

A Study on Change in the *Subae nongga* at the Time of the South Korean Land Reform: The Case of Namjong-myeon, Gwangju City

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Though strictly forbidden by the South Korean Land Reform Act (1950), the resale of lands distributed by that land reform was widespread. In Namjong-myeon, 38.3 percent of the original recipient households (the so-called *subae nongga*, those households that originally received land under the land reform) resold their distributed lands in de facto land sales. As a result of such sales, while the original recipient households in Namjong-myeon had numbered 371, the actual number of final recipient households—those who ultimately gained possession of the distributed lands—increased to 393. Among these 371 *subae nongga* households, 77 abandoned their distributed lands. Those who did so were economically disadvantaged relative to their peers in both the size of their landholdings as well as land distributions. Yet, despite the widespread de facto buying and selling of land at the time of the land reform, ultimately there was little difference between the “original recipients” and “final recipients” of distributed land in terms of land size and ownership. This means that the “equalitarianism” of the South Korean land reform, which is regarded as one of the key factors behind the successful growth of the South Korean economy, was steadfastly maintained even through the turmoil of the Korean War.

Keywords: Land reform, *subae nongga*, distributed land, de facto land sales, equalitarianism

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