were spot analyzed for Hf isotopes. The results indicate that the upper member of the Huangliu Formation in this gas field shows two major peaks of U–Pb ages at ca. 250 Ma and ca. 432 Ma, along with four subordinate peaks at ca. 757 Ma, ca. 1926 Ma, ca. 2529 Ma and ca. 2775 Ma. The initial Hf isotope ratios [ $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$ ] of these zircons are negative to positive for each age group, suggesting that existing crustal materials were mixing with new mantle melts in some magmatic episodes. In contrast, the lower member of the Huangliu Formation show two major age peaks at ca. 98 Ma and 248 Ma, with a subordinate peak at ca. 1453 Ma. The  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values are concentrated between  $-11.6$  and  $-3.4$ , revealing that they were derived from older crust. Comparing with the source characteristics of tectonic units surrounding the basin, the source of the upper member in the gas field was mainly from the southern Yangtze Block, whereas the lower member was derived from the Hainan Uplift. Together with the change of climate and sedimentation rate after 10 Ma on the northern margin of the South China Sea, we attribute the provenance change to the uplift of the Tibetan Plateau at the same time.

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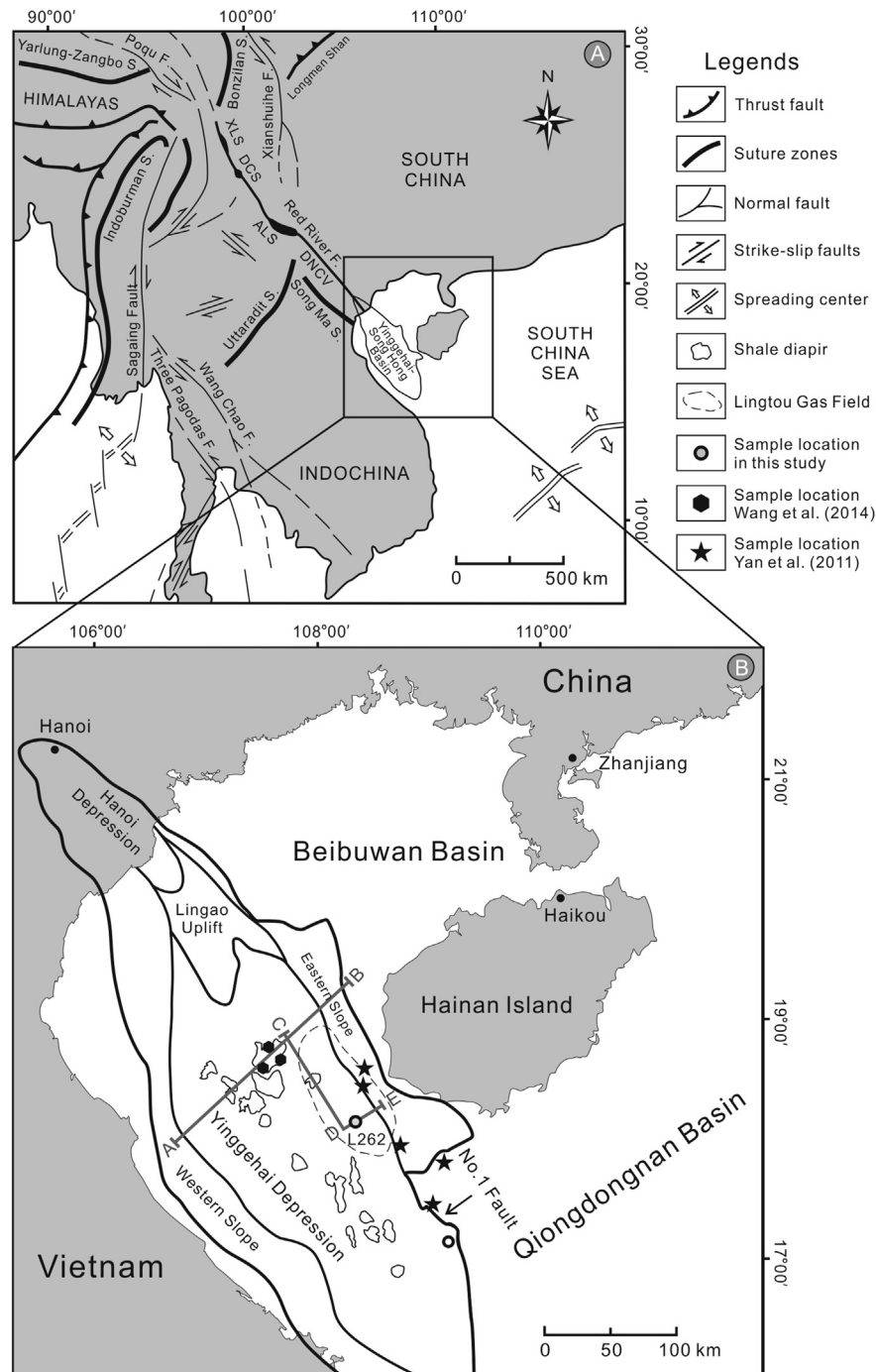
## 1. Introduction

Studies on the provenance of a reservoir and its transport routes are critical to establish its tectonic evolution in a sedimentary basin (Morton et al., 2001; Tsikouras et al., 2011). Uncertainties in the provenance and distribution of the reservoir may contribute to operational risks in drilling. The Upper Miocene Huangliu Formation is an important hydrocarbon exploration target in the Yinggehai-Song Hong (Y-SH) Basin, South China Sea. During the last

decade, much attention has been paid to the provenance of the deep marine sedimentary rocks of the Huangliu Formation due to its huge gas potential and commercial value. Several published research papers focused on the petrography, sequence stratigraphy, geochemistry, heavy mineral analysis, and whole-rock isotopes and geochronology (e.g. Gong et al., 1997; Wu, 1997; Huang et al., 2003; Yan et al., 2007; Xie, 2009; Lei et al., 2011; Yan et al., 2011; Wang et al., 2014), which greatly enhanced our understanding of the distribution of reservoir in the basin. Yan et al. (2011) used detrital zircon geochronology of the eastern slope of the basin (Fig. 1B) to show that two major age peaks at 110–90 Ma and 275–225 Ma, suggest the source was derived from Hainan Island. Wang et al. (2014) used the same methods to constrain the provenance of the

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**Figure 1.** Geologic sketch map of the Yinggehai-Song Hong Basin, (A) Modified after Tapponnier et al. (1990), Leloup et al. (1995), Gilley et al. (2003) and Zhu et al. (2009); (B) Modified after Huang et al. (2005) and Lei et al. (2011).

sedimentary rocks in the Dongfang gas field in the central Y-SH Basin. The authors argued that the detritus in the Dongfang gas field was derived from multiple sources since the Late Miocene. Conventional heavy minerals, seismic profiles and sedimentary facies data suggest that the sediments of the Huangliu Formation in the Lingtou gas field are also derived from Hainan Island (Gong et al., 1997; Xie, 2009). However, the conclusion is skeptical because the basin is located in structurally complex regions with multiple source areas (e.g. Indochina and Yangtze blocks) (Wang et al., 2014), and lacks precise geochronologic and isotopic data. Therefore, the provenance of the sandstones in the Lingtou gas field

remains unclear. Although conventional methods of determining provenance appear to reach their limits and cannot meet the needs of further hydrocarbon exploration, U–Pb ages add the time dimension to the provenance analysis (Beltrán-Triviño et al., 2013). U–Pb dating of detrital zircon is one of the most widely used methods in provenance studies, especially combined with Hf isotopes (e.g. Griffin et al., 2004; Meinhold et al., 2008; Wu et al., 2010; Zhao et al., 2013).

