

## 2. Expressive *wanglai* in annual cycles and emergency events

In the previous chapter I have shown how generous, instrumental and negative *wanglai* work. In fact the different types of *wanglai* are inter-linked. Generous *wanglai* can be seen as a part of the input to expressive *wanglai*, whereas negative *wanglai* can be seen as a part of instrumental *wanglai*. Although expressive *wanglai* itself is largely involved in seeking different resources to arrange villagers' major family events, life cycle events, or emergencies, this would not be considered as an instrumental activity in Kaixiangong because villagers interact with each other based on long term relations in which human feelings are mainly involved. This kind of human feeling is similar to what previous researchers have called *renqing* and *ganqing* (see section 6.1.1). In this chapter I will demonstrate how expressive *wanglai* worked in annual cycle events including cycles of life and production, as well as emergencies. I will focus on showing how expressive *wanglai* works in life cycle events in the next chapter.

### 2.1. Annual cycles' events

Kaixiangong villagers separated annual cycle events into annual life cycle events and annual production cycle events (*shenghuo shang de xiangbang* and *shengchan shang de xiangbang*). As an input to social support most of the annual life cycle events have been described in generous *wanglai* (see 1.1). Only a few such events involving social support will be shown in this section. They are: peeling soya beans, making rice cakes, and conditioning silk-quilted roll neck jerseys (*fanyi*)<sup>1</sup> (see 5.4). Among more than a dozen products from Kaixiangong Village there were three main product groups. They are agricultural production, sideline production including raising silkworms, rabbits, pigs, sheep, etc., and industrial production. Social support and expressive *wanglai* were involved in events of busy seasons in agricultural production (*nongmang jijie*), raising silkworms, and cutting rabbits' hair (see 5.4). The above annual life and production events only involve the labour support among different resources, and among different sources, mainly relatives, friends, neighbours, and fellow villagers have been involved. Those events can

show how the different types of *wanglai* are related to each other and in which way *lishang* works.

### 2.1.1. Horizontal *wanglai*

In Kaixiangong Village each family had relatively fixed teams for each event in the above annual life and production events. The teams are formed mainly horizontally with agnatic kin, non-agnatic kin, neighbours, fellow villagers, or friends from their family networks. Liu told me that, “especially to wrap *zongzi* (a pyramid-shaped dumpling made of glutinous rice) it is not easy to pick up people randomly for help. Similarly the threshing has to be well organised with other families given limited time and available threshers”. The establishment of the above mutual labour support teams is based on a generous *wanglai*. As I have shown in section 1.1, villagers concentrated on entertaining others and enjoying themselves in most annual life cycle events, which to a certain extent can be seen as an input into their relationship. When they needed help in other annual life cycle events the arrangement of labour support can be seen as the natural outcome of their input in the generous *wanglai*. Yao said that she “would feel embarrassed (*buhao yisi*) if she has to arrange people to help with every annual event from scratch, needless to say more effort would be involved”. She cared about the feeling of embarrassment more than the effort because she believed only those people who were invited for meals or tea parties during festivals could be asked to help with different events and become relatively fixed teams of her household.

For a household it is just as important to maintain mutual support teams as to form them in the first place. Apart from annual life events or festivals, every other event can be an occasion to express their appreciation of the help. Meals or tea parties before or after the events are ways of expressive *wanglai*. Jin told me that, although she likes to have fixed teams for the different events, her lists needed to be modified sometimes. For example, a woman was on her list for peeling soya beans. In 1993 Jin was reluctant to ask her to peel soya beans because that year the woman did not grow soya beans and so Jin would have been unable to pay her back. But she offered help for Jin voluntarily. As soon as Jin smoked the fresh soya beans she gave her a bag to thank her. This was also an allusive way in which Jin

ended the partner relationship in peeling soya beans, without involving any spoken words. I asked Jin how sure she was that the woman could understand her meaning? Jin said if she came again Jin would treat her in the same way, namely, give her a bag of newly smoked soya beans afterward. But she guessed that the woman might feel too embarrassed to come because this could be interpreted by the villagers that she was asking for the smoked soya beans with minimum effort – only peeling for another rather than growing it for herself. Jin was right. The woman did not come to offer help again in the following year, and one year later she and her husband moved to live with their daughter’s family permanently, away from the village. This case shows both the woman and Jin wanted to give the other more, by either offering one more help or giving a larger present, when ending the partner relationship. This way of ending was based on the local custom which said “do not owe each other any *renqing* (*shui ye bu qian shui*)” which can be weighed by a steelyard in their hearts. Jin enjoyed this kind of way in dealing with different relationships because whenever she recalled the experience to mind and pondered over it she tasted different flavours of *renqing*. For her it would be boring if they spoke to each other directly, simply with words.

For the villagers, this kind of mutual labour support within close relations was considered as expressive *wanglai*, rather than instrumental *wanglai*. Qiu said, while she was making rice cakes, that “making different rice cakes or peeling soya beans is partly for the festival, partly for enjoyment, as well as to strengthen the families’ relationships”. Obviously, work like making rice cakes or peeling soya beans was related to generous *wanglai* because they did it mainly to entertain others and enjoy themselves. Other work, like conditioning jerseys and help in annual production events, “does not need to look for a special *guanxi* but does need proper arrangement because almost all the households can provide a labourer with reasonable skill and ability. So nobody is asking for a favour from anybody (*shui ye bu qiu shui*)”, said Ni. In other words, the common ground of how the above mutual labour support worked is that households share the common events and resources equally. A request beyond this common ground, e.g. to ask someone’s help in order to get into a hospital quickly or to buy cheaper building materials, would be considered as making instrumental *guanxi*.

### 2.1.2. *Lishang* criteria

The above phenomena of expressive *wanglai* in labour support also happened in Xiajia village. Yan (1996b) observed that, on the one hand, the cost of entertainment in mutual labour assistance increased and, on the other, villagers preferred to work for free in order to claim credit later (90). However, he didn't explain why. For Kaixiangong villagers, the cost of entertainment and what kind of labour support can be offered or accepted are much clearer and reliable because they are gradually cultivated over a long period in everyday practice. The above cases in the annual cycle show there are different *lishang* criteria behind the expressive *wanglai* between villagers which can be seen below.

The villagers are quite clear what should or should not be done according to moral judgement. There were a few specialised households in the village which each raised more than 100 rabbits. These households did not engage in labour support with others because it was beyond the boundary of social support. As a villager said there is a strong sense embodied in a local saying that *bang qiong bu bang fu* (support for poor people but not for rich). It means villagers should only help others in a similar economic situation to themselves as a regular labour exchange. Some informants gave me an illustrative example. This story happened in 1987 when the village began to experiment with economies of scale for agri-production in order to narrow the huge gap between rural industry and household agri-production. One household contracted more than 20 *mu* of cultivated land with the village collective and had a difficulty in the busy season due to problems with a sowing machine in transplanting wheat and rapeseed into the land within the seeding time. However, nobody responded to the collective's call to help the household because they believed that it is morally wrong to help others for the sake of money.

Human feeling can also be seen in the above cases. Although the local custom makes clear boundaries for labour support on the one hand, on the other hand, there is also an optional space for human feeling. An informant told me that if the main labourer got a serious illness in a household, which also contracted much land with the collective, some villagers including himself would offer to help out of

sympathy. This feeling is mixed with *renqing*. Under this circumstance the sick person, whether he likes it or not, must show his appreciation in order to keep the expressive *wanglai*. In other words, he should hide his true feeling (*ganqing*) if he did not like others' help, otherwise they would be hurt and the relationship would stop. Moreover, there is another kind of human feeling, namely enjoyment, involved in some annual events. The significance of the tea party indicated such a human feeling. Although women helped each other to peel fresh soya beans and cut rabbits' hair as a labour exchange, the tea parties are treats for themselves as well. This is how they turned the boring work into an enjoyable thing. Serving the same purpose, traditionally the villagers held feasts for helpers after they sold silkworm cocoons (*canba*).

These cases obviously involved rational calculation. In Jin's case the rational calculation can be seen from the way in which both parties either helped the other one time but not twice, or gave a few more but not fewer presents when they ended the teamwork relationship of peeling soya beans. In "raising silkworms" (5.4) I discuss how mutual help is involved with BY's silkworm hatching room's case. She explained the reason villagers had to engage in personal mutual help in this way rather than carry out the advanced practice created in 1930s, when there were eight common rooms specially built for hatching eggs and shared by the villagers (Fei, 1939:214-15). She said the collective hatcheries weren't a good idea because silkworms were such fragile creatures that they could easily become ill if the raising area was too big and they were not carefully looked after. This was a purely rational judgement of how to hatch silkworms, at the same time it showed how personalised expressive *wanglai* took place. The idea of rational choice not only appeared in agricultural arrangement, it was also used in household industrial work. It is normal to hire labourers if some household industrial work is needed. This is pure market exchange and is nothing to do with social support and expressive *wanglai*. However, the villagers carefully chose the Chinese character *pinyong* (engage somebody as – with a positive connotation) rather than *guyong* (employ – more negative, similar to exploitation) when hiring or employing labour so as to avoid being personally involved in the trouble of a suggestion of private business, which was not allowed at that time.

Moreover, there is religious sense involved in such expressive *wanglai*. BY Zhou, the woman who owns a hatchery, told me about some local customs related to raising silkworms. Before the work started, traditionally, people always went to temples to pray to the silk goddess (*canhua niangniang*), then addressed locally as *leizu* (wife of the legendary – Yellow Emperor and reputed discoverer of sericulture). Nowadays her worship in temples has reduced, but is still conducted either in temples or at home. During the silkworms' month (May or the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> lunar month) villagers should close their main door and put red paper on it (*bihu*). This means that nobody is allowed to drop in on others' houses with or without warning.<sup>2</sup> Couples are not even allowed to have intercourse because it is symbolically unclean. When people talk to each other they should avoid ginger and bean curd, which are regarded as taboo and unlucky. Ginger is pronounced as *shengjiang* and *jiang* sounds like a stiff corpse (*jiangshi*), and bean curd (*doufu*) is pronounced the same as decomposed flesh (*fulan*). Instead of *shengjiang* (ginger) and *doufu* (bean curd) they say *lakuai* (hot cube) and *baiyu* (white jade). Many informants confirmed that it is very important to respect the above local customs to avert disaster.

