Rapid Economic Growth and Gender in China: Focusing on the Analysis of Nongjianü Issue (农嫁女问题)
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After World War II, China is the only country in East Asia that gave the land rights to women. However, under the marketization in post-socialism, especially since 1992, urbanization and industrialization have been accelerated and the exploitation of rural land been increasingly deepened. Through land development, local governments take the land appreciation tax and involve in the primitive accumulation of capital. Under the collective ownership of rural land, China started the land privatization.

Land development does not only lead to land dispossession of villagers, but also exclude women from the new collective economic organization. These women call themselves “Nongjianü,” and they are also called as “Chujianü,” “Waijianü” in Chinese, or “married-out women” in English. In my research, I use the term “Nongjianü.” In light of different definition of Nongjianü, I use Nongjianü to refer to the women who register household at the natal village, are excluded from the new village collective economic organization on the grounds of their marriage with the men who are originally from other villages or cities. The main purpose of my dissertation is to analyze the historical background and political economic structure of the appearance of Nongjianü Issue, and produce new knowledge of land and gender.

My dissertation consists of three parts.

In the first part “The History of Modern Chinese Women’s Land Right”, I use equalitarianism and feminism as two important clues to analyze the establishment and development of Chinese women’s land right. In the Chapter 2, in order to understand the history of modern Chinese women’s land right, I summarize the two conceptions concerning with women’s land right----equalitarianism and feminism’s origin, development and dynamics. In the Chapter 3, based on the primary documents which were collected from Botou County Archive, Qing County Archive, Hejian City Communist Party Archive, Hebei Province ACWF Archive between 2012 and 2013, and from Jing Gang Shan Revolution Museum, I review the history of Chinese women’s land right from 1928 to 1984 which is divided into 6 periods: a. the period of Jing Gang Shan Revolution and Soviet Republic of China(1928-1934) ; b. the period of the Second of Sino-Japanese War(1937-1945); c. the Civil War between the China Communist Party and Kuomintang(1946-1949); d. the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (1950-1952); e. the period of agricultural produces cooperation and people’s commune(1952-1976); f. the period of the Chinese economic reform.

In the second part “The political economy analysis of Nongjianü Issue”, utilizing the report and news on women’s land right of China Women’s News (1984-2010), I indicate the representative characteristics of rural women’s land right issue. Furthermore, I try to answer what Nongjianü Issue is and to figure out the structure of
appearance of Nongjianü Issue. In the Chapter 3, I firstly collect reports and news about rural women’s land issue from China Women’s News (《中国妇女报》) into 3 periods-1984-1986,1999,2010. Secondly, I analyze the reports and news with 4 categories which contain the source of information, subject, standpoint, the form of call. Finally, I indicate the representative characteristics of rural women’s land right issue. In the Chapter 5, I divide the Nongjianü Issue into 4 stages which is the Rudimentary Stage(1978-1992); Expanding Stage(1992-1998) Nationwide Scale Stage(1998-2007); Prosperity Stage(2008-) to make clear of the All-China Women’s Federation’s changing attitude and resolution of Nongjianü Issue. This chapter reconfirms that the standpoint and the changes of All-China Women’s Federation in the period of China economic transformation. In the Chapter 6, I try to answer what Nongjianü Issue is and to figure out the structure of appearance of Nongjianü Issue. First of all, I analyze the adjustment of law and policy concerning about ‘the land privatization’ which is closely related to Nongjianü Issue. With the land’s nationalization and capitalization, the process of land privatization appears to be more and more exploitative. At the meanwhile, the appearance of the Nongjianü Issue is spread throughout the whole country. In this chapter, according to Nongjianü’s interviews and the dates about real estate’s development project, I find that the Nongjianü issue presents a trend of “housewifization” and Nongjianü Issue is one performance of the ongoing primitive accumulation of capital in China.

In the third part “The Nongjianü’s Fight”, I examine the Nongjianü’s protest movement and their solidarity with urban feminists. The exploitation of village land has increased rapidly since 1992, harming women’s land rights. The purpose of Chapter 7 is to reconsider the rightful resistance concept of social protest movements from the perspective of gender and to describe the characteristics of the protest movements of rural Chinese women. In the Chapter 8, using the fieldwork which I conducted in Hebei（河北）, Guangdong（广东）, Zhejiang（浙江）, I analyze the nongovernmental legal organization’s solidarity with Nongjianü’s protest movements. Otherwise, with the disappearance of 3 formal or informal nongovernmental legal organizations, I ask where Nongjianü protest movement’s future is.