

6. Theoretical approaches

The main goal in my dissertation is to explicate a model of Chinese reciprocity and social relationships with *lishang-wanglai* which I interpret from certain implicit cultural models in Kaixiangong. This Chapter presents the theoretical background which shows how the new theoretical concept – *lishang-wanglai* is developed. It includes a static model and dynamic networks.

Three disparate theoretical approaches have influenced this dissertation: a variety of work about the rather vaguely defined concept of social support from sociology, anthropology and social psychology, well established work on the nature of reciprocity, and recent theories of social creativity. Section 6.1 will show how the conceptual structure of *lishang-wanglai* relates to both general reciprocity as well as social exchanges studies and Chinese related studies. I will begin with a discussion with Sahlins's typology of reciprocity (1972) in section 6.1.1. In my approach I bear in mind the concerns of Chinese scholars about Western scholars' "academic hegemony" due to the dominance of the English language. Apart from related anthropological and sociological general theories my development of *lishang-wanglai* is grounded by Chinese notions (see section 6.1.2).¹ The section 6.1.3 develops a ***lishang-wanglai* model**, which describes the typological components of the concept of *lishang-wanglai*.

Section 6.2 relates to the mobilisation of *lishang-wanglai*. In this section I review social support and social networks from an interdisciplinary perspective. Social support was a very popular interdisciplinary topic in the 1980s, but it is still an unclear term and commonly appears in social psychological textbooks. Sociologists and anthropologists have used social network studies in different fields. I select from the literature those aspects which are related closely to my work, and develop the idea of dynamic ***lishang-wanglai* networks**.

Finally, section 6.3 will show **the motivation for conceptualised *lishang-wanglai***. I review another part - the psychological and cultural aspects part (nonrepresentational ethics) of Kipnis's (1997) "*ganqing* (human feeling)" and Liang Shumin's (1949) "*qingli* (human heart)", as well as the theory of social

creativity. I am interested here in shedding further light on the characteristics of Chinese society, previously documented by sinologists, that seem most unfamiliar to non-Chinese researchers. In particular I will consider the links between *ganqing*, human heart, social creativity, and the positive enjoyment of ambiguity that characterises many aspects of Chinese society. One of the interesting aspects of *lishang-wanglai* is the way in which participants enjoy balancing the multiple possible criteria involved in personal relationships, especially where they must adapt or change customs. This enjoyment is very characteristic of Chinese society. It provides a positive explanation for the way in which, throughout Chinese society, direct statements of fact are seen as “less tasteful” than indirect statements.

6.1. Reciprocity and a *lishang-wanglai* model

The ESRC project and my fieldwork show that resource exchanges, in which reciprocity is central, play a leading role in the arrangement of social support among rural Chinese people. This confirms previous researchers’ studies on social support related reciprocity². In 6.1.3 below I will show how such reciprocal social support in a rural Chinese village is expressed within my *lishang-wanglai* model which corresponds to reciprocity in two ways: as a set of exchange criteria (*lishang*) and as a set of exchange relationships (*wanglai*). In this section I will first review Sahlins’s (1972) work which is close to my work in many ways. Then I will engage in a relatively thorough discussion with related Chinese notions: this is necessitated by the variety of different types of relationship and corresponding principles that have been explored in the context of these notions over the last few decades. Lastly I will introduce how the *lishang-wanglai* model is constructed.

6.1.1. Marshall Sahlins

Reciprocity, as a principle, originally came from Mauss’s (1925) “the spirit of the gift” (1967:8-9). Instead of his early category of the “pure gift” and “real barter” (1922) Malinowski (1926) articulates the principle of reciprocity and concludes “the principle of give-and-take” is the foundation of Melanesian social order (chapters. 3, 4, 8, and 9). Levi-Strauss (1949) believes the principle of reciprocity can be a foundation of all social relations (1969:84). Meanwhile other researchers challenged Mauss’ views of *hao* of the Maori. Firth (1959) argues Maori’s *utu*’s

importance to the notion of “compensation” or “equivalent return” (12ff.). Marshall Sahlins’s (1965a and b, 1972/74) elaboration of reciprocity and the links between material flow and social relations in primitive economies particularly interests me. Sahlins’s reciprocal theory is based on a ‘primitive’ economical society. When introduced into China, a highly complex and advanced country, this caused much confusion. In this section I will discuss Sahlins’s work within the context of the related studies in China.

I will summarise Sahlins’s ideas first. He proposed the use of reciprocity in anthropology to define a set of exchange relationships among individuals and groups. He suggests that these types of reciprocity form a continuum, which correlates with kinship and social distance. He identifies three variables as critical to determining the general nature of gift giving and exchange: kinship distance, sociability, and generosity. He also introduces a tripartite division of exchange phenomena to demonstrate the universality of reciprocity: generalised reciprocity, balanced reciprocity and negative reciprocity. Generalised reciprocity is the solidary extreme and characterises interactions between close kinsmen or within a restricted and intimate social group. According to Sahlins, “Generalised reciprocity” refers to transactions that are putatively altruistic, transactions on the line of assistance given and, if possible and necessary, assistance returned. The ideal type is Malinowski’s “pure gift.” Other indicative ethnographic formulas are “sharing,” “hospitality,” “free gift,” “help,” and “generosity”. The free gift or the sharing of resources without strict measurement or obligation to repay is the norm. Thus close kinsmen often assist one another and interchange food and other goods without any strict expectation of return, other than the existence of a diffuse obligation of a moral rather than economic nature to reciprocate or to assist when needed. Examples include parents housing and feeding children or paying for their education. “Balanced reciprocity” refers to direct exchange. In precise balance, the reciprocation is the customary equivalent of the thing received and is without delay. It is the midpoint and is the form of exchange between structural equals who trade or exchange goods or services. Balanced reciprocity is less personal and moral, and more economic in type. “Negative reciprocity” is the attempt to get something for nothing with impunity. It is characteristic of interactions between

enemy or distant groups and is the attempt to maximise utility at the expense of the other party. Negative reciprocity ranges from haggling to theft and raiding or warfare. It is the most impersonal sort of exchange. In the end Sahlins shows reciprocity is a measure of social distance, on a scale from very close: close kinship, marriage, to very far: trade and war. The greater the social distance, the closer to negative reciprocity, like war (1972:185-230). Among the above three reciprocities the different uses of “balance” must be noted. The whole point of gift exchange is that “balance” is always deferred in every exchange except market exchange. Only in market or barter exchange is the balance completed in the single act of exchange. Market exchange is a separate category. Many researchers have used Sahlins’s model of reciprocity as a framework for analysis of their data.³ My fieldwork experiences verify the widespread existence of a combination of Sahlins’s three types of reciprocity. However, this generalised concept of reciprocity has many drawbacks.

(1) Sahlins’s typology of reciprocity is not enough for applying to my fieldwork in Kaixiangong. Based on my fieldwork I proposed a *wanglai* typology (see 6.1.3)⁴ by combining Sahlins’s (1965) typology of reciprocity and Befu (1966-67) or Yan’s (1996b) categories of expressive exchange and instrumental exchange. I did not use Sahlins’s balanced reciprocity because both expressive and instrumental exchanges normally are balanced, otherwise they can be counted as generous or negative *wanglai*. I use the meanings of Sahlins’s generalised reciprocity, but replace it with “generous *wanglai*” to highlight its character of “pure gift”, “free gift”, and “generosity”. I also have included the negative reciprocity as negative *wanglai*.

However, the way in which I use negative *wanglai* is different from Sahlins’. It is not clear why the altruistic and theft extremes are to be called reciprocity, since no reciprocal transfer is involved. In other words, Sahlins didn’t make a distinction between ending a relationship and turning one type of exchange relationship into another. For me, ending a relationship naturally won’t affect the parties emotionally, i.e. Kaixiangong villagers normally would end a relationship with one of old distant generational relatives (*laoqin*) after their

son got married due to their involvement with a new generational relative (*xinqin*). Turning one type of exchange relationship into another would continue to affect both parties for a certain period, for instance, if a son stopped a relationship with his parents he would turn an expressive *wanglai* into a negative *wanglai*. It looks like they have no relationship but they never stop of thinking of each other. One day it might turn back to expressive *wanglai*. In other words, stopping one kind of relationship with somebody can mean starting another kind of relationship with the same person. For example, to turn an expressive *wanglai* into an instrumental *wanglai* between the same persons means the relationship is still there but with a different nature. Such phenomena of different types of relationships co-existing between two persons or groups are quite common in rural China. Based on Sahlins's negative reciprocity and other related work I made further divisions within the type of negative *wanglai* (see "Negative *wanglai*" in 6.1.3).

(2) Sahlins's definition of social distance including the closeness of close relatives and geography is not appropriate with the Chinese case. Chinese people have separate ways to calculate kinship or friendship distance, which are less affected by geography. For example, at a funeral mourners within *wufu*⁵ of patrilineal descent may never have met but if they are mourning together for a common ancestor, they are close in the sense that they are related to the person who has died. There is also the calculation of relationships through affinity, through women, and through marriage. Anyway, among kin one may be close related in kinship or live geographically close but not feel close. One can also have close feeling among non-kin, like popular Chinese sayings that within the four seas all men are brothers (*sihai zhi nei jie xiongdi ye*) or a relative far off is less help than a neighbour close by (*yuanqin buru jinlin*). I found that rural people who live in the same place and feel close do not apply generalised reciprocities in all their contacts. Balanced or even negative reciprocities can happen to them quite often, but this does not mean that they are distant to each other. I have also found a simpler measure of social distance to be more useful when considering social support in my research work. Yan also noticed that "kinship proximity does not always necessarily result in

generosity; and under certain circumstances extraordinary hospitality is displayed to guests, strangers, or potential enemies” (1996b:100).

So instead of Sahlins’s statement that the closer the social distance, the greater to generalised reciprocity, and vice versa (1972: 203), I propose a statement: the better *lishang* the more likely *wanglai*, the more frequently *wanglai* the closer social distance, and therefore, the greater the generous *wanglai*, and vice versa. For me closeness or distance is not fixed. To make or maintain relationships creates closeness, and to stop or cut off relationships with others creates distance. It is *lishang* which determines the degree of closeness and distance of a relationship through different types of *wanglai*. That is to say the more one understands the *lishang* of the relationship, the greater one’s ability to use the particularistic⁶ component of the relationship.

The greater ability has a positive moral value, relating to the enjoyment of mutual interaction and respect, and the shared liking which these engender. Like Sahlins, the moral value of the exchanges has generalised reciprocity at the highest level, with balanced and negative reciprocities decreasing by degree in their order. Amongst the categories of generous, expressive, instrumental and negative *wanglai*, Chinese people also consider the higher levels to have greater moral value than the lower levels. My addition is that each type of *wanglai* can be changed at any time within one particular relationship according to *lishang* criteria. They are moral judgment, human feeling, rational calculation and religious sense (see *lishang* in 6.1.3). Consideration of the change in moral values and how this is accomplished is central to the study of *lishang-wanglai*. Moral scaling may differ when comparing *lishang-wanglai* in different cultures or different historical period within one culture.

I also consider it more appropriate to measure social distance by frequency of *wanglai*. For me, social distance, as the opposite of social closeness, is a measurement of social relationships determined by frequency or infrequency of contacts (*wanglai*). This is similar to Stafford’s (2000a) idea that social distance follows the term relatedness, which includes the feeling of closeness and contacts (*laiwang*). The term *wanglai* in *lishang-wanglai* enlarges the meaning of the

Chinese version of reciprocity and includes exchange relationships and connections. This means one can make closeness and distance relationship by personalising any individual or group in any place at any time through contacts (*wanglai*). This is more important than kinship relationships, geographical distance, and closeness of human feeling. According to this measurement, no matter where you live or whom you live with, if you contact each other frequently you have a close relationship. Otherwise, even two brothers who used to live in the same family, and still live in the same village after they have divided into two families, have different relationships to contact and are likely to become more distant (see section 1.3). I differentiate contacts by resources and size of resource exchanged. The closeness is also measurable in the generosity as distinct from the frequency of gifts.

(3) Another difference between Sahlins's work and mine is that Sahlins's writing is about social relationships at any one time, whether they were made or inherited. Sahlins rather incidentally introduces the possibility of change by mentioning that balanced reciprocity is inherently unstable. On theoretical grounds, it would seem either to tend to closer relations, towards a generalised reciprocity or to less close relations, to a negative reciprocity (1972:223). However, he gives no evidence for this useful speculation. Based on his fieldwork Kipnis (1997) made clearer statements. According to Kipnis, "human relationships are the by-products of neither biological generation, a Confucian worldview, nor any sort of abstract 'social structure' that works outside of or above human subjects; they are the results of purposeful human efforts, of a type of practice". This kind of practice is dependent upon the human actors' continuing work, which is not merely "remnants" of tradition, but rather is activated or vitalised in present village life (1997:7). I agree with this and will support it by showing the dynamic flux in exchange relationships. I am going to emphasise a particular aspect in which the relationships are dynamic, flow, variable, and so are changed by people according to *lishang-wanglai*. I am also interested in how exchange relationships work among rural people and affect their life, and its changing process. For me, the relationships are not fixed things, and to decide to make a new relationship or to discontinue social relationships is a creative process. Compared with the previous researchers I

will be concerned much more with the making of social relationships, with their being changed and with the activity of keeping them, because my fieldwork material provides more information about this. I am doing an analysis in which the change or creation of social relationships is very central. Chapters 1 to 4 show I looked at the whole process of making, maintaining, altering, and stopping social relationships when I analyse social support in Kaixiangong Village. Furthermore, *wanglai* (contacts) are signs which give information about relationships. The way in which a person would choose a relationship is through changing contacts or through using existing contacts in different ways. Existing relationships are partly spontaneous, and partly chosen on purpose (when the wish to make closer relationships results in actions which achieve this). In other words, relationships are continually redefined by people.

6.1.2. Chinese notions

Chinese scholars from mainland China, Hong Kong, Taiwan and overseas⁷ have been able successfully to use concepts from the Chinese socio-cultural matrix, to examine Chinese society. However the greater objectivity possible from an external observer is equally valuable⁸. This section will attempt to appraise critically the Chinese notions relating to reciprocity from both perspectives. In this subsection I will review each of these: *mianzi*, *chaxugeju*, *yuan*, *fu*, *bao*, *huhui*, *guanxi*, *renqing*, *ganqing*, *yang* and *laiwang*. This review will lay the groundwork for my introduction of *lishang-wanglai*, as a key concept with unifying framework in 6.1.3.

*Mianzi (mien-tzu)*⁹

Mianzi (face) is the first Chinese notion in the area of interpersonal relationships to gain the attention of non-Chinese writers and scholars. Arthur Smith (1894) began his description of the Chinese character with a discussion of face in the late nineteenth century. Lin Yutang (1935/95) summarised three immutable laws of a Chinese universe: face (*mianzi*), fate (*mingyun*), and favour (*enhui* part of *bao*), as early as 1935. Hu Hsien Chin (1944) was the earliest researcher to study Chinese face systematically. She divided Chinese face into *lian* (*lien*) and *mianzi* (*mien-tzu*) with a list of five different uses of *lian* and twenty-one of *mianzi* (45-60).

According to Hu, “The importance of *lien* and *mien-tzu* varies with the social circumstances of ego. All persons growing up in any community have the same claim to *lien*, an honest, decent ‘face’; but their *mien-tzu* will differ with the status of the family, personal ties, ego’s ability to impress people, etc. In a tightly knit community the minimum requirements for the status of each person are well recognised. Anyone who does not fulfil the responsibilities associated with his roles will throw out of gear some part of the mechanism of well-ordered social life.”(62). All the subsequent discussions retain Hu’s distinction between *mianzi* and *lian*, but each elaborates one or the other’s importance. They also refer to Erving Goffman’s work on face (1959), e.g. Hwang (1985/87) used it in a study of Chinese power games. As a micro-sociologist Goffman analyses everyday life and is concerned with the ways in which people play roles, and manage the impressions they present to each other in different settings, showing that societies are ordered through a multiplicity of human interactions. In short, Goffman conceptualises “face work” as about the maintenance and the disturbance of the surface. The key difference between Goffman and Hwang’s face studies and the Chinese version of face is that Chinese face has a much richer and more positive concept to do with one’s reputation, respect, dignity, prestige, status, feeling, sensibilities, self-respect, etc. Thus Chinese face can serve the positive role of keeping society in harmony as well as having adverse effects for certain individuals, e.g. killing people by forcing them to commit suicide.

