

Acknowledgments

I am tremendously grateful to my supervisor and academic adviser Stephan Feuchtwang for without his constant encouragement, and invaluable advice and criticism throughout the period of all my research work from 1991 to 2004¹, this dissertation would never have been written. I would like to thank the City University, the ESRC (The Economics and Social Research Council), the UCC (the Universities' China Committee), the GBCC (the Great Britain China Centre), and the BFWG (the British Federation of Women's Grant) for their financial support. I owe a special *renqing* debt to the villagers in Kaixiangong village, as well as Neiguan village, whose understanding and help are crucial to my fieldwork, to the local cadres of the villages, officers of township, and Wujiang City and Dingxi County, especially, Yu Menda, Shen Zhirong, Zhou Yuguan, Wang Jianmin, Yao Fukun, Xu Guoqi, Zhou Yonglin and Zhou Baoying, etc. who supported me during the periods of my fieldwork and post-fieldwork. I would like to thank especially both my Chinese and Western doctors -- Henry Weidong Han and Peter Savundra. With great help from a combination of traditional Chinese medicine and Western treatment (vestibular rehabilitation therapy) the illness is now under control. My thanks also to my colleagues in the ESRC project for letting me share their fieldwork notes and reports, and their comments on my work. They are Guo Xiaolin, Lu Feiyun, Lu Yinghao, Pan Jianxiong, Qian Wenbao, Shen Guanbao, Wang Mingming, and Zhu Weimin. I am also grateful to the following who have all helped in different ways. They are Dorlly Bailey, Chen Lixing, Cheng Yuan, Gina Cuciniello, Dai Jianzhang, Harriet Evens, Fei Xiaotong, Gordon Grant, Huang Ping, Hui Haiming, Li Xiaojiang, Liu Xin, Fiona McConnon, Anne McGrath, Qiu Zeqi, Song Lina, Charles Stafford, Norman Stockman, Tang Ning, Wang Huaibing, Wang Qi, Yan Yunxiang, Mayfair Yang and Yu Shuo.

Finally, I must thank my family and close relatives. In particular, Eleanor Mayger, my sister-in-law, for her "labour of love" in reviewing and correcting carefully the draft manuscript; Thomas, my dearest husband, not only for displaying considerable self sacrifice and patience in our family life and tolerating my consistent underestimates of the time and effort required to complete this piece of research work - more importantly his intelligent questions stimulated my thoughts, and his critical mind sharpened my arguments and promoted better understandings of cultural, gender and personal differences; Neil / Changcheng, my lovely son, for loving me in spite of the long hours I have had to spend in front of my desk as he grows up. Last but not least I am deeply grateful to my beloved mother, Yang Jizhai, for her love and strength throughout my unusual upbringing and her invaluable support and wisdom while living with us as I completed this work.

¹ From October 1998 when Stephan moved to Department of Anthropology at the London School of Economics and Political Sciences (LSE) I extended my research interests towards anthropology ever since. I continued my research work at Department of Sociology while I was completing my PhD dissertation.