

〈研究論文〉

The Land-Peasant-Ecology Complex Ecosystem Research of Western Fujian in the Period of Central Soviet Area*

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Abstract: It made a significant impact on the land ownership policy and people's life by the establishment of the Central Soviet Area in Western Fujian. The land ownership in West Fujian changed from the landlord private system in feudal society to the public ownership owned by peasants. During the Central Soviet Area, the living standard of peasants in Western Fujian has improved significantly and the society became more stable. Land was the main ecological factor in the complex ecosystem of land-peasant-ecology in Western Fujian Soviet Area, which had the characteristics of low productivity and inadequate land use and so on.

Key Words: Central Soviet Area; Western Fujian; Land Ownership

Western Fujian was the main component of the former Central Soviet area. In the early stage of the Central Soviet Area, the area under its jurisdiction was the western Jiangxi Province, which expanded to the southeastern Jiangxi and the northwestern Fujian Province in the middle and later stage, and which spanned the vast area of scores of counties in Fujian and Jiangxi provinces. Because of the dense peaks and the rolling hills, the transportation facilities fell behind in Western Fujian, and most of them belong to remote and backward rural areas in southern China. In the traditional agricultural society of China, the concentration and decentralization of land are two confrontational movements that cross each other constantly. On the one hand, the landlords and officials

made the concentration of landholding through land sales and threats of violence; on the other hand, due to the impact of traditional Chinese family division and abortion system and the peasant wars, land is dispersed constantly again. During the period of the Central Soviet Area, Western Fujian experienced the changes of land ownership, and the lives of peasants also changed greatly. At the same time, it had a certain influence on the ecological environment in Western Fujian.

1. The Situation of Land and Peasants in Western Fujian before the Period of Central Soviet Area

There is a vast land and a sparse population in

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Western Fujian, but there is still a mountainous and few fields situation, and because of the concentrated settlements it is low per capita cultivated land. According to the statistics in 1926, the per capita cultivated land was 2.07 Mu (about 666.67m²) in Longyan County, and 2.08 Mu in Yongding country, and 1.96 Mu in Shanghang county, and 1.98 Mu in Changting county. Not only per capita cultivated land is scarce, but also the quality of cultivated land is poor in West Fujian. The cultivated land can be roughly divided into three categories: the paddy fields (commonly called "oceanic fields") in open valleys and basins, the terraced fields (commonly known as "mountain drainage fields") on hillsides, and the ridge fields (mostly barren soil) created in small branch valleys of the basins, which are fragmentary because of the mountains and hills. There is worse sunshine conditions and poor drainage in the ridge fields. The 69.8% of the cultivated land is terraced and ridge fields in the whole region. The soil condition is extremely poor and the water conservancy facilities are backward, so most of the cultivated land is "the harvest relying on heaven". The crops are over harvested in non-disaster years and poor harvest in disaster year. The agricultural development is slow and unstable. As a result, the pressure of population on the land is quite serious in Western Fujian.

In the first half of 20th century, the peasants struggle against resistance in Western Fujian never ceased, even under such poor land conditions. "Equal Land Right" is the main content of this struggle¹. At that given time the composition of the peasants in Western Fujian was as follows: "Except Liancheng country, the farm laborers accounted all the peasants for below 5% in other six counties of Western Fujian. The farm laborers was less than 1% in Changting country, and there were even no peasants at all in Xinan town of Yongding

country. The reason was that there was no capitalist agricultural production in Western Fujian, and almost all of them were essentially non-economic feudal exploitation. "The average number of the rich peasants is less than 5%, the average number of the middle peasants is only 17%, but the poor peasants accounted 75%. This is proof that the development of agricultural capitalism in Western Fujian is impossible under the double oppression of the imperialism and the landlord class. Land is concentrated on the landlords, the quantity of peasants with cultivated land decreases day by day, and the number of landless peasants increases more and more. Objectively, the land struggle will be inevitably intensify"². In order to earn a living, the peasants had to endure heavy land rent exploitation and rent the land from landlords. "The number of peasants which rent land accounted at least for 60% in all the counties, and it is 70% in Changting county, and it is even more than 80% in Nanxiang town Liancheng county"³. Under the exploitation of this feudal system, the peasants undoubtedly led to poverty and even bankruptcy eventually⁴.