This study uses combined U–Pb and Lu–Hf isotope analyses of detrital zircons from marine core samples to constrain sedimentary provenance of the Huangliu Formation in the Lingtou gas field,

eastern margin of the Y-SH Basin. The main purposes of the study are (a) to understand zircon age compositions of the Upper Miocene Huangliu Formation in the gas field; (b) to determine the sedimentary provenance; and (c) to discuss provenance changes and their tectonic implications.

**2. Geological setting**

The NNW–SSE trending Y-SH Basin, located and surrounded by the Hainan Island to the east, the South China Block to the south and the Indochina Block to the west (Fig. 1), is a Cenozoic pull-apart basin. The basin was developed on the northern margin of the South China Sea continental shelf, and the formation was generally considered to be related to the southeastward strike-slip deformation and clockwise rotation of the Indochina Block as a result of the collision and indentation of India into Asia (Fig. 1A) (Molnar and Tapponnier, 1975; Tapponnier et al., 1986; Guo et al., 2001; Sun et al., 2003; Yan et al., 2011). The basin is bordered on the north

and east by the Beibuwan and Qiongdongnan basins, respectively (Fig. 1B).

Up to now, a number of commercial gas fields have been found in young, shallow reservoirs in the basin. The stratigraphic units related to hydrocarbon generation and accumulation are divided into: the Lingtou Formation (Eocene); Yacheng and Lingshui formations (Middle and Upper Oligocene, respectively); the Sanya, Meishan, and Huangliu formations (Miocene) and the Yinggehai Formation (Pliocene), which are covered by Quaternary sediments and underlain by pre-Paleogene strata (Fig. 2) (Gong et al., 1997; Geng et al., 1998; Gong and Li, 2004). The basin is characterized by its large volumes, subsidence rates, overpressures, and diapirs which widely developed in the central Yinggehai Depression (Zhang et al., 1996; Luo et al., 2003; Huang et al., 2009). These diapirs, in an en echelon arrangement, and varying in shape and size, have been recognized by their great significance in hydrocarbon exploration (Xie et al., 2001; Wang and Huang, 2008; Huang et al., 2009; Lei et al., 2011) (Fig. 1B). The basin contains up to 17 km thick

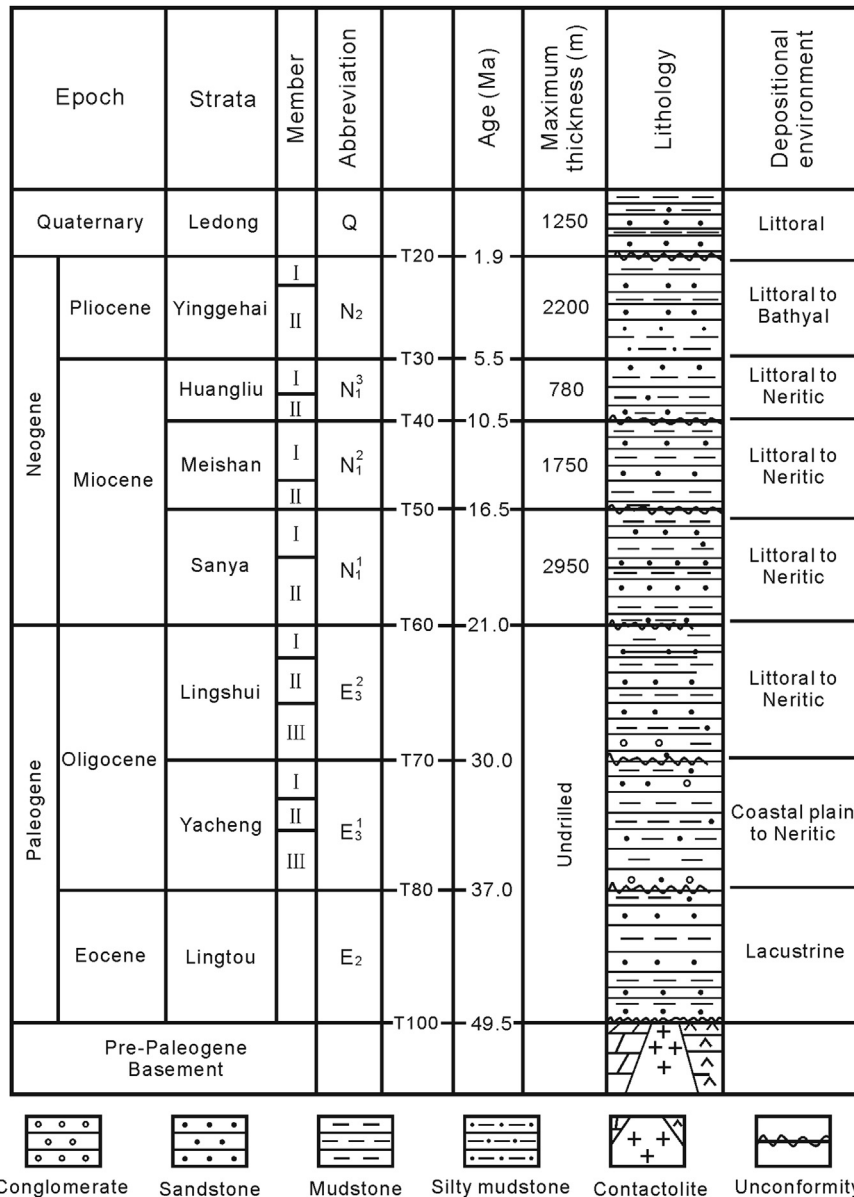


Figure 2. Regional stratigraphic column of the Y-SH Basin, modified after Gong et al. (1997), Huang et al. (2003) and Xie (2009).

of Paleogene to Quaternary sedimentary rocks (Gong et al., 1997; Yan et al., 2011). The infill sedimentary rocks in the central Yinggehai depression is composed by lacustrine, littoral and neritic to littoral and bathyal clastic deposits. The depositional facies of the Huangliu Formation (T40–T30) are shown in Figure 3.

### 3. Sampling and analytical methods

#### 3.1. Sampling

Two sedimentary rock samples (L262-1 and L262-2) were collected from the core library of CNOOC Ltd., Zhanjiang, China.

Sample L262-1 was collected from the upper member of the Huangliu Formation (8.2–5.5 Ma) that consists mainly of fine sandstones, siltstones and mudstones at a depth of 2535 m. Sample L262-2 was selected from the lower member of the Huangliu Formation (10.5–8.2 Ma) that is composed mainly of gray green sandstones and mudstones at a depth of 2740 m (Figs. 3 and 4). Both samples were from the “L262 well” which is located in the Lingtuo gas field, eastern margin of the Yinggehai Depression (GPS: N 18°22′10″, E 108°22′30″) (Figs. 1B and 4).

#### 3.2. Zircon U–Pb isotopic analysis by LA-ICP-MS

Detrital zircon U–Pb dating was performed on polished grain mounts by laser ablation-inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry (LA-ICP-MS). Zircons from the two samples were separated using heavy liquids and a Frantz magnetic separator, following purification by hand sorting. Zircon grains were mounted in epoxy and polished down to near half sections to expose internal structures. Approximately 300 zircon grains were handpicked from each sample.

