Spain's Pacific Empire and the Chinese Diaspora: Convergence and Intersection

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This talk explores the rise of the first Chinese diaspora in mid-16th century Manila, Philippines, the colonial capital of Spain’s Pacific empire. Hungry for American silver, Chinese traders brought silk, porcelain and other luxury goods to Manila. In twenty some years, the Chinese community of Manila grew to 20-30,000, making it the largest Chinese population outside China—in effect, signifying the beginning of the Chinese diaspora. Over time, tens of millions of Chinese migrants from south China would trade, work, and populate European empires throughout Southeast Asia from the mid-16th through the mid-20th centuries.

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