The traditional feudal rule in China is the landlord occupying land as the main feature. Before the Central Soviet Area, it is the same as all the countryside of China in Western Fujian, and the land was highly concentrated in the hands of landlords and rich peasants. During the founding period of the Central Soviet Area in Western Fujian, the survey of six counties in Longyan, Yongding, Shanghang, Liancheng, Changting and Wuping showed that "85% of the land is mastered in the hands of the renting class, and less than 15% of the land is owned by the peasants"⁵. Taking the town Dongxiao in Longyan country as an example, there were 165 households and land 1023 Mu in the area in 1929. The local public land is controlled by landlords and rich peasants, landlords and

rich peasants in Dongxiao who accounted for 14.86% of the peasants occupied the land quantity as high as 92.9%⁶. The large landlord Lu Chengju owned nearly 1000 Mu land in Yongding County. Landless or little land has become the root which lead to the peasants impoverished extremely. Food and clothing were not yet been satisfactory, and not to mention the peasantry took the activities in the political field.

Except the oppression of the traditional feudal system, the peasants in Western Fujian were also squeezed by the warlords of Nationalist Party. During 1920s and 1930s, warlords occupied Western Fujian. Various kinds of taxes came in succession, and the peasants were forced labor (such as to be porter and to build the road and so on). The peasants here had to paid high land rent to the landlord class, at the same time they also bear various kinds of taxes, such as the rich donation, voluntary donation, housing donation, livestock donation, acre donation, kitchen range donation, poll tax and so on. According to the statistics in 1925, there are monthly miscellaneous donations include defense contribution, domestically made opium donation, salt donations, tobacco and alcohol donations, stamp duty, slaughter house tax, paper making donations, and nitramine donations in Longyan. "The monthly income is about 14,000 Yuan (Silver dollar in Republic of China) from above eight kinds of taxes. It is a huge amount of money, and in addition the number of foreign donations much more than this income"⁷. Even the faces which were picked out of the city by the peasants, there was still a tax "half Hao per load"⁸. In 1920s, "There are more than 40 kinds of taxes only in Longyan country, with an annual per capita burden of 28 Yuan (Silver dollar in Republic of China), the land tax expropriation was more than 20 years ahead of time in Shanghang county"⁹. "Under the rule of the Nationalist Party. They used all

the exploitation methods"¹⁰. After paying the land rent, the peasants took up almost all of their surplus and even owed a lot of money. So the warlords were also the landlord actually. The warlords not only occupied the land but also had the right to use every person as slave in Longyan. Sometimes peasants are also slaughtered the whole hometown by the warlords. The small landlords in Longyan were also suffered oppression and exploitation by warlords, which was a phenomenon of internal conflict in the ruling class. Although there were conflicts among them, they were always consistent with the peasants, and the landlords obtained compensation from peasants successively. The rich peasants were oppressed by the taxes of warlords, at the same time they exploited the poor peasants and the middle peasants by renting out their land¹¹.

It was such cruel economic exploitation that made the peasants unable to pay their rents and taxes. At last, the landlords "forced the poor workers and peasants to sell their children and wives even to the extent that to eat the babies"¹². The peasants lived a life of vagrancy, shelterless clothes, unenough food and unspeakable suffering. From this point of view, the people's livelihood was "extremely miserable" in Western Fujian before the establishment of the Central Soviet Area¹³. In addition to the widespread exploitation of land rent and taxes, usury is another common way to exploit peasants in the Western Fujian Soviet Area. In investigation of Mao Zedong, it is pointed out that the interest rate of usury in Western Fujian Soviet Area is generally 2-3 points per month, and the highest is 12 points in all the counties in Western Fujian. In addition to pay money, the way to repay usury can also be grain or land, wife and children and so on. Therefore, under the pressure of high interest, once the peasants lend usury, it is difficult for them to repay, and eventually lots of them were forced to sell