Cathodoluminescence (CL) imaging of zircon grains was carried out using a Gatan Mono CL detector attached to an Electron Microprobe (JSM6510, Japan) at Beijing GeoAnalysis Co., Ltd., to identify the internal structures of the grains and to select target sites for laser ablation analyses. Zircons were dated using a LA-ICP-MS hosted at the State Key Laboratory of Isotopic Geochemistry, Guangzhou Institute of Geochemistry, Chinese Academy of Sciences (GIG-CAS). Sample mounts were placed in the two-volume sample cell flushed with Ar and He. Laser ablation was operated at a constant energy of 80 mJ and at 8 Hz, with a spot diameter of 33 μm. The ablated material was carried by the He gas to the Agilent 7500a ICP-MS. Element corrections were made for mass bias drift, which was evaluated by reference to standard glass NIST SRM 610. The

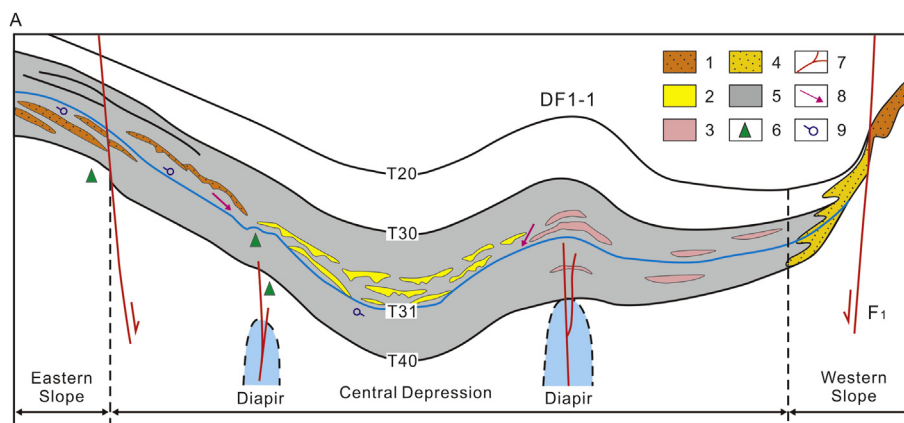
Temora was used as the age standard ( $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U} = 416.8 \text{ Ma}$ ) (Black et al., 2003). Details of analytical procedure, precision and accuracy are similar to those of Jackson et al. (2004), Yuan et al. (2004) and Liu et al. (2010).

The  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  ages <1000 Ma are used, whereas  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  ages were selected if the  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  ages were older than 1000 Ma. For statistical purposes, ages which display more than  $\pm 10\%$  discordance were rejected in this study. Isotopic ratios of U–Th–Pb were calculated using ICPMSDataCal (Version 7.2) (Liu et al., 2008, 2010). Common Pb was corrected by ComPbCorr#3\_151 using the method of Andersen (2002). The age calculation and concordia plots were made using ISOPLOT (Version 3.0) (Ludwig, 2003). To show accuracy and analytical precision, data points are displayed on concordia plots as filled error ellipses, with all errors reported at the 1 Sigma confidence level.

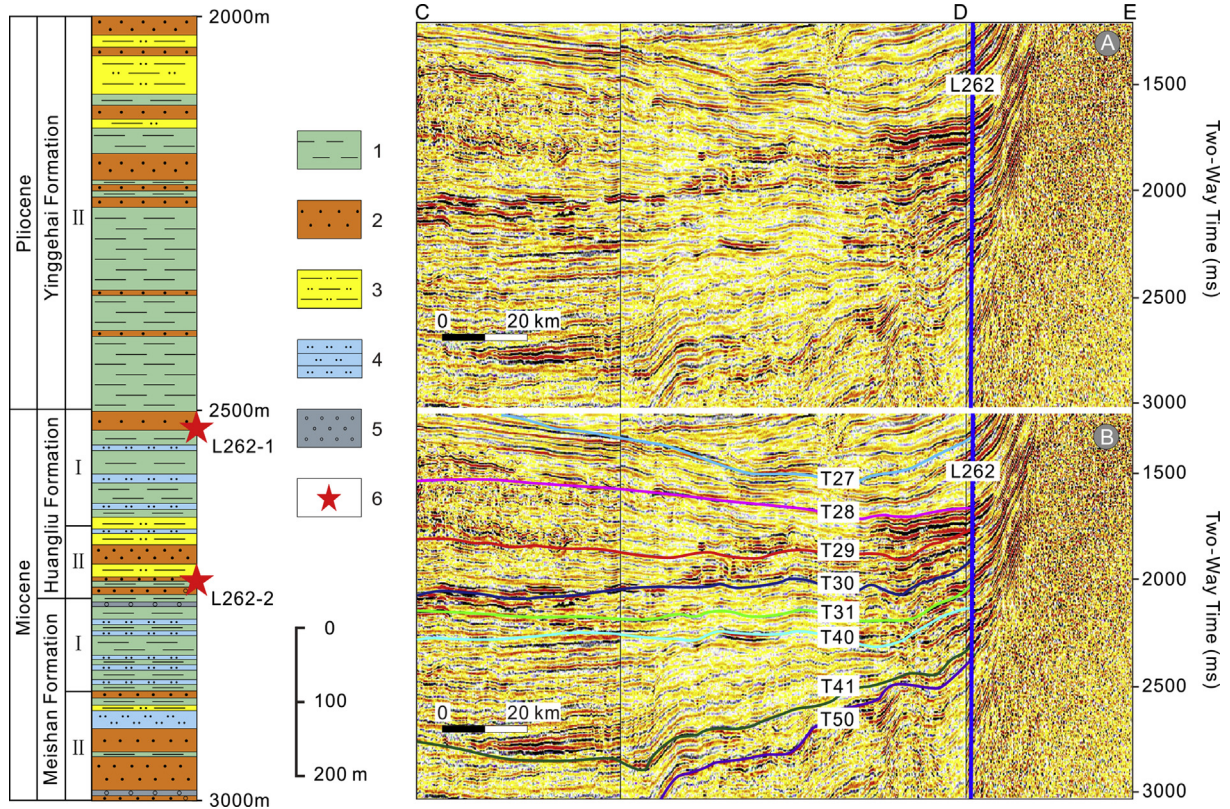
#### 3.3. Zircon Hf isotopic analysis by LA-MC-ICP-MS

In situ zircon Lu–Hf isotopic analysis was carried out on a Neptune Plus multi-collector ICP-MS equipped with a RESOLUTION M-50 laser-ablation system at the State Key Laboratory of Isotopic Geochemistry, GIG-CAS. The Lu–Hf isotopic measurements were made on the same spots that were previously analyzed for U–Pb ages. The laser parameters were as follows: spot size, 45 μm; repetition rate, 8 Hz; energy, 80 mJ. Helium was used as a carrier gas and a small flow of nitrogen was added in the gas line to enhance the sample signal. A normal single spot analysis consists of 30 s gas blank collection and 30 s laser ablation. The integration time was 0.131 s and about 200 cycles of data were collected.  $^{173}\text{Yb}$  and  $^{175}\text{Lu}$  were used to correct the isobaric interference of  $^{176}\text{Yb}$  and  $^{176}\text{Lu}$  on  $^{176}\text{Hf}$ . The  $^{176}\text{Hf}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  was normalized to  $^{179}\text{Hf}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  0.7325 using an exponential law for mass bias correction. Penglai sample was used as the reference standard (Li et al., 2010). The analytical procedures were the same as those described by Wu et al. (2006) and Yuan et al. (2008).