It’s useful to make distinctions between *mianzi* and *lian* (Hu 1944), ascribed and achieved status (Ho 1976), social and moral face (King and Myers 1977, Cheng 1986, Chen 1989, Zhu 1989, Yang M.¹⁰ 1994, Yan 1996b). It’s also helpful that previous researchers have identified *li* or *liyi* (propriety) and *de* (morality) as respectively the social and moral roots of Chinese face (Cheng, King and Myers, Zhu). Yang M. (1994), Yan (1996b) and Kipnis’s (1997) empirical studies have proved *mianzi*, *guanxi*, *renqing* and *ganqing* worked together in Chinese society. In contrast to these writers, I am particularly interested in the principles of high regard and the maintenance of good social relations. For me, both *mianzi* and *lian* or *lianmian* (Kaixiangong’s term: *lian* + *mianzi*, cheek and face) touch upon two principles in maintaining reciprocal personal relationships. They are moral

constraint (Yan's term) and social embarrassment, which can be seen as part of the *lishang* criteria (2.2.3). In the villagers words "face is important for man as the bark is to the tree (*ren yao lian shu yao pi*)". In Kaixiangong, villagers describe the feelings involved in some situations with the term *buhao yisi* (to feel shy, ashamed, embarrassed, or humiliated, etc.). These situations are typically when villagers ask for help in return from those people they have helped, or refuse those people who are asking for help even though they would really like to help, or delay returning a favour, etc. M. Yang's finding in her fieldwork also supports this idea (1994: 141, 196). A villager explained to me that this kind of *buhao yisi* is complex. It includes their own feeling of embarrassment at not being able to live up to expectations and feelings of the others, which might be resentment, disappointment, or disapproval. I confirmed this with my English friends who said they would normally feel *buhao yisi* to ask their friends financial questions, invade their privacy, or take advantage of them. In addition, a villager told me that the idea behind the feelings of *buhao yisi* is a set of moral judgments distinct from formal politeness. There are some relevant Chinese sayings consciously held by the villagers: one ought to repay debt (*qianzhai yao huan*), one would feel light without debt's pressure (*wuzhai yishen qing*), the better the returned credit the easier it is to borrow (*you jie you huan zai jie bunan*), never becomes a "debt-asking ghost" (*bu zuo taozhagui*).

Chaxugeju

Based on Chinese classic texts and villagers' everyday life in Yunnan Province, Fei Xiaotong (1947) established the existence of ego-centered social relationships of *chaxugeju*. This notion is a figure of speech for Chinese social structure which involves certain principles. On the one hand, Fei explains that Chinese social structure looks like the picture created by throwing a stone into a pond. An individual's ego is at the centre of his social world, and all other people have different distances around him. Social relationships (*shehui guanxi*) are a network (*wangluo*) formed by increasable personal connections (*siren lianxi*) (21-28). On the other hand, Fei (1947) explains that the *xu* of *chaxugeju* is based on Confucius' *lun*, which relates to ten types of relationships (25).¹¹ Fei claims the starting point of a moral system in *chaxugeju* is to cultivate oneself according to *li* and the whole set of personal relationships¹² maintained by *de* (29-35). In other words, restraint,

by self-cultivation (*keji xiushen*) based on *li*, is the most important principle to build up one's personal networks (*siren guanxi*) (25-26). Fei also compared *li*, *de* and law in people's life. He said *li* is the most important element, maintained by internalised customs, *de* is maintained by public opinion, and law is a restraint on people from outside. So rural society is a *lizhi* (rule by rites), a society which is ruled mainly by *li*, not by law (48-59). Although the contents of *li* are sometimes cruel, they are maintained as traditional customs which people revere from inside. Fei pointed out rural Chinese people live in the same place with close relationships limiting some social activities. For example, due to strong senses of *renqing* and *mianzi* (face), some villagers have to go to a market a long way away from the village to trade in order to avoid a conflict within the village (75-77).

The idea of *chaxugeju* has influenced many researchers. For example, Lau (1982) divided kinship into the three categories of family, close-kin, and other kin in 1977 Hong Kong. He found that the *chaxugeju* existed in emotional support, financial support, and in the resolution of problems. Both Yang Yinyi (1995, 1999) and Chen Junjie (1996/98) suggested that *lunli* (Fei's *chaxugeju*-based Confucian basic relationships) should be one of three basic dimensions of *guanxi* structure. Yan (1996b) also mentioned *chaxugeju* related to *guanxi* (228). From my point of view the structure of *chaxugeju* looks similar to Sahlins's model of reciprocity (see 6.1.2). Fei touched upon principles of moral judgment, human feelings, rational calculation and religious sense. However, Fei's *chaxugeju* has not been accepted over half a century later. The main problem with it is a lack of testing in empirical studies and refinement through studying related theories. Fei's ideas mainly came from Confucius' classic texts, whereas there were always other related social theories in ancient China. Fei's understanding of Confucius' morality needs to be justified in people's real life. How *li*, *de*, and law work now are quite different from what they were either in ancient times or when Fei wrote his work because situations in my fieldwork villages have changed. Although Fei noticed changes in relations, more work needs to be done in order to understand the process of changing personal relationships.

Yuan and fu

Fei (1947) introduced two related terms *xueyuan* (ties of blood, consanguinity and blood relationships) and *diyuan* (people born in the same land) in studying rural Chinese society. They correspond to *xueyuan shehui* (blood and marriage tied society) and *xiangtu shehui* (native and popular society). In mainland China from the 1980s onwards some *yuan* related terms appeared in Chinese sociological textbooks.¹³ They formed personal networks: *xueyuan* for relationships based on ties of blood, *qinyuan* for kinship relationships, *diyuan* for fellow-townsmen relationships, *yeyuan* for colleagues' relationships and *youyuan* for friendship etc. Many researchers have carried out empirical studies with the above “*yuan*” related relationships in different subject areas, e.g. Wang Xiaoyi (1993) from sociology and Zhai Xuwei (1993) from social psychology.

Commonly *yuan* is used to mean a predestined relationship, luck or fate by which people are brought together (Cudianzu 1995:1262). It originally comes from Buddhism. According to Sun Shangyang (1994), Buddhism was successfully begun in China by eminent monks who interpreted Buddhist doctrine very well with Confucian and Taoist beliefs. The Chinese version of Buddhism accepted the idea that people should deal with relationships according to *lunli*. For example, people tied by marriage are called *yinyuan*, and by blood as *xueyuan*, by the same place are *diyuan*, etc.

Yuan became an object of study with a religious sense starting from Yang Guoshu (1982/89) in Taiwan. He claims that the Chinese have a strong sense of fatalism, which is expressed as *yuan* in interpersonal relationships. According to Yang G., there are five direct sources of *yuan* in people's everyday life in traditional society. They are the gods or immortals descending to the world, the transfer of evil spirit and fraud, reincarnation and transmigration, retribution of good and evil, and design by the nether world. Yang G. lists 17 types of *yuan* and divides them by time (long term or short term) and moral judgement (good, bad, and normal). He also lists 30 popular phrases about *yuan* and divides them into different groups. 70 percent originally came from marriage relationships, either good or bad, long term or short term. Based on his initial results of an empirical study in university

students in 1980 he believes *yuan*'s basic function is in maintaining a harmonious interpersonal and social relationship. Yang G. related five functions of *yuan* to psychologists' (e.g. Weiner, B. 1979) work on the process of establishing, making and maintaining social and interpersonal relationships. They are an attributional process in establishing relationships, an acquaintance process as soon as there is contact, defence mechanism after the relationship fails, defensive rationalisation in maintaining relationships, and self-fulfilling prophecy. Some empirical studies also proved the importance of *yuan* in social or personal relationship, e.g. Zhai Xuewei (1993) and Yang Yinyi (1995). I too use *yuan* in the analysis of my fieldwork. When I use the common term of *xueyuan* (tie by blood), the blood covers the distinction between descent and blood. However, I do not use the idea of blood for male line and flesh for female care and reproduction, which tends to be patriarchal and marginalising towards women. I found in Kaixiangong Village it is quite common for some married couples who have difficulties in working together to blame their marriages: *mei yuanfen* (not a predestined relationship). I will use the idea as a religious sense of *lishang*.

The religious sense can also be seen from Fei's (1947) earlier work on *fu*. When Fei introduced *xueyuan* and *diyuan* he didn't mean to involve a religious sense in social relationships. However, when Fei described the power of tradition with the term *fu*, he did mean a kind of religious sense. According to Fei, some traditional treatments in curing illness are highly effective (*lingyan* - works magically). Such things are not easy to understand and the villagers do not bother to ask for reasons because they simply believe that to follow the traditions would bring *fu* for them and that otherwise there would be endless problems (52-53).

Fu is a general term for blessing, benediction, happiness, good luck, and good fortune. There are different terms related to *fu* in Chinese everyday life. For example, *fuqi* or *fufen* (good luck, good fortune), *fuxiang* (a face showing good fortune), *fuxing* (lucky star), *fuzhi* (happiness, blessedness), *fuli* (welfare, well being), *xiangfu* (enjoy a happy life, live in ease and comfort) or *xiangqingfu* (a peaceful, quiet and easy life), *xingfu* (happiness), *zhufu* (blessing, benediction), etc. Gou Chengyi (1994) carried out a literature study especially on the topic of *fu* itself. He summed up the traditional meanings of *fu* based on *wufu* (five good

things) in the traditional Chinese culture of *jixiang* (lucky, auspicious, and propitious). *Fu* is the first word of the five *fus* (*fu-lu-shou-xi-cai*). The rest of *fu* includes *lu* (official's rank and salary in feudal China), *shou* (long life), *xi* (happy, joyous, delighted), and *cai* (wealth, money). However, ordinary people's understandings of *fu* are concrete. For them, *fu* means to be well-fed and well-clothed, all is well, calm and peace, have a long life and many sons, no misfortune and disaster, etc. (5-66). Gou also combed out different ways to reach *fu* from Confucius, Taoism, and popular culture separately. According to Gou, Confucius' ways include “*li* (morality, etiquette, manners, rituals)”, “*xiao* (filial sentiments and behaviour)”, “*ren* (kindheartedness, benevolence, humanity)”, “*shun tianming* (acceptance of destiny and cultivating oneself)”, “*zhongyong* (opt for the golden mean)”, etc. (124-164). Gou continues that the Taoist ways to reach *fu* are “*zhizu* (be content with one's lot)”, “*ziran* (conform to natural trend)”, “*wuyu* (constrain one's desire)”, “*wuzhi* (humble)”, “*xiaoyao* (free and unfettered)”, etc. (165-194). However, Gou found from ordinary people's life and popular culture that there are different ways than the classics to reach *fu*. For them, the most important things are hard work and frugality, modesty, tolerance and forgiveness, accumulating merit for both this and the other world. Gou then listed twenty customs of praying for *fu* (78-123, 196-252) and divided *fu* into *zhifu* (reaching *fu*) and *qifu* (praying for *fu*).

The idea of *zhifu* (reaching *fu*) and *qifu* (praying for *fu*) was confirmed by Wang Mingming's (1998) empirical study. However, from his fieldwork materials Wang overlooked the main meaning of *fu* (good fortune) by applying mechanically “practice” (Bourdieu's term) to analyse rituals and treating *fu* as “social ontology” (24-25). It doesn't much help to understand rural Chinese people's life because it missed its religious sense. Kaixiangong villagers who were very poor or ill always talk of their *ming buhao* (bad fate) or *mei fuqi* (unfortunate). The villagers also often use *you fuqi* (good fortune) to describe people with long and happy lives. I will use *fu* as a part of the religious sense of *lishang* and show how it affects rural Chinese people's life and their personal relationships. This way of using *fu* is like Fei's (1947) and Yang M.'s (1994). She also found people often use *youfu* for having good fortune in her fieldwork (1994: 332).

The above usages of *yuan* and *fu* by the villagers drew my attention to a religious sense, which I have classified as one criterion of *lishang* (see 6.1.3) in my study. My fieldwork materials will prove that the religious sense is very important in making, maintaining and stopping personal relationships in rural China (see chapters 1 to 4).

Bao (pao)

Yang Liansheng (Yang Lien-sheng 1957) is one of the first scholars to study *bao (pao)*¹⁴ related to social exchange and social relations in the 1950s. Yang L. found a good starting point for understanding the Chinese meaning of reciprocity from the Confucian classic the *Book of Rites* and in common sayings. They touch upon the *quality* of return, e.g. to recompense injury with kindness or injury, and *quantity* in exchange relationships, e.g. a person should return either lots more or nothing, or a little bit more, or the same amount of things to those people who have helped or presented gifts to him, etc. This treatment of exchange relationships can be more or less fitted into Sahlins's reciprocity typology (6.1.1). Yang L. lists *bao*'s wide range of meanings: report, respond, repay, retaliate, and retribution, response, return, etc., and claims that *bao* as a verb refers to the action of exchange, and that *bao* is also a basis of social relations and principle of reciprocity (1957: 291). Yang L.'s idea of *bao* as the Chinese version of reciprocity has been accepted by a number of other researchers (King A. 1977, Yang M. 1994, Yan Y. 1996b, Guo 1998, etc.)

However, I will argue that *bao* is not a proper Chinese term for reciprocity. (1) Yang L.'s discussion of different kinds of *bao* (see Table 3) from Confucius leads to two extreme ends. One is *bao'en* (pay a debt of gratitude) to the five most respectable persons. They are heaven (*tian*), earth (*di*), one's Lord (*jun*), one's parents (*qin*) and one's master (*shi*); because one owes them so much that it is beyond one's power to return it, so one is obligated to be respectful and grateful to them (291-304). Another is *baochou* (revenge, avenge) for the above special relations. Apart from Confucian social ethics Yang L. introduced another traditional use for *bao*, namely *xia* or *youxia* (*hsia* or *yu-hsia*, knights-errant).¹⁵ According to Yang L., knights-errant distinguished themselves as *xia* (*hsia*) and *yi*

(*i*, rightness) who were extraordinarily gifted in personality and talent. They would not expect any reward, and would even reject such a reward when they did favours for others. They wanted to behave super morally on a level even higher than that of the sages and the wise, who took pleasure in treading comfortably the moral middle way (294-96). Obviously, this tradition of knights-errant (*youxia*) is even more extreme in terms of exchange behaviour and relationships. *Bao*'s two extreme ends were confirmed by Wen Chang-I's (1982) literature study on *bao*. He found 145 cases referring to *bao* in classical historical literature from Zhanguo, Qin, Han, Wei, Jin, Nanbeichao, to Sui, Tang, Song and Ming Dynasties. 84 per cent of them related to two extreme ends of paying a debt of gratitude (*bao'en*) or revenge (*baochou*).¹⁶ Wen's work is helpful, although the cases are not representative of everybody's views because the sources themselves are an official perspective. The officials writing the literature wrote little about commoners and so the cases involved many more officials than commoners. If something happened to a commoner it must have to be exceptional for anyone to be bothered to put it into the book. My empirical study will show that the rare phenomena of *bao'en* (pay a debt of gratitude) and *baochou* (revenge) don't represent ordinary Chinese people's relationships in daily life (see 1.1 and 1.3). I find that *bao* types of reciprocity are identified with generous and negative *wanglai* (see *wanglai* of 6.1.3) in the villagers' everyday life and religious life.

