

An Anthropological Study on Nuns in Tibet: With Special Reference to 'zheqi' Monastery

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The 'zheqi' monastery is a Tibetan Buddhism nunnery on the eastern edge of the Tibetan area. Unlike other Tibetan Buddhist monasteries, which has a long history, this nunnery built in the 1990s. Now there are 52 nuns in the temple, all of them from nearby towns. Influenced by new economic models and ideas, traditional Tibetan Buddhism monastery has seen a decline in the number of monks. But the new temple, which is so close to the border with the Han and Tibet, has maintained that scale and the number of nuns still increasing. New economic models have indeed been introduced into the region and have had an impact on the lives of people in the region. It seems that the new economic model has little effect on the temple. Why isn't there a decline in nuns here, is there a large population increase here? Women are more pious or really exists the blessing of god? Figuring out these questions and understanding the situation of the nuns monastery will helps us to understand how religion maintains its vitality in a new environment, and how it fits with new and new ideas. Attitudes toward religion in the new economic model between male and female.

According to eight -month fieldwork I did in this nunnery, there exist some interesting phenomena. The economic model of the region has changed since the 1980s. The economic situation has improved and the number of families engaged in business activities has increased. Now women have more autonomy, and they have a certain economic foundation to choose their own way of life. Actually new economic models and ideas do not necessarily weaken traditional notions. Religion is not opposed to new ideas. In fact, it is the development of economy that promotes the increase of the number of nuns. Women have more time and space to engage in religious activities than men who take part in the main economic activity.

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