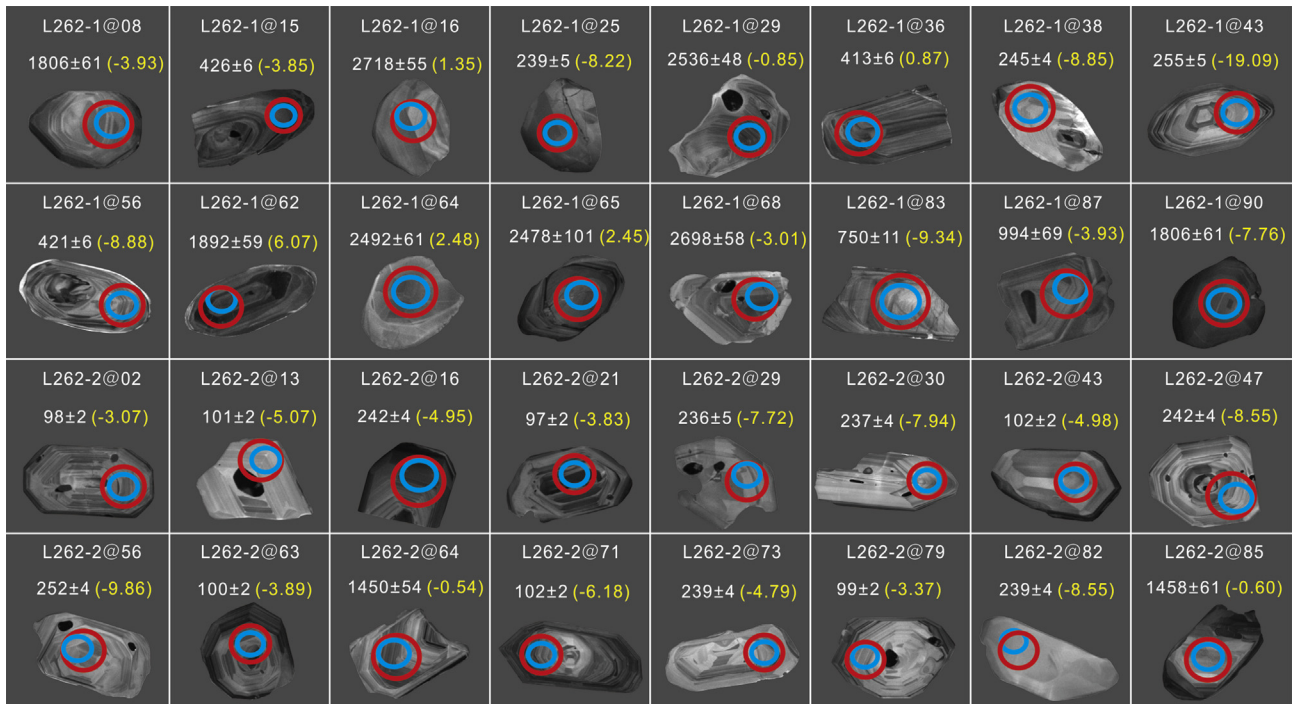
The initial Hf isotope ratios are denoted as  $\varepsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values that were calculated with the Chondritic Uniform Reservoir (CHUR) at the time of zircon crystallization, and the present-day  $^{176}\text{Hf}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  and  $^{176}\text{Lu}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  ratios of chondrite and depleted mantle of 0.28277 and 0.0332, 0.28325 and 0.0384, respectively (Blichert-Toft and Albarède, 1997). Initial  $^{176}\text{Hf}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  values were calculated based on  $^{176}\text{Lu}$  decay constant of  $1.865 \times 10^{-11} \text{ year}^{-1}$  (Scherer et al., 2001). The single-stage model Hf ages ( $T_{\text{DM1}}$ ) were computed with reference to the depleted mantle with a present-day  $^{176}\text{Lu}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  ratio of 0.28325 and a  $^{176}\text{Lu}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  ratio of 0.0384 (Griffin et al., 2000). Two-stage model Hf ages ( $T_{\text{DM2}}$ ) were



**Figure 3.** Section of depositional facies of the Huangliu Formation (T40–T30) in the Y-SH Basin. Position of the section is shown in Figure 1B, modified after Zhang et al. (2013). Legend: 1- Delta; 2- Submarine fan; 3- Neritic beach and bar; 4- Seashore; 5- Neritic; 6- Tectonic slope break; 7- Fault; 8- Downlap; 9- Truncation. T30–T31: the upper member of the Huangliu Formation; T31–T40: the lower member of the Huangliu Formation.



**Figure 4.** Measured Miocene to Pliocene sequences of L262 drill core on the eastern margin of the Y-SH Basin and giving positions of investigated sandstone samples (Left). Uninterpreted (a) and interpreted (b) seismic profile shows the conformable contact between the upper and lower members of the Huangliu Formation (T30–T31 and T31–T40, respectively) (Right). Legend: 1-mudstone; 2-sandstone; 3-argillaceous siltstone; 4-siltstone; 5-conglomerate.



**Figure 5.** CL images of representative detrital zircons analyzed for the U–Pb ages and Lu–Hf isotopes. The large and small circles denote the LA-(MC)-ICP-MS analytical spots for the U–Pb ages and Lu–Hf isotopes, respectively. Numbers near the circles are U–Pb ages ( $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  ages are selected for zircons older than 1000 Ma and  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  ages for zircons less than 1000 Ma), with the  $\varepsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values (within parentheses). The blue and red circles are 33  $\mu\text{m}$  and 45  $\mu\text{m}$  in diameter, respectively. (For interpretation of the references to color in this figure legend, the reader is referred to the web version of this article.)

computed using a  $^{176}\text{Lu}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  value of 0.015 for average continental crust (Griffin et al., 2002). During the analyses, the  $^{176}\text{Hf}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  and  $^{176}\text{Lu}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  ratios of standard zircon (Penglai) were  $0.282907 \pm 0.000016$  ( $2\sigma$ ,  $n = 20$ ) and 0.000303, respectively. These values agree with the recommended  $^{176}\text{Hf}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  values for Penglai ( $0.282906 \pm 0.000016$ ,  $2\sigma$ ,  $n = 117$ ) (Li et al., 2010).

## 4. Results

CL images of representative zircons from the studied samples together with spot ages and  $\varepsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values are shown in Figure 5. The U–Pb age data are shown on concordia plots and relative age probability diagrams (Fig. 6), and are presented in detail in Table 1. The Hf isotope results are given in Table 2 and illustrated in Figures 7 and 8.

### 4.1. Zircon U–Pb ages

#### 4.1.1. Sample L262-1 (the upper member of the Huangliu Formation)

More than 300 zircon grains were separated from sample L262-1 which was collected from the upper member of the Huangliu Formation in the Lingtou gas field. The zircon grains are colorless and transparent, and show a wide range of shapes from prismatic crystals to oval grains with mostly rounded corners (Fig. 5), suggestive of a long transport of some zircons before deposition, or multi-cycle deposition. In addition, some zircon grains are incomplete, and they may have been damaged during transport. The zircon grains reach up to 300  $\mu\text{m}$  long, but are mainly in the range of 90–110  $\mu\text{m}$ . Most grains show oscillatory growth zoning under CL (Fig. 5) and have high Th/U values ( $>0.4$ ). All of these features indicate that the majority of the analyzed zircons are of a magmatic origin (Wu and Zheng, 2004).

Of the 90 analyses conducted on 90 zircons for this sample, 87 analyses are concordant within error (Fig. 6A). The measured

$^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  ( $<1000$  Ma) and  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  ( $>1000$  Ma) ages range from 3169 to 83 Ma. There are two major age peaks at ca. 250 Ma and ca. 432 Ma, along with a number of subordinate age peaks at ca. 757 Ma, ca. 1926 Ma, ca. 2529 Ma and ca. 2775 Ma.

#### 4.1.2. Sample L262-2 (the lower member of the Huangliu Formation)

Over 300 colorless zircon grains were separated from sample L262-2 which was collected from the lower member of the Huangliu Formation in the Lingtou gas field. Most of the zircon grains are angular or subangular (Fig. 5) and appear to have retained their euhedral crystal shapes, implying short transport before deposition. The grains reach up to 200  $\mu\text{m}$  long, but mainly range from 80 to 100  $\mu\text{m}$ . Most of the grains show oscillatory growth zoning in CL images (Fig. 5), and have high Th/U ratios ( $>0.4$ ), indicating that the majority of the analyzed zircons are of a magmatic origin (Wu and Zheng, 2004).

Of the 85 analyses conducted on 85 zircons for this sample, all of the analyses are concordant within error (Fig. 6B). The measured  $^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$  ( $<1000$  Ma) and  $^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$  ( $>1000$  Ma) ages range from 1457 to 93 Ma. There are two major age peaks at ca. 98 Ma and ca. 241 Ma, with a subordinate age peak at ca. 1453 Ma.