(2) It is confusing to use *bao* for a type as well as a principle in personal exchange relationships. Guo Ying (1998) replaced Yang L.'s *i-yuan pao-te* (*yi yuan baode*, to recompense kindness with injury) with *lishang-wanglai* as one type of *bao* relationship, whereas Wen stated that *lishang-wanglai* is a basic principle of *bao* exchange (1989: 374).¹⁷ (Note that I will provide my own different definition of *lishang-wanglai* in 6.1.3). For Yang L, *bao*'s two traditions: Confucius's classic and the spirit of knight-errantry, provide a common ground (the principle of reciprocity) for the whole of society (309). Conversely, it is not clear how *bao* based on Confucius' dual standard of ethics (gentlemen and small men), works in the relationships of a commoner's daily life. According to Confucius a society is formed from two classes: the *chun-tzu* (*junzi*, gentlemen) and the *hsiao-jen* (*xiaoren*, small men)¹⁸. Yang L. explained that gentlemen prefer to discuss and

deliberate and find out *yi* (righteousness or the right decision after deliberation) rather than to fight against an unreasonable person - the latter is a mere brute according to Confucius. In this case the knight-errant – Yang L.’s other ethical code of *bao* – should be categorized as a small man. Yang L. argues that gentlemen extend their help without seeking reward because their mind is conversant with *yi* (righteousness), whereas small men extend their help seeking reward because their mind is conversant with *li* (gain) (305-306). I, therefore, will treat *yi* (righteousness) and *li* (gain), etc. as part of the criteria of *lishang* and make justifications for how I apply them in common people’s everyday life (see 6.1.3).

(3) Discontinuity is a characteristic of *bao* types of exchange. As Wen pointed out, the exchange behaviour is finished after repayment (1989:347-382).¹⁹ Among Yang L.’s complicated list of *bao* it would appear that only *huibao* (repay, reciprocity) can be used for ordinary people’s reciprocal exchange. However, I found that Kaixiangong villagers hardly ever use this sense of *bao* in everyday practice. I used *huibao* from our questionnaire²⁰ to ask the villagers whether or not they support each other using a *bao* kind of return. The answer is “No”. They explained to me that they always expect a little bit more in return from those people who accepted help from them, and they would also give more in return when they asked others for help. The amount of return to other people should be slightly more than what they received from them both in principle and in practice. They said this is *renqing* rather than *bao* because they want to keep the balance of reciprocity in the long run. They only use *bao* in the sense of *bao’en* (to pay debt of gratitude) for looking after their parents in their old age and giving them a proper funeral after their death (*yanglao songzhong*). This kind of *bao* is a one-off behaviour which will be finished after they have fulfilled their duty. After that their relationship with their passed away parents will continue in a different form but it is not *bao* (see 4.3).

Huhui

Reciprocity is a very unclear concept in mainland China. It became well known as *huhui* (mutually beneficial) from the 1980s when both the subjects of anthropology and sociology appeared again in socialist society.²¹ There are six different

translations for reciprocity in a Chinese version of the *Anthropological Dictionary* (1991), edited by Wu Zelin et al., based on the *Anthropological Dictionary* by Charles Winick (1956/80). They are *huizeng* (return), *yibei hucheng* (address to each other between different generations), *quanli yiwu duideng guanxi* (rights and obligations on a reciprocal basis), *pingdeng huhui* (balanced reciprocity), *yuanshishi wuwu jiaohuan* (generalised reciprocity), and *budengjia jiaohuan* (negative reciprocity) (Wu 1991:576). “*Budengjia jiaohuan* (negative reciprocity)” is one of Sahlins’s reciprocities (see 6.1.1), which has been translated back into English as “exchange of unequal values” by Luo Hongguang (2000), who actually meant by this negative reciprocity and unbalanced reciprocity. Instead of *huhui* Wang Mingming also uses *huhui jiaohuan* for reciprocity (1997a: 133) and *gaihua jiaohuan* for Mauss’s generalised exchange (1997a: 175). Strangely enough, Wang did not mention at all Sahlins’s different types of reciprocity in his general introductions of anthropology and his related studies of social support (1997a and b). In Yan Yunxiang’s Chinese version of *The flow of gifts* (2000), reciprocity was used in two ways. On the one hand, it has been translated as *huhuan* or *huhui* when it was associated with *bao* (14, 18, 142, and 170), which is consistent with Yan’s understanding that *bao* is the Chinese expression for reciprocity. On the other hand, Sahlins’s generalised reciprocity, balanced reciprocity, and negative reciprocity have been translated as *yiban huhui*, *junheng huhui*, and *foudingxing huhui* (98), and the unbalanced reciprocity as *feijunheng huhui* (155).

Huhui (mutually beneficial) is still a Chinese expression for reciprocity in exchange relationships. Compared with “*huhuan* (exchange or mutual exchange)”, commonly used as an economical or sociological concept of “exchange”, *huhui* seems to include the character of reciprocity - a long term with not exactly equivalence return. However, I don’t think *huhui* can be an appropriate Chinese term for reciprocity because it excludes “unbalanced reciprocity” and “negative reciprocity”. I checked the term *huhui* with Kaixiangong villagers. They always say “*huli huhui*”. The *li* of *huli* is the same as the *li* of *liyi*, meaning “interest”, “benefit”, “profit” or “advantage”. The *hui* of *huhui* has a similar meaning to the *yi* of *liyi*, namely, directly gain and long term benefit. *Liyi* was given by an old villager in Kaixiangong Village to show the difference between the direct gain

exchange and strategic exchange. I found that *liyi* is a very interesting concept, which can help in understanding social support resources exchanges in rural China. In common usage, *liyi* can be translated into English as the following: “interest”, “benefit”, “profit” or “advantage”. None of these translations can express accurately the intention of *liyi*. They explain half the meaning of *liyi*, namely “*li*”. The old villager said people understand *li* as representing the basic needs for their life, as the old saying “*ren wei cai si, niao wei shi wang*” (literally, people die for seeking wealth, birds die for seeking food). He also understood they can’t always get *li* by doing something for somebody. This is why sometimes people use *liyi* as separate words, like *youyi wuli* (literally, “get long term benefit but didn’t get direct gain”).

Yi is one part of *liyi* and itself is a useful word to understand strategic exchange. I couldn’t find the right English word for it. I think *yi* is best explained in English as “long term benefit”. A villager who gave me the word *liyi* told me the villagers understand that one can’t always get direct benefit by doing something, but one might get something useful (*youyong* or *haochu*, literally, “a good thing”) in the future when one is in a difficult situation. He even knew the famous Taoist saying *youweili wuweiyong* (literally, “full is gain, empty is benefit”, meaning one can see the gain in one’s basket which has been filled by gifts, one can also in the empty basket see the long run benefit”, in short *youyong*). This is at the core of Taoist social theory. It is the same as Yan’s finding in Xiajia: “Within the boundaries of this local moral world, the pursuit of personal interest mingles with the fulfilment of moral obligations, and the value of a gift lies mainly in its role to sustain a long-term order of social life rather than a short-term personal benefit” (Yan, 1996b:226). It is also confirmed from Chen Junjie’s (1996/98) fieldwork in which he considered *liyi* (gain, benefit, interests) as one of three dimensions of his *guanxi* structure. For me, *li* and *yi* is a pair of terms which is related to the reason for producing social exchange relationships. As immediate gain, *li* can be involved in market exchange, instrumental exchange, and negative exchange. As long term benefit *yi* can be involved in almost all kinds of exchange relationships except market exchange. In particular *yi* is a strategy for instrumental exchange. Even to cut off a relationship with somebody which could cause harm to oneself would be

of benefit. This kind of exchange relationship can be classified as Sahlins's negative reciprocity (see 6.1.1).

I found another use of *yi* when I discussed the term *liyi* with other villagers. They gave me the pair of related terms: *jianlisiyi* or *jianliwangyi*. This *yi* is derived from Confucian *renyilizhixin* (i.e. benevolence, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and fidelity). When villagers used this kind of *yi* they linked it with *dao*. The *dao* of *daoyi* can be translated into English as Taoism, doctrine, morals, morality, ethics etc. *Yi* has an original complex form, which is formed by *yang* (sheep) and *wo* (me). Sheep symbolise kindness and happiness, literally one should be or ought to do something leading to perfect satisfaction. In common usage, the *yi* can be translated into English as justice, righteousness, personal loyalty (*yiqi*), and human ties or relationship (*qingyi*), which is similar to *renqing*. In this sense the *yi* is a very important and practical term in particular in personal relationships. *Daoyi* means morality and justice. It is a moral constraint in the exchange relationship. Thus the meaning of *huhui* (mutually beneficial) has been enlarged by the villagers' interpretations from rational calculation (*liyi*) to moral constraint (*daoyi*) in maintaining long term personal relationships. Both rational calculation and moral constraint are components of *lishang* criteria (see of 6.1.3).

Guanxi (kuan-hsi)

A study of *guanxi* can be traced back to Fei (1947) in the 1940s. Since the late 1970s a number of scholars have made efforts to bring to light the leading role of gifts and other exchange relations in Chinese social life, which relate to *guanxi*.²² *Guanxi* seems to have become an important notion and a general analytic concept for the understanding of social exchange and relationships in Chinese society. I will first summarise related work and then provide my arguments.

Qiao Jian (Chiao Chien 1982)²³ is perhaps the first researcher who suggested that *guanxi* should be a general concept for studying complex society. He claims *guanxi* to be characteristic of personal networks by using J.C. Mitchell's word (1969: 13), reticulum, (also used by B. Kapferer 1969: 182), and Jacobs' 1979 phrase: particularistic tie, and that *guanxi* is a basic concept for the study of complex

societies. He defines *guanxi* as a situation of mutual effect and affection between individuals and groups (1989:105-122). He classifies *guanxi* itself as a common people's saying because he couldn't find *guanxi* as a proper term in the formal dictionaries of *Cihai* and *Ciyuan*. He listed twelve uses of *guanxi* (kin, classmate, colleague, friend, etc.), six ways of maintaining *guanxi* (heredity, adoption or entry into a certain relationship with somebody, pull, currying favour with somebody in authority for personal gain, trying to get on well with somebody, strengthening the bonds of friendship), and fourteen functions of *guanxi*.

Huang Guangguo (Hwang Kwang-kuo 1987) provides a complex framework in which he links the notions of *guanxi*, *renqing*, and *mianzi* together. In this framework *guanxi* has been divided into three types of relationships: the expressive tie, the instrumental tie, and the mixed tie (see Table 3). The related rules of the three ties are respectively need, equity, and *renqing*. According to Huang, the expressive tie is generally a relatively permanent and stable social relationship, which characterises family relationships in China in particular. A typical Chinese family is governed by the rule of need since it can meet almost all the needs that its members have, although interpersonal conflict can happen in Chinese families. The relationship in instrumental ties serves only as a means or an instrument to attain other goals. Such relationships between salesmen and customers, bus drivers and passengers, nurses and outpatients are basically unstable and temporary since both parties consider this kind of social interaction solely as a means to achieve their own purposes, and equity rules can be applied. The mixed tie is the most popular kind of relationship in China in which *renqing* rules are applied. Both sides of a mixed tie know each other well, have some connections or interests in common, thus forming complex networks, with relatives, neighbours, classmates, colleagues, teachers and students, people sharing a natal area, and so forth. The mixed tie can last as long as both parties see each other frequently following the *renqing* rule (1987: 947-953 or 1989: 294-298²⁴).

Ambrose King (Jin Yaoji, 1989a, 1989b, and 1994)²⁵ offers an elaborate interpretation of *guanxi* in Chinese society. He believes there are two basic types of interpersonal relationships or *guanxi*: social exchange (social *guanxi*) and economic exchange (economic *guanxi*) (see Table 3). "In a strict sense *jen-ching*

hardly enters into economic *kuan-hsi* since economic exchange is dictated by impersonal market rationality” (1994:120). For King, in social *guanxi*, which is by contrast diffuse, unspecific, and ruled by the principle of reciprocity, *renqing* plays a central role. Furthermore, King claims the focus of the Confucian relation-based social system is fixed on the particular nature of the *guanxi* relation between individuals. Thus *guanxi* is established through social interaction between two or more individuals. The existence of *guanxi* depends on the existence of the attributes (Nakane’s term, 1970) shared by the individuals concerned. In Chinese society the most common shared attributes for building networks are locality (native place), kinship, working together, being classmates, sworn brotherhood, a common surname, and a teacher-student relationship. *Guanxi* building is a work of social engineering through which the individual establishes his personal network. Chinese individuals have commonly utilized this kind of highly personal relation construction as a cultural strategy for securing social resources toward goal attainment, which is usually denied them through normal channels in Communist China. King points out that economic *guanxi*, on the other hand, is dictated by impersonal market rationality. As he states: “the widely cursed phenomenon of “going through the back door” will not go away easily, not until the day when market rationality is fully operational, and law becomes the rule of everyday political life” (1994: 109-126, 126).

Yang Zhongfang (1991) divided *guanxi* into four types based on *zhenqing* (psychological feeling) and *yingyou zhiqing* (social moral feeling): namely *qinqing* (intimate feeling), *youqing* (friendly feeling), *renqing* (human feeling), and market exchange relationships. She (1998) defined another typology of interpersonal relationships, which are: ascribed relationships (members of family, classmates, etc.), instrumental relationships, and expressive relationships. She (1999) then turned to develop three stages of the dynamic process of building a relationship, starting from courteous reception, to instrumental, then to the expressive stage.

Basing empirical studies on *guanxi* some Chinese researchers concentrated on the principles in social or personal relationships. Zhai Xuewei (1993) suggested three Chinese characters *yuan* (predestined relationship), *qing* (human feelings), and *lun* (Confucian’s relationships) form a Chinese style of interpersonal relationships

(*renji guanxi*). The three characters correspond to God, rules, and laws in the West. He explained the three backgrounds for each of them. *Yuan* is an idea of destiny (*tianming guan*), which provides why people should be related to each other. *Qing* tells what kinds of conduct should be followed in people's relationships. *Lun* is Confucian centered *lunli* thoughts, which tell people how to keep relationships.²⁶ Correspondingly, there are religious ideas, individualism, and social contracts in the West. Thus, Zhai concludes that Chinese interpersonal relationships are more likely to be stable, to give more than to receive, dependent, thinking for others, law-abiding, while the Westerner is more likely to move, reciprocate exactly, be independent, think for self, cherish freedom, etc. Similarly, Yang Yinyi (1995) also claims that in Chinese logic the starting point in making a relationship is the family oriented self rather than the individual self as in the West. So Chinese relationships involve *lunli* (Confucius basic relationships), *renqing* and *yuan* (predestined relationship). Chen Junjie (1996/98) suggested that *guanxi* structure has three dimensions: *lunli* (Confucius basic relationships), *ganqing* (human feelings), and *liyi* (gain, benefit, interests). His fieldwork materials in Yue village, Zhejiang Province, show *ganqing* to be a kind of pure human feeling, sometimes beyond kinship feeling. He also showed how brothers' relationships can turn to enemy relationships to prove the importance of *liyi* in keeping up relationships.

Yang Meihui (1994) offers a systematic study of gift exchange and personal relations in urban China. For Yang M, *guanxi* refers to an interpersonal relationship or personalistic relationship (151), whereas *guanxixue* refers to the art of social relationships, which has ethics, tactics and etiquette elements (109). Yang M. then shows how *guanxixue* worked in different kinds of *guanxi* through three elements. *Guanxixue* are embedded in interpersonal exchanges and reciprocal commitments in which *ganqing* (human feelings) or *yiqi* (loyalty)²⁷ ethics are involved. On the other hand, *guanxixue*'s tactical instrumental dimension links it to impersonal money relations and bribery, in which ethics do not play a role (122-23). Yang M. applies both *guanxi* and *guanxixue* as general concepts in a very wide scope of social relationships in urban China. She also provides many details to show how they emerged in the different periods of socialist China. In particular, Yang M. sees

that *guanxi* and *guanxixue* can form a *minjian* (society of people), and become an “oppositional power” to contend with the “administrative power” in China.

Compared with research based on general studies, or observations of urban life, Yan Yunxiang’s (1996b) analysis is a case study based on observations of rural life. Yan presented a new interpretation of *guanxi*, and he spent two chapters to analyse it in the emic and etic views. He explored the interlocking relationship between gift giving and network building, and how *guanxi* networks behave in action (20, 75-97). He defined a *guanxi* network’s structure which includes personal core, reliable zone and effective zone, based on the local definitions (105-114). He drew three ethics of *renqing* (rational calculation, moral obligation and emotional attachment) as principles of *guanxi* networks (146). For Yan, *guanxi* is the operation of *renqing*, and *renqing* is the deeper level of *guanxi*. In other words the higher *guanxi* relations the deeper the consideration of *renqing*.