The principles of *lishang* sometimes can be mixed and interchangeable, when social creativity takes place and alters different types of relations. The following example related to changes of the agricultural production arrangement in the busy season. Villagers used labour support in the busy season because they needed to thresh wheat and barley with threshers within a limited time, in order to turn over the crop to the state as their dues for taking responsibility of the land. They used the term: selling public grain to the state (*jiao shou gongliang*). Others used a different term: selling surplus grain to the state (*mai yuliang*). Noticing the change I asked a former head of the village for the reason. He said the term of *jiao shou gongliang* (selling public grain to the state) came from the term of *jiao gongliang* (delivery of public grain to the state) before the rural reform in 1979. It was a very serious matter and the delivery was also called “loving the motherland grain (*aiguoliang*)”, a political task which involved both morality and extension of human feeling from human being to the motherland. “To deliver loving the motherland grain was an effective way to arouse the enthusiasm of the peasants

and at the same time strengthen political control. Although spiritual resources of morality and human feelings were mobilised, this would not last for a long period.” The head of the village’s experience shows at that period the relationship between the state and the villagers was mainly maintained with morality, human feelings including universal love and fear and accusations of lack of patriotism, etc., principles of *lishang*. Villagers’ creativity was inhibited. The change in these terms illustrated a relationship between the state and the villagers in a vertical context over the past three decades. Although the relationship between the state and villagers is not *lishang-wanglai*, local officials and village cadres played a role and the relationship was personalised by both sides. As a contrast, the market, the invisible hand, also played a positive role in the relationship between the state and the villagers, although this is beyond *lishang-wanglai*.

In the early stages of rural reform in the 1980s, selling grain including wheat, barley, rice, etc. was the villagers’ duty in return for taking responsibility for the land from the state. However, a few years later, methods of repaying this agricultural tax were much more flexible, i.e. grain, silkworm cocoons, or even cash. The villagers found easier ways to meet the task of selling wheat, barley, the overwintering crop, etc. to the state (*jiao shou gongliang*). For example, there were two rice crops a year before 1990: the early one was in February and the later one was in June. They stopped growing the earlier rice in February because rice was no longer a “hard task to the state” (*ying renwu*) and they wanted to save more time for other work. When I was there, villagers started using the term “selling surplus grain to the state” (*mai yuliang*), because they had enough food to eat. The informant who used the term of *mai yuliang* explained to me that before the 1990s his family needed 1,500 kg rice for 5 people, whereas now with the same people they only needed 1,000 kg, because they had a much wider variety of other food. So they sold the remaining 500 kg to the state to pay part of the agricultural tax.

So the changing of villagers’ *wanglai* with the state from meeting the political hard task of handing over “loving the motherland grain” (*jiao aiguliang*) to selling surplus grain to the state (*mai yuliang*), indicates the movement of *lishang* criteria. The moral judgment of fulfilling the state’s political task and human feelings of love for the country gave way to rational calculation because along with the

privatization villagers wanted to arrange their life more sensibly by themselves. Some villagers attributed the above change to the heavenly gods and said “without heavenly gods’s (*laotian*) blessing we could not keep our everyday life happy and auspicious”. A lady told me proudly that they bought two big statues made of marble, each two meters high, to stand on the East Temple, which represented the heavenly god protecting them. This formed a sharp contrast with my memory of the shabby temple building in 1996. The above change at the end of the twentieth century shows that expressive *wanglai* in annual life and production events seem now to have reduced. Rational calculation is the most positive criterion, although this co-exists with other *lishang* criteria, e.g. moral judgement, human feelings or religious sense.

## **2.2. Emergency (1) - Natural disasters and human made calamities**

Social support through expressive *wanglai* is especially important during critical periods as benefits that can be gained through interaction with others (Deaux & Wrightsman, 1988: 245). For rural Chinese people a critical period or emergency means a situation requiring immediate action, e.g. a famine, a natural disaster, illness and injury, market collapses, and human made calamities, etc. Kaixiangong villagers consider man-made calamities as a kind of disaster because they think they are even more harmful and need to be addressed quickly. The phenomena of natural disasters and man-made calamities form a contrast with the annual cycle events of the last section. Instead of private and labour support, in this section, public support accounted for a large proportion of the sources, and finance, information and especially policy are more important resources of *lishang-wanglai* networks. Although the nature of the relationship between the local officials and village cadres and the villagers is administrative, *lishang-wanglai* can be involved through the contacts in an emergency situation between the authorities and villagers. In this section I will show how the villagers arrange their life during emergency situations, but will omit the topic of famine<sup>3</sup> since Kaixiangong’s case won’t add more to the many existing studies. I will also leave illness and injury to the next section.



### 2.2.1. Expressive *wanglai* and its varieties

In emergency situations of natural disasters and human made calamities different types of *wanglai* can be involved in the relationships between the state via its representatives at the grass-roots level and villagers.

The orthodox idea about the relationship between the state and the villagers in emergency situations is that it comprises generous *wanglai*, because the former provided different resources to give relief to the latter when they were in difficult situations. So the representative at the topmost level of the state and the party was claimed as the people's great liberator, emancipator, or saviour (*da jiuxing*). The famous song of "The East is Red" (*dongfang hong*) said Chairman Mao was such a *da jiuxing*. This orthodox idea remained from Mao Zedong, to Deng Xiaoping and Jiang Zemin. The yearly based performances of Chinese New Year by CCTV (Chinese Central TV station), started at the beginning of the social reform, takes as one of its main themes praises of heroes who fought against natural disasters. At the end of each performance the credit always went to the party and the state and their leader, either Deng Xiaoping or Jiang Zemin.<sup>4</sup> I asked a few village primary school students in my sampled households for opinions on the above orthodox idea and confirmed that such an idea was still taught in school textbooks. However, their parents had different opinions about it. Only 16 per cent of informants of sampled households agreed with the orthodox idea. These villagers could not give specific examples to back up their idea, but they gave credit to the state and the party spontaneously. The 16 per cent of informants simply believed the propaganda about extreme cases from newspapers, which showed how some people could not survive at all in emergency situations without institutional support.

However, 75 per cent of them felt grateful for the local government's emergency support. For example, in the flood period of 1991, one informant told me that his relatives lived in another township in which the loss caused by the flood was much more serious. The county and township officials visited them to give comfort. They also sent specialists to find out information about problems and losses, distribute materials for victims, and help them in resettling and recovering from the flood. Another informant said that the Miaogang Township officials also came to the

village and took part in the work of fighting the flood. The villagers also noticed that village cadres and heads of groups worked much harder than usual. As section 5.8 shows, Wang, who was head of one of the groups, rowed a boat and purchased materials for the whole village to fight the flood, which was not a part of his job as a head of the group. The agricultural technician also voluntarily worked overtime very hard for the dam. Villagers told me that one could only see such moving scenes in emergency situations, when almost all the village cadres and heads of groups worked very hard. Again, in other difficult situations villagers could get support from different institutions, e.g. agriculture service station of the township and agricultural technician, epidemic prevention station in the township and a veterinarian in the village. Although villagers were grateful for the different kinds of institutional support, they said this kind of feeling is different from great kindness (*enqing*) from and to their parents. So the relationship between the villagers and the state through its representatives in emergency situations generally can be counted as expressive *wanglai*, according to villagers' common sense.

In emergency situations, instrumental *wanglai* and negative *wanglai* can also be involved. I did not hear related examples in Kaixiangong. But the head of the Wujiang Civil Affairs Bureau, Xie, told me that some township officials overestimated the flood situation and made *guanxi* with the Bureau in order to gain more relief funds. Facing this kind of phenomena the Bureau increased security and warned officials never to release relief funds for *guanxi* or *renqing*, at pain of disciplinary measures against the transgressor. Furthermore, Xie also told me that if the relief fund was not well controlled it could cause more serious problems. For example, a township official of a Northern Jiangsu County applied for a greater share of the relief fund than he needed for an emergency occasion. He diverted money to other purposes, including lending some to his in-law's family for house construction.

Xie's above cases show that the administrative relations co-existed with *lishang-wanglai*. On the one hand, Wujiang Civil Affairs Bureau heightened their sense of discipline to prevent the relationship from being personalised by some townships' officials. This is not a *lishang-wanglai* relation. On the other hand, an official from Northern Jiangsu personalised the administrative relation, which can

be explained as both instrumental *wanglai* and negative *wanglai*. According to Xie, if the extra fund was purely used for the township's public good even if not directly for the natural disaster, it can be seen as instrumental *wanglai* because he made use of *guanxi* for his own work in his own department for his own interests. However, this township official diverted funds for his relatives, although they lived in the disaster area. This should be counted as negative *wanglai* because the township official gave priority to his relatives (see section 6.1.3). This is why he received a reprimand, which was circulated to the whole of the county (*tongbao piping*).

I have no detailed information about the case because I did not pay special attention to such cases when I was conducting my fieldwork. I assume, however, that the township officials distributed a circulated notice criticism because they received complaints from his in-law's neighbours. Their situations were much worse than the in-law's family and they did not get any relief funds. Normally this was the way in which feedback went to the township government or the county government. If a voice was loud enough or the township official's problem big enough it would draw the local government's attention. The circulated notice criticism was the reaction of local government to put right the wrong. The township official could become an honest and clean official after the criticism, or be removed from the position and replaced by another official. Thus a balance was reached again between the villagers, the township official, and the local government.

Although in emergency situations the relationship between the state through its representatives and the villagers involved different types of *wanglai*, in Kaixiangong Village it mostly appeared as expressive *wanglai*. I will provide further explanations when different *lishang* criteria are considered below.

### 2.2.2. *Lishang* criteria

As I have shown in the previous section, when people were in an emergency or a difficult situation they can see *renqing* in a relationship between villagers and public sources. This kind of *renqing* can be categorised as expressive *wanglai* in which different principles of *lishang* are involved.