### 4.2. In situ zircon Hf isotopes

LA-MC-ICP-MS zircon Hf isotope measurements were performed following LA-ICP-MS U–Pb dating. Fifty-four dated zircon grains from the two samples (L262-1 and L262-2) were selected for in situ Hf isotope analyses. The sequence of analyses allowed the U–Pb ages and Hf isotopes to be done on the same spots as shown in Figure 5.

Twenty-nine spots were made on 29 zircon grains from sample L262-1. The results show a broad range of the initial  $^{176}\text{Hf}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  ratios from 0.2810 to 0.2825, with  $\varepsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values of  $-27.9$  to 6.1

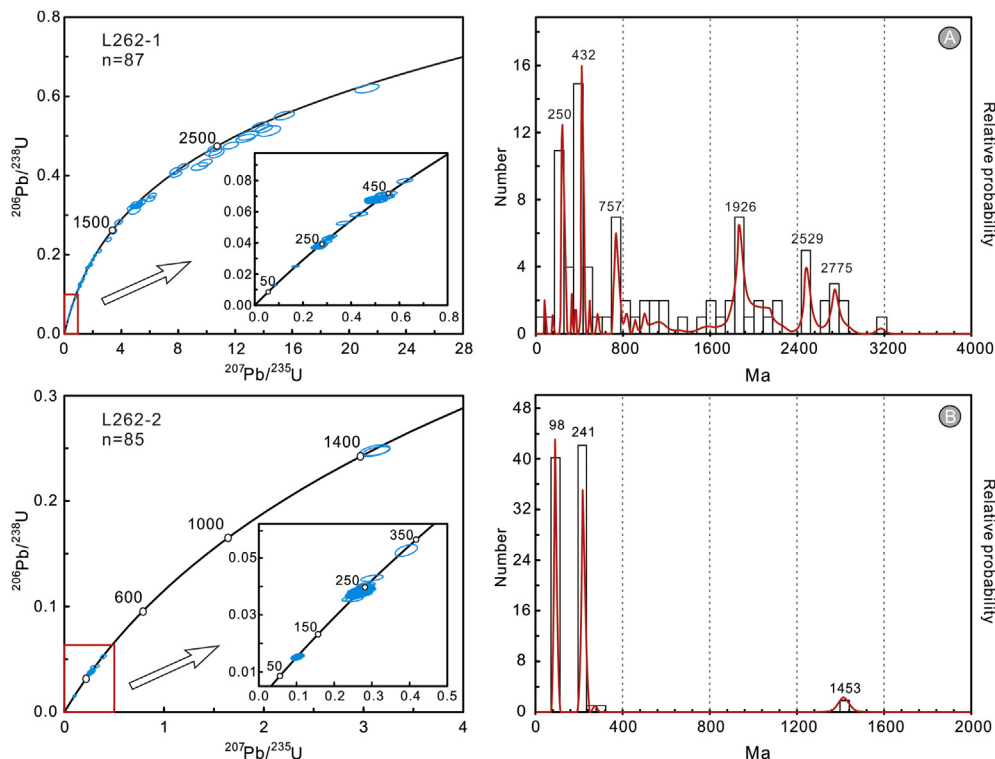


Figure 6. U–Pb Concordia and histogram diagram of detrital zircons for the two samples from the eastern margin of the Y-SH Basin. Data-point error ellipses are 1 sigma.









Table 1 (continued)

Grain no.	Element (ppm)		Th/U	Ratios		Age (Ma)				Discordant text						
	Th	U		$^{207}\text{Pb}/^{206}\text{Pb}$	$^{207}\text{Pb}/^{235}\text{U}$	$^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$	$^{207}\text{Pb}/^{235}\text{U}$	$^{206}\text{Pb}/^{238}\text{U}$	$1\sigma$							
L262-2@78	74.40	253.10	0.29	0.05153	0.00279	0.28613	0.01501	0.04038	0.00064	264.9	91.7	255.5	11.9	255.2	4.0	0.1
L262-2@79	161.47	237.52	0.68	0.05087	0.00402	0.10443	0.00776	0.01546	0.00033	235.3	183.3	100.9	7.1	98.9	2.1	2.0
L262-2@80	175.02	282.99	0.62	0.05104	0.00266	0.26182	0.01383	0.03701	0.00058	242.7	125.0	236.1	11.1	234.3	3.6	0.8
L262-2@81	169.39	298.36	0.57	0.04866	0.00380	0.10330	0.00756	0.01560	0.00024	131.6	174.0	99.8	7.0	99.8	1.6	0.1
L262-2@82	136.24	196.97	0.69	0.05087	0.00301	0.26611	0.01707	0.03772	0.00061	235.3	132.4	239.6	13.7	238.7	3.8	0.4
L262-2@83	248.68	555.70	0.45	0.05125	0.00195	0.26096	0.01075	0.03634	0.00045	253.8	91.7	235.4	8.7	230.1	2.8	2.3
L262-2@84	138.94	209.94	0.66	0.04959	0.00386	0.10417	0.00818	0.01560	0.00034	176.0	174.0	100.6	7.5	99.8	2.2	0.8
L262-2@85	48.67	73.46	0.66	0.09153	0.00294	3.11031	0.10146	0.24756	0.00371	1457.7	61.1	1435.2	25.1	1425.9	19.2	2.2

(Table 2 and Fig. 7A). The Hf isotopic model ages ( $T_{\text{DM}2}$ ) for these zircons range from 3.22 to 1.16 Ga (Table 2 and Fig. 8A).

Twenty-five spots were made on 25 zircon grains from sample L262-2. The results show a relatively narrow range of initial  $^{176}\text{Hf}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  ratios from 0.2818 to 0.2826, with  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values of  $-11.6$  to  $0.6$  (Table 2 and Fig. 7B). The Hf isotopic model ages ( $T_{\text{DM}2}$ ) for these zircons range from 2.07 to 1.10 Ga, with a concentration in 1.5–1.1 Ga (Table 2 and Fig. 8B).

## 5. Discussion

### 5.1. Source characteristics of surrounding tectonic units

The hinterland of the southern Yangtze Block, the Truong Son Belt (Indochina Block) and the Hainan Uplift (Cathaysia Block) (Fig. 1A) all constitute potential sedimentary sources for the Y-SH Basin during the Late Miocene (Xie, 2009; Wang et al., 2014). Understanding the provenance characteristics of these tectonic units is an important factor in determining the provenance of the studied samples.

The basement rocks of the southern Yangtze Block are of Proterozoic and Archean age (2100–1700 Ma and 2800–2300 Ma, respectively) (Metcalfe, 2006; Zheng et al., 2006). The block is characterized by Neoproterozoic magmatic activity (1000–700 Ma) (Chen and Jahn, 1998; Huang et al., 2009), probably in response to the breakup of Rodinia (Li et al., 2003; Ling et al., 2003). U–Pb ages of Late Paleozoic igneous rocks in the Youjiang Basin and Song Chay Massif range from 480 to 400 Ma (Roger et al., 2000; Carter et al., 2001; Yan et al., 2006; Yang et al., 2012a,b). Mesozoic igneous rocks associated with the Emeishan mantle plume, or collision between several micro-continents and the Yangtze Craton are found to yield U–Pb ages between 280 and 220 Ma (Hoa et al., 2008; Zhong et al., 2009; Zhong and Xu, 2009; Roger et al., 2012; Chen et al., 2014). The distributions of igneous rocks in this area are shown in Figure 9 (area A).