Instead of *guanxi* and *guanxixue* (Yang M., 1994), *guanxi* and *renqing* (Yan, 1996b), A. Kipnis (1997) uses a pair of terms *guanxi* and *ganqing* to analyse human relationships in peasants’ village life. For Kipnis, *guanxi* refers to different types of interpersonal relationships (25, 224-25). The reference of *guanxi* is “self”. Influenced by Pierre Bourdieu, Kipnis’s ‘self’ is broad. It is not an internal one, but a place in the social hierarchy and an association with appropriate feelings (*ganqing*). “[When] Fengjia villagers re-create their networks of relationships, they also re-create themselves. If one considers the self to be socially determined..., then one’s relationships in fact constitute one’s self” (8). Thus according to Kipnis, *guanxi* stands for making relationships and associations, and therefore for the creativity of social actors in contracting themselves in terms of relationships. He demonstrated how *guanxi* is produced by examining how *ganqing* is embodied over different events and rituals with a broader sense, what the cultural logics of *guanxi* production reveal about the kinship, gender, local patterns of subjectivity, and Fengjia political economic evolution, and how Fengjia people are ‘subjects’ producing *guanxi* through gift giving, banquets, *kowtowing*, etc. in everyday life, weddings, funerals, and other occasions to constitute their ‘self’ and ‘subculture’.

The above researchers' efforts to conceptualise *guanxi* shows, on the one hand, *guanxi* is a structure of networks (Qiao, Hwang, King, Yang Z.) as well as principles (Hwang, King). On the other hand, while Zhai, Yang Y., Chen draw principles for *guanxi*, Yang M., Yan and Kipnis used other concepts (*guanxixue*, *renqing* and *ganqing*) to pair with it. However, my understanding of *guanxi* and my fieldwork findings are not consistent with them. Here I would like to argue that *guanxi* is not a general analytic concept for studying ordinary people's personalised relationships and reciprocity. My reasons are as follows:

(1) *Guanxi* is over-extended and imprecisely used by earlier researchers. Some researchers use it in the narrow sense of personal relationships (King, Huang), and some researchers use it in the broad sense of social relationships (Yang M., Chen) or human relationships (Kipnis). Some researchers use it with a negative connotation (Gold, Oi, Huang), and some researchers use it with a positive connotation (Yang M.). Some researchers use it as a descriptive term (Jacobs, Walder); some researchers use it as a general analytic term (Qiao, Huang, King, Yang M, Yan, Kipnis and Chen). I have no problem in using *guanxi* as a descriptive term and to classify different types of relationships, although there is perhaps a difference in usage within rural China, or between rural usage and the generalisation of the concepts of Kipnis and others. *Guanxi* is more likely to be used in a negative sense in Kaixiangong Village. For them, *guanxi* refers to one kind of exchange relationships, which are very important and special to the villagers. In this sense *guanxi* in rural China does not accord with that assumed by Yang M. and Kipnis. Kaixiangong villagers told me that most people are ordinary people (*putong ren*) who haven't got *guanxi*, except for a few special people who have *guanxi*. Those people either themselves are local cadres, or have important kin somewhere. Villagers also told me that their households did not become upstart households (*baofa hu*), as they didn't have *guanxi*, as Yan found from Xiajia village "rural cadres can absorb more non-kin ties into their personal networks and build larger networks" (1996b: 119). Since *guanxi* appears as a one way flow and unbalanced and unequal relationship in China, it always demands that people of lower social status give more to those of higher status in order to obtain some resources controlled by the latter, as Yan described in his book (1996b: 147-75). Oi

also shows that a few succeeded in using personal connections (*gao guanxi*) for better jobs or to receive special favours from leaders (1986/9:146). In Kaixiangong, the villagers value working ability more than the ability to make *guanxi*, due to *guanxi*'s strong instrumental flavour and negative sense. In the past the term of "ability" was never used in connection with *guanxi*. An elderly villager told me that decent people rely on ability rather than *guanxi* to live (*kao benshi er bushi kao guanxi chifan*). Here ability refers to working ability rather than *guanxi* (making and maintaining special relationships) for their households. Like the shop owner in Fengjia (Kipnis, 1997), Kaixiangong people also believe that they do not want to rely on *guanxi* or make *guanxi* for their business. They don't feel shamed to be without *guanxi* or not being good at *gao guanxi* (to make *guanxi*). This is why to make *guanxi* is a rare phenomenon in ordinary people's everyday life in Kaixiangong Village. Although some young people agreed that making *guanxi* for special relationships is a kind of ability nowadays in Kaixiangong, it does not alter their behaviour much. I invited 14 women for a group interview in Qiu's house in April 1996. They all agreed that they would rather work hard outside the village than get a job in the village through making *guanxi* with village cadres.

(2) *Guanxi* only represents a particular historical period of China. Qiao Jian (1982) found *guanxi* does not appear in the formal dictionaries of *Cihai* (the sea of the word) and *Ciyuan* (the sources of the word). Nor does it seem to be part of everyday speech in Taiwan (Yang M. 1994) and she surmises that *guanxixue* emerged in socialist China (49). This agreed with Zheng Yefu's (1996) explanations that *guanxixue* became an important behaviour art of particularism in contemporary China because the Imperial examination system was abolished at the beginning of this century, and the market system was abrogated in the middle of the century (55). Sun Liping (1996) even made a structural analysis of it by comparing changes in social relationships before and after social reform at the end of the 1970s. Based on Parsons's general system of action, Sun also provided a typology of *guanxi*, which mixes particularism with universalism and correspondingly expressive and instrumental functions. His document-based analysis showed how particularism worked in different periods of new China. This theoretical exercise is helpful for Chinese in their use of ideas from the West.

Guanxi and *guanxixue* might be a useful descriptive term to describe phenomena in socialist China, in urban areas, and only some phenomena in rural areas.

(3) *Guanxi* mainly covers urban areas, but does not generalise to rural personalised relationships. I would like to quote a conversation between Kipnis and a shop owner in Fengjia. When a woman's shop opened for business she received lots of "congratulatory gifts".

Kipnis "took the giving of such gifts by the shop owner's friends and relatives and her own prominent display of them to be archetypal *guanxi*-building activities.

I asked if these gift givers were also regular customers. She replied 'yes' and I thought to pay her a compliment by saying: 'Your skill at forming *guanxi* has helped speed your success' (*guanxi gao de hao shi ni chenggong de kuai*).

I was surprised when she replied, '*Guanxi* has nothing to do with it. I rely entirely on myself.'

'But aren't your best customers also the friends and relatives who gave you these decorations?' I asked.

'Yes,' she said, 'but I charge everyone the same price, so *guanxi* has nothing to do with it.'

'What about your business license?' I asked.

'Party Secretary Feng helped me get that, and he's my nephew, so that doesn't involve *guanxi* either' " (183).

For Kipnis, *guanxi* is a concept which covers all personalised relationships in rural areas. But this story shows it is not. Normally I would count the relationship between the shop owner and the Party Secretary Feng as *guanxi*. However, in this case I believe the woman "that doesn't involve *guanxi* either", because Party Secretary Feng himself is a special case. He took this post from 1964 after the old Party Secretary died until Kipnis left Fengjia. He was a representative to the National People's Congress from 1978 to 1987. He was on the standing committee of the Shandong Province People's Congress and the only "peasant" member of it from 1980 until Kipnis left Fengjia (127, 129). As a local cadre, if he had not treated his relatives and fellow villagers equally, he would have lost his post by the end of the Cultural Revolution in 1976. In other words, Party Secretary Feng is a local *qingguan* (honest and upright official). It's his job to deal equally and kindly with anyone in the village. The relationship of the Party Secretary with his aunt, in

which he gave her a license, is not a personal relationship and would not be covered by *guanxi*.

(4) The character of *guanxi* itself cannot be a general analytical concept. The common usage of *guanxi* has been translated to be connections, relations, and relationship (Cidianzu 1995:354). They are nouns which always require working with a verb, e.g. *gao* or *la guanxi* (making relationships), or cultivate *guanxi* (Yan's term), or manipulate *guanxi* (Kipnis's term). To a certain extent, Fei's term of *lianxi* (1947) is even better than *guanxi* because *lianxi* combines *lian* (verb) for making *guanxi* and *xi* (noun) for *guanxi*. The mixture of structure or networks and principles of *guanxi* always causes difficulties in study. On the one hand, as Yan found in Xiajia, villagers "may talk about how much *renqing* they possess when in fact they are referring to the size of their *guanxi* networks (122-123)". The same happened in Kaixiangong. When I asked the villagers "How much *guanxi* have you got?" they always replied "None" because they categorized it as a kind of negative relationship. On the other hand, when *guanxi* is used as a principle for analysis it always requires longer or different phrases, e.g. *guanxixue* (principles, or the art of cultivating good personal relations), *renqing* or *ganqing*.

In sum, the character and the meanings of *guanxi* are too confused for it to be an appropriate general analytical concept. *Guanxi* is not a powerful enough term to cover people's relationships in the wide range of China and the change in different historical periods. *Guanxi* belongs to a particular historical period. Even within that historical period *guanxi* is only true of the cities and not of all the countryside. More crucially for my argument *guanxi* doesn't cover all personalised relationships for the villagers. Thus *guanxi*'s utility in my own work is limited. Since there are no Chinese characters accurate enough to interpret the Western sense of reciprocity and at the same time analyse how Chinese people perceive the making and maintaining of personal relationships, I borrowed my villagers' usage of *lishang-wanglai* (See 6.1.3) in my study. In China its use is common, with a long history and it is still a concept for related phenomena of *guanxi* and *guanxixue*. My use of it is to show how particularism and universalism co-exist in China, as I have shown how expressive, instrumental, and other types of exchange relationships

work based on a set of principles or criteria in making and maintaining personal relationships with my fieldwork materials (see chapters 1 to 4).

Renqing (jen-ch'ing) and ganqing (kan-ch'ing)

Renqing is commonly used in the following ways: (a) human feelings, human sympathy, sensibilities; (b) natural and normal human relationships; (c) etiquette, customs, propriety and courtesy; (d) favour; (e) gifts, presents.²⁸ *Renqing* used as a principle of social relationship can be traced back to Fei (1947). Based on his fieldwork in Yunnan Province Fei found that people who lived in the same community liked to keep their relationships going with *renqing*. They always made sure they never owed a debt (*bu qianqing*) overall by always offering something to different people, and never cleared their accounts (*bu qingzhang*) which means that balanced relationships can only be seen over a long term (75-77). Yang Liansheng (1957) simply suggested *renqing* could be termed 'social investment' (291). In this case the materialised *renqing* investment is always linked with *ganqing* investment. However, others (King 1980/89, Hwang 1985/89 & 1987²⁹) noticed there are always problems in *renqing* practices. Hwang points out the dilemma of *renqing* clearly: the high price of accepting *renqing* from others; the low guarantee of receiving an offering back from others; the risk of feelings and emotions being hurt. Especially to those who lack resources, power, or good *guanxi*, when they face adversity, there is a change in warmth or coolness in the attitudes of their associates following on their success or failure. *Renqing* is as thin as a piece of paper (957-59).

In order to enquire how such investment may be guaranteed previous researchers explored *renqing* as a system. Ambrose King (1980/1989)³⁰ is one of the first scholars who introduced the notion of *renqing* as the main conceptual tool to study patterns of personal relations. Based on his study on Chinese ancient literature, King shows *renqing*'s three meanings to be human feelings, resources, and *shigu* (the ways of the world, worldly-wise) (77-83). Hwang (1985/89 & 1987) elaborates the contents of *renqing*, which include human feelings or emotional responses, a kind of resource which can be used as a medium of social change, and a set of social norms and moral obligations (953-54). Based on their fieldwork

some researchers reached a similar conclusion. For Yang Meihui (1994), “*renqing* is part of the intrinsic character of human nature... ..the proper way of conducting oneself in social relationships, ...refer to the bond of reciprocity and mutual aid between two people, based on emotional attachment or the sense of obligation and indebtedness” (67-68). And one meaning of *renqing* together with *ganqing* (human feelings) and *yiqi* (personal loyalty) is as the affective sentiments of *guanxixue* (109-145). Unlike King and Hwang, who treated *renqing* with different elements as a part of the *guanxi* principles, Yang Yinyi (1995) simply used *renqing* together with *lunli* (Confucius basic relationships) and *yuan* (predestined relationship) as the principle of *guanxi* concept. Yan Yunxiang (1996b) treated *renqing* as a synonym for *guanxi* as a type of exchange relationship (122-23) and emphasises “the system of *renqing* has three structural dimensions: rational calculation, moral obligation, and emotional attachment” (145-146).

Ganqing can be summed up using its definition in Chinese dictionaries: (1) a strong psychological response to a stimulus from outside; emotion, feelings, sentiment; (2) affection, attachment, love of somebody or something, i.e. *lianluo ganqing* (to make human feelings or close relationship with somebody).³¹ *Ganqing* (human feelings) studies can also be traced back half a century by non-Chinese scholars (i.e. Fried 1953, Gallin 1966). Since the late 1970s the meaning of *ganqing* has been broadened by some researchers (i.e. De Glopper (1978, Jacobs 1979, Oi 1989 and Potters, 1990). Sun Longji (Sun Lung-kee 1987) perhaps is the first Chinese scholar who used *ganqing* as a key term to analyse Chinese deep culture structure. Chen Junjie (1996/98) suggested that *ganqing* (human feelings) together with *lunli* (Confucius basic relationships) and *liyi* (gain, benefit and interests) can be three dimensions of *guanxi* structure. Influenced by Sun (1987, 1991) work on *ganqing*, Kipnis (1997) argues that as subjects Fengjia villagers create and created - individual and society - in the process of gift giving, ritual, and emotional interaction, etc. through managing *ganqing* (10-11). He also introduced an interesting term of “embodying *ganqing*” (27). For him the process of drinking in a banquet (53-54, 56), gift giving (58, 72), weddings (89-96), funerals (97-97, 103), etc. ritual and ritualised decorum like toasting, bows and kowtow, etc. are discernible forms or methods of materialising *ganqing* (27). Furthermore, “*guanxi*

unite material obligation and *ganqing*” (72), “*ganqing* is a central component of *guanxi*” (105), and it “must be conceived of more socially rather than psychologically”, whereas sincerity, a kind of “inner” feelings of one’s heart, is usually absent from *ganqing* (108).

Thus the above statements show Kipnis’s usage of *ganqing*³² is no different from the previous researchers’ use of *renqing* relating to *guanxi*. In other words almost all Kipnis’s examples of embodying *ganqing* appeared to be describing what others (e.g. King 1986, Yang M. 1994 and Yan 1996b, etc.) called *renqing*.³³ This can also be seen from Kipnis’s citations of Sun’s “magnetic field of human feeling (*renqing de cilichang*)” (9-10) and Fengjia villagers’ saying “*zou ge renqing* (to make human feelings)” (58). Therefore, the previous researchers’ *renqing* and Kipnis’s *renqing* related *ganqing* can be understood as the same issue. For me Kipnis’s embodying *ganqing* (*biaoda ganqing*) or embodiment of *ganqing* can be interchanged with expressing *renqing* (See chapters 2 and 3).

Since *renqing* and *ganqing* are so easily confused Zhai Xuewei (1993) suggested neither *renqing* nor *ganqing* but *qing* (human feelings), together with *yuan* (predestined relationship) and *lun* (Confucian’s relationships) form the Chinese style of interpersonal relationships. Yan (1996b) makes a good distinction between *ganqing* and *renqing* by borrowing an educated villager’s explanation “*ren* stands for personal relations here, like the relationship between you and me. And *qing* is an abbreviation for *ganqing*. So, the term *renqing* should be understood as personal relations based on good feelings” (139). Here Zhai’s *qing* is too broad and Yan’s “good feelings” is too narrow. From my point of view *renqing* and *ganqing* are useful terms for understanding norms of exchange relations, but they need to be further distinguished.