The moral obligation for helping others in an emergency is the first criterion of *lishang*, which seems the same everywhere. For example, the Civil Affairs Bureau of the county collected a donation of about 2,700,000 *yuan* from people who were not affected by the flood, according to an annual report of the flood of 1991 by Xie, head of Civil Affairs Bureau of the county. Again, during the 1991 flood even overseas Chinese scholars and students in the UK donated about 120,000 *yuan* for the flooded areas and victims along the Yangtze River. The nature of the above people who provided financial support for the victims is the same as that of the agricultural technician and many villagers who voluntarily provided labour support for other villagers, though their farmlands were not threatened by the flood. The reason the villagers support each other in an emergency is based on a local custom that *jiu ji bu jiu pin* (help for emergency but not for poverty). According to the local custom, everybody has an unshakable duty to help others when they are in an emergency situation, but nobody is obligated to help the poor because this is a long term work and sometimes can be an endless burden. Although both support for emergency and poverty are part of the work of the County Civil Affairs Bureau,<sup>5</sup> the cohesion of the different people involving themselves in helping others in an emergency is mainly a moral obligation. A former head of the village, BS Yao, said that when people were in natural disasters the government normally appeared *tongqing-dali* (reasonable, sensible, and understanding human feelings). The term of *tongqing-dali* includes *qing* (human feelings) and *li* which is the same as Neo-Confucianism's *li* (reasonable or sensible)<sup>6</sup> but different from Confucius's *li* (propriety, rites, etc.). In this case villagers' understanding of the *li* is that the local government should be eager to support those in an emergency. In return, villagers always responded positively to the local government's calls because this is in line with the local custom. Thus the relationship between the villagers and state via its representatives is a virtuous circle.

The second criterion of *lishang* is sympathy, human feelings, although this can hardly be distinguished from moral judgement in the above situation. It was the dominant feeling in emergency situations, which can be mixed with other feelings among the Chinese. In 1991 when I had just arrived in the UK I saw the slogan: "blood is thicker than water (*xue nong yu shui*)" everywhere among overseas

Chinese who were collecting donations for the Yangtze River flood. I was moved by such patriotic feelings. Over more than 10 years experience living in the UK I saw innumerable donations for different disasters all over the world and never saw the slogan “blood is thicker than water”. My reasons for giving a donation went beyond the patriotic feeling towards human feelings. 75 per cent of the sampled households felt grateful for the local government’s emergency support, but they did not feel that they owed a great debt (*enqing*) to the state and the party or had any sense of patriotism. It was Yao, a former head of the village, who first used the term *renqing* to describe a relationship between the party or state and villagers. He said, “[Over] the half-century different kinds of policies had been implemented without understanding *renqing* and this had caused human made calamities from the party and state much bigger than natural disasters”. Here *renqing* relates to the will of the people more than human feeling but is still related to human feeling. Yao continued “villagers felt much happier (*xinqing shuchang*) when they were allowed to apply the policy of the household responsibility in 1983, but they felt depressed in 1996 because private business was still not allowed in this village”. Thus the relationship between the state and the villagers can be moved into a vicious circle. In the end he pointed out that “policies inconsistent with *renqing* would finish sooner or later (*bu tong renqing de zhengce zaowan yao wandan*)”. I added his point as an additional question and checked with my sampled informants. All of them agreed with Yao’s idea.

Rational choice is the third criterion of *lishang* which can be seen in the arrangements of protection from natural and man-made disasters. How villagers arranged different kinds of production<sup>7</sup>, which diverted risk from one particular product, is certainly a rational calculation, also not a criterion of *lishang* in expressive *wanglai* because there is no personal involvement. However, for the villagers, a diversified economy (*duozhong jingying*) is not only a model of all-round development, it is a way of protection from emergency as well. As Dong, one informant of my sampled households, said “however rational they are at balancing the proportion of different products the lack of security from uncertainty in policy always threatens the villagers”. This means the villagers’ rational

calculation was limited by the degree of rationality exhibited by the government and its representatives.

As for the fourth criterion of *lishang*, there was almost no direct religious sense involved in emergency work in natural disasters during the post Mao era. This is different from Fei's description. "The occasions for magical performances are threats of flood, drought and locust plagues. Whenever the occasion arises, the people go to the district government and appeal for magical help. By ancient tradition the district magistrate was the magician of the people. In the case of flood, he would go to the river or lake to demand the receding of water by throwing his official belongings into the water. In the case of drought he would issue an order to stop killing pigs and would organise a parade with all the paraphernalia suggesting rain, such as umbrellas and long boots. In the case of locust plagues he would parade with idol of *luiwan* (1939:167)." However, the district magistrate was no longer the magician of people in the 1930s, when Fei was carrying out his fieldwork there. "The present magistrate... not only denies his traditional function to be the people's magician, but is supposed to enforce the law against magic. But the natural menaces of flood, drought, and locusts continue to threaten people" (168-69). It is also different from other areas of China at the same historical period in which other researchers show that rural people did employ religious activities to avert natural disasters (i.e. Luo 1997:693-694, 2000: 216-220; Mai 1998:231-247).

Although up to the late 1990s the natural disasters appeared less serious in Kaixiangong's case, villager Qiu claimed the destruction of the temples by local government was a kind of human made calamity which related to a religious sense indirectly. According to her, natural disasters or human made calamities, which would interrupt villagers' everyday life order, can be a reason for each other. She explained to me, in a telephone conversation after my fieldwork, that many villagers believed the two big events of 1996 were interlinked: the destruction of the temples was a reason for the collective enterprises' bankruptcy and the changing of the economic system from collective to private (*gaizhi*). The villagers used two Chinese terms to describe this: *yin huo de fu* (profit by misfortune) and *xi cong tian jiang* (a gift from the Heavenly gods). Although villagers said the changing of system was the result that they had been asking for over several years,

*fu* and *tian* of the above two terms indicated the change seemed arranged by supernatural beings. Thus the relationship between the state and villagers moved to a virtuous circle again after the crises.

### 2.2.3. *Lishang-wanglai* networks

The above cases of emergency and difficulty also show there were many vertical circles between the local government via its representatives and villagers in *lishang-wanglai* networks. In theory these kinds of relationships are nothing to do with *lishang-wanglai*. However, in practice the relationships can be partly personalised by *lishang-wanglai* from both sides of *wanglai* and the *lishang* criteria co-existed at the same time.

(1) The starting point of one such big circle of the 1991 Yangtze River flood was when the victims needed support and ended with the victims who received support. The resources, donations in this case, came from different people including overseas Chinese through local government agents, up to the central government, downwards via local or overseas government agents, and ordinary people everywhere. As I mentioned earlier the relationship between the Chinese Embassy and overseas Chinese in the UK is a part of this big circle. The donations from overseas Chinese in the UK during the flood situation can be counted as expressive *wanglai* due to complicated human feelings in which long-term benefits in return are expected in different ways. For instance, a newsletter from the CSSA-UK (Chinese Scholars and Students Association) published a list of donations. It also highlighted a UK based Chinese scholar who donated £400 to the flood relief in 1991. He was then introduced to Chinese Embassy officials, as a model of repaying the motherland's kindness. This provided a chance for him to personalise an administrative relationship between him and the Embassy. I heard afterwards he did use the chance to make a closer relationship with them in order to create opportunities to work with his hometown in Yangtze Delta. I noticed another donation list for the 1995 flood, which has been published on the internet. Almost all the "calls for a donation" would mention "a list will be published". The way in which such lists were published was a standard way for any Chinese institution to give credit to people who donated more (*biaoxian hao*) and encourage those who

did less. This might be one reason that Chinese people like to keep records for all sorts of things mainly to do with *lishang-wanglai* between individuals and institutions. Some lists can be kept by lists' holders, i.e. *lidan* (gift list) in Yan's Xiajia village or *renqing bu* (*renqing* notebook) in Kaixiangong, others like *heimingdan* (black list) by a government agent, *biantianzhang* (restoration records of usurious loans, former land holdings, etc., kept secretly by members of the overthrown classes dreaming of a comeback), etc. Others can be published as a name list by posting on notice boards, i.e. *guangrong bang* (roster of honour), *gongdebang* (donation list for building a temple), and *mujian mingdan* (donation lists for flood, etc.). For the Chinese the above lists can be stored over a long time as part of the relationship between an individual and an institution. In the relationships *lishang-wanglai* can be worked in both directions: top down or bottom up.

This is different from donations I observed in the UK, which have nothing to do with *lishang-wanglai*. In spring 2001 my son's nursery school arranged a donation for an Indian earthquake. I was not sure whether or not the teacher would keep a list of the children's donations. After the donation there was no list posted, and it was completely finished as an individual action. For me, this kind of donation can be counted as generous *wanglai* due to its lack of expectation of any kind of return, but the donors gained better feelings by helping others. I asked some parents about their opinions of the donation. One said this kind of donation was based on people's generosity. Another said that it is commonly agreed that it would cause some side effects if the list was kept or published. Some pupils donated more due to their parents being richer but this did not mean they were better people. Others donated less because their parents were poorer but they should not be embarrassed. This is how the sense of equality takes place.

(2) The relationship between Wujiang Civil Affairs Bureau of the county and welfare factories<sup>8</sup> is also a part of a big circle. Xie, the head of the Bureau, told me how a vertical expressive *wanglai* worked between the Bureau and welfare factories in Wujiang County. The reason this case involved *lishang-wanglai* is because some victims of the flood were workers of welfare factories themselves or had relatives in the disaster area. When the Bureau collected donations from the



welfare factories they also collected many complaints and comments of related policy through personal contacts. Xie told me that compared with their very limited financial support, policy support is a major resource from the state. For instance, in the 1991 the Civil Affairs Bureau received about 200,000 *yuan* relief fund from the state, but the loss was 443,000,000 in 1991 flood. The state relief fund only took 7.4 per cent coverage of the loss. The rest was covered by donations raised from the welfare factories by the local Wujiang Civil Affairs Bureau of the county. The way in which the Bureau raised so many funds from the welfare factories was by giving a promise of lenient policies. In other words, the welfare factories gained lenient policies from the local government for long term development by making donations or people who lost their houses in the flood. The local officials' important and rich resources for gaining materials from people and different originations are making different kinds of policy from time to time. In the case of providing lenient policies to the welfare factories the Civil Affairs Bureau had double wins. On the one hand, it raised a relief fund for the victims of the flood. On the other hand, it promoted the county's welfare factories' development which supported the Civil Affairs Bureau's work by raising more funds for poverty relief. The total number of welfare factories has grown from 67 in 1991 to 130 in 1995, and the total output value was 27.5 hundred million *yuan* in 1995.

(3) The relationship between Kaixiangong Village cadres, e.g. the village agricultural technician FK Yao, and the villagers, is also a part of the big circle. Yao told me that he gained support and trust from both local officials and villagers due to the credit he stored when they were in difficult situations such as the 1991 flood. An informant gave me another example about Yao to prove this. When I was there I heard some villagers complain that the pesticide and chemical fertiliser was not effective because the station purchased some supplies of bad quality. Yao reported this to the township immediately. Soon a new policy was made that the village station had to lay in new stocks of quality-controlled pesticide and chemical fertiliser from the township. Yao's good work in preventing a plague of insects also won credit from local officials. This is why he could affect the policy making of the township. He used his influence on public policy to help the villagers when necessary. He then used his influence on the villagers to gain influence with the

local officials. This behaviour repeats itself in endless cycles. Yao said that in order to keep the circle running smoothly he should go on and on working hard and storing credits. But, he continued, the most difficult thing is that the circle can be interrupted by human made disasters, i.e. the Cultural Revolution which not only interrupted a cycle of the virtuous circle but also destroyed the order of villagers' everyday life.

