

Gender Paradox and Women's Spatiality : Case Study of Study Mothers at Chiang Mai Chinese Christian Church

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ABSTRACT

This article explores a Chinese group of 'peidu mama', Chinese study mothers who have been participating in the new Chinese migrant Christian communities in Chiang Mai city, Thailand. Drawing from the case study, the article examines the gender paradox and women's spatiality issue that appeared within the church and community. I applied the qualitative methods of interviews, participatory observation which I become a volunteer at Chiang Mai Huaren Jidu Church to collect information for several months. This research points out that some church women have been facing an extreme level of gender paradox and gender hierarchy working through church activities. Under the situation which mentioned before, female Chinese Christians have strategically utilized Christianity interpretation, deploying the tactics of 'obedience' and 'reversed patriarchal bargaining' to negotiate with traditional gender and family relationship. This is an attempt, as an ongoing desire, to reduce the inferior status encountered paradoxically by traditional Confucian gender and family values.

Keywords: Gender paradox, Patriarchal bargain, Spatiality

INTRODUCTION

Gender paradox in Chiang Mai huaren jidu church

The increasing new Chinese immigrants in Southeast Asia in the past 3 decades cause an increasing number of Chinese Christian churches in Chiang Mai. The Chinese diaspora Christian Churches which set up in recent years focus on the member of the new Chinese diaspora with the oversea Chinese pastor, using mandarin as the only language. Among these Chinese diaspora Churches, Chiang Mai Huaren Jidu Church, set up in September 2015, develop most quickly, with about 60 regular members and 40 flexible members.

Chiang Mai Huaren Jidu Church is a typical ethnical Chinese diaspora church, which paid a major role in building a sense of Chinese belonging based on the new Chinese diaspora identity. It is operated practically through Mandarin Chinese language, Chinese food, and Chinese culture-based activities, such as Chinese traditional holidays celebration and various family activities, these activities