

“ home” and “ away” : belonging and network of returned overseas

Chinese

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Generally speaking, returned overseas Chinese in my investigation are those individuals and groups who, owing to the anti-Chinese agitations or then intensive international relationships from the beginning of 1960s to the end of 1970s, had to return to their homeland China from Southeast Asia. Most of those returnees were allocated to overseas Chinese farms by government. So to returned overseas Chinese, what on earth is the significance of “return to homeland China”? The returned overseas Chinese I investigated were born in the host countries, and yet regarded China where practically they hadn't been previously as “homeland”. In fact, some of those returnees, being attracted by the propaganda, such as the superiorities of socialism and the guarantee of well-off living, returned to China and yet found that there were drastic differences between reality and propaganda. Moreover, they were ineluctably involved into various kinds of politic activities and accordingly the lives they led then were unavoidably tough. And many returnees had to stay in overseas Chinese farms for the rest of their whole lives.

However, the anti-Chinese agitations or the intensive international relationships then did not account for the returns of all returned overseas Chinese. It is noticeable that some of the returnees returned voluntarily. Participating in revolutionary movements or receiving education in China are the primary reasons accounting for their returns. Although returned overseas Chinese associations have ever collected and revised the oral histories of returned overseas Chinese, currently there are few systematic studies on the reasons and procedures of their returns.

Therefore, on the basis of my previous research and my achievements on returned overseas Chinese studies, I will pivot my investigation on both those returned Overseas Chinese, who returned voluntarily, and returned overseas Chinese associations. And, from the perspective of the relationships between China and overseas Chinese societies in Southeast Asia, I will probe into problems, such as the reasons of their returns, their current living situations, their identifications.