I distinguish *renqing* as a type of exchange relationship, whereas *ganqing* is a kind of principle or criterion in a relationship based on my fieldwork. The discovering of *renqing* as a type of exchange relationship came from conducting a questionnaire in the ESRC social support project.³⁴ I found when I asked the villagers “how many *renqing* have you had?” it worked much better than when I asked them about *guanxi* or *huibao* (repayment, reciprocity). The villagers

immediately gave me a full list of their relationships. The whole study on *lishang-wanglai* is built up from there. It is confirmed by Yan's (1996b) fieldwork finding. Yan perhaps is the first researcher who found that when Xiajia villagers talked about how much *renqing* they possess, in fact they were referring to the size of *guanxi* networks (122-23). However, he overlooked his own finding when he developed his *renqing* system by repeating previous researchers' literature study (245, n.1 of Reciprocity and *Renqing*).

After reviewing the above Chinese notions a framework for *lishang-wanglai* can roughly be seen. As I mentioned earlier in this chapter *lishang-wanglai* corresponds to reciprocity in two ways: as a set of exchange principles (*lishang*) and as a set of exchange relationships (*wanglai*). Here *lishang* includes moral judgement (*de, dao, yi, lunli* or *mianzi*), human feelings (*qing, ganqing* or *mianzi*), rational calculation (*huhui, li* or *liyi*) and a religious sense (*ming, yuan* or *fu*), whereas *wanglai* includes generous *wanglai* (*bao* or *en*), expressive *wanglai* (*renqing*), instrumental *wanglai* (*guanxi*) and negative *wanglai* (*guanxi* or *baochou*).

A full account of the *lishang-wanglai* concept will be given in 6.1.3. Although I mainly use *renqing* as expressive *wanglai*, I will also sometimes use it and *ganqing* as descriptive terms like the villagers. I will argue that neither *renqing* nor *ganqing* can be general concepts for analysis of Chinese personal relationships and reciprocity with the *lishang-wanglai model*:

(1) *Renqing* and *ganqing* cannot analyse a specific type of personal relationship, e.g. they cannot explain Yan's finding that rural cadres can absorb more non-kin ties into their personal networks and build larger networks (119), as we can with other kinds of exchanges like instrumental *wanglai* or negative *wanglai* (see section 6.1.3). My fieldwork findings agreed with earlier researchers about *renqing*, which accord to four types of *wanglai*. The villagers used three pairs of Chinese characters to describe *renqing*. These are *duo* and *shao* (more and less), *qing* and *zhong* (light and heavy), and *bo* and *hou* (thin and thick). However, when I asked them to explain these characters I had many different explanations. (a) Some people said having more or less *renqing* means more or fewer connections

with other people. This is the same as Yan's fourth point of *renqing*, which means a large or small *guanxi* network. These can be expressive or instrumental *wanglai* networks. (b) Others said, on the one hand, more or heavy *renqing* means the gifts of *renqing* cost too much to endure (*renqing ya si ren*). On the other hand, they said too much or heavy *renqing* means loving-kindness (*enqing*) or owing a great debt of gratitude (*qian renqing zhai*). This kind of *renqing* has more to do with emotional attachment. These two extreme ways can be seen from negative *wanglai* and generous *wanglai*. Ordinary people tend to "escape" from such a heavy *renqing* situation (King, 1987) and try to keep it more balanced. (c) For the thin, less, or light *renqing*, some people said this means lack of truthful feeling and shallow *ganqing*. This is similar to King and Hwang's description about how some people treat others badly because the latter have lost their resources or power. This kind of *renqing* is more like *guanxi* as a negative *wanglai* rather than instrumental *wanglai*. (d) Others thought less *renqing* also means *boli*, which literally means that the gift carries not enough value, or it is a 'small' gift in a self-deprecating remark made as a gesture of politeness. A more popular saying is *li qing qingyi zhong* (literally, the gift is trifling but the feeling is profound). For example, when I presented a small gift³⁵ to the sampled households where I conducted my interview, I always said it was a *boli* or *xiao yisi*, which I learnt from them. The villagers' reply always was either *qianli song emao* or *li qing qingyi zhong*. (The original saying puts these two sentences together, and means that the gift may be light as a swan's feather, but sent from a thousand miles away, it conveys deep feeling). An informant told me that he appreciated it very much because it was I who chose, bought, and carried it all the way to them from England. This indicates villagers' moral norms for judging other people's behaviour. This kind of *renqing* is more like the etiquette, customs, propriety, and courtesy which Chinese people commonly used. It can be understood as expressive *wanglai*, but the relationship can be short or last longer, dependent on maintenance between the two parties.

(2) Both the characters of *renqing* and *ganqing* are not simple enough to be general analytic concepts. On the one hand, they are both nouns and have to be used with verbs: "zou *renqing*" in Kaixiangong or "zou ge *renqing*" in Fengjia; "lianluo *ganqing* (to make human feelings)" or "shenhua *ganqing* (to deepen human

feelings)", etc. On the other hand they are mixed up with human feelings, exchange principles, resources, a type of exchange relationship, etc. With *lishang-wanglai*, once a specific type of *wanglai* has been judged the criteria of *lishang* can be easily applied. For example, a London-based Chinese woman told me that she had a headache from a gang of English neighbours' children who played with her children in her house. She and my English husband discussed how to stop them from playing for too long and messing up the house, without hurting their feelings. I found how *renqing* and *ganqing* were mixed in this situation, which can be covered by *lishang*. (a) Morally the Chinese woman believed that as a host she should restrain herself to be always polite, consider guests' feelings, and never tell guests to go away directly (ethic of *renqing*). (b) She believed that if she sent them home untactfully she would hurt those children's feelings (*ganqing*). Deep inside she worried (*ganqing*) she might lose potential friendly neighbours (*renqing* network) if she didn't handle the situation well. (c) She found that Chinese ways did not work with the English neighbours' children, such as to ask them some indirect questions "Are you tired yet"? "Have you done your homework"? "Do you enjoy helping your mum doing housework"? Or even offering them more drinks. Chinese children would understand that it was time to go home without feeling embarrassed (*renqing* practice). She decided to find out an English way to deal with the situation. This is a rational choice, like a Chinese saying that wherever you are, follow local customs (*ruxiang suisu*). My husband said that he would send them home by giving the reason that he felt too tired and he wanted some peace, etc., in a straightforward and friendly manner, and invite them to come again at some other time. This can be described as saying that: "true politeness is to do with making other people feel comfortable, not following social rules". She told me that although the English saying says "not following social rules", she would treat the saying as a "social rule" or *renqing* principle to deal with English people.

(3) It is too difficult to use *renqing* and *ganqing* as analytic concepts when they are mixed in one relationship at the same time. For example, when Kipnis was sick and wanted to rest he received a stream of visitors, but a local person told him that he shouldn't show his irritation to them otherwise he would lose them as friends (27-28). Based on my experience in Kaixiangong Village there might be four

reasons for the possibility of losing the villagers as friends, which accord with *lishang*. (a) It could reduce the villagers' trust of the anthropologist if he behaved strangely because they expected the specialist on Chinese cultural studies to know the basic ways of the local world (*renqing*). To visit the sick (*tanbing* in Yan's Xiajia and *wangxin* in Kaixiangong) is a quite common custom in China. Not showing one's irritation to the villagers can be considered as a white lie in the West, whereas in Chinese society a mutually understood code of social behaviour (*renqing*) is considered to be more important than the person's private "true" feelings (*ganqing*). (b) It could hurt the villagers' true feelings (*ganqing*) because he did not appreciate the villagers' kindness in paying visits to him (*bu lingqing*), whereas they accepted him for a friend. Such feeling was not deep and mixed with sympathy for his being ill and a long way away from his own home. In other words, if the villagers felt hurt or embarrassed they would close their hearts towards him. This kind of feeling is *ganqing* rather than *renqing*. (c) Many villagers visited Kipnis by following the local custom (*renqing*) which is a rational choice because it was polite for them to do so, although they had not yet developed a friendly feeling (*ganqing*) towards him. In this case they were embodying *ganqing*. (d) The religious sense can be seen from a Chinese saying that *sanfen bing qifen yang*, literally, the illness involved three parts physical, seven parts spiritual. Kaixiangong villagers generally believed that a sick person would recover quickly if many people were on his side of *yang* (spirit) and against his *bing* (illness).

The above cases show *ganqing* (human feelings) can be in everybody and everywhere, and *renqing* (tactful ways of dealing with different people) also exist everywhere, but operate differently from place to place. Human feelings, the second criterion of *lishang*, can separate *ganqing* from *renqing* because the *renqing* ethic can be moral judgment and etiquette, customs, propriety, the *renqing* norm can be part of rational choice. Expressive *wanglai*, the second type of *wanglai* can be a synonym of *renqing* when it is used as a type of exchange relationship. Thus *lishang-wanglai model* unites *guanxi*, *renqing* and *ganqing* together.

Yang and laiwang

Finally I will discuss a pair of Chinese notions *yang* and *laiwang*, a systematic study on Chinese kingship and related relationships, which is proposed by a non-Chinese scholar Charles Stafford (1995, 2000a)³⁶. Alongside patriliney and affinity Stafford found two *equally* forceful, and relatively incorporative, systems of Chinese relatedness, which he called the cycle of *yang* and cycle of *laiwang*. The cycles went beyond earlier anthropologists' (e.g. Freedman 1958, Watson 1982, Faure and Siu 1995, etc.) idioms of Chinese kinship and social life with reference to patrilineal descent and the kinship system itself (2000a: 38, 52). Furthermore he states, "in many Chinese contexts ties based on mutual assistance, co-residence, friendship, and discipleship may be more significant than ties of kinship", that ties are not only based on kinship (2000a: 50). This is very true as we have seen from the above discussions of Chinese notions, and will further substantiate when "*wanglai*" is elaborated in 6.1.3.

However, there are some differences between Stafford's cycles of *yang* and *laiwang* and my study on *lishang-wanglai*, although we both found the characters of *laiwang* or *wanglai* from our own fieldworks' informants who used the same term of *li shang wang lai* in different areas of China. Stafford interpreted the term as "ceremonial (*li*) generates back-and-forth (*wanglai*)" (2000a: 47; 2000c:105). According to Stafford "*li*" can be simply understood as ritual/etiquette, such as attending the ceremonial (*ganli* or *suli*), sending-off (*song*), greeting (*ying*), summoning (*qing*), receiving (*jie*), detaining (*liu*), etc. (2000c: 106). Stafford supposes that "*wang lai*" as the cycle of *laiwang* centres mostly on the relationship between friends, neighbours, and acquaintances (2000a: 38) and uses it as synonym of *guanxi*, i.e. the production of 'social connections' through gifts, favours and banquets as Yan 1996b and Yang M. 1994 have both discussed (2000c: 105). For a different opinion from mine on *guanxi* refer back to the above notion of *guanxi* section.

Furthermore, Stafford, on the one hand, treats the cycle of *laiwang*, as non kin relationships, which "is a crucial element in the building up of relatedness between those who are *not* related by kinship" (2000a: 47). On the other hand, he treats it as

an extension of *yang* to the outside world (2000a: 44) or the extension of *yang*-linked reciprocity to the outside world (2000c: 52). However, it is not clear how the two cycles work together with the existing systems of patriliney and affinity in Chinese society. Obviously, the cycle of *yang* centres mostly on the parent-child relationship (2000a: 38) which mainly deals with a relationship within a family, whereas previous studies on patriliney and affinity related to kinship or relatives of the given family, and the cycle of *laiwang* has to do with friends, neighbours, and acquaintances of the given family (2000a: 38). Within this framework the two cycles don't answer the following questions: how the cycle of *yang* works in the respectful care for parents (*yanglao*) in increasingly nuclear families in Xiajia (Yan, 2003) and giving birth for the husband's family (*yang erzi*) in the increasing marriage pattern of taking a son-in-law into a family (*zhao nuxu*) in Kaixiangong? What is the difference between an affinity relationship and a *yang* cycle of married out daughters and their families to a given family? If the two cycles are to do with **social and personal connections** how can the relationships between a given family member and the dead ancestors be related with the cycle of *yang*, and local people can be related to local gods with the cycle of *laiwang*? What are reasons or principles motivating the two cycles' mobility and the social malleability of connections, e.g. reinforced or cut through successes or failures in the cycle of *yang*, and extended through adoption, or the extension of *yang*-linked reciprocity to the outside world (2000a: 52)?

Let me move now to the key notion of *yang*. Stafford listed *yang*'s range of meanings: 'to give birth to', 'to cultivate', 'to educate', 'to nourish', and *fengyang* (respectfully care for the elderly), *yang haizi* (raise children), *yang zhu* (raising pigs) and *yang hua* (growing flowers), etc. (1995: 80). He didn't go into the Chinese cultural context to understanding the full range of meanings of *yang*, but limited his usage of *yang* to that to do with "life", i.e. human beings, animals and plants. But this meaning of *yang* is nothing to do with death. The Chinese would have relationships with their ancestors forever, but never accept the concept of to *yang* a dead person or an ancestor (*yang siren* or *zuxian*).

Based on Fei's (1947) ego-centred *chaxugeju* of Chinese social structure here I will show my understanding of *yang*. The starting point of *yang* is ego and then it

extends outwards in the following ways: to cultivate oneself morally, e.g. *yangxing* (nourish one's nature) or *xiushen yangxing* (cultivate one's native sensibility and nourish one's inborn nature, e.g. foster the spirit of nobility by moral cultivation or through a moral life as advocated by Confucianists; conserve one's vital powers by avoiding conflict with the unchangeable laws of nature as practised by Taoists); to cultivate one's spirituality or mould one's temperament, e.g. *yang hua* (growing flowers) *niao* (raising birds) *yu* (feed fish) *chong* (raise insect or worm), *yang mau* or *gou* (keep cat or dog); to take care of one's health and life, e.g. *yangbing* (take rest and nourishment to regain one's health), *yangshen* (rest to attain mental tranquillity), *yangjing xurui* (conserve strength and store up energy), *yangsheng* (care for life or preserve one's health), *yangzun chuyou* (enjoy a high position and live in comfort); to gain material benefits, e.g. *yang zhu yang niu ma* (raise pigs, sheep, cows and horse), or *yang can* (raise silkworms) in Kaixiangong; to maintain or keep in good repair, e.g. *yang di* (increasing soil fertility) or *yang lu* (maintain a road).

The ego of *yang* can be extended to family and country (*guojia*). To provide for a family in a vertical way, e.g. *yanghuo* or *yangjia hukou* (support or feed one's family), *yang erzi* (give birth to), *yang er fang lao* (one rears children against old age), *yanglao songzhong* (look after one's parents in their old age and give them a proper burial after they die), *yang fu mu zi nu* (foster father, mother, son and daughter). To support or serve somebody or something in a horizontal way, e.g. *wei nuzi he xiaoren nan yang ye* (the most difficult thing is to serve one's women – wife, concubine, hetaerae or lover, and a small man – who is always playing tricks behind one's back), *yanghan* (of a woman having a lover). Examples for *yang* extend to the whole country in vertical and horizontal ways, *yangbing qianri yongbing yishi* (maintain an army for a thousand days to use it for an hour), *jianyi yanglain* or *gaoxin yanglian* (nourish honesty of government officials by living a frugal life or paying high salaries to avoid corruption). My previous work unit refused a person's application for a bigger flat and even skimmed part of his salary to punish him for his strong complaints. He left his baby in an office angrily and asked officials: "How can I nurture and educate the revolutionary successor (*peiyang geming jiebanren*) for the party while I can't even survive (*yanghuo*)

myself”? Similarly, in Kaixiangong a woman said “I raised sons for the country so the country should support me in my old age” (*wo yang erzi wei guojia guojia wei wo yanglao*), because one of her sons went to University and another went to the Army. On the contrast, some Miaogang Township officials received such a downwards vertical *yang* from the party and state when it was joined to Qidu Township in 2003. According to the related policy the officials past their 57th birthday should take early retirement. It was called “*li gang tui yang* (to leave their posts and retire with full salary and premium)” which meant the state will take care of (*yang*) their later years. There is also an upwards vertical *yang* between people to the party which is mixed with horizontal *yang*. A popular saying among overseas Chinese goes “I should pay for the great debt to the party and people who raised me” (*wo yinggai baoda dang he renmin de yangyu zhi en*).