their children or wives. Therefore, Mao Zedong pointed out that usury was "the most poisonous way of exploiting the poor peasants" by the landlords and the rich peasants¹⁴. The life of the people in Western Fujian was so miserable that the bankrupt peasants and handicraftsmen are everywhere. Under the pressure of life, these people gradually joined the HongJiang Society, the Sandian Society, the Hongiang Society and other party organizations, or becoming to be robbers directly. At that time "robbers became an important issue in Western Fujian"¹⁵ under the social conditions. In this part of the public consciousness, the reason they were robbers was because of the landlords, so most of them were against the landlords. However, quite a few of them were used by the landlords due to the limitations of their cognitive abilities. They "ran wild as before"¹⁶ at the beginning of the revolution. It can be said that this group of people who had robbed the bandits was a headache social problem for rulers of all dynasties in China.

2. The Situation of Land and Peasants in Western Fujian after the Establishment of the Central Soviet Area

In the first half of 1930s, the peasants occupied land which changed greatly after the agrarian revolution. Through the research in Xunwu, Mao Zedong had "made clear the problems of the rich peasants and the landlords and put forward solutions to the problems of the rich peasants; The policy of land distribution is that to take from the haves and give to the have-nots and to take from the fat to pad the lean -- take from those who have much a better, so as to the rich peasants, the middle peasants, the poor peasants and the farmhands can all live on". He pointed out that "if the landlords were

given no land to make them drink the northwest wind, and the rich peasants were given only some bad land to make them half-starving, which will force them to become a rebel, then the poor peasants and the farmhands would be isolated"¹⁷. Therefore, in the early period of the Soviet Area, land distribution was basically carried out in accordance with the pattern of equal distribution among the population. Otherwise, some landlords and rich peasants would be displaced because they had no land to cultivate, then to be the bandits and to destroy social order. In view of the social background at that time, it was correct to adopt such a way of land distribution¹⁸. At that time, the revolution also realized the purpose of changing from feudal landlord land ownership to peasant land ownership.

Despite being regarded as the most unstable factor in society, the vagrant as the bandits gained land in the agrarian revolution after the Central Soviet Area was established. The evil habits of the bandits were transformed to a certain extent. Most of them became supporters of the Soviet regime and were able to live in peace. Therefore, for this part of peasants "generally welcome the revolution, not only there is no a counter-revolutionary, but also there were ten participating the guidance work of the district and township governments, and one of them become a guerrilla commander"¹⁹. In the base areas under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, even the unruly members of the Communist Party and bandits were "submissive to the revolution"²⁰. The social problem of successive dynasties in China by the bandits has been solved. As a result of the successful transformation of the vagrant masses, the whole Soviet area had an unprecedented stable and good situation: no thieves and beggars, no gamblers and prostitutes, no opium smokers, no robberies and murders. It is also true that people

"need not shut the doors at night, and many doors of peasants are pasted with couplets of night-time house open, and no one pockets anything found on the road, and garden no free soil, and no vagrant in the field from Southwestern Jiangxi to Western Fujian"²¹. After the founding of the Western Fujian Soviet Area, a considerable number of peasants without houses or few houses acquired land and allotted the surplus houses of landlords. The housing problem of peasants was solved. Accordingly, the living condition of the peasants in Western Fujian Soviet Area has undergone tremendous changes.

The economic burden of peasants had been lightened. After the founding of the Western Fujian Soviet Area, the Soviet government abolished the land rent and taxes which from the Nationalist Party government, and the debts owed by peasants before the revolution were canceled. In addition to paying the land tax, peasants had no any other financial burden. "All the harsh taxes by local Nationalist Party government were removed in Soviet Area, and the levy of the warlords is even more out of the question"²². But at the same time, the peasants in the areas under the Nationalist Party rule were not exempted from heavy taxes, and the land tax even exceeds the original ten times. In addition to heavy farmland taxes, there are additional taxes and miscellaneous taxes. There were 61 kinds taxes only in Jiangxi province ranking third in China²³. From the merchant's point of view, as the merchants who had no jobs and few land, they hated the taxes bitterly before the establishment of the Soviet Area. After the revolution, in the Soviet Area "there is no taxes and exploitation, so the attitude of small businessmen is very sympathetic to the revolution, even the businessmen in Nationalist Party ruled area because of making money by the protection of Communist Party, so they could

