



Leftover Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China (Asian Arguments)

By Leta Hong Fincher

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A century ago, Chinese feminists fighting for the emancipation of women helped spark the Republican Revolution, which overthrew the Qing empire. After China's Communist revolution of 1949, Chairman Mao famously proclaimed that "women hold up half the sky." In the early years of the People's Republic, the Communist Party sought to transform gender relations with expansive initiatives such as assigning urban women jobs in the planned economy. Yet those gains are now being eroded in China's post-socialist era. Contrary to many claims made in the mainstream media, women in China have experienced a dramatic rollback of many rights and gains relative to men.

Leftover Women debunks the popular myth that women have fared well as a result of post-socialist China's economic reforms and breakneck growth. Laying out the structural discrimination against women in China will speak to broader problems with China's economy, politics, and development.

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Leftover Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China (Asian Arguments) By Leta Hong Fincher Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #896728 in Books
- Published on: 2014-04-10
- Released on: 2014-05-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .80" w x 5.44" l, .65 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 213 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"Leftover Women should carry a health warning: this book will severely raise your blood pressure. Leta Hong Fincher's subject - researched through statistical analysis, sociological surveys and extensive first-hand interviewing - is the toxic vitality of sexism in China today." - The Guardian Book Review by Julia Lovell

"Leta Hong Fincher's 'Leftover Women' offers a...chilling account of the pressures on Chinese strivers...One hopes that "Leftover Women" will soon be translated into Chinese, as it is likely to resonate deeply with urban educated women. It seems the party has forgotten the Mao-era dictum: 'Women Hold Up Half the Sky'." - New York Times Book Review by Judith Shapiro

"A compelling piece of original research...Leta Hong Fincher, an American journalist-turned-academic, argues that the same party that pushed through the elevation of women's status in the 1950s is now trying to engineer their return to the kitchen." - The Economist Book Review

"A powerful -- and provocative -- argument that China's female shortage, far from empowering women, has actually resulted in a situation where urban women's rights are increasingly imperiled....It's 'Backlash', China-style, on a scale Susan Faludi never envisioned, touching the lives of 650 million women, almost a fifth of all the women in the world." - L.A. Review of Books, by Mei Fong

"In this commanding book Hong Fincher argues that China's international image, celebrating the increasing education and wealth of its women, masks an alarming slide back towards deep gender inequality - and that the very education and wealth of Chinese women is being used against them...Hong Fincher pulls no punches in her excoriation of this injustice, and yet her book is accessible and fascinating - an important work for scholars as well as those wishing to broaden their understanding."

- Feminist and Women's Studies Association (UK & Ireland) Book Review by Carina Hart

"In lively and accessible prose Hong-Fincher demonstrates conclusively that urban professional women have been disproportionately disadvantaged during China's breakneck economic development and largest wealth accumulation in human history. Hong-Fincher exhaustively cites media, government statistics, her own interviews, and her Weibo survey results to substantiate the fact that gender inequality in China has reappeared with a vengeance and shows no signs of abating any time soon." - Rebecca E. Karl, New York University

"Cast aside what you think you know about the 'empowered' women of China today. Modern Chinese women are under pressure in a society that often locks them out of social equality, property rights, and legal protection from domestic abuse. This is the reality that China scholar Leta Hong Fincher puts forward in her study of resurgent gender inequality in China. Her book is a well-researched and riveting read, including a number of gripping personal accounts straight from China's so-called 'Leftover Women.' For any curious observer of China or women's issues, this is one to read." - Kristie Lu Stout, Anchor/Correspondent, CNN International

"Making the most of her experience as a journalist and her training in sociology, Leta Hong Fincher draws on previous breakthrough works in Chinese gender studies and her own interviews, while proving equally at

home summarizing statistics and telling poignant tales of individual experience. The result is an engagingly written, thought provoking work on a crucially important but often overlooked subject. Essential reading." - Jeffrey Wasserstrom, author of *China in the 21st Century: What Everyone Needs to Know*

"A brilliant, compelling, and innovative study of contemporary China and one of the most important sociological inquiries into the political economy of gender. Leta Hong Fincher's richly detailed research and critical analysis of gender politics in *'Leftover' Women* provide an indispensable resource for anyone who wants to understand the key socioeconomic transformations in postsocialist China." - Lydia H. Liu, Columbia University, co-editor of *The Birth of Chinese Feminism*

From the Author

Li Fang is relieved that she found a husband just in the nick of time. The parents of the university graduate and former human resources manager in Beijing feared that their only daughter was getting old and might never be able to marry. Li worried that she would pass the 'best child-bearing age' and might no longer be able to give birth. She is 26.

Contents:

Introduction

1 China's "leftover" women

2 How Chinese women were shut out of the biggest accumulation of real-estate wealth in history

3 China's giant gender wealth gap

4 Back to the Ming dynasty

5 Wives caught in China's web of abuse

6 Fighting back

Acknowledgments

Notes

Index

About the Author

Leta Hong Fincher is an award-winning journalist and the first American to receive a Ph.D. in Sociology from Tsinghua University, Beijing. Her book, *Leftover Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China*, was named one of the top 5 China books of 2014 by the Asia Society's ChinaFile, one of the best foreign policy books of 2014 by FP Interrupted, one of the best Asian books of 2014 by Asia House, and one of Time Out magazine's top 10 China books of 2014.

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