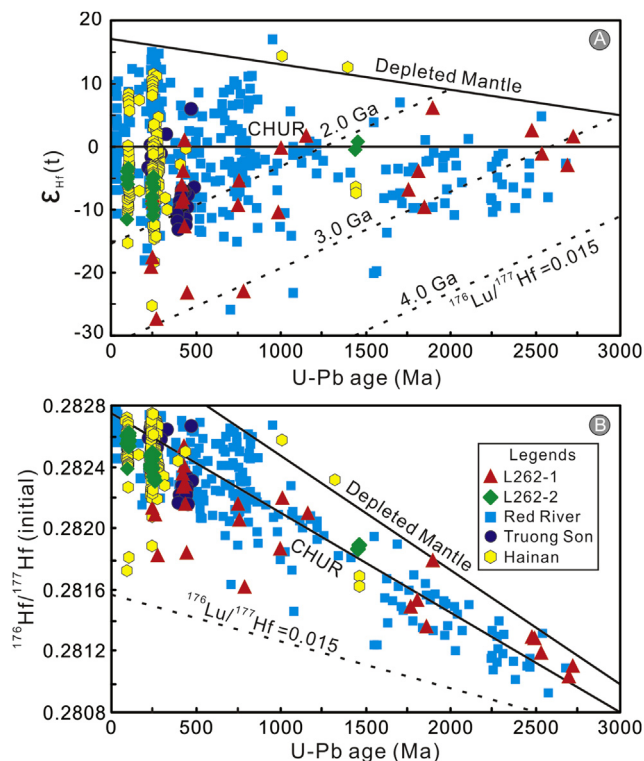
The Truong Son Belt is characterized by Silurian and Permian–Triassic granites, which correspond to the Caledonian and Indosinian Orogenic Events, respectively (Fig. 9, area B). Rocks of early Permian–Triassic arc magmatism (280–270 Ma and 250–240 Ma) are widely distributed in this belt (Hoa et al., 2008; Liu et al., 2012). In addition, the Early Paleozoic granitoids within the Truong Son Belt are mainly located in the southwest of the orogenic belt, with ages of 460–430 Ma (Carter et al., 2001; Lan et al., 2003; Usuki et al., 2009).

The Permian to Triassic granitoids are well developed in the Hainan Uplift, on the southern margin of the Cathaysia Block (Fig. 9, area C). Representative igneous intrusions include the Jianfengling granite (249 Ma), Shilu granite (262 Ma), Panyangdong granite (234 Ma), Changtangling granite (264 Ma), Baolang granite (272 Ma), Tianzai granite (245 Ma) and Zhizhong granite (272 Ma) (Li et al., 2006; Xie et al., 2006a, 2006b; Wen, 2013; Wen et al., 2013). The Yanshanian granitoids are mainly distributed in the southern and western parts of Hainan Island, and their U–Pb ages are mainly in the range of 170–80 Ma (Wang et al., 1991, 2011, 2015; Jia et al., 2009).

### 5.2. Provenance analysis of detrital zircon

Sedimentary detritus in the study area was presumably transported by paleo-fluvial systems (e.g. Red River, Ma River, Changhua River) surrounding the basin and was subsequently reworked during transgressions (Xie, 2009). U–Pb ages of detrital zircon have been widely used in detecting the provenance of geologic terranes and sedimentary sequences (Yang et al., 2012a,b). The U–Pb Concordia plots (Fig. 6) display striking age differences between the

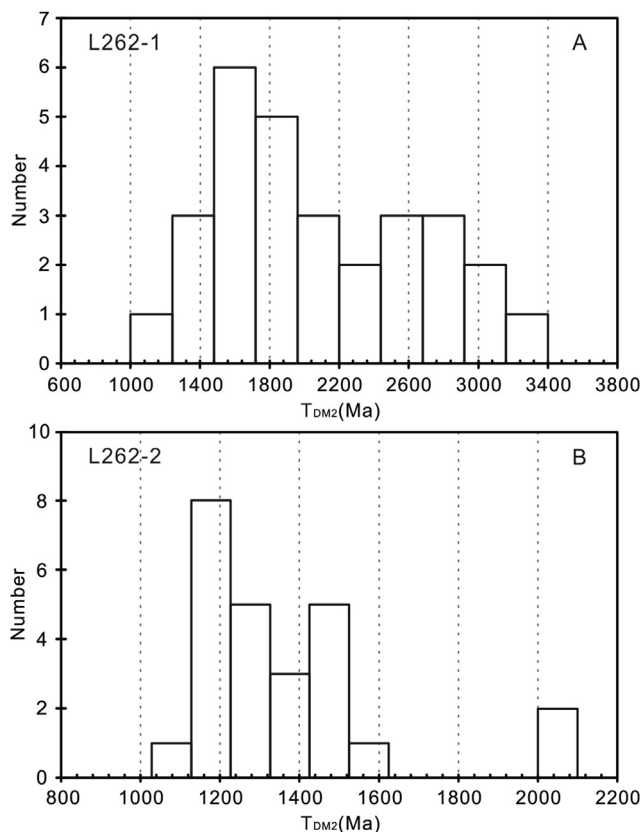




**Figure 7.** Plots of crystallization ages versus (A)  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$ , and (B)  $^{176}\text{Hf}/^{177}\text{Hf}$  for all detrital zircon analyses from the two sedimentary rocks L262-1 and L262-2. CHUR: Chondritic Uniform Reservoir; dashed lines show the evolution of crustal volumes with  $^{176}\text{Lu}/^{177}\text{Hf} = 0.015$ , corresponding to the average continental crust. Data of detrital zircons from the modern Red River and Red River Fault Zone are from Hoang et al. (2009) and Lin et al. (2012). Data for the Truong Son Belt are from our unpublished data. Data of the Mesozoic granites in the Hainan Island are from Wen (2013) and Wen et al. (2013).

suggest that Permian zircon grains from the modern river on the eastern margin of the Indochina Block have  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values ranging from  $-4.16$  to  $+0.47$  with model ages between 1200 and 840 Ma. A large number of Permian–Triassic zircons in the Hainan Uplift have  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values between  $-10$  and  $+1$  with model ages concentrated between 1800 and 1200 Ma (Wen, 2013; Wen et al., 2013). The Indosinian ages in sample L262-1 gave  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values at  $-27.91$  to  $-7.76$  (Fig. 7A) with model ages between 2438 and 1424 Ma (Fig. 8A), which are different from those of the Indosinian zircons in the Truong Son Belt, but similar to those of the Hainan and Red River in the southern Yangtze. The sediments of the Y-SH Basin are derived from several drainage systems, but the main input is the Red River (Song Hong) and its tributaries. The source of the Red River could be considered to be located mainly in the Yangtze Block (e.g. Hoang et al., 2009). Therefore, we suggest that the Indosinian zircon grains (ca. 250 Ma) were most likely derived from the southern Yangtze Block and the Hainan Uplift.

Caledonian zircon ages with an age peak at ca. 432 Ma are commonly related to the global tectonic-magmatic event termed the “Caledonian Orogeny”, which is manifested by a number of Early Paleozoic magmatic and metamorphic rocks in East Asia (Lu et al., 1999). As discussed above, Ordovician and Silurian granitoids are well distributed in the southern Yangtze and Indochina blocks. A large area of plutonic intrusive rocks is exposed along the Red River Fault Zone and Truong Son Belt (Fig. 9). Despite the Caledonian zircon grains that have been detected from Hainan Island, they could account for only a small portion of the total amounts. The  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values of these zircons range from  $-23.69$  to  $+0.87$  with model ages between 2378 and 1161 Ma, and mainly



**Figure 8.** Histograms of the two-stage Hf model ages for detrital zircons from the Huangliu Formation sandstones.

in a range of 1400–1200 Ma. Our unpublished data show that the Caledonian zircons from the modern river on the eastern margin of the Indochina Block have  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values ranging from  $-12.71$  to  $-6.34$  with model ages between 1832 and 1549 Ma. The Caledonian zircon grains extracted from sand of the modern Red River have  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values of  $-12.5$  to  $+6.33$  with model ages between 1602 and 883 Ma, with a peak at ca. 1200 Ma (Hoang et al., 2009). Although the  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values have an intersection between the Indochina and Yangtze blocks, the model ages of the sample are closer to those of the Yangtze Block.