sympathize with us". As businessmen felt that the Red Army was indeed good and they were not like the Nationalist Party demand excessively. "So wherever the red army been the shops opened and without fear, and the residents in the city were not afraid too. Especially for the strict discipline of the Red Army, the residents satisfied very much"²⁴. After the success of the agrarian revolution under the leadership of the Communist Party, the living standards of the peasants had been improved to a certain extent, and the social production in the Western Fujian Soviet Area had increased. In addition to the income of agricultural products, the economic sources of peasants in the Western Fujian Soviet Area had also increased, and the income from mountain forests was one of the important economic sources. At the same time, peasants got a share of pond and earned income through fish farming, which was also an economic source. In addition, because it was allowed "free trade" in the Soviet Area, peasants could "do some shoulder peach business to make up for their lives"²⁵. The local markets had be reorganized and restored in Western Fujian. The tradition of one market for every few days has been passed down to the present day. The peasants who did not do shoulder business could also take surplus goods to sell on the markets²⁶ to get small profits.

The living conditions of peasants had also changed significantly. On the one hand, there was changes in clothing. In the Western Fujian Soviet Area, "Per capita could make a suit of clothes every two years before the revolution, and per capita could make a half suit of clothes every year after the revolution, an increase of 200%"²⁷. From the point of view of clothing, the general clothing demand of peasants had been able to meet in the Western Fujian Soviet Area. On the other hand, the diet had also changed. Before the revolution, the eating

of people in Western Fujian was hard to be solved. Although agriculture and handicraft industry also had certain development at that time, the vast working people at the grassroots level still suffered from hunger because the dominant power was in the hands of the landlords. It has always produced less rice in Western Fujian Soviet area, but even so, the local people also solved the problem of eating after the establishment of Soviet area. "Before revolution, we couldn't eat enough, and now we could eat enough and that we could also sell the rice to the Red Army then pay land tax and buy bonds and exchange oil and salt"²⁸. Another improvement in diet was the increase in meat intake. Generally speaking, the meat of poor peasants increased by 1 times before the revolution and the workers increased 2 times. In the past, "the meat is scarce even during the festival. Now do not say the festivals, every market we could buy some meat to eat"²⁹. Chicken and ducks were eaten most which be sold before. There was still some surplus in cooking oil. Under normal circumstances, the amount of rice and meat can be used as a rural society measure of China. The changes in the diet in the Western Fujian Soviet Area could reflect the improvement of people's living standards after the establishment of Soviet Area.

Although the Agrarian Revolution changed the production relations of the original feudal system in the western Fujian Soviet Area and could effectively liberate productive forces, the material standard of living depend on the productive forces development level at that time. "Because the production tools and farming methods in the Soviet Area were still very backward, there were still many places where the phenomenon of human plow was replaced by cattle". The life of peasants in Western Fujian Soviet area had been improved, but the living standard was still not high.

At the same time, due to the perennial war and the blockade to the Soviet economy by the Nationality Party. The "scissors movement of prices" phenomenon of industrial and agricultural products also caused the living standards of peasants to improve slowly at that time. The annual growth rate of crops was "generally about 15-20%, so that the valley price is surprisingly low for a period of time"³⁰. Especially "from 1931 to 1932, when the Red Army was encircled and suppressed by the Nationality Party, and all around were blocked. The price of salt was very expensive, and a silver dollar could only bought for one Liang (50 gram) salt"³¹. Such a situation of living frequently appeared during this period. Since the founding of the Interim Central Government of the Chinese Soviet Republic in November 1931, the "Left-leaning" land policy emerged after the 4th Plenary Session of the 6th CPC Central Committee. The Left-leaning land policy does not oppose the distribution of land, but advocates the distribution pattern of "the landlord does not divide the land, the rich peasants divide the bad land". In particular, it is pointed out that "the landlord class and their families must not be allowed to reconnect with the land relationship after their land has been confiscated without cost", and that the attempt to "give the landlords an opportunity to restore their land" should be "mercilessly attacked and opposed"³². The original correct way of land distribution of Mao Zedong was negated by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the Far East Bureau of the Communist International. The first National Congress of the Soviet Union drafted the Land Law, which stipulated that "the owner who were confiscated the land has no right to obtain any land distribution", and the land of rich peasants "must be also confiscated and distributed". the rich peasants could be assigned to the worse "labor land" after the their land

was confiscated³³. The publishing and implementation of this policy meant that landlords and rich peasants would have no way to living in the future, and would be eliminated both physically and economically. Although the land ownership in the period of the Western Fujian Soviet Area experienced a tortuous process, great changes actually had taken place. It was the changing from private ownership of land to public ownership.

