

Leta Hong Fincher

Leftover Women

The Resurgence
of Gender Inequality
in China

SPECIAL LECTURE ON WOMEN IN CHINA

Sponsored by the Council on East Asian Studies at Yale University
and the Yale-China Association

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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. Yet gains made by women in the past are now being eroded in China's postsocialist era of breakneck economic growth. A combination of factors – skyrocketing house prices, legal setbacks to married women's property rights, a widening gender income gap, and a media campaign against "leftover" women (*shengnü*) – has contributed to a fall in the status and material well-being of Chinese women relative to men. In her recent book, *'Leftover' Women: The Resurgence of Gender Inequality in China* (Zed 2014), **Leta Hong Fincher** debunks the claim that women overall have fared well as a result of China's rapid economic reforms. Come hear her speak of the structural discrimination against women and how it is creating broader problems with China's economy, politics and development.