(4) Not everyone wishes or is able to use vertical *lishang-wanglai* in an institutional relationship. In contrast to the village agricultural technician, the relationship between the village veterinarian and the villagers was different. Zhou told me that many villagers did not like the village vet very much because he only helped them with preventative inoculations for big animals, i.e. pigs or sheep. She noticed the village vet did not even give enough doses for the rabbits and they caught a kind of disease after the preventative inoculation. Another villager told me that the vet's wife always showed her cold face to them whenever they turned up to the vet's house asking for such help. The vet said that making inoculations for big animals was part of his job. He was paid 2,500 *yuan* by the village collective in 1995. Both the vet and his wife believed that inoculations for rabbits were largely the vet's favour to the villagers because the amount of work was large and the gain was small. He told me he charged 3 *yuan* for the cost of the vaccine per inoculation for each pig or sheep but only 0.30 *yuan* for a rabbit, according to a reference guide from the township epidemic preventative station. It is clear that the vet wanted, on the one hand, to keep his relationship with the villagers within a work boundary which means that he did well with the big animals. On the other hand, he has had difficulty with the relationship between the township epidemic preventative station, the villagers, and himself and his family. He felt it was very difficult for the villagers to understand the difference between his job and favours because they tended to mix them together. So the vet's perfunctory manner and his wife's cold face actually were ways to avoid unwanted business without directly saying "No" to the villagers, because to say "No" would make the villagers consider him an enemy. Until 1996 their ways worked, because it stopped the demands of more than half the village households.

Thus the relationship between the vet and the villagers involved two circles. One is an administrative circle, which is not *lishang-wanglai*. Another is expressive *wanglai* with the households of the village for whom he did inoculations of the small animals. As I mentioned earlier in the previous paragraph both the vet and his wife believed they did favours for these households by only charging the cost of the chemicals but not his labour. This provided credit for his family's *lishang-wanglai* with those households. I have not got further material to prove this, but I will prove it indirectly.

Zhou told me that her family had 22 rabbits, which provided nearly a quarter of the income for her family. It was very important for her to find a proper way to do the inoculations. However, she felt it was very difficult to see the vet and his wife's cold faces when she asked him to make inoculations for her rabbits. One day she bought two bottles of chemical (3 *yuan* each) from the township and asked one of her husband's work mates to help with the inoculations. In exchange she joined his wife's team for cutting rabbits' hair. Thus a private support link was established. This kind of private support formed a circle of expressive *wanglai*. I asked Zhou whether or not she was a creator for such an arrangement. Zhou said she was one of the first people who felt they needed to do so. She told me that she introduced one neighbour and one fellow villager to such private arrangements by giving them the unused chemicals. Recently, Zhou told me through telephone conversations that the person who helped her with injections changed his job in another enterprise outside the township in 1998. Since then, she asked her nephew who was a vet of a neighbouring village for it. He only charged the chemical cost of the injection. In return she cooked him a nice meal each time. Zhou also told me that although the cost of the vaccine for injections recently increased to 0.50 *yuan* per rabbit, still about half of the villagers continued to arrange this matter by themselves, mainly through their relatives and friends who were either vets themselves or able to do it in and outside the villages. In exchange the villagers either entertained them with nice meals or helped their families to cut rabbits' hair, etc. I believe that the way in which the village vet related to nearly half the village households is more or less the same as the expressive *wanglai* of private support.

The above two kinds of arrangements in injections for rabbits can be seen as two circles which are interchangeable. After the implementation of the policy of changing fees to taxes (*feigaishui*) the vet's income was reduced from 2,500 *yuan* to only 300 *yuan* per year from 2001 onwards, which is the same amount as a village doctor. One of the previous heads of the village told me that the village collective had stopped organising villagers to raise pigs and the villagers now dealt directly with the township slaughterhouse. This means raising pigs was no longer the village collective's business and villagers settled all kinds of pig fees in the township slaughterhouse. Therefore epidemic preventative inoculations for pigs were no longer the main work of the village vet because villagers got such help directly from the township, which sent people to villages to do the inoculations. Thus the changing situation affected the vet's position in the two circles between administrative institutions and some villagers. On the one hand, the village vet lost almost all the administrative circle due to the change of the policies. Along with the reduction of importance of the veterinarian for the village his income was gradually cut down. Although he would carry on the epidemic preventive inoculation of big animals for the villagers, the nature of relationships would be changed to a market relation. Again this kind of relation is not *lishang-wanglai*. On the other hand, the expressive *wanglai* between the vet and the villagers in injections for rabbits, which mixed a little bit of administrative and a lot of *renqing* with some households, changed to a mixture of a little bit of market and a lot of *renqing*.

Let's find out the causes of the mobility of *wanglai* through *lishang*. Tan, the head of group 7 where the vet lived, told me that the vet does not like *lishang-wanglai* in general, although his family are partly involved in it. From his point of view this was morally wrong because this showed that the vet lacked a sense of social responsibility. Using the above example of injections for rabbits, Tan said, if he were the vet, he would try to give feedback to the township epidemic preventative station about the unfair policy relating to injection for rabbits, even by personalising it, in order to improve the policy. This would benefit many people. It would also improve the vet's situation in the village instead of losing so many villagers as his potential customers by providing inferior services. The vet's

unpopularity in the village was also caused by his perfunctory manner towards villagers with whom he did not want to have close relations because he was not interested in *lishang-wanglai*.

Both the vet and his wife were put in a difficult situation when dealing with villagers' demands for injections for rabbits. They could not separate *ganqing* (human feelings) from *renqing* (human feeling and social rules) so when they defended themselves from using *renqing* networks in the village, at the same time, they hurt the villagers' feelings, and lost them as friendly neighbours and fellow villagers. In Yao's words the vet lost his "*qunzhong jichu* (mass basis)".

The problem in the relationship between the village vet and the villagers was originally caused by the official guidelines from the township epidemic preventive station. The vet and his wife's decision to keep some households for expressive *wanglai* and drop others was largely based on the rational calculation that they should not work for too little gain with too much effort.

I do not know when the vet's wife complained of him as a "worthless wretch" whether or not he would say it was determined by fate (*mingzhong zhuding*) that he had no interest in *lishang-wanglai*. This happened to some village couples when they had a row. Fate is a religious term. It is difficult to tell how much the vet's relationships with the institutions and villagers were determined by this. It would be interesting to see how the vet improves his relationships with villagers and lives independently from the support of village collective and the township epidemic preventive station under new circumstances.

### **2.3. Emergency (2) - Illness and injury**

Table 9 shows there were 19 households and 22 persons in the sampled households involved in illness and injury from 1979 to 1996. The above cases involved resources of finance, labour, emotional caring, spiritual support, etc., coming from members of households, family relations and fellow villagers, different institutions including medical insurance, etc. Apart from this, there was another system of worshipping gods or goddess for protection against illness or coping with long term chronic disease. Although *lishang-wanglai* in illness and injury situations mainly

involved expressive *wanglai*, other kinds of *wanglai* or relationships can also be involved. This section will show how different *wanglai* and relationships mobilised around a basis of expressive *wanglai* with explanations of *lishang* based on vertical and horizontal *wanglai* with different sources of *lishang-wanglai* networks.

### 2.3.1. Vertical and horizontal *wanglai* between members of the household

Normally a member of a family with chronic disease or permanent disability would rely on household support from other family members. This kind of arrangement would work as a vertical *wanglai* between older and younger generations. For example, Han, head of the household 7, told me that in 1995 he fell off a roof when he was helping a fellow villager build a house. His vertebra was injured and it took him one year to recover after hospital treatment. Moreover, he would never recover fully from the injury, which meant his family lost a full labourer. Han said, luckily his family had had a furniture business since 1980, which required less physical work than work on the farm. Han was also proud of having a filial and capable son who took responsibility for the family business and took care of him for the rest of his life. Household 15's case demonstrated another responsible son in the village. The housewife of the household told me that her husband, Fang, spent 7,000 *yuan* on his father's cancer of the oesophagus in 1992, and 4,000 *yuan* for a lavish funeral in 1993.

If families had no sons they would also make similar arrangements by taking a man as son-in-law (*zhaonuxu*) to serve functions of *yanglao-songzhong* (look after one's parents in the old age and give them a proper burial after they die).

Household 11 illustrates a horizontal *wanglai* between couples. The family have spent more than 20,000 *yuan* since 1988 for Tan's wife. Tan told me that his wife suffered from gastropathy and went to hospital for an operation in 1988 which cost 3,000 *yuan*. Since then she spent more than 2,000 *yuan* per year for medicine until 1996. There is another case of *zhao nuxu* (taking a man as a son-in-law into family), also involving horizontal *wanglai*, which related to household support for chronic disease. When I was passing one of a few old houses in the village, a retarded girl drew my attention. After interviewing the family I knew she was the only daughter of the family and had very limited ability to live without help. A

young man lived with them. He came to the village from a poor village in Zhejiang Province a few years ago and was very well looked after by the family. The young man also worked very hard with the other members of the family and they got on very well as if he were a real member of the family. The retarded girl's mother told me that "I wish the young man would live with us forever, but I do not think *laotian* (Heavenly gods) would bless my family with such *fuqi* (fortune, a happy lot)". Recently, I heard that they had built a very nice new house and the young man married the retarded girl as a *zhao nuxu* of the family. Yao, a neighbour of the family, told me that after I left the village the young man became a carpenter and earned a reasonable amount of money. One day he announced that he wanted to marry the retarded girl and became a *zhao nuxu* because he liked this family and wants to live in with the family and the village forever.

The above vertical circle is mainly mixed with generous and expressive *wanglai*. Generally parents are generous to their children when they are young, and the idea of looking after one's parents in old age and giving them a proper burial mainly involves generosity. When children get older and their parents are not yet too old the relationship between them is mainly expressive *wanglai* (see chapter 3). However, the idea of rearing children against old age including illness in the vertical *wanglai* is not a form of guarantee as is the insurance system in the West. In other words, the relationship between children and their sick elderly parents can be moved from generous, expressive, to negative *wanglai* and vice versa. For instance, there is a popular saying in the village that "*jiu bing chuanguqian wu xiaozi* (in cases of chronic sickness, there are no filial children at the bedside)." After Rao's mother passed away he told me he understood more of the saying. According to Rao if his mother sickened for a long time and he took care of her less well he would be forgiven by not being called an un-filial son. This is why such a death was called *baixi* (white happiness) in the village, as in the rest of China. This means the person's death extricated both the person and his or her closest family members from a predicament. If he did not take care of his mother, or even treated her badly, then he would be called an un-filial son. Luckily, he won the name of filial son because he took care of his mother very well for two years.