3. Characteristics of Land Ecology in Western Fujian during the Period of Central Soviet Area

In the early and middle 1920s, Chen Jiongmeng of the Guangdong Army first invaded under the name of "protecting the law", and soon returned to assist Guangdong. Then Li Houji was defeated by Xu Zongzhi, and the defeated army fled across the border. Li Liejun stationed following. The warlords came and went, and the war lasted for more than 30 times. Since the late 1920s, there had been a long-term confrontation between the Nationalist Party and the Communist Party, and there had been a confrontation between the 19th Route Army and the Kuomintang Army during this period. The above-mentioned pluralistic political power structure constituted a basic feature of the social and political style of Western Fujian in the first half of the 20th century, and at the same time it aroused the strong resistance of peasants³⁴. It made that Western Fujian had been in turmoil in the early 20th century, and a large number of population outflowed, then social economy was difficult to obtain a long-term stable development space. Since the Agrarian Revolution, with the continuous change of land policy, the land ecology had changed accordingly. Mineral resources are relatively abundant in Western Fujian. The early Soviet

policy which did not organize the mines development, and many natural resources had not been exploited and keeping state of idle and useless. The early Soviet land system and policy which did not fully mobilize the enthusiasm of peasants for production, and the rural economy was not be well adjusted and developed, so the Soviet government made further adjustments to the system and policy. Among them, there were certain policies that affected the ecological environment.

First, the adjustment of land allocation and the characteristics of traditional land. "The ancestral halls and temples of all warlords and landlord class, and the land of counterrevolutionaries should be confiscated unconditionally (the part of the land of the rich peasants or semi-landlords was leased should also be confiscated and the part was not leased should be allocated). The land allocated previously to the landlords should be immediately recovered and all property was allocated to the poor peasants and the middle peasants. All the property should also be confiscated immediately³⁵. Peasants could carry out production activities on their own after the land was divided equally. Encouraged by the policy of economic construction at that time, the enthusiasm of peasants for production had been greatly enhanced, and more and more agricultural products had been created. The redistribution of land made peasants got their own land, and consequently the protection of land ecology was attached great importance. The natural ecology of Western Fujian had been temporarily relieved and alleviated. However, the farmland in this area was narrow and the output was low, and the plots are scattered and scattered. Except some of the relatively high yielding fields, sometimes because there are more mountains and less fields, the local people would open up the valley between the two mountains into fields, along with the valley layer upon layer,

forming crater fields. Crater fields was more dispersed and affects the growth of crops because of the short sunshine duration. As a medium and low yield field, the crater fields accounted for more than 70% of the total cultivated land area. According to a survey conducted of Longyan in the 1940s, more than half of the farms had more than six hilly fields, the most of which were divided into more than 50 plots. According to the statistics of the second soil survey in 1988, 46.6% of the plots were larger than 0.5 Mu, and 23.6% were 0.3-0.5 Mu, and 29.8% were smaller than 0.3 Mu. The dispersion of two field which was less than 0.5 meters accounted for 40.22%, and 30.29% was between 0.5-1.0 meters, and 29.49% were more than 1.0 meter³⁶. This kind of cultivated land was smaller, the dispersion of two field is larger which cause high tillage intensity and the agricultural mechanization is difficult. Meanwhile the distribution of land was very scattered, and peasants worked hard running around. They wasted of time and energy, and the water conservancy and pests and other management was extremely inconvenient.

