

Gender Relationships and the changing meaning of Non-timber Forest Products among Dai, Han and Jinuo people in Baka village

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1. Background

The Jinuo nationality was the last ethnic group to be identified officially by the state in 1974. It is also one of the smallest ethnic groups among the 56 nationalities of China. They mainly live in Jinuo Mountain, a tropical upland area neighboring with lowland Dai people. Depending on rich natural resources, Jinuo people traditionally practiced shifting cultivation and non-timber forest products (NTFPs) collection for their livelihoods. With insufficient grain supply due to the low productivity of upland rice cultivation, a barter system was traditionally in operation in which the Jinuo people used NTFPs to exchange for rice, salt and woven cloth with the Dai. This barter system is still present among the elder generation, though it is decreasing. Following the change of political structure after liberation in 1949, especially when the value of market economy developed in the 1980s', there was a great impact on the Jinuo's NTFPs collection. NTFPs collection has become not only for barter, but also a cash crop commodity that the Jinuo can easily access. Commoditization of NTFPs has increased greatly under the influence of expanded demand and the development of tourism. Women have traditionally been the dominant source of labor involved in NTFPs collection, but the impacts of the commoditization of NTFPs on the Jinuo's labor division and gender relationships as the system shifts from barter to commodity exchange is not clear.

The following chart presents the background of the formulating research questions:

Timing	Jinuo nationality	Dai nationality	Han nationality
Pre-liberation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NTFPs has no monetary value ● Low exchanging value ● Less political power ● 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● rich in rice products ● dominate political and economic power ● dominate barter system with Jinuo 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● few present at that time
After liberation ↓ 1980s' ↓ now	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NTFPs has monetary value, and play more and more cash crop role in their life ● Developed agriculture technology to get more rice productivity ● Still less power through they have discoured equal political right with others ● Do not control market ● Low price of NTFPs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dominate population ● dominate economic power in local market but decreasing political power ● Often play middleman role in NTFPs trade ● Barter system decreasing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● increasing population ● becomes more powerful ● brought market economy ● brought in tourism ● increasing commoditization of NTFPs

2. Research Questions

This research will address changes in the gender relationships in the barter system and the commoditization of NTFPs in the Jinuo community, which has also been impacted on by relationships with the Dai and Han. The research questions are developed further as follows:

- How do Jinuo women redefine the meaning of commoditized NTFPs and their position/role within the process of commoditization?
- How do Jinuo men redefine the meaning of commoditized NTFPs and their position/role within the process of commoditization?
- How has the commoditization of NTFPs contributed to the changing in gender relationship in Jinuo community?
- How have the changing meanings of NTFPs contributed to changing ethnic relations among the Jinuo, Dai and Han?

3. Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this research is that the marginalization and commoditization of natural resources does not necessary lead to the marginalization of women's status.

4. Research Objective

The following objectives will be addressed during the research process:

- To understand the meaning of NTFPs in Jinuo life in different historic periods
- To understand the impacts of the Dai and Han on these meanings.
- To understand the impacts of the commditization of NTFPs in Jinuo community on gender relationships

5. Objectives and Working Plan

Schedule	Objective	Activities	Methodology and Tools
April (5 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To gain initial understanding of the situation ● to review and survey previous research 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● secondary data collection ● secondary data study 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● take notes
May (15 - 20 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to understand historical change in power relations among Jinuo, Dai and Han ● to perceive different meaning of NTFPs in Jinuos' lives in this historical process ● to perceive the changing gender relationship in Baka 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● field survey ● local library survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● participant observation(barter and market) ● participatory observation(barter and market) ● chart of products flow by gender and by Jinuo , Dai and Han ● key informants interview (Jinuo, Dai) ● semi-structure interview ● mapping of meaning of NTFPs by gender by Jinuo and Dai in barter system ● mapping of meaning of NTFPs by gender by Jinuo and Dai in barter system ● mapping of meaning of NTFPs by gender by Jinuo, Dai and Han in market ● time line ● photo record

June (10 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to write primary research paper 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● data analysis ● paper writing 	
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to exchange 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● workshop 	
September (15 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● supplementary survey based on comments in July's workshop ● to cross check survey information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● field trip 	Same as the first field work
October (10 days)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● to complete written paper for submission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● finalize written paper 	