Having reviewed the rich meanings of *yang* one can see that the cycle of *yang* is too difficult to be understood and accepted by Chinese people. It is also too narrow to cover the above different social and personal relationships in both vertical and horizontal ways. Even so, the mobility of cycles of *yang* and *laiwang* in vertical and horizontal ways is helpful for understanding the mobilization of *lishang-wanglai* networks (see section 6.2).

Stafford’s study on cycles of *yang* and *laiwang* can also help in understanding the *lishang-wanglai model*. Firstly, the study on *yang* and *laiwang* touches upon four basic *lishang* criteria. Stafford said a relevantly poor family borrowed 14,000 *yuan* for the son’s wedding in order to “look good for the quests” (*mianzi* or face). The reason behind this is complex. (1) Moral restraint can be one of the reasons because the groom’s family provided a grand ceremony to honour the bride and her family. The groom’s family intended the bride for their hoped-for future, i.e. giving birth to the husband’s family and respectfully serving his parents in their old age (2000a: 43, 40-41). On the wedding banquet the guests of relatives, neighbours and friends can be monitors for the bride. The bride is under obligation (*yiwu*) to show filial piety or filial obedience (*xiao*) to the groom’s parents. The moral idea of *xiao* was transferred through red envelopes from parents to children (1995: 85). If the bride didn’t do well in her duty she could receive moral censure from others or self-reproach due to the groom’s family’s own debt in order to honour her on the

wedding. (2) According to Stafford the cycle of *yang* means that parents provide their children with housing, clothing, food, financial support, emotional inclusion and education etc., and children provide care for (*shanyang*) or respectful nurturance (*fengyang*) for their parents in old age, e.g. material assistance, entailing emotional and ritual inclusion, and other things as well (2000a: 42; 2000c: 108). The contents of the cycle of *yang* obviously include human feelings, i.e. mutual emotional inclusion between both sides. For example, a foster son takes bags of fruit to visit his foster parents, from affection, like married out women did (1995:87). (3) The idea that people have relations of *laiwang* with others to provide each other with mutual assistance (2000c: 106) is based on rational choice rather than biological closeness. For example, one of the foster sons, with his wife and children, continued to live at the family home and give almost all of his income to his foster father. He received a larger share of the inheritance, whereas one of the biological sons who moved away from the family and made no contribution to the family wealth was excluded from a share (1995: 88-89). (4) Religious sense can be seen in many aspects. There are some food-related symbols of *shoumian* (long-life noodles) or *shoutao* (eternal-life peaches) (1995: 95-96), which relate to a religious sense loosely. This saying embodied religious sense clearly: “Special efforts are made to keep the dead comfortable and well-fed, because it is under-fed spirits who most often become hungry ghosts (*egui*)” (1995: 97). In Angang parents not only strengthen the bodies/persons (*bushen*) of the children as well as protect them (*hushen*), by giving them expensive magical charms (*fu*) to ward against evil spirits (1995: 97-100). When Angang people celebrate a god’s birthday the process of giving and participating relates to a circular logic in which the god’s power (*ling*) is produced through the collective efforts of devotees. It shows a strong deity is made strong by his worshippers because a strong god provides protection for all his devotees (2000b: 107).

Secondly, Stafford’s study on *yang* and *laiwang* also touches upon four types of *wanglai*. (1) It is normal for parents to internalise a popular idea of returning one’s parents’ great debt of gratitude and loving-kindness for upbringing (*baoda fumu de yangyu zhi en*) through various *yang*. Stafford distinguished the contribution from children to parents with different levels of *baoda* (repay or respond): *yang* (to

support) and *fengyang* (to respectfully support). The latter is similar to *bao'en* (pay a great debt to one's parents). This idea is commonly agreed by Kaixiangong villagers to relate to generosity between children and parents. (2) Stafford pointed out that once young people are old enough to work and hand over most of their income to their parents it is not "support for parents (*yang*)", but he didn't explain why it is at the very core of Chinese notions of parent-child reciprocity (2000a: 44). For me, according to the context, this is a kind of bottom up expressive *wanglai* from a child to parents. It expresses his or her trust and respect for parents, who will keep and use the money on his or her wedding. (3) Mr Zhang decided to attend a wedding because he was paying back the groom's father's help for his family. Neighbours and friends came to the wedding for a kind of investment: you give money on the wedding banquet, and then if you later have some 'matter' or 'business', this family will come and help (2000a: 45, 47). It looks like a purely instrumental *wanglai*. However, if this is the case why do the rest of the neighbours and friends come to the wedding banquet even when Mr Zhang, who received help from the groom's father, was reluctant to attend the wedding? (4) There is an extreme *yang*-related Chinese saying for negative *wanglai*: *yang hu yi huan* (to rear a tiger is to court calamity - appeasement brings disaster) or *yang yong cheng huan* (warm a snake in one's bosom). Stafford found a case that can be fitted in negative *wanglai* when one woman complained bitterly about one of her sons who moved away from Angang and provided the family with no financial support (1995: 86).

This concludes my discussion of Chinese terms that relate to reciprocity. As can be seen, there are a large number of related ideas, in some cases used inconsistently. However some themes predominate. *Guanxi* is used, confusingly, to describe a variety of different concepts. It is clearly important. Equally, *renqing* / *ganqing* and *yang* / *laiwang* are used to describe Chinese relationships that seem important. My conclusion is that the confusion arises from any attempt to fit a possible multiplicity of motives (*lishang*) and reciprocity-related relationships (*wanglai*) into a framework that does not explicitly disambiguate the above concepts. I have already hinted that *lishang-wanglai* will provide a solution to this ambiguity: further elaboration will be given in 6.1.3.

6.1.3. *Lishang-wanglai*

The term *lishang-wanglai*, which I use throughout this thesis to denote my conceptualised framework for reciprocity, comes from a Chinese socio-cultural context which can be traced back to Confucian classics. Although the framework is one of the theoretical innovations in my work, the term *lishang-wanglai* has a rich Chinese context which to some extent informs my usage. In this section I will clarify different uses of this term first. I will then make justifications of how I would use classic texts with regard to *lishang* and introduce the set of *lishang* criteria. Finally I will make some clarifications and introduce the *wanglai* typology.

Li shang wanglai and lishang-wanglai - A sinological introduction

Li shang wanglai is a quotation from the Confucian book of *Li Ji* (Book of Rites): “In the highest antiquity they prized (simply conferring) good; in the time next to this, giving and repaying was the thing attended to. And what the rules of propriety value is reciprocity (*bao*). If I give a gift and nothing comes in return, that is contrary to reciprocity; if the thing comes to me, and I give nothing in return, that also is contrary to reciprocity” [*Li Ji* (The book of rites), Legge 1885:65]. In short *li shang wanglai* can mean “giving and repaying is the thing attended to”. This quotation sounds as though it is to do with etiquette or propriety but the whole of *The book of Rites* shows it is to do with almost every aspect of social life. This can also be seen from its use within the wider Chinese socio-cultural context.

Although *li shang wanglai* is a four-character idiom, I noticed in Yan’s book (1996b) that he consistently used *li shang wanglai* which is the same as in A Chinese- English Dictionary (Cidianzu 1995:598). It is the standard way of writing the phrase in mainland China. However, in Stafford’s books (1995, 2000, etc.) he spelled the phrase as *li shang wang lai* as according to the Far East Chinese-English Dictionary by Liang Qiushi from Taiwan. The meanings of the notion as a common usage are slightly different between the two dictionaries. The former explains “courtesy demands reciprocity”, “deal with a man as he deals with you”, “pay a man back in his own coin”, and “give as good as one gets”. The latter is translated succinctly as “courtesy emphasizes reciprocity”. A less succinct

translation would be: “for the sake of propriety/etiquette (*li*), people must engage in *wanglai*”. From my understanding the reason *wanglai* in the mainland version doesn’t split into *wang lai* is because *wanglai* had already become a free-standing term a long time ago. It means “come and go”, “contact”, “dealings”, and “intercourse” (Cidiancu 1995: 1043). This is how *li shang wanglai*’s meanings went beyond the literal meaning of *li* (propriety or etiquette). It is now broadly accepted by mainland Chinese people that *li shang wanglai* is a general method for dealing with different relationships. This is indeed the Kaixiangong villagers’ usage of *li shang wanglai*. Comparing with *guanxi*, a popular Chinese notion, *li shang wanglai* has a positive connotation which indicates a sense of balance: neither haughty nor humble, neither supercilious nor obsequious, neither overbearing nor servile. My use of this terminology is deliberate – I have a more positive view of personalised relationships in China than M. Yang’s (1994) *guanxi*, and unlike A. Kipnis’s *qanqing* (1997) balance as the essential element.

Although *wanglai* is verb, when it is combined with *li shang* as one phrase it can also be used as noun and adjective according to Chinese grammar: as a verb, i.e. we are *li shang wanglai* with each other (*women shuangfang zhengzai lishang wanglai*); as noun, i.e. the principle of our contact is *li shang wanglai* (*women jiechu de yuanze shi li shang wanglai*); as an adjective, i.e. our relationship is based on the principle of *li shang wanglai* (*women de guanxi shi jianli zai li shang wanglai de yuanze jichu shang de*). *Li shang wanglai* always mixes principles with actions. When *li shang wanglai* is used as a noun the stress is on principle, when it used as a verb the stress is on action and when it used as adjective both aspects are implied.

The problem is *li shang*. Here *li* is a noun which is commonly used to mean ceremony, rite, etiquette, propriety, gift, present, etc. However, in the original Confucian work *li* of *li shang wanglai* represents the whole range of ideas from Confucianism which touch upon thoughts of philosophical and religious ideals, social, political, economical, educational and moral principles, ethics, and courtesy, propriety, rite, etc., as given expression in *The book of rites*. *Shang* can be a noun or adjective but more often a verb. It can be translated as to esteem, to value and to

set great store by, but it is hardly ever be used in its independent form. The most common terms joined with *shang* are *chongshang* (uphold or advocate), *gaoshang* (noble or lofty) and *shangwu* (encourage a military or martial spirit). Here *chongshang* is verb, *shangwu* is a noun and *gaoshang* can be an adjective or noun, i.e. He is a noble man can be translated into Chinese as *ta shi yige gaoshang de ren* (adjective) or *ta hen gaoshang* (noun). When *shang* is put at the front, as in *shangwu*, one can make a term *shangli* which can be easily understood as to encourage a ceremonial and appropriate spirit. The popular saying that China has long been known as a “land of ceremony (*liyi zhibang*)” is the case of *shangli*. When *shang* is put at the back, as in *chongshang* or *gaoshang*, one can make a term of *lishang* which means principles based on the valuing of *li*. Therefore, *lishang*’s meaning is much broader than *shangli*. Both *shangli* and *lishang* can be used as a noun and adjective, i.e. *lishang* indicates a set of principles (noun) or the contents of *lishang* include a set of principles (adjective). The four principles or criteria of *lishang* that I define were part of *li* in the Confucian classics, although this is much narrower than the original rich meanings. This is why and how I used *lishang*.

Although there is no a free-standing term *lishang* in China, nor the terms *lishanglai* and *lishangwang* in China, this doesn’t stop Taiwanese from using them. There were no such terms as *li gang tui yang* (to leave their posts and retire with full salary and premium) or *qiye zhuanzi* (changing of collective village enterprises into private) a few years ago in China but this didn’t stop them being introduced to Kaixiangong village. There are a couple of dozen terms Kaixiangong people used which can’t be found from any dictionary, i.e. *canba*, *chuxing*, *fanyi*, *shengqian*, *wangxin*, *zhoudai*, etc, although these have well-defined local meanings.

The way in which I grouped *li shang wanglai* as *lishang wanglai* or to be more precise I divided *lishangwanglai* into these two parts is influenced by Liang Shumin (1949/95). According to Liang, Chinese society is a *lunli* based society. Here *lun* is Confucius’s family based relationships,³⁷ whereas *li* can be interpreted according to another meaning of *li*³⁸, which includes *qing* (*ganqing*, *renqing* - human feeling, *qingyi* - friendship) and *yi* (*yiwu*, obligations). The above *li* and *yi* are basic principles which come from Confucius’ *ren* (benevolence) (79-80). For

Liang the relationships (*lun*) can be made with anybody anywhere according to principles (*li*), which are lively and can never be fixed (93), whereas I replace *lun* with *wanglai* and *li* with *lishang*. Liang's idea of Chinese society based on *lunli* hasn't been accepted for more than half a century due to the character of *lunli* that has been widely interpreted as ethics but has not been proved by empirical study.

In order to distinguish different usages of *li shang wanglai* or *li shang wang lai* I therefore made one hyphenated word *lishang-wanglai*. Although when it is translated back to Chinese it will still be a four-character idiom, the word socialism is also a four-character term but this doesn't stop it being one word *shehuizhuyi* in Chinese *pinyin* (Cudianzu 1995:884). One thing that is not fully worked out in my dissertation, but nevertheless implied, is that *lishang-wanglai* as a new concept in reciprocity is general applicable, as Sahlins' typology of reciprocity. There is therefore an issue of how best to translate the word *lishang-wanglai* in a way that will be easily understood by a non-Chinese audience. (a) *Lishang-wanglai* can also be translated as contacts-ethics word to word; (b) Its meaning can be "the calculus of changing reciprocal relationships", or "reciprocally personalising of relationships". (c) It might be the best to simply use *lishang-wanglai* just as English speakers have accepted *kula* and *guanxi*. *Lishang-wanglai* looks very long but sounds OK – only 4 syllables compared with the long words particularistic or universalistic which have 8 syllables each.

Previous researchers have had varying understandings of *li shang wanglai* in studying social and personal relationships. Yang Liansheng (1957) quoted the above famous passage on *li shang wanglai* to show that the concept of *bao* is a basis for social relations in China. Yang Meihui (1994) quotes the original saying of *li shang wanglai* in the beginning of the introduction to her book. She clearly regarded it as a central point of social relationships in China, but she didn't discuss it in her book since her interests are *guanxi* and *guanxixue*. Yan Yunxiang (1996b) quotes it as a principle of reciprocity based on *renqing* ethics. He claims the ancient text is "propriety upholds reciprocal interactions", whereas Xiajia villagers' version of this is "people interact with each other in terms of gift exchange" (14; 16; 124-125). He discovered four operating rules of gift giving which reflect the principle of reciprocity. They are firstly that a good person always interacts with

others in a reciprocal way, namely, *li shang wanglai*. Secondly, the offer of a gift should not break the existing hierarchical system of social status in either kinship or social terms. Thirdly, gifts must be made in accordance with previous interactions and fourthly the returning of gifts requires the proper manner (123-127). Thus Yan narrowed *li shang wanglai* to be one of the four rules of reciprocity with his understanding of what Xiajia villagers were doing. Charles Stafford (2000a and c) interpreted *li shang wang lai* as “ceremonial (*li*) generates back-and-forth (*wang lai*)” (2000a: 47 and 2000c: 105) and from this derived his notion of *yang* and *laiwang* cycles (see *yang* and *laiwang* in 6.1.2). Although Yang L.’s *bao*, Yang M.’s *guanxi*, Yan’s *renqing* and Stafford’s cycles of *yang* and *laiwang* all derive from the same famous quotation of Confucius, they carry materially different conceptuality. From my point of view, none of these existing concepts provide a sufficiently general model within which to analyse Chinese complex exchange relationships (see 6.1.2). One of my motivations is to provide a coherent general model within which the social exchange interactions in my fieldwork can be described. As the above survey shows this is necessary, because although the existing notions cover all the individual elements of social interactions, they are not consistent with each other and cannot easily be used together to provide a complete descriptive model.