The mobilising of different *wanglai* can be seen in the horizontal way too. The relationship between the young man and the retarded girl's family started with generous *wanglai* from the girl's family to the poor boy: at this time the girl's family never expected the boy would marry their retarded daughter in return for their taking care of him. During the period that they lived together the relationship moved to expressive *wanglai* because they liked each other and worked hard to keep together as a real family. When the boy decided to marry the retarded girl the relationship between him and the family became generous *wanglai* again because "the young man sacrificed his whole life for the family" as Yao said. However, if the young man had married another girl in the village after he got richer and kept a relationship of quasi son with the family the relationship between him and the family would have been seen as an instrumental *wanglai* because he used the family when he was in difficult situation. If he was a dutiful quasi son after he established his own family and kept an expressive *wanglai* with the retarded girl's family the relationship could then be improved. If the young man left the family and the village the villagers would describe him as *wang'en-fuyi* (devoid of gratitude) and the relationship between him and the family would then be negative *wanglai*.

I did not know the details of the young man's personal story. His choice to marry the retarded girl is consistent with traditional moral codes: *zhi en tu bao* (one is aware of a great debt of gratitude and understand to pay it back), or even *di shui zhi en dang yong quan xiang bao* (one should return a full spring of water for a drop of water received when one was in a difficult situation), etc. However, the extent to which such moral codes are binding is unclear. Han of household 7 told everybody that his son would take responsibility for him after his back was injured and he was disabled permanently, for two reasons. On the one hand, it is normal for parents to internalise a popular idea of returning one's parents' great debt of gratitude and loving-kindness of upbringing (*baoda fumu de yangyu zhi en*) by praising their children. The idea of *en* is commonly agreed by the villagers to relate to generosity between parents and children. On the other hand, Han told everybody that his son would look after him to put additional external pressure on the son, because he was not so sure how long the above traditional idea would work in his case.



Human feeling is another *lishang* criterion. The above cases show loving-kindness involved in both vertical and horizontal ways, as Fang to his father, Han's son to him, Tan to his wife, and the young man to the retarded girl, etc. I asked Tan why he spent more than 20,000 *yuan* for his wife's gastropathy. He told me that they were "an affectionate couple (*en'ai fuqi*)". For him, love meant putting in a lot of hard work into their life. He was proud of himself and paid the money all by himself, which he could do because he was a famous galvanised ironsmith in the township.

Rational calculation is another criterion. I also asked Tan why he did not seek financial support from public sources. He told me that he never expected he could claim anything from these and it was not worthwhile to spend much energy for limited money. Household 15's case also shows that it was too much hassle to claim financial support from public sources. Fang, the head of the household 15, told me that although he spent 7,000 *yuan* for his father's cancer of the oesophagus at one time, he would not bother the village collective or local government because there was not a clear regulation for him to follow. Fang was a manager of a construction company of the township and also one of the richest people in the village. Fang said that he hated to *la guanxi* meaning to involve himself in an unclear relationship for instrumental purpose, because he was a businessman and wanted everything to be clear.

The sick and injured people in the village are considered to be unfortunate people. All the members of the above households I interviewed mentioned the term of *fuqi* (good fortune). The main reason determining whether an unfortunate person could have a happy ending depends on whether or not there is a *fuqi* (good fortune) in their life. In particular the retarded girl's mother repeated again and again that her daughter "*youfu* (has good fortune)" which was blessed by the Heavenly gods (*laotian*). This idea of *fu* is imbued with religious sense.

### 2.3.2. Vertical and horizontal *wanglai* with personal relations

The highest expenditure on medical treatment in Table 9 is in the household No. 5, the RD Tan family. Tan's son suffered blood poisoning in 1993 when he was 27 years old and a father of a four year old boy. He was sent to Suzhou City hospital,

which charged 40,000 *yuan* for the medical treatment. This was “snow and frost” for the family. The Tan family had 10,000 *yuan* of debt from building a house in 1992, bringing the total debt up to 50,000 *yuan*. The way in which Tan arranged financial support for the huge expense of his son’s hospital treatment was as follows. He gave the bad news to his close links in the family’s networks. He then received 22,000 *yuan* with no interest from their relatives. This comprised 5,000 *yuan* from his older daughter, 3,000 *yuan* from his younger daughter, 6,000 *yuan* from Tan’s son’s in-law, 1,000 each from Tan’s sister and Tan’s wife’s brothers, which are old generation relatives, and 3,000 *yuan* each from Tan’s quasi-sons. Rao also borrowed 500 *yuan* from each of three friends. The above private support made up 59 per cent of the total expenditure. Tan also borrowed a non-interest loan of 6,500 *yuan* from the village collective and submitted an expense account of 9,000 *yuan* to the township. Furthermore, the Tan family received about 100 people’s visits (*wangxin*) and gifts equivalent to 2,000 *yuan*, after Tan’s son came back from the hospital.

The above case shows the Tan family arranged and received financial support from criss-cross networks, which mainly involved horizontal private support. As I have shown in “non-agnatic kin” of 4.1.2, it is important for villagers to keep and maintain their lists of non-agnatic kin. I checked the relatives who loaned money to Tan’s son for his hospital treatment. They are exactly the same families on the list of Tan’s family’s close non-agnatic kin. Since their relations were maintained well during festival periods, when the Tan family were in trouble he received financial support from them automatically. This process of maintaining relations which are used in an emergency can be understood as input and outcome. According to Tan, he did not ask their close kin for specific amounts of money when he told them the bad news. They worked it out themselves by following the local custom. So the sum of financial support was more or less expected by him, i.e. new kin which is of the in-law’s family gave 6,000 *yuan*, 1,000 *yuan* of each from two old generational kin, 3,000 *yuan* each from the sick person’s younger sister and two quasi brothers, etc. I asked Tan how these families had spare money to loan to him? He said each of them had their own lists of close kin and they could borrow money from them. For example, his older daughter was the oldest child in the family. She got married

in 1986 and established well maintained family networks, whereas the younger daughter only got married in 1991. So the older daughter offered double the amount of the younger daughter. However, since the older daughter already loaned 3,000 *yuan* for her natal family's house building, which she saved over a few years, she had to borrow money through her family networks for her brother's illness. Thus the money received from Tan's oldest daughter should be understood as one share (*yifen*) from her, who arranged it through her family networks.

The above case also shows the quasi kin's function in an emergency situation. One of them, Peng, was the son of the former head of the group when Tan was his assistant. Since these two families got on well, when Peng was two years old he claimed Tan and his wife as quasi parents. According to the local custom to "claim quasi kin", the quasi parents cooked three years New Year's Eve meals (see 5.1) for Peng and Peng should fulfil his duty as a son for Tan's family. Another quasi son, Jiang, lived in a neighbouring village. His mother was a little sister of Tan's wife when they were girls. The two girls lived in different villages but became good friends because they both enjoyed watching the Spring Performance. Sometimes Jiang's mother came to Kaixiangong Village to watch and vice versa. When Jiang was one year old he claimed Tan and his wife as quasi parents. Jiang became a bricklayer when he grew up. Tan's son claimed him as master, which meant a doubled closeness of a relative (*qin shang jia qin*). Since then Tan's two quasi sons and their families are part of the Tan family's close kin list. For Tan it was natural that the two quasi kin loaned Tan's son 3,000 *yuan* each, which was the same amount as Tan's own younger daughter. Thus the relationship between the Tan family and the two quasi sons involved criss-cross networks because it involved different families horizontally and crossed older and younger generations vertically.

As another instance of private support, visits to patients are a popular custom in China. It is called *tanbing* in Yan's Xiajia (1996b:63) and *wangxin* in Kaixiangong Village. After his accident Han, of household No. 7, enjoyed very much the *wangxin* from his relatives, neighbours, and fellow villagers. Han told me that his relatives, neighbours, friends, and fellow villagers visited him with lots of gifts during and after his stay in the hospital. For example, they brought him eggs,

chicken, pork, pigeon, instant noodles, sugar, fruits, cakes, different types of general tonic, etc. Han told me that the gifts which people chose were in particular good for patients. This can be seen as a kind of support with materials.

In household No.12's case the *wangxin* involved a more complicated relationship. Zhou provided a full list of people who visited her when she suffered from pleurisy. To my surprise Zhou remembered all of the visitors, though this happened 10 years before my interview. She told me that she received about 150 people's visits. They were 15 close relatives, 100 fellow villagers from three groups, 10 village's cadres' wives, 19 assistants, one of each in 19 groups of the village (*xinxiyuan*), 5 people who came from the diversified economic service company of the township, 3 researchers from Shanghai University. Zhou told me proudly that "the gifts cost about 1,000 *yuan*, which can be calculated, but the *renqing* of caring was priceless".

It is easy to understand why the people from her work link visited her. This can be seen as a mixture of institutional relationship and expressive *wanglai* because in her work circle she always takes her share of care for others on similar occasions. It is normal for fellow villagers from her own group to visit her according to the local custom. But it was unusual to receive visitors from the other two groups, number 5 and 7. Among them the group 7's case is not too difficult to understand. Zhou told me that she started to create a relationship with villagers in her sister's group since her sister committed suicide (see 1.3.4) in 1972, in case her nephews needed help. As time went on, she won all of them to be part of her family's network. It can be seen as an outcome of her input over a long term. Thus this kind of *wanglai* between Zhou's family and the fellow villagers in group 7 can be understood as a mixture of expressive and instrumental *wanglai*.

The main reason Zhou helped many villagers beyond her own and neighbouring groups in the village can be covered by a moral statement that she wanted to be a good cadre (*haoganbu*). She often helped women who lived in other groups of the village in different ways as a head of the Women Federation of the village, because the job involved little formal work. For example, some women were afraid or felt shy when seeing doctors in the township hospital for gynaecological examinations

and asked her along as company. This was beyond her duty. She met their requests mostly when they asked because she thought they could be her “mass basis (*qunzhong jichu*)”. Some people thought this was her job and others understood these were favours she provided to them. Afterwards they gave her little gifts in return. Zhou told me that the above women didn’t visit her when she was ill because it was the wrong place (*changhe budui*) for them to do so. According to the villagers’ common sense this kind of relationship between the women and her can be counted as instrumental *wanglai*. Zhou said it does not matter whether or not the women she helped gave her gifts. The important thing for Zhou is that she could win their trust and support for her work. This was the same argument the agricultural technician used, as well as the former head of the village YG Zhou: “we worked very hard in everyday life to win over villagers one by one (*yige yige di zhengqu*), in order to gain support from them.” The praise the village cadres gained as good cadres (*haoganbu*) from the villagers was the credit they won from them. This kind of mass relation (*qunzhong guanxi*) with villagers can be seen as vertical expressive *wanglai*, although as village cadres their power was limited. In other words, it can be seen as downwards *wanglai* to the villagers and is therefore opposite from the upward pattern that Yan found in Xiajia (Yan, 1996b:171).

For both Han and Zhou the satisfaction of emotional care from their private links was very helpful for recovery. Han said he was very happy for the visitors to come to see him because it proved his family had a good quality reciprocal relationship with them. Zhou told me that she felt honoured she received visits from all the visitors when she was ill. She also enjoyed very much so many people’s visits because it proved all her links felt grateful (*lingqing*) for her hard work in maintaining different kinds of relationships in the past.

Zhou’s answer as to whether or not she would expand her mass basis is a typical answer of rational calculation. She said that there was no need for her to have the maximum number of villagers in her *lishang-wanglai* networks because her position was tiny compared with the head of the village and local officials. However, it was necessary for her to make a broader relationship with another neighbouring group, group 5, although she did not expect all the fellow villagers from the group to visit her, because the neighbouring group 5 villagers could be her

potential supporters as her personal networks of mass basis of her work. Zhou told me about the ways she helped group 5's fellow villagers in everyday life, i.e. looked after an injured person, gave some spare grass to a family for the rabbits, patched up a family quarrel, etc. She said she did these without any clear instrumental concern as it was for guarding her nephews in the adjacent Group 7. This appears to be the formation of a horizontal expressive *wanglai* with the group 5 villagers. For example, when a villager asked somebody for something, e.g. cutting rabbit's hair and gave them a tea party afterwards, this appears to be an instrumental purpose. But she can't pick up people for help randomly. The help must be given within an expressive *wanglai* context. In this case villagers from group 5 visited Zhou to either repay her help over a long time in different ways, or for getting her repayment in the future in other ways, which is not pure generosity either. The group 5's villagers' action shows that both they and Zhou accepted each other in horizontal expressive *wanglai*, although in a marginal position at the edge of their *lishang-wanglai* networks. Their reciprocal actions were according to the local custom.

There is finally a hidden aspect of visits to patients (*wangxin*) which relates to a religious sense. I asked a numbers of villagers the meaning of *wangxin*. They told me that it is a traditional way for villagers to bring proper gifts to visit someone who has had serious illness, an accident causing a serious injury, a hospital operation, or has given birth, etc. In such circumstances, extra money is needed for treatment, medicines, transport, nourishing food and so on, and also this person and his or her household needs more care and attention. According to the village custom, relatives, neighbours, friends and fellow villagers should be involved each in the appropriate degree. In particular, the villagers believe a Chinese saying *sanfen bing qifen yang*, literally, the illness involves three parts physical treatment, seven parts caring and spirituality. They think a person can recover quickly if very many people come to see him or her, because this means they are all on the side of his or her *yang* and against his or her *bing*.

### 2.3.3. Vertical wanglai with institutions

Public support can be of different types: financial, information, organisation for related activities, etc. The financial resources can be requested from official sources (bank or village collective or state or collective work unit) or unofficial sources (usury and mutual savings), or others (see Table 4). The village collective played an important role in public support. Over the last 25 years in Kaixiangong Village public support normally applied to a single person or households (*tekun hu*)<sup>9</sup> in difficulty from serious illness or injury, although situations changed from time to time. It can be seen from the following items: village clinic, medical insurance, disabled living allowances and funerals for the poor, etc. and the like (see 5.8).

Section 5.8 shows that a few cases involved different types of top down vertical *wanglai*. They were a village doctor and villagers, a village head and a group head, a few village cadres and a nearly disabled villager, a Director of the Village Committee and a poor village, etc. Normally these relationships would be counted as institutional relationships because they were work related relations. However, the relationships were personalised by both sides, in particular in a top down vertical direction. For example, the relationship between the medical insurance and villagers is not *lishang-wanglai*, but when it was first introduced to the village the villagers were forced to pay for it and it did involve *lishang-wanglai*. It was a mixed vertical instrumental and expressive *wanglai* between the local government and the villagers via the village collective, through village cadres to personalise the relationship. On the one hand it was the village cadres' job to complete the transition from the rural co-operative medical system to a commercial medical insurance system. The former head of the village said, for the medical insurance the main problem was that most villagers did not want to pay for it because they didn't see the point and believed the village collective or the township government would take some responsibilities for any extra burden. So the persuasion involved instrumental purpose. On the other hand, nobody could get money from the villagers without touching them with human feelings (*yi qing dong ren*). The village cadres asked villagers, one household by one (*yijia yihu*), to imagine if he or she was Han (see the above household No. 7's case) to show how important the

medical insurance was. Eventually the majority of the villagers joined the medical insurance system. The way in which the transition was accomplished mainly used expressive *wanglai* between the village cadres and villagers. Thus the relationship between medical insurance and the villagers became partly *lishang-wanglai*.

The case of No. 5, the Tan family who borrowed money from the village collective, involved a top down vertical expressive *wanglai* between a village head and a group head. This appears similar to the instrumental *wanglai* when JG Wang borrowed money for her daughter's wedding from the village collective (See 5.8). However, Tan insisted his case was different and should be treated as expressive *wanglai*. (a) Morally, such a serious illness of his son entitled him to ask for financial support in any way possible. After he arranged financial support from private sources and the township he still needed 6,500 *yuan* to balance the hospital expenditure. He was told that he was allowed to borrow 2,000 *yuan* from a bank, with interest and complicated formalities. This is, of course, nothing to do with *lishang-wanglai*. However, Shen, who was then village head, offered to loan him the full sum with simplified formalities and without interest. (b) Tan said he was very grateful and moved that Shen was so concerned and cared about his family's situation. The villagers showed their understanding of it with great sympathy. For them, JG's daughter's wedding was a direct reason, and his mother's operation an indirect reason, to cause him to borrow money from the village collective, whereas Tan's son's operation was a direct reason. (c) Tan admitted that he gained resources from the village collective and Shen gained a credit from him, which involved rational calculation. But he pointed out that the main reason he borrowed money from the village collective wasn't *guanxi* between him and the head of the village, although as a group head it did smooth the thing a bit, due to not requiring him to go through complicated formalities. According to Tan, both he and Shen could have been removed from their posts, but one thing couldn't change. That is, if a village head takes care of a group head the group head will work hard for him as well as for his group people. (d) Recently I asked Tan's son, who suffered blood poisoning 10 years ago, what he thought about his illness and his health and family life in general. He said he was luckily fully recovered from the illness. He was grateful to the village collective which arranged work for him in a village



enterprise after he recovered from his illness. He became a culturist in aquiculture after the enterprise went bankrupt. His family repaid all the debt two years ago. His son was sixteen years old and just had a ritual of worship for both a life goddess (*ataimo*) and medical goddess (*xinganmo*). He himself was not interested in gods, but his mother took part in all the spiritual events, which she believed would benefit her family members.

Section 5.8 shows that the relationship between a doctor of the village clinic and the villagers is a mixed institutional and commercial relationship. The difference between the two rural Chinese medical systems is it contains a higher commercial element now than it did under the rural co-operation medical system. *Lishang-wanglai* took place during the period of transition between the systems. (a) Dr Ni thought it was morally wrong to charge villagers much higher payments for home visits from 1992, a few years before the new system took over. According to the new regulations, from 1992 onwards he was allowed to charge 50 *fen* registration fee per visit from every patient who visited the clinic, 3 *yuan* in daytime and 5 *yuan* for an evening home visit. However, Ni thought 3 *yuan* was too much for the villagers to pay, when converted to an annual payment per person under the co-operative medical system. Besides, it was a double charge on the villagers because he already received income from the village collective, which originally came from the villagers. So he decided to charge a rate much lower than the regulation rate for the first 4 years.

(b) Ni told me that he also felt embarrassed to charge his fellow villagers up to 10 times the normal registration fee, especially when they had an emergency. This is a typical human feeling of sympathy. So during the 4 years of the transition period Ni adapted the new regulations for the villagers. For example, he always charged a 50 *fen* registration fee per visit, whether a patient visited the clinic or he visited them at home. If a treatment involved having intravenous drips he then charged 2 or 3 *yuan*, including the registration fee, etc. He explained his adaptations to his patient whenever he visited them and gained better understanding from them. This is how Ni mixed an expressive *wanglai* with the institutional relationship between a village doctor and the villagers. Ni told me that if he had suddenly charged high rates according to the regulations he would have earned lots more money, but

would also have lost many of the villagers as friendly patients. This is why the villagers liked to make a comparison between the village doctor Ni and the village vet. They said the former had more human feelings (*renqingwei*) than the latter in dealing with the changing situation with villagers.

(c) From 1996 onwards, after the villagers stopped paying for the rural co-operative system in the village, Ni started to charge fees from the villagers according to the new regulations issued four years previously. His income then increased up to 10,000 *yuan* per year, which is triple what it was before. Ni thought it was fair for the villagers, which accords with rational calculation. I interviewed a household without a serious illness or injured person or disabled person and asked for their yearly medical expenditure. It included registration fees per visit to the village clinic (*weishengshi*), doctor's home visits, and costs for medicine, etc. The medical expense of the household was about 150 *yuan* per year. Interestingly enough, when the informant Ding listed his family's annual expenditure he said his "family spend more or less the same amount, about 150 *yuan*, on farm animals, agricultural plants, and medical expenditure for family members".

(d) In contrast to the many villagers who praised Ni as a nice doctor, full of human feelings, his father-in-law became a Christian because he believed his son-in-law lacked human feelings. Ni was a man who married into the family as a son-in-law (*zhaonuxu*). His parents-in-law lived in a neighbouring house separately as two households. After Ni's mother-in-law passed away the two households continued the same relationship as neighbours to each other. This is different from most households' family arrangements and the local custom of the village. I suggested it might be because Ni grew up outside the village with professional skills. But the father-in-law insisted that Ni had lack of *renqing* and kept distant *ganqing* (human feeling) from him, which was determined by their fates. The father-in-law suffered heart disease, but he didn't even believe that his son-in-law could cure it with his profession. This was why he disengaged himself from the situation he didn't understand, by becoming a Christian in order to get help from God.

#### 2.3.4. Vertical *wanglai* with spiritual beings

Support from spiritual beings wasn't on the original study of the ESRC social support project. I added this, based on my own findings from my fieldwork in Kaixiangong Village. There has always been a kind of informal system in the village for protection against illness or coping with long term chronic disease. It is called *baifo* (to worship Buddha). This is the same character as *baifo*, which means to worship Buddha in general. The reason I chose the phrase "spiritual beings" rather than a particular god or goddess is because the villagers had different religions. In particular, they mixed Buddhism (*xinfo*) and Taoism (*xinshen*) together. 75 per cent of sampled households said that they worshipped Buddha for health. The most popular way was to go to temples for such worship. However, there were two more kinds of worship, which became more popular during the past two decades. One was called worship of a heart and liver goddess or medical goddess (*bai xinganmo*), and another was to take up Christianity (*xinyesu*).

To worship Buddha is a traditional way of praying for relief or cure from illness. It has always been and still remains an activity in the village. This can be carried out at home or at a temple, or mixed with everyday religious life. However, to worship a heart and liver goddess or medical goddess (*bai xinganmo*) was a relatively new phenomenon in Kaixiangong Village. The numbers of villagers who worship *xinganmo* increased since it was introduced in the village from Hehuawan village in the 1980s,<sup>10</sup> and their customs influenced each other.

When I started my fieldwork there were three small temples in the village. However, the local government sent some people to destroy all three in April 1996, one month before I left. The villagers were not very much shocked. A woman, Jin, who I met on the lunar New Year's Day when she was looking after the temple, told me that villagers had got used to the fact that different disasters would happen to the temples from time to time, and they were rebuilt again afterwards. For example, East Temple, the main temple in the village, was destroyed completely during the Cultural Revolution and was rebuilt in 1993. It was destroyed again in 1996 and rebuilt again in 2000. In 2003 the temple was closed again due to application of a rule against feudal superstition. Therefore, to worship the heart and

liver goddess at home became a necessary supplement to the villagers' religious life.

I attended such an occasion in the Ding family. The paper inscription of the *xinganmo* was presented in the middle of the back table. Ding presented eight plates of sacrifices in front of the paper inscription: peach-shaped cakes, noodles, oranges, apples, a whole fish, a big piece of pork, a whole chicken, and eggs. Six small handleless wine cups lay in line on the back of the table and one candle and one incense-burner were placed in front of the offerings. A metal pail stood by the table for burning money paper. She then made a bow with her knees bent to the paper inscription of *xinganmo*. In the end she burnt it and lit six strings of firecrackers.

Ding told me that she arranged this worship at her mother-in-law's request. Her mother-in-law suffered gastropathy for more than twenty years and was always on pain-killers whenever she was in pain. Although she tried different medical treatments, they did not cure the root problem. This time she felt a great deal of pain from her gastric disease and accepted one of her friends' advice to worship the heart and liver goddess (*xinganmo*).

For Ding the worship of the heart and liver goddess is similar to the worship of another goddess (*ataimo*) for celebrations of a one month old birthday and sixteenth years old birthday. The differences were: only people above 16 years old were allowed to worship the *xinganmo*; if one's mother got ill her son should worship the *xinganmo* for her and if one's father got ill then his daughter should worship for him. However, in Ding's case, her husband was doing business outside of the township. Ding's mother-in-law suggested that her daughter-in-law carry out the worship in her son's absence. This adaptation of the custom was purely for practical concerns, as the worship itself was convenient and easy to perform at home.

To have Christianity as a religion in Kaixiangong villagers' words was *xinyesu*. Although the villagers clearly distinguished Christianity from the different spiritual beings of Buddhism and Taoism, they did not distinguish between the different

schools of Christianity. The Chinese characters of *xinyesu* are to believe or to be believers of (*xin*) Jesus (*yesu* – Chinese pinyin for Jesus). So the villagers call it *yesujiao*, which doesn't mean Protestantism. To me their performance and worship looked more like Catholicism (*tianzhujiao*), but it was registered as Christianity (*jidujiao*) with the local government. Here and after I will describe this as Christianity.

I found there were Christian believers in the village from my interview with my sampled households. Zhu first answered “Yes” to my question of “general belief in spirits”, but she then answered “No” to questions on worship of local gods and ancestors. She explained to me that she worshipped local gods and ancestors before she became a believer of Christianity in 1994. She told me that there were 14 such believers by 1996, 4 male and 10 female, in the village. I interviewed all of them. Amongst them 10 families were recorded by Geddes (In Fei 1986) and are still Christian believers after 40 years. The oldest one, Xie, was 82 years old. He told me that he became a Christian in 1931, influenced by his uncle (mother's brother). Although there had been several political campaigns over the last half of the century, his family members never stopped praying to Jesus at home and gained benefit from it. Xie also told me that he and his wife had one daughter and brought a man as a son-in-law (*zhao nuxu*), who became a believer. They had three children: one son and two daughters. After the son got married his wife became a believer of Christianity, but the two daughters were no longer believers after they married into non-Christian families. This shows that although the numbers of believers in his family increased and decreased over generations and marriage, in the end it more or less balanced.

The above believers went to two places for services. One was called *difang jiaohui* – the word-for-word translation being “local church”, which meant a fixed meeting place without a church building and no registration with the local government. It was the only “local church” in Miaogang Township and had about 80 believers and held a service every Sunday. It was set up in a believer's home in Miaogang Township. Two “brothers” (lay preachers) came from Zhejiang Province and worked (*chuan fuyin*) in this area. They led people in singing some hymns, gave testimonies (*zuo jianzheng*), read the bible, preached the gospel, prayed, etc. One

quarter of the 50 believers there were males. People who wore a black hat were baptised and called each other sisters and brothers, and otherwise were friends. After the rituals the baptised believers left to share red wine and small pancakes.

Another place was called *guojia jiaohui* – word-for-word translation being “the state church”. This meant a real church building and it was registered with the local government. I went to such a church in Zhenze Township with some believers on a Sunday by public transport. Sun, a pastor, told me that the church was built in 1915. It was taken over by a school to use as a warehouse in 1958 and returned to the church people in 1989. From the early 1980s, before the church was returned to them, they carried out services in private houses. This manner of worship resembled what I saw in Miaogang Township. However, instead of *difang jiaohui* (a place without church building and non-registered) they called it *dixia jiaohui* (underground church service because it was not registered). Up until 1996 there were about 2,000 people who attended the church for services, 400 of whom were baptised.

Before the service started I found some people praying by themselves in waiting rooms. The procedure of the service looked more or less the same as what I have observed in Western churches, although there were differences among them. After the service I noticed a little blackboard with a title of “pray for others” (*daidao*) in the church hall (see photo sets 1:37). The contents were “for xx village xx and xx the mother and daughter to be converted; For xx village xx’s sister’s family who are having a difficult time; for xx village xxx’s eye disease; for xx village sister xx recovering from her broken leg; for recovery of xx village sister xx from depression; for regaining sister xx village xx’s loving heart to her husband; for xx village brother xxx recovering from hepatitis; and for xx village xx to become stronger after an illness.” The titles “sister” or “brother” denote believers, so it can be seen that the prayers asked specific help for prayer group members, as well as others. This way of praying for others was created by the local people. It is different from what I am familiar with in the West, but has strong similarities to my observations of other religious practice in Kaixiangong, e.g. where family members pray to obtain specific help for others in the same family: the son worships the heart and liver goddess for his mother or a daughter for his mother; a wife worships

local gods in a temple for her husband or a mother for her son, etc. I will come back to this topic in the section of “Implication of *lishang*” below.

The relationship between spiritual beings and the villagers involves top down and bottom up reciprocal vertical expressive *wanglai*. As I pointed out in 1.1.3, the reciprocal *wanglai* is formed by the actions of villagers themselves and the imaginary reactions of spiritual beings. The two-way nature of this vertical *wanglai* can be seen from the two rebuilds of the East temple. The first time was in 1993. Jin, one of the organisers of rebuilding the temple, told me how the East Temple was rebuilt. After she had been suffering illness for some years she saw a fortune-teller (*dalaoye*) outside of the township. He told her “*qimiao* (build a temple)”. She and her friends used the extension of a warehouse which was located in the original temple site as the temple building. They collected about 500 *yuan* from villagers whom she knew were interested in this issue. They then bought *longmen* (a dragon door – a kind of curtains with some decorations), big metal pails, table, etc. Two original big candlesticks were returned by a workpoint recorder (*jigongyuan*) who had been keeping them since the Cultural Revolution.

After the temple was destroyed in 1996 the villagers rebuilt it in 2000. Fang told me that a few weeks before the temple was rebuilt a spiritual being appeared in her dream and made a request (*tuomeng*) for her to organise the rebuilding work. It also told her some details of the temple, i.e. the temple should have two statues, who were *Caodaren* and his wife. *Caodaren* was a loyal official in ancient China. Fang and her friends soon raised more than 8,000 *yuan* donation from the villagers and asked a master to carve two marble statues of two meters high to be placed in the temple.

The cause for the rebuilding in these cases was after a villager suffered illness or was given instructions in a dream. This can be interpreted with *lishang* criteria. (a) Morally great merit (*ji da de*) is given to those who organise a rebuild of the temple. The villagers would always remember them. Whoever contributed would also be remembered. For example, the bookkeeper who returned the two original big candlesticks to the East Temple in 1993, and three copies of record of merits and virtues (*gongde bu*), written by pen brush on a big red paper, published all the

people's names and amounts of donations for rebuilding the temple in 2000 (b) Human feelings are also in evidence. In the first case, the sick person organising it can always gain great sympathy from the villagers. The second case shows the feeling of fear of taking responsibility for organising it. I tried to contact Fang again for more details of the temple, but her son refused to let me talk to her. I then asked one of her neighbours to see her. He told me that she and her family were afraid of being marked out by a researcher from England as a tall tree catches the wind (*shu da zhaofeng*). I can understand this feeling. It also shows the limitation of telephone interview methods. (c) To rebuild the temple needed a place, ideas, money, materials, etc., in which rational calculation must be involved. The organisers sought financial and labour support through private sources of neighbours, friends, and fellow villagers; information support from other temples outside the village; as well as a market for specialised carpenters and sculptors. (d) The ritual of record of merits and virtues (*gongde bu*) was a typical way for the villagers to communicate with spiritual beings. As I mentioned earlier, there were three copies of the record of merits and virtues (*gongde bu*). One was burned in the opening ceremony of the temple to show the Heavenly gods (*laotian*) everybody's contribution. Another was put up on the temple wall as a poster, and the final one was kept for a record as the way in which people keep gift lists (*renqing bu*).

When I was thinking about the difference between instrumental *wanglai* and expressive *wanglai* a conversation in the West Temple with Xu, a male villager, enlightened me. Xu was one of two men whom I met in the West Temple. He told me that he went to the temple to worship Buddha for his heart disease (*xinji*). I asked him why so few men visited temples normally, except in the lunar New Year's Eve. He told me that according to the village custom worship for health doesn't have to be carried out by the person who is sick. When he was busy with his work his mother and wife usually did it for him. However, for best results the person who had the illness should always go to pray devoutly to the gods (*jingchang baibai*). Moreover, if one's worship was just for the sake of curing illness it wouldn't be effective enough. Xu's opinion can also be interpreted with *lishang* criteria. (a) Morally, one should be a true believer of any spiritual being rather than using it for a particular purpose. Then one could get a blessing from it.



As Ding's mother-in-law said, to her the worship of the heart and liver goddess means inviting another specialist goddess to help her to recover from the illness. So instead of worshipping gods or goddesses in general, on every 1<sup>st</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of the lunar month she also read silently the name of *xinganmo*. (b) If one worked hard enough by praying to the spiritual being regularly one could touch it and receive blessings from it. As Ding's mother-in-law said, once she became believer of the *xinganmo* she would pray sincerely to her over years and eventually the goddess would be touched by her. (c) If one truly believed in the spiritual being but was too busy to worship it one's close relatives were allowed to do it for one. When I asked Ding's mother-in-law how effective the worshipping *xinganmo* was on her illness she said it would never have an effect if one only worshipped once for a particular purpose. She even quoted a Chinese saying that *pingshi bu shaoxiang, linshi bao fojiao* (never burn incense when all is well but clasp Buddha's feet when in distress). (d) There is a Chinese saying embodying a religious sense. It would be effective if you truly believed it (*xin ze ling*).

I was surprised by the huge difference between the two neighbouring townships of Miaogang and Zhenze. In Zhenze Township, on the one hand, Christianity flourished. On the other hand, the Buddhism looked very depressed. After I visited the church I went to all the main places where there had been temples in the past in the township including three of them in Jinxing village, another fieldwork village of the ESRC social support project, which was located by the township. I found no temple existed at all in Zhenze Township. It was clear that Christianity was much more popular than Buddhism in Zhenze. I asked some sampled households in Jinxing village why Buddhism had declined and Christianity had increased. Their answers can be predicted from the implications of *lishang* below.

(a) The reason villagers in Kaixiangong Village or surrounding areas continually worship spiritual beings for curing illness is because morally they thought they were right (*dui*) to choose any way they liked for their own bodies and mind, according to their own situation. They used the word of "right" to mean *dui* (opposed to wrong - *cuo*) which has a strong moral sense rather than political term (*quanli*). It was important for the local people to have a religious existence, no matter which it was. They told me that Zhenze was a Socialist Spiritual Civilization

township (*shehuizhuyi jingshen wenming zhen*). All the temples were destroyed by the local government, which was similar to Miaogang's situation in 1996. According to the local government, to believe in Buddhism was treated as superstition. It was an underground activity just as Christians carried out services in private houses before the early 1980s. The increase in the numbers of Christian believers was one way to remonstrate against the government's interference with their spiritual world. It was also true for some villagers in Miaogang. Zhu told me that she became a believer of Christianity to change her fate and protect against illness. She said her husband served in the army for seven years during the Cultural Revolution. During this difficult period her older son dropped out from primary school because he had to work on the land and her younger son died from cancer of intestines when he was 11 years old. After she visited a church in Zhenze Township several times she placed the hopes of her family on Christianity. The change of her belief from "general belief in spirits" to Christianity shows that she had found a new spiritual sustenance that replaced the old one.

(b) The reason for the increasing worship of Christianity and decreasing worship of Buddhism in Zhenze obviously involved the human feeling of fear of repression by the government. Among human feelings sympathy is the most common reason for people to understand why those religious believers became believers for curing illness. The contents of the Notice on a blackboard for group prayer in the church hall mainly involved health and illness. Even for people who gave other reasons for their Christianity, i.e. changing of fate, bad temper (*pique*), recovering or protection from illness, wanting life in heaven after death, wanting something superstitious than Buddhism, etc., they also wanted to recover or be protected from illness. Beside, they also used two Chinese phrases *wuke jiuyao* and *wuwei erzhi* with their interpretations from common usage. The former means if one was too ill to be cured by medicine one shouldn't ask god for it, whereas it was commonly used as "Everyone makes mistakes, but few are incorrigible". The latter means: don't ask god to cure your illness, if you pray to god devoutly enough it will go. This was a basic concept in Taoism, literally, do nothing and everything is done. The above two phrases, for the villagers and people in Zhenze, mean that their devout prayers would eventually influence the gods. This means one should never become a

religious believer for the instrumental purpose of curing illness rather than to express one's feeling to move the god (*gandong shangdi*). The former motivation would make praying to spiritual beings instrumental *wanglai*, and the latter expressive *wanglai*.

(c) One of villagers in Jinxing village gave me an answer using rational choice. He said conversion to Christianity was allowed in Zhenze because the church was registered with the local government. This was also the case in Miaogang Township. In order to avoid the matter of superstition, as soon as the biggest temple, *laotai* temple in Miaogang, was properly rebuilt again in 2000 it was registered with the local government. But it was registered into another category as a Tourism Development Scheme. After the temple was rebuilt it attracted a large number of worshippers (*xianghuo hen wang*). The revival of Christianity in Zhenze Township 1996 and Buddhism in Miaogang Township 2000 shows that local people's religious sense never goes away. The shifts between Buddhism and Christianity in the two townships can be seen as a rational adaptation to the political changes.

Practicality was also an important reason for worshipping the heart and liver goddess and Christianity's spread in the village. As I mention at the end of 6.3.3, Tan, Ni's father-in-law, became a Christian to change fate and guard against illness. He also said he didn't want to spend more on medicine because he was getting older and couldn't get more income from working on the land. He found that to be a Christian was just what he needed because he understood his illness well as a common saying that prolonged illness makes a doctor of a patient (*jiu bing cheng yi*) and he also wanted to understand his life with help from God. Furthermore, Xie, the oldest Christian believer, told me that "Relying on Jesus' direction (*kao ta zhidian*), I can cure disease for both human beings and animals with Western medicine, although I am an illiterate person. I remembered lots of medical names and understood which illness needs which medicine and quantity and never went wrong. Thanks to Jesus."

Let's come back to the Zhenze Church. Sun, a pastor of the Zhenze Church, said that there were three methods of prayer which were called pray together in church

service (*daodao*), pray by oneself anywhere (*zidao*), and individual or group pray for others (*daidao*). This reminded me that the oldest believer in Kaixiangong Village mentioned the word “*zidao* (self pray)”, how his family members prayed by themselves during the Cultural Revolution. Sun agreed that the self prayer was a very convenient way for people to convert themselves to Christianity without interruption, whenever outside situations had changed. Referring to the group prayer Notice in the church hall, Sun continued that it has been interpreted in two ways. One is that a person prays for the closest members of family. Another is an extension of this way, namely, the person through a group of people prays for his or her closest member of family, because they believe one person has limited energy and if many people worked together it would produce more power. In return the person also joined such a group to pray for others.

(d) The way in which some Kaixiangong villagers and local people sought support from spiritual beings for curing their illness obviously manifests religious sense. This can be seen in different ways. On the one hand, the villagers believed sometime a god would show its presence or power (*xianling*). I heard a story that in 1993 the bookkeeper recognised subconsciously it might be the time to return the two candlesticks for rebuilding the East Temple. After he did it his family members’ illnesses were all cured. On the other hand, Xu, the man I met in the West Temple, told me that “it does not matter which Buddha (*fo*), god (*shen*) you worship, and where they were located - local or national, east or west. The important thing is if one truly believed the Heavenly gods (*laotain*, or spiritual beings) under any circumstances and then one could be helped.” Geddes noticed the ten households of Christian believers still existed in 1956. He thought the villagers’ religious sense was unaffected even by the situation of the Communist Party advocating atheism after 1949 (In Fei, 1986).

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- <sup>1</sup> The last item won't happen exactly on a yearly basis.
- <sup>2</sup> Only in periods of raising silkworms do the villagers close their doors. The rest of the time the main entrances of their houses are always open, as I mention in 2.2.
- <sup>3</sup> Bernstein 1984, Ding 1989, Freedman 1966, Jelliffe 1971, Mallory 1926, Skinner 1971, Torry 1979, Wong and Will 1991, Yan 1996, etc.
- <sup>4</sup> However, in 2004 the CCTV's Chinese New Year's performances didn't glorify either Jiang Zemin or Hu Jintao. It seems a reflection of the uncompleted power transition from Jiang to Hu.
- <sup>5</sup> Their basic works covered a larger range, i.e. social relief, relief for poverty or aid-the-poor programme (*fuping*), social welfare and security, and support for the army and giving preferential treatment to families of army men and martyrs.
- <sup>6</sup> A rationalistic Confucian philosophical school that developed during the Song and Ming Dynasties.
- <sup>7</sup> According to the village income and distribution table of 1995, net income was only 17 per cent from agriculture, 31 per cent from sidelines, and 52 from industrial production. The industrial production included some villagers who worked for village collective enterprises, other households engaged in processing materials or supplying manufactured goods for enterprises outside the village, and others who worked in enterprises outside the village, etc. Amongst the sideline productions raising silkworms, rabbits, pigs, etc. took 21 per cent of the total income.
- <sup>8</sup> Welfare factories are factories established for people with different kinds of disabilities from 1980s. There were flexible policies of taxes and fees for welfare factories since this new phenomenon appeared in rural China.
- <sup>9</sup> *Tekunhu* is a technical term used by local officials for households in extreme difficulty, mainly caused by illness and injured persons.
- <sup>10</sup> It was a neighbouring village including four groups when Fei conducted his fieldwork in 1936 and joined in Kaixiangong Village in 1982.

