THE ROLE OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN CHINESE IN CHINA'S MODERNIZATION PROCESS AMIDST THE TRANSFORMATION OF COLONIAL HERITAGE

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Abstract: The Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia is a special group which moved and flowed between China and Southeast Asia in modern history, especially since the 17th century. The process of Southeast Asia’s colonization not only was a process of plundering resource, but also a process of expanding modernization due to the first-mover advantage of the Industrial Revolution. As a result, Southeast Asian Chinese are the witnesses, participants, and disseminators of modern civilization from Europe to Southeast Asia. In the process of China’s modernization, overseas Chinese who have long been flowing between Southeast Asia and China have played an irreplaceable role: on the one side, they are the inheritors of European colonial heritage; on the other side, they are the pioneers of modern Chinese civilization for three reasons. First, Southeast Asian Chinese have provided financial support for China’s modernization through capital inputs such as banks, overseas remittances, and foreign exchange; secondly, the “Nanyang Style” led by the overseas Chinese’s lifestyle, education, and etiquette, etc., in Southeast Asia is a junction of Western and Chinese civilizations, which has become an ideological energy in China’s modernization process; and thirdly, Southeast Asian Chinese directly invest and build factories in China, integrating China into the world’s modernization process, sharing and creating the achievements of modern civilization.

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Room G5-314
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