I have, however, also been struck by the way in which many non-Chinese attempts to understand complex Chinese society have been reductionist. They have led to concepts that make Chinese society appear very different from non-Chinese societies. Of course the differences do exist, and are of a natural interest to researchers. However the detailed analysis of my fieldwork results, using the *lishang-wanglai* model, as well as its networks (see section 6.2), allows the complexity of Chinese society to be understood more deeply, by highlighting the way in which universal human motivations, used creatively in the context of Chinese social exchange, can give rise to the observed behaviour. Social artifacts such as expressing *ganqing* (see section 6.1.2) – very alien to non-Chinese people – become more explicable when considered in the light of the social creativity implicit in *lishang-wanglai*.

These preliminaries motivate my definition of *lishang-wanglai* as a new way of conceptualising personalised relationships. In view of the previous discussion, I use the word *lishang-wanglai* with its grounding in the Chinese socio-cultural matrix. The conceptual basis for *lishang-wanglai* comes partly from my review of Sahlins's work, and the many Chinese concepts, relating to reciprocity. I use this notion for a Chinese version of reciprocity which contains a model (see section 6.1.3) and networks (see section 6.2). In the *lishang-wanglai* model *wanglai* covers different types of reciprocities and *lishang* provides different criteria to judge them. This distinction between type and criteria is necessary to provide an accurate description of the complex relationships found in my fieldwork. As the preceding sections have indicated, it is also motivated by the wish to incorporate existing useful concepts within a single unambiguous framework. Moreover, my purpose is to elaborate a general concept of reciprocity by drawing out from *lishang-wanglai* richer meanings than exist in the general concept of reciprocity. This new way of thinking about social exchange relationships will certainly work in rural China and might, due to its generality, apply to other societies.

My interest, in proposing *lishang-wanglai*, is to provide a tool to examine Chinese personal relationships that explicitly allows a multiplicity of motives, and does justice to the nature of the interactions found in my fieldwork. One of my key findings is that over and above their material utility, Chinese villagers derive satisfaction from their complex social relations, and highly prize the ability to create new solutions to social problems. This is an example of social creativity (reviewed in section 6.3). It is the fact that a single social action (*wanglai*) can be interpreted in different ways simultaneously that explains much of the complexity, and enjoyment, inherent in Chinese social exchange (see section 7.3).

The *lishang-wanglai* model is thus my interpretation of Kaixiangong villagers' social support action patterns (*wanglai*) which is based on certain implicit cultural models. The *lishang* criteria come from the reasons and explanations given by the informants. They include some Chinese sayings consciously held by the villagers, e.g. *you jie you huan zai jie bunan* (the better the returned credit the easier it is to borrow), *zaijia gao fumu, zaiwai gao pengyou* (at home one can rely on parents,

away from home one can rely on friends), etc. and some folk concepts, e.g. *bang qiong bu bang fu* (support for poor people but not for rich) or *jiu ji bu jiu pin* (help for emergency but not for poverty), *zou renqing* but not *zou guanxi* (through a kind of expressive *wanglai* to do something rather than through a kind of instrumental *wanglai* in villagers' everyday life), etc. For the villagers mutual support in everyday life within close relations was considered as expressive *wanglai*, rather than instrumental *wanglai* (see section 2.1.1, points of (2) & (4) of *Guanxi* in section 6.1.2). It was the villagers who drew an explicit distinction between expressive and instrumental *wanglai* with the notions of *renqing* and *guanxi* because they didn't know Befu's (1966-67) terms of expressive or instrumental exchange. This kind of distinction can also be seen from Yan's Xiajia (see *Renqing* in section 6.1.2). Based on these observations I intend the *lishang-wanglai* model, which is very close to implicit "Chinese folk models", to describe what the villagers appear to be doing, but not to be a literal rendering of folk models.

The conceptual foundations of the *Lishang-wanglai* model are as I have previously intimated built on top of other scholars' work. For example, the idea of dividing *laiwang* into different types directly came from Sahlins's reciprocity typology and even the term "negative" is borrowed from Sahlins (1972), and "expressive" and "instrumental" from Befu (1966-67). For more details see the subsection "Wanglai typology" later in this section and for a comparison of the full list of influential scholars' related work see Table 3. The *lishang* criteria directly benefit from Yan's three elements of *renqing* ethics (1996b: 146) which are, however, themselves influenced by previous scholars (1996b: 245, n.1 of the Reciprocity and *Renqing*). More details may be found in my review on related Chinese notions (see section 6.1.2) and the section "*Lishang*" later in this Chapter.

Justifications of lishang

From the above reviews in section 6.1.2 we can see that previous researchers explored classic Confucianism and used many terms, i.e. *lun* (relationships), *de* (morality), *renqing* (human feelings), *fu* (fortune) and *yuan* (predestination), etc. in order to find out deep reasons, principles, and criteria of making and maintaining personal relationships. The above terms can all be traced back to Chinese ancient

philosophers' texts. Justification is necessary here of my use of these texts which were written a very long time ago. Therefore how they are now understood may be quite different from how they were when they were first written. Again these texts have been used in different periods always as a means of cultural rule or as a cultural regime. Therefore, one can't assume that they reflect what the ruled people thought. Their popularity relates to their use as an instrument of control, and therefore does not necessarily mean that they epitomise popular ideas. They may reflect something about the way people were ruled, but not necessarily how people rule their own lives. Even in the same historical period the usage of *lishang-wanglai* in Kaixiangong Village may differ from other villages. The following points justify my use of concepts from these ancient texts: they are made here but apply throughout my dissertation.

(1) It needs to be clear that the texts were used as a set of cultural rules and may not reflect what the "ruled" people think. I found a traceable source through a set of steps. For instance, the term of *lishang-wanglai* was given by a villager verbally. He referred it to another villager who had a better education than him. The latter also confirmed it verbally by saying it came from Confucius which he had been taught in school, although he never read the original textbook. In other words, the villagers sometimes refer to others for knowledge which is then transmitted to them, or to which they defer, since such people share better knowledge and are able to provide explanations (See Jing Jun 1996). If a person can't explain himself, he will ask other people, better read than him. For example, the chef of the Village Committee, who was employed by the collective, recommended to me an old villager in Kaixiangong Village as an interviewee for rituals in the village. He then asked me for a copy of my notes about the interview. He told me the reason he needed it, is because he wants to establish his own business, namely, to do proper banquets for villagers if he lost his current job. I asked him why didn't he just simply buy a book about it. He said that information from books does not necessarily tally with the actual situation in the village. So I will use some educated or old villagers as points of reference, just as the villagers themselves do.

(2) The texts to which I will refer are also read according to my understanding of the villagers' explanations of their meanings, even though they haven't read them.

It is normal for educated Chinese people, including myself, automatically to associate what is said with these texts, which we have read as classics. For example, in the film *The Story of Qiuju*³⁹ Qiuju wants to “*tao ge shuofa*” for her husband after he is hit by the village cadre. Some educated Chinese would use terms like *pingli* (reason things out), *shenzhang zhengyi* (uphold justice) to describe it, which involve the ancient terms *li* (reasonable, sensible) and *yi* (justice). This kind of understanding is quite accurate for “*tao ge shuofa*” which means she wants to ask for justice.

(3) I understand that different people’s use of the same texts or terms may differ from place to place. For example, villagers in Yan’s Xiajia village wrote *lishang* like 礼上 and simply meant gift flowing. This *shang* is different from the textual characters *lishang* and so the common usage meant that the system of propriety upholds the reciprocal interaction among people (1996b:123-24). This happened in Kaixiangong Village too. Although many villagers did not know how to write *shang* of *lishang* (礼尚), they were quite clear *lishang* is not only to do with gifts or rituals in their everyday life. According to their understanding, *li* of *lishang-wanglai* has very wide range of meaning. I learned many related terms and explanations in Kaixiangong. Apart from *liwu* or *liping* (gift), *liqing* (a gift of money), *lidan* or *renqingbu* (a list of gift), there are lots more things to do with *li*. They told me whatever, when you *zuoke* (be a guest) or *daike* (be a host) you should understand *limao* (courtesy, politeness, manners), *lijie* (courtesy, etiquette, protocol, ceremony), *lisu* (etiquette and custom), *liyi* (ceremony and propriety), *lifa* (rules of etiquette, the priorities), *lishu* (courtesy, etiquette), They even care about *liyu* (courteous reception) -- how the host treats them, i.e. when a newborn baby with its mother arrives at her natal family as the first visit *lipao* (gun salutes – firecrackers) should be fired. They have complicated *lifū* (ceremonial robe or dress) especially for weddings and funerals. This is a more concrete meaning than the more philosophical interpretations of the classical *lishang*.

Lishang criteria

As I have shown in section 6.1.2, previous researchers highlighting the making and maintaining of reciprocal social or personal relationships in China discuss many

motivations and criteria, and in particular: moral judgement, human feelings, rational calculation, religious sense, etc. These four elements also make up the Confucian *li* or *lishang-wanglai*. The term relates to many forms of social behaviour in ancient China. I, therefore, use these four reasons or principles to form my *lishang* criteria, and discuss each individually below.

(1) Moral judgements can be interpreted as *gou yisi* (honourable, loyal), *jin yiwu* (fulfil obligation), *jiang daoli* (fair, sensible, reasonable, rational, equitable, etc.), and *you liangxin* (have a conscience, be good-hearted) in making and maintaining personal relationships. For example, Yan's (1996b) *zhanguang* (sharing) functions as a moral constraint for both the helper and the helped because they are obligated (*yiwu*) to each other in sharing resources (130). The idea of sharing also is used in Kaixiangong Village and is expressed as *gou* or *bugou yisi* (honourable, loyal or lacks of). The villagers explained this using the following examples related to Fei Xiaotong (hereafter XF).

According to the villagers, XF's academic and political success was helped by some villagers individually and the village as a whole. Of the villagers who helped him more than half a century ago, many have died. However, their accumulated merit (*jide*) in helping XF can be passed onto the younger generations. The principle is the same as keeping a family gift list in order to repay it from the next generation in case the current generation has not done so. The villagers thought that XF was obligated to them and it was morally right that they should share something from XF's success. So they expected him to express his gratitude by supporting the development of the village since the end of 1970s when XF became an important figure of the state (*dang he guojia lingdaoren* – beyond a Minister of any Ministry of the state). Over a twenty year period Fei expressed twice this kind of *yisi* via local government: his actions can be categorised as expressive *wanglai*. In one case he made Kaixiangong Village a part of “Southern Jiangsu model (*sunan moshi*)” from the middle of the 1980s to 1996. In the other case he helped the village to gain a 4 million *yuan* loan from the township Credit Corporation (*xinyongshe*) during the period of the ceremony to celebrate his sixty years in academia in 1996. It appears that XF was indeed *gou yisi* (honourable, loyal) to the villagers. However, villagers told me that in fact XF lacks *yisi* with them because

the above expressions both went wrong. The first one delayed the village's economical development and the second case caused the village to be involved in a heavy debt from 1996 to 2004 (see section Kaixiangong Village in the Introduction).

Moral judgement is central to people's actions but differs in different places and peoples. For instance, to kill someone who killed your father (*baochou*), or to kill oneself for *mianzi* because one couldn't bear nasty gossip, to obey absolutely one's ruler, father, husband, older brother etc. used to be classified in the highest rank of moral valuation. Conversely, to do business, to have a daughter rather than a son etc. used to be classified in a low rank of moral valuations. But not everyone now agrees with all of these, and some of them have become obsolete. For the villagers, everybody has a steelyard in their heart (*renren xin zhong you yi gan cheng*). This means moral judgement that can also change along with changing times, so when they do something they would always weigh it with the steelyard in their heart. Anyway, the steelyard in the villagers' hearts will live throughout their lives.

(2) Human feelings, as one of the *lishang* criteria, can be translated into Chinese as *renlei zhi qing* (feelings of human being), *ganqing*, and *renqing*, etc. Here *qing* can be translated into English as emotion, feeling, sentiment, affection, attachment, and love, etc. I use "human feelings" to describe this motivation since I am concerned with personal relations. In Chinese *qing* is a root which can produce a few dozen related terms including *renqing* and *ganqing*. Such *qing* can be traced back to Confucius. He concludes that there are seven kinds of general feelings (*qiqing*), of human beings (*renqing*) which are joy, anger, sorrow, fear, love, hate, and desire.⁴⁰ In Yan's (1996b) village people also count enjoyment as an aspect of their exchanges. "There are two kinds of gift giving: one is joy and another is suffering. For those with whom I have good feelings, I am very happy to present gifts when they host ceremonies, because the gifts come from my heart. But, I often have to attend rituals and offer gifts to people with whom I have no good feelings, and that is really awful" (141).

My fieldwork material forced me to pay more attention to a kind of positive feeling - enjoyment in making and maintaining personal relationships, although the

enjoyment in general can be for good or bad reasons. In a previous paper (Chang, 1999), I mentioned women who maintained social relationships for their own sake. The enjoyment came from making personal relationships just to have the relationships, not for any instrumental reasons or for any moral reason of obligation to maintain sociability. This kind of pressure is visible in reciprocal social support and *lishang-wanglai* in many ways. The most obvious example is that people always say *tianlun zhile* (enjoying family happiness together is the highest rule). This is the same for males and females, older generations and younger generations. When I asked some women why they spent so much energy in preparation, doing ritual events, and gift giving, etc., the answers were more or less the same, that it is *hao baixiang* (have fun, play, joy, cheerful), or *you yisi* (interesting, enjoyment). The meaning of *yisi* here is quite different from when it is used in *bu gou yisi*. I also found that people do something which appears to be for nothing. This kind of behaviour looks like altruistic behaviour, but could at the same time be for the sheer enjoyment of the sociability. Some Chinese scholars (Chen J. 1996/98, Chen W. 1997, Xiang 1999 and Zhai 1998) also found the occurrence of enjoyment and creativity in making and maintaining social or personal relationships. I have given more examples of this in chapter 1 to 4.

(3) The idea of rational calculation is used in rational choice theory, exchange theory, strategic interaction, etc. which have been relatively fully developed. It has been accepted as a universal truth that individuals always seek to maximise rewards from their interactions with others (i.e. Blau, Homans, etc.). In studies of *guanxi* and *renqing*, King, Huang, Yang M., Yang Y., and Chen all took Chinese *liyi* (advantage, benefit, profit, interest) as an important reason to make social or human relationships. Yan (1996b) simply used the Western term of rational calculation for it (146). This is initially proper because the sense of the villagers' *liyi* is identical with what in theory is called rational choice. It is also true in Kaixiangong Village. When I discussed this issue with villagers an old villager told me an old saying "people die for seeking wealth, birds die for seeking food" (*ren wei cai si, niao wei shi wang*). This means seeking *li* (profit, money) is a basic human need. This idea of *li* fits well into the idea of rational choice in the West, and I do not need to go any further into the huge literature on rational choice. —

(4) Religious sense. Before I went to China for my fieldwork I didn't quite understand why there was a question "do you have any religious beliefs?" in the questionnaire of the ESRC social support project (see Introduction). When I finished collating the results I had no doubt about the validity of the answer that 95 per cent of informants had a "general belief in spirits".⁴¹ This kind of "general belief in spirits" is mixed with popular religious practices in everyday life, as Smart puts "meaning the general and usually very localised religion of the people, which also is sometimes loosely referred to as Confucianism, but is actually a set of practices and ideas which draws on various aspects and institutions of Taoism, Buddhism and the state religion. From a Western angle, this is all rather messy and muddled" (1989/95:103). I am mindful that if I get involved in such a "messy and muddled" situation it will make this dissertation too complicated. However, no work has yet shown how the spiritual aspect plays an important role in issues of social support, although there are many studies and discussions on the Chinese "general belief in spirits" by sinologists, anthropologists, and sociologists in both Chinese and English.⁴²

Here I will show how this kind of "general belief in spirits" is important in the villagers' everyday life in two ways. Firstly, it is quite common for the villagers to explain something with *ming* (fate), *yuan* (a predestined relationship) and *fu* (good fortune), etc. (See *Yuan* and *fu* in section 6.1.2). Secondly, ancestors and the local gods are included in the *lishang-wanglai* networks (see section 6.2), which comprise almost all the ceremonies and rituals in the villagers' everyday life. For the villagers, human relationships and personalised institutional relationships can be made and maintained in different ways, whereas relationships between villagers and ancestors or local gods can only be practised through the praying for *fu* (see more discussion below) which occurs in almost all the ceremonies and rituals. In fact, the relationship between the villagers and ancestors or local gods is a very complex exchange relationship because when there is a ritual or celebration it involves a three-way relationship. People share a meal, and therefore maintain relationships between each other, through reference to the ancestor or the god. So three distinct relationships need to be considered. The way in which a god or ancestor is honoured in ceremonies involves not only food but also incense. The

god or ancestors are representations of how the people who come together consider themselves to be related to each other. So the ancestor represents the relationships of the people who come to worship the ancestor together. The ancestor is the point of reference to show that we are all related to each other through the ancestor. In other words, we come together in worship of the ancestor or god because we belong to the same kind of world (*quyuan*, share the same interests) or the same locality or we all come from the same place (*diyuan*), etc.