The Neoproterozoic ages with a peak at ca. 757 Ma (Fig. 6) are in response to the “Jinningian Movement (1000–700 Ma)” in the South China Block, and may be associated with the breakup of the Rodinian supercontinent (Li et al., 2002). Anorogenic granite intrusions are widely distributed in the Yangtze Block (Chen and Jahn, 1998) and range from mafic to felsic in composition (Lin et al., 2012). There are many rock outcrops along the Red River Fault Zone on the southern margin of the Yangtze Block, and their emplaced ages range from 840 to 740 Ma with a peak at ca. 810 Ma (Li et al., 2005, 2009; Wang et al., 2010) (Fig. 9). Neoproterozoic zircon grains have also been discovered in the Truong Son Belt with an age peak at ca. 958 Ma (Usuki et al., 2013), which is older than the ages obtained from our sample. Because mid-Neoproterozoic zircons have not been reported from Hainan Island, we infer that those zircons may have been derived from the southern Yangtze Block. The range of ages in our sample yielded  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values of  $-23.72$  to  $-0.38$  with model ages between 2658 and 1692 Ma, suggesting that they were produced by reworking of Archean and Proterozoic crust.

Moreover, the Proterozoic (ca. 1926 Ma) and Archean age peaks (ca. 2775 Ma and 2529 Ma) in this sample (Fig. 6A) could be

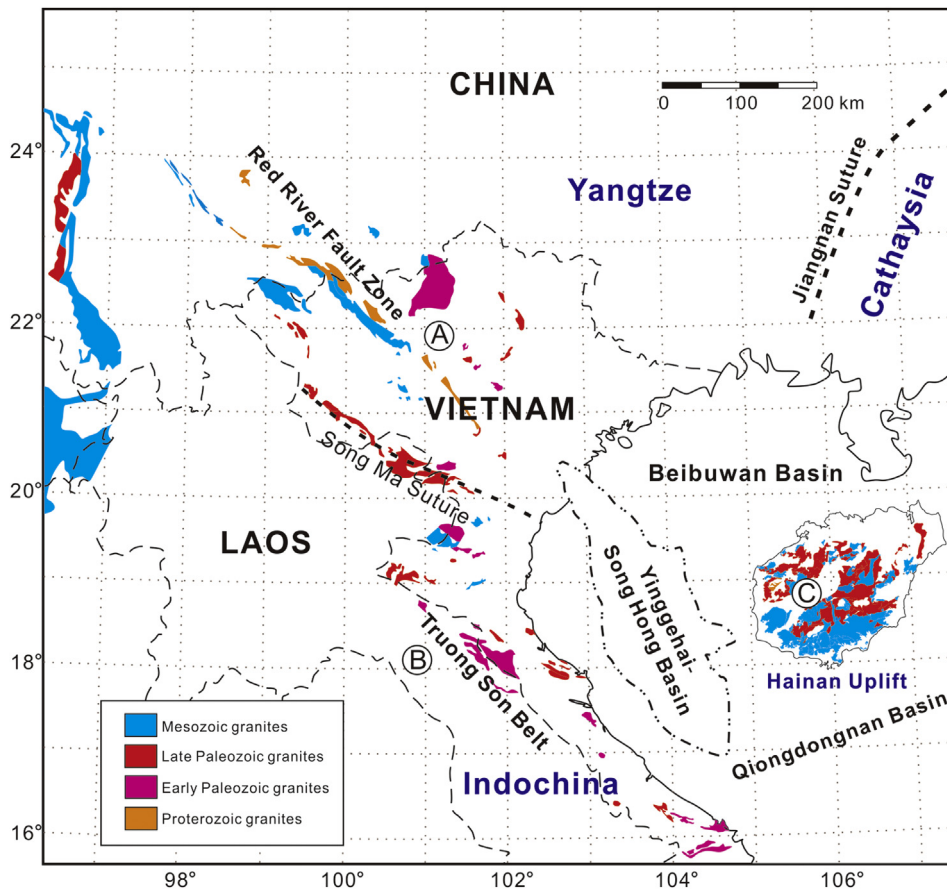


Figure 9. Distribution of the igneous rocks in the different tectonic units surrounding the Y-SH Basin.

considered to be sourced from the basement rocks of the Yangtze Block (Metcalf, 2006).

Abundant detrital zircon grains in these age groups have rounded corners (Fig. 5), revealing long distance transport and/or sediment recycling. In addition, the age populations of the sample show a strong similarity to those of the upper Miocene sandstone in the Yen Bai Basin (Hoang et al., 2009), the major provenance of which was argued to be from the southern Yangtze Block through the paleo-Red River and its tributaries. This suggests that the upper member of the Huangliu Formation was mainly sourced from the southern Yangtze Block, and the Hainan Uplift also provided minor detritus to the basin at the same time.

#### 5.2.2. The lower member of the Huangliu Formation (10.5–8.2 Ma)

Zircon grains from the lower member of the Huangliu Formation yield crystallization ages between 1457 and 93 Ma (Fig. 6B). U–Pb ages give two major age clusters at ca. 98 Ma and ca. 241 Ma, and a subordinate age cluster at ca. 1453 Ma (less than  $\pm 10\%$  discordant) (Fig. 6B).

The Late Yanshanian zircon grains with a peak at ca. 98 Ma account for almost half of the total grains (45.9%), which coincides with those of the Cretaceous igneous rocks in Hainan Uplift (Fig. 9). The Yanshanian granites have been recognized in the southern Hainan and yielded ages range from 170 to 80 Ma (Wang et al., 1991, 2011; Jia et al., 2009; Yan et al., 2011). Detrital zircons from modern rivers in southern Hainan Island show a main age peak around 100 Ma (Wang et al., 2015), and may be interpreted as a signature of the Hainan Uplift because they are rare or absent in the other surrounding tectonic units. The  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values of these zircons range

from  $-11.57$  to  $-4.98$  with model ages between 1237 and 1095 Ma, revealing that they were derived from the Mesoproterozoic crust.

The Late Permian–Triassic zircon U–Pb ages with a peak at ca. 241 Ma are consistent with those of the Indosinian granites in the South China Block. Also, the Permian (272–254 Ma) and Triassic (249–227 Ma) granitoids (Wen et al., 2013) which are dominantly shoshonitic-high-K A-type and I-type granites (Li et al., 2006; Xie et al., 2006a; Wen et al., 2013) have been widely discovered in the Hainan Uplift. The Late Permian–Triassic zircons in our sample have negative  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values of  $-10.78$  to  $-4.79$  with the Mesoproterozoic model ages (Table 2), which are consistent with the  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values ( $-10$  to  $+1$ ) in the Hainan Uplift, suggesting they were largely derived from recycling of an old crust.

Two Mesoproterozoic zircon grains in the sample have  $\epsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values of  $-0.65$  and  $+0.60$  with model ages of 2073 and 2023 Ma. The two grains have older Hf mode ages than their U–Pb ages, suggesting some degree of reworking of existing crust in the magmatic episode (He et al., 2013). The Mesoproterozoic felsic volcanic rocks in the western Hainan Island were dated at 1460–1430 Ma, which was considered to be related to the Grenvillian orogeny in Asia (Xu et al., 2007; Li et al., 2008).

The detrital zircon grains in these age populations are mostly euhedral to subhedral in shape (Fig. 5), suggesting that the clastic materials were mostly derived from a local source. The general absence of Palaeozoic, Neoproterozoic and older zircon populations ( $>1500$  Ma), but abundant Cretaceous ages implies that there were no clastic materials derived from the Yangtze Block and the Truong Son Belt. The lower member of the Huangliu Formation on the eastern margin was only derived from the Hainan Uplift.

In summary, the source areas for the lower and upper members of the Huangliu Formation are different in the Lingtou gas field (Drill L262). The provenance of the lower member was from the adjoining Hainan Uplift, east of the basin, whereas the sediment of the upper member was mainly derived from the southern Yangtze Block, northwest of the basin. The possible provenance directions and transport routes of the Upper Miocene Huangliu Formation are shown in Figure 10.

Combined with the age data from the Dongfang gas field (Wang et al., 2014) and Eastern Slope (Yan et al., 2007) of the basin, we suggest that the diversity of the age populations in the source areas reflect changes in sediment supply to the sample locations. In the central Y-SH Basin, the age populations are complicated with a wide range of zircon ages, which indicates multiple sources from the Yangtze Block, Hainan Island and Indochina Block (Wang et al., 2014). However, the age populations in the eastern Y-SH Basin are more simple, with two major age peaks consistent with derivation from Hainan Island (Yan et al., 2011). Compared with the provenance characteristics of the early and late stages of the Late Miocene (Fig. 10), we find that the source change happened only in the Lingtou gas field, which means the northwestern source (Red River) changed from short to long distance transport during the Late Miocene. The provenance change in this area may have been related to the tectonic event in East Asia.

### 5.3. Tectonic implication

The Y-SH Basin is a principal repository of the materials eroded by the Red River drainage and should be sensitive to changes in erosion rate in eastern Tibet. The U–Pb ages and Hf isotopes of the detrital zircons suggest a provenance change between the upper and lower members of the Huangliu Formation in the Lingtou gas field. The Late Miocene provenance change may be in response to a major phase of Tibetan Plateau uplift, an important tectonic event that affected a wide area in the South China and Indochina blocks during the Late Miocene (Liu and Yin, 2002).

The collision between India and Asia in southeastern Asia may have occurred before ca. 55 Ma (Lee and Lawver, 1995; Tapponnier et al., 2001), which set up a series of chain reactions and caused the uplift of the Tibetan Plateau in southeastern Asia (Molnar and Tapponnier, 1975, 1978; Tapponnier et al., 1986). The mechanism for the uplift of the Tibetan Plateau is still controversial, and the major hypotheses include the distributed shortening model

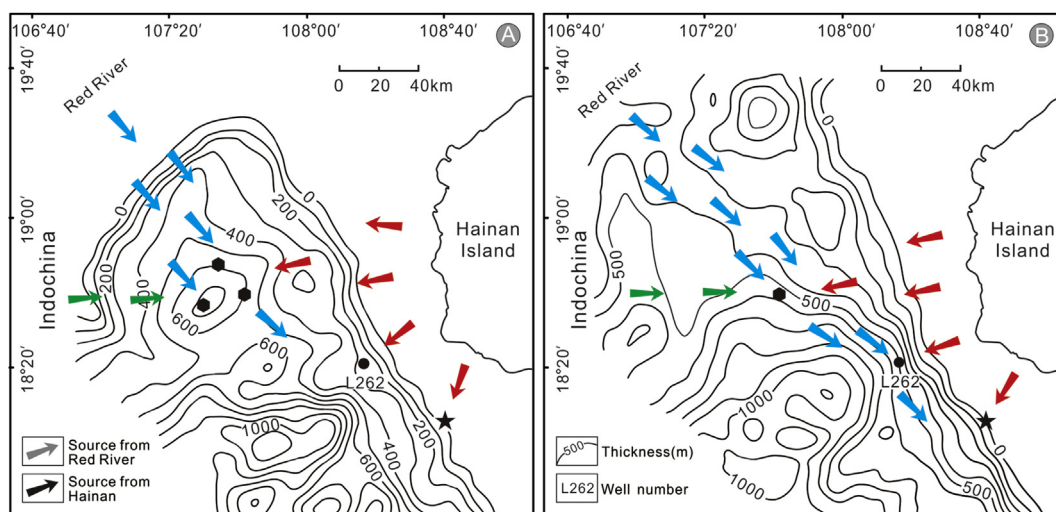
(England and Houseman, 1986; Molnar et al., 1993) and the continental extrusion model (Tapponnier et al., 1982, 2001). The provenance change is consistent with the broad climate change in the Late Miocene (Harrison et al., 1992; Molnar et al., 1993), which was affected significantly by increases in altitude of the plateau (An et al., 2001). Erosion patterns in southeastern Asia may have been related to rock uplift rates, but are presently not climatically controlled (Burbank et al., 2003; Hoang et al., 2009). Wan et al. (2007) used a multi-proxy approach to reconstruct the past change of the East Asian monsoon since 20 Ma. The results show that a profound shift occurred at ca. 8 Ma, which is in accordance with the time of the stratigraphic boundary between the upper and lower members of the Huangliu Formation (8.2 Ma). They also argued that the phased uplift of the Tibetan Plateau played a significant role in strengthening the Asian monsoon.

Additional studies also support this above conclusion. For example, Cliff and Sun (2006) suggested that the sedimentation rates in the Y-SH Basin increased sharply at the end of the Miocene. Clark et al. (2005) used an initiation of the major river incisions to identify the timing of the initial uplift at 13–9 Ma and the high erosion rates between 0.23 and 0.47 mm/yr, and the result does coincide with the thermochronology data published by Xu and Kamp (2000) and Kirby et al. (2002). Gong and Li (2004) found that the uplift of the Tibetan Plateau since 10 Ma has had an important influence on the climate and sedimentary environment of the South China Sea, and the thick infill of the Y-SH Basin has been supplied by paleo-Red River delta during the Late Miocene.

The provenance evolution of the Y-SH Basin can be summarized as follows: on the eastern margin of the basin, owing to paleogeographic and climate frameworks, the Hainan Uplift as a local and single source provided detritus to the Huangliu Formation during the early stage of the Late Miocene (10.5–8.2 Ma). The uplift of the eastern Tibetan Plateau induced by the collision between India and Asia, instigated a climate change in southern Asia and hence an increase in erosion. The paleo-Red River would have been able to carry more detritus to greater distances, and thus the eastern side of the Y-SH Basin began to receive detritus from the southern Yangtze Block during the late stage of the Late Miocene (8.2–5.5 Ma) (Fig. 10).

## 6. Conclusions

The detrital zircon U–Pb ages and Hf isotopes show a marked difference between the upper and lower members of the Huangliu



**Figure 10.** Possible provenance directions of the Upper Miocene Huangliu Formation on the eastern margin of the Y-SH Basin: (A) the early stage of the Late Miocene and (B) the late stage of the Late Miocene. The sediment isopach is modified after Gong et al. (1997). Symbols are as in Figure 1.

Formation in the Lingtou gas field, eastern margin of the Yinggehai-Song Hong Basin. The age spectra from the lower member are comparatively simple with two sharp and well-defined peaks. The  $\varepsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$  values of the zircons are mostly negative, revealing that the zircons were largely derived from recycling of an old crust. The age spectra of the upper member are diverse with a wide range of ages and multiple peaks. The initial Hf isotope ratios [ $\varepsilon_{\text{Hf}}(t)$ ] exhibit negative to positive values, suggesting that the existing crustal materials were mixing with new mantle melts. The diverse U–Pb ages and Hf isotope patterns suggest different source areas and changes in sediment supply to the sample locations. The provenance of the upper member was largely derived from the Yangtze Block, whereas detritus of the lower member was derived from the Hainan Uplift. The change in provenance provides an important clue in understanding the movement of the Tibetan Plateau and its influence on the South China Sea during the Late Miocene. According to the uplift history of the Tibetan Plateau and the climate and sedimentation rate changes on the northern margin of the South China Sea, the provenance change may correspond to a major phase of Tibetan Plateau uplift during the Late Miocene.

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## Appendix A. Supplementary data

Supplementary data related to this article can be found at <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.marpetgeo.2014.12.004>.

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