Gender Discrimination In Chinese Family: Son-preference

It has been a long period since the traditional Chinese family was characterized as patriarchal in which females were inserted in severe social disadvantage relative to males. In this strongly evolved patriarchal family system, rational biases on the gender inequality in a family are presented as sons are believed to be the permanent members of the family who keep possession of the life-time financial relationships with their parents and earn the most properties from them, based on both cultural and economic reasons (Xie, 2013). From my perspective, as I have been exposed to medias such as drama series on television that are presenting about biases on gender in a Chinese family, as well as seeing my mother who is a daughter of Chinese family that immigrated from China to live in Thailand faces the similar problem, I think it is one of the severe issues we should be concerning in order to prevent sex ratio imbalances and maintain the equal rights between each human-being.

There has been a tendency to see China as a country where son preference is deeply rooted and possibly increasing since twentieth century due to the high sex ratio at birth. Son preference is usually regarded as as a recent phenomenon, although it is an old characteristic of the Chinese society. Since a long period before the twentieth century in which there was one-child policy, sex ratio was already unbalanced between boys and girls, because of a high number of infanticides. The sex ratio at birth ranges from 103 to 106 boys for 100 girls in industrialized countries. However, The same ratio in China rose from 106 in 1979 to 117 in 2001. In spite of the fact that one-child policy alone cannot explain the son-preference, we have to focus on the social and economic factors in order to comprehend the bias of son-preference in which many Chinese families experienced (Son preference in China, 2015).

There are factors contributing to son-preference which mainly includes cultural factors and economic factors. 'By compensating parents of girls in various ways, the government reinforces the idea that girls are not as valuable as boys', stated Eklund, a professor of Department of Sociology from Lund University. It can be seen that families in rural areas prefer sons because sons are expected to take over the farming or other family businesses (How serious is son preference in China?, 2011). They are expected to contribute to their families' economic success due to the facts that they can provide long-term investment for their parents unlike the women who are only temporary members of families before marriage into new families. Thus, there is a belief that parents do not have to be insuring the daughters because they are going to become members of new families (Preference for sons in Asia could have severe social consequences, 2007). Furthermore, sons are believed to obtain well-paid jobs and bring income to family more than women. Thus, having sons will guarantee the parents that the lineage will be continued and the properties will stay in the family (Son Preference, 2010). It can be seen from my mother's experience as an instance that she only received approximately twenty percent of all the properties from her parents while the sons received eighty percent of the properties, as well as the justification that sons were always right whenever there were conflicts within the family.

In conclusion, the Chinese family has a patriarchal system since long periods ago in which females were inserted in severe social disadvantage relative to males. Son-preference issue occurs due to the cultural and economic factors in which there are beliefs that sons are the

permanent members of family who will invest family’s life-time income and preserve the family’s properties, whereas female members are not important due to the fact that they are temporary members of the family. Hence, Son preference is one of the severe issues which should be taken into account in order to maintain sex ratio imbalances and the equal rights between each human-being.