What the villagers gain through the ritual or ceremony is enjoyment of the praying for *fu*. Luo Hongguang (1995 and 1997) found, in Yangjiagou and Heilongtai villages in the north west of China, the richer people were the more expenditure went on ritual activities, and the more spending on ritual activities, the higher prestige they could gain. This is because the local people enjoy accumulating merits and virtues from the nether world or the Hades (*ji yingong*) would reward good fortune. Luo calls this kind of exchange that of moral-soul (1995:445-475; 1997: 689-705). Stafford (1995, 2000a and c) provides many cases of how Angang people and Dragon-head villagers enjoyed their everyday practice, in particular separation and reunion, to relate to their ancestors and the local gods for protection and good fortune.

Clarifications of wanglai

Wanglai, as part of *lishang-wanglai*, has its own meanings, i.e. come and go, contact, dealings, intercourse, or back-and-forth (Stafford's term), etc. *Wanglai* can be further divided as a Taiwanese saying that *lishang wang* and *lishang lai*. This is a way to see an exchange relation on both sides according to its own *lishang* criteria. Section 6.2 will show *wanglai* can also be displayed in both horizontal and vertical ways. Fei's (1947) *chaxugeju*, Sahlins's typology of reciprocity (1965/72) and Stafford's *laiwang* circle (2000a and c), can be categorised as horizontal *wanglai*. Other relations e.g. Polanyi's redistribution (1957), Stafford's *yang* circle (2000a and c), worship of ancestors and local gods (Luo 1997; Wang 1997c), people carrying on traditions or customs in making and maintaining relationships, and a Chinese saying *jiwangkailai* - carry forward the cause and forge ahead into the future, etc. can be categorised as vertical *wanglai*. *Lishang-wanglai* networks

are formed by criss-cross circles like latitude and longitude or horizontal and vertical ways (see section 6.2). My use of *wanglai* is different from that of previous related studies and there are numbers of points that need to be clarified.

(1) I would like to make clear that the implications of Polanyi's and Sahlins's references to 'primitive' economics are in one crucial sense not acceptable. I will show how 'primitive' reciprocity and redistribution exist in the highly complex and developed economy of China. Yet Mauss (1925/50) in the last chapter of *the Gift* shows how they co-exist within the capitalist society of France. In Mauss' study what might be understood as 'stages' actually co-exist. John Davis (1977) showed how large the gifts at Christmas and various other times were in the developed capitalist economy in Britain. When talking about different principles of market exchange, he and others showed that in the same society you have a coexistence of highly industrialised market exchange, production for exchange, plus all these other things which have been called redistributive, or dyadic reciprocity. There have been a lot of recent discussions on whether or not it makes any sense to distinguish between consumption of commodities and consumption in other ways to create a self in a set of relationships. It plainly has a social meaning. The social meaning of the use of commodities or anything produced for exchange has been a major object of study in many main theoretical and empirical studies e.g. by Daniel Miller et al (1998). However, I am making no assumption about the question of evolutionary stages from Mauss onwards, because I just show that different kinds of relationships co-exist in China.

(2) Parsons's (1937/49) generalisation of Chinese society as particularistic relationships is incorrect. According to Parsons, in contrast with the impersonality of the West, the whole Chinese social structure accepted and sanctioned by the Confucian ethic was a predominantly 'particularistic' structure of relationships (550-51). Yang Liansheng (1957) accepted Parsons's idea and claimed that "personalised relations have a tendency to particularise even institutions which were intended to apply in a universalistic manner (303)". However, some scholars have noticed that there were always different types of relationships co-existing in China. Fei (1947) wondered why villagers carry goods to a market more than ten miles away from the village, rather than sell or exchange them within the village.

The villagers told him that they walk away from the village in order to keep a distance from the other villagers. In the market no *mianzi* (face) relationships are involved in exchange relations, people behave as strangers to each other (77). G. W. Skinner (1971) found in traditional Chinese society, there were two ways to escape from the dilemmas of *renqing*: a person who was born locally was not allowed to be a county magistrate; businessmen preferred to do business outside their hometown (277). This shows traditional China to have had a meritocratic kind of political system, and the idea of an impersonal market. There are also ways to escape from *renqing* into negative exchange, which is neither *renqing*, nor meritocratic, nor market. Yu Yingshi (1987) argues that particularism and universalism actually co-exist in all societies. There are some cases in which personal relationships play important roles in America and England. In terms of cultural values, the highest principle in the West is justice, whereas in China it is *ren* (later called *li*). King (1986) has a clear sense that Chinese people act always both in particularistic and meritocratic ways. According to King, meritocratic, namely, universalistic, legal and rational relations are ways established to keep a balanced and harmonious society. Zheng Yefu (1995) claims that universalism and particularism have always co-existed and conflicted with each other in human society (47). The imperial examination system is such an example. He quoted a figure from Ho, which shows that in the early Ming dynasty commoners made up 60% of the successful candidates in the imperial examinations at the provincial level (1962:49), although there were problems involving particularism at the end of different dynasties (54). This figure shows the imperial examination system was fair in a universalistic way for people from different social backgrounds. The differences between early and late periods of different dynasties show particularism gradually filling and growing in the system. Zheng points out that particularism cannot disappear easily and it is most important to study how to deal with the relationship between universalism and particularism (43-47). Zhai Xuewei (1997) examines particularism and universalism with an analysis of local policies (*tu zhengce*). According to Zhai, neither particularism nor universalism can be called local. Both characteristics are included in the process of policy making. The starting point is universalism (from central government) to particularism (local characteristics), then to universalism (looks fair to local people) again. Peng Siqing

(1998/99) explored *guanxi* in Chinese interpersonal trust relations and showed, from his fieldwork findings, that the *guanxi* operation establishes and develops interpersonal trust and can co-exist with the legal system in China.

I agree with the above arguments against Parsons's notion of the wholly particularistic structure of relationships in Chinese society and believe that China is a particularistic society as well as a universalistic, meritocratic, market, and exploitative society. It is important to recognise the co-existence of universalism and particularism in Chinese society, where characteristics of reciprocity, redistribution, market, and other kinds of changes and relations are mixed. *Lishang-wanglai* therefore, which provides a way of understanding Chinese society, could in principle also be applied to Western societies, though possibly it will have less obvious effects there. The key idea is that in China the universalistic exchange relationships may be, but do not have to be, turned into personalised relationships, and vice versa. When this happens the relationships becomes partly particularist or partly universalist. This analysis of the possibilities and ways of changing between particularistic and universalistic relationships distinguishes my work from that of other researchers.

(3) Previous researchers' related work has always mixed up different kinds of relationship which cannot be covered by *wanglai*. There are social relationships (e.g. Huang 1986; King 1989; Yang M.1994), interpersonal relationships (e.g. King 1987/89; Zhai 1993), human relationships (Kipnis 1997), and personal relationships (Fei 1947; Zhai 1999). I am not going to use them for the following reasons. (a) Social relationship is too wide for me to use. In its broadest sense, it could cover every relationship in society, such as rational choice transactions, bureaucratic relationships, public service relationships involving justice, marital relationships, purely instrumental and personalised relationships, etc. Many social relationships cannot be covered by *wanglai*. For example, China is in a social formation. A whole social system can be a global social system or a social formation, defined by a division of labour, or other aspects of culture, something more than those who enter into relationships. *Wanglai* is nothing to do with such interdependence as a division of labour or public transport, which are not personal relationships although one's life is dependent on them in general. They would

affect one's life. Moreover, there are other sets of relationships, which shouldn't be included in *wanglai*, i.e. a system of domination of power / governmental power or economic power, and relationships of knowledge which authorise who is to say what is truth or what is not truth, etc. (b) Human relationships' objects are friends, lovers, and members of family relationships. This is too narrow for me to use. Although anthropologists tend to explore their cultural explanations and psychologists tend to provide inner reasons for difficulties and ways to deal with them, I will touch upon both but will place more weight on cultural explanation. (c) I am not using interpersonal relationships for similar reasons, namely that I do not want to be involved in interaction theory.

(4) Ego or family based *lishang-wanglai* networks (see section 6.2) are different from a typical idea that Chinese social structure is an enlargement of family relationships. According to Confucian philosophy, the society and family should be structured in the same way, based on three principles and five relationships (*sangang* and *wuchang*). This idea has influenced China over two thousand years in different ways because the Confucian philosophy became orthodox. There is a powerful ideal that the family should be the model for the whole of society and the ideals of family relationships should be ideals of all other social relationships. However, the Confucian social idea isn't universal, and wasn't even in his time. There were also the ideas of legalists then. In present China there is a bureaucratic official's ideal applied in the organisation of government or works. There are other kinds of social relationships, such as official, market, ruthlessness (pure self-interest), and friendship, etc. They are equally idealised and can't be the same as a family relationship. Furthermore, people are expected to act according to ideals but they can't always do this well. For example, one person claims that he is a head of a big family (e.g. *danwei* - a work place) but he can't treat everybody as well as he should do as a head of a big family. There are also other ideals, such as political ideals of equality, *chaxugeju* (Fei, 1947), *yang* and *laiwang* circles relationships (Stafford, 1995 and 2000c), or the ideal of women's relationships which involved mutual help, enjoyment of each others' company and making things for different events or rituals in Kaixiangong Village, etc.

(5) In order accurately to model the exchange relationships it is necessary to make a clear boundary for my research. My own use of the term “personal relationship” derives from my fieldwork. Relationships for the villagers can be any relationship which a person can possibly have, although they never give names to different kinds of relationships. These kinds of relationships involve personal relationships, interpersonal relationships, market relationships, and institutional relationships, etc. For example, before the Jinfeng silk factory (Photo sets 1:7) was taken over from Kaixiangong Village by the township, it had an instrumental relationship with the villagers. However, the relationship dropped down to a negative relationship because the villagers judged it was an unfair exchange. The main problem was that the factory caused environmental pollution in the village and never paid to bring it under control. The village cadres formally reported this many times to the township government but nothing happened. They then explained this to their villagers and complained with them to anybody who visited the village. The visitors were officials from the township and above, and related higher authorities, i.e. bureaux of industry, commerce, tax, electric power, water, health, public security, and journalists and researchers from the locality or outside. They even made it impossible for any further researcher to live in the village.⁴³ For the villagers, this was their way to use *lishang-wanglai* in the furtherance of other kinds of relationships. They believed that if they went on and on to the above people then one day the problem would be solved. By treating something as a *lishang-wanglai* problem the nature of other relationships of government administration or general economic interdependence are changed. The whole way in which government administration is held to account can therefore be analysed according to *lishang-wanglai*. So the relationship between the villagers and the local government in controlling environmental pollution became part of a negative relationship because it received financial benefit from the factory. I read a piece of news on the internet that in another part of China under the same circumstance some villagers even exploded part of a factory to express their complaint. The negative *wanglai* between the Kaixiangong Village and Jinfeng Factory or the local government turned back to instrumental *wanglai* again along with the changing privatisation of the system (*gaizhi*) from 1997. For the villagers, the new policy of changing the whole system from collective ownership to private is what they

wanted. It was also a result of their continuously personalising different kinds of visitors including local officials and researchers. This case shows the government relationships, economic relationships, and knowledge relationships, which are not in themselves *lishang-wanglai*, involved in a relationship between Jinfeng Factory and Kaixiangong. These relationships can be changed by being treated according to *lishang-wanglai* principles by the villagers and village cadres. Therefore, *lishang-wanglai* as a concept can be applied to any social relationship including relationships with one's parents or enemies, or any other groups anywhere at any time, so long as they affect the participants' relationships in a personalising way.

Therefore I add “personalised institutional relationship” into the notion of general reciprocity, which allows all the related relationships to be studied under the single topic of *lishang-wanglai*. The idea of an institutional relationship came from Karl Polanyi's (1957/1968) typology of exchange. He drew heavily on Malinowski's work in the Trobriand Islands. In his discussion of anthropological economics Polanyi proposed that there were radical differences between capitalist economies dominated by market exchange, and pre-capitalist ones where gifts or ceremonial exchange predominated. He divided all economies into three types according to the dominant mode of distribution: reciprocity, redistribution, or market exchange. I found strong evidence from my fieldwork experiences that a combination of reciprocity, redistribution, and market exchange widely exists in rural China. The way in which Polanyi picked up redistribution as a different type of exchange to contrast with anthropological reciprocity and economic market exchange enlightened me to push further on this topic with my fieldwork data. For me redistribution can be the type of redistribution as Kula Ring or Kaixiangong Village collective's redistribution, or indeed that of any kind of resources owner, e.g. an institution's redistribution.

Personalised relationships refer to people who act according to a set of criteria (*lishang*) purposefully through personal sources (see Table 2) and personal resources to directly turn any kind of social relationships into certain personalised relationships (*wanglai*), i.e. turn institutional relationships to personalised institutional relationships, etc. All personal direct contacts can be counted as ways of personalising relationships, whereas other formal complaints i.e. writing to a

newspaper or writing a letter to officials, the indirect contacts, are not. It is easy to understand that for local officials it is important to have a good long-term relationship with local people, since even when they retire they still live in the area. But for more distant officials there is no continuing potential cycle of personalised relationship, so why do they need to build such long-term relationships with local people? In China over two thousand or more years there has always been an access for people to contact an institution – whether or not it can be personalised or how much it has been personalised is another matter. What I look at are personalised relationships in which the *wanglai* element is essential and *lishang* is the calculation of *wanglai*. Chinese people believe to contact someone in person (*wanglai*) is not only (a) effective (rational choice) but could (b) help the institution to work better (moral judgement). So for the villagers when they personalise local officials they actually personalise the institution where the officials work, and it doesn't matter where the officials come from -- local or distant.

Lishang-wanglai can describe personalised relationships by specifying the way they are calculated and the principles according to which they are created and maintained. Each of these terms can be expanded: how relationships are made personal, how personal relationships are recreated, changed and maintained, and how they are ended. This is the whole creative process. The way of personalizing an institution works in terms of long term cycles extended over generations in which both the vertical and horizontal are involved. Of the *lishang* criteria human feelings is the most important one. Human feelings co-exist with all the other criteria and make *lishang-wanglai* personalised relationships.

How is social justice or rational calculation different between personal relationships and impersonal relationships? Although social justice or rational calculation can be applied to impersonal relationships as much as personal relationships, when they are used in the presence of human feelings the relationships can turn into personalised relationships from impersonal relationships.

Although I based the *wanglai* typology mainly on Sahlins's (1965/72) work on a reciprocity typology which can be used as an analytic tool, when I consider the

level of synthesis I will introduce “personalised institutional relationship” in order accurately to model the exchange relationships found in my fieldwork. Setting up the boundary of *lishang-wanglai* distinguishes all the other social relationships outside of *lishang-wanglai* from *lishang-wanglai* relations. The way in which I did this was by borrowing Parsons’s term “personal relations” (1937/49) and Polanyi’s (1957) idea on exchange relationships and making this into the term of “personalised institutional relations”. Thus Polanyi’s redistribution and market exchanges have been treated as part of instrumental *wanglai* when they are personalised. Basically, people can personalize almost every relