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Hakka Women Constructing Selfhood in Revivalist Communities in Taiwan

In the 21st century, the sense of community among Hakka women in Taiwan has become stronger in comparison with that of the 20th century when Hakka identity was suppressed, most subaltern women remained illiterate, and gender inequality was accepted. This study investigates the emergent social roles of women and their construction of new personal identities in a township in northern Taiwan. The focus is mainly on an amateur group which is formed to practice and perform Hakka traditional mountain songs. Through interviews, a questionnaire and participant observation, I have examined the effects of the revivalist movement on women in this community. Although the songs reinforce traditional concepts, the associated group activities are shown to provide these women with an occasion to share migration stories and other experience stories. The revivalist community has thus contributed to increased self-awareness.