Second, the requirement of land reclamation and the characteristics of land productivity. After the distribution of the mountains and forests to the peasants, the land of the dead will not be taken back and the new ones will no longer be supplied. The land which got share could not be grown poppies and all prohibited objects or grave temples were not permitted too. All newly reclaimed wasteland was owned by peasants was free for land tax and which could be given material help at the discretion of the Soviet government, but it must be registered with the Soviet government. However, in the period of the Western Fujian Soviet Area, the agricultural production technology was almost no growth than the level in the Ming Dynasty for a long time, and there has been no substantial progress for

hundreds of years. According to the survey in the 1930s, the agricultural production tools used in Western Fujian are still hoes, iron plugs, ploughs, rakes, rollers, dung buckets, etc. There is no new machinery. Agricultural technology such as fertilization, drainage, farming and so on was no innovation as always. By the end of 1987, the irrigation area in Western Fujian reached 142.21 million Mu and an increase of 75.6% over 1949. Among them, 1.2649 million Mu of irrigation area and 1.2268 million mu of drought and flood protection area were guaranteed which accounted for 60.8% of the total arable land in Western Fujian, so that two-thirds of the peasants out of the situation of "living in the heaven".

However, the existing water conservancy facilities still could not meet the needs of agricultural production and development, farmland water conservancy facilities were generally aging, and the phenomenon of overload was serious, and the ability to withstand natural disasters is not strong. "From 1957 to 1986, there were 122 times heavy rains in the whole region, with an average of 4 times a year, 88 droughts and an average of 3 times a year, which greatly affected agricultural production. In 1986, a drought of 800,000 Mu resulted in the loss of 70,000 tons of grain"³⁷.

Third, the adjustment of mountain forest management and mineral resources development and the impact of ecological environment. There are many mountains and forests in Western Fujian, and the output of tea seeds and timber is very large. With the approval of the Soviet government at that time, peasants could cut down trees to get timber. On the one hand, peasants could solve the problem of firewood burning, on the other hand, they could get profits. The Central Soviet Area stipulated that all farms and forests (such as bamboo mountains, tea mountains, fishponds, mulberry field, fir mountains, etc.) directly cultivated by labor

force should be allocated to the peasants (the principle of mountains division was the same as that of land division). Large mountains and barren hills without labor force, or mountains which was used to prevent wind and flood-proof should not be allocated, and which was managed by the Soviet Union. The masses demanded that the reclamation of the mountains should be approved by the Soviet Union³⁸. After that, it was readjusted as follows: "All the fir trees which the height was over 1.8 Chi (about 0.6 meters) should be owned by the public, and the fir trees that the height was below 1.8 Chi should be owned by the peasants; when selling the fir trees, the government will levy a lower mountain forests tax. The mountain field should be distributed (such as bamboo mountains, tea mountains, orchard, fir trees mountains, etc.), but the public mountains (such as Houlong mountain, Shuikou Mountain and other always public mountains) should not be distributed, which run by the government. Peasants could work the mine, but the work must be registered (referring to lime, carbon)"³⁹. Carbon and lime could be freely mined by private individuals (but registered with the government) or operated by production cooperatives on the principle of increased production. There will be progressive taxes on forest, the amount of all kinds of forest taxes should be assessed first, and the amount of fir trees tax should be stipulated by the amount of falling mountain price and the amount of harvest⁴⁰.

During the period of land revolution in the Central Soviet Area, several adjustments were made to the distribution of land in Western Fujian. During the period of the Central Soviet Area just founding, "the land revolution in Western Fujian was not correct in many ways in solving the land problem. The interests of the land revolution did not fall entirely in the hands of the poor peasants and middle peasants. All the land was

equally distributed on a population basis, even among the landlords and all the reactionary family members and the commercial workers and businessmen have gotten land too"⁴¹. One size fits all distribution method was the initial policy of Western Fujian system, which not only did not improve the enthusiasm of peasants, but also caused a lot of agricultural production problems. At that time because the Soviet government did not know much about the land condition of the Western Fujian, it could not really distribute the mountain forests according to the actual demands of the masses. Many mountain forests were not distributed to the peasants, resulting in the gradual desertification of the mountain forests.

In the peasant-land-ecology complex ecosystem, the social development is not only restricted by the local landform, hydrology, climate and other natural factors, but also restricted by the level of productivity development in the social development stage. It is the result of a complex and continuous interaction among peasants, land, ecology and society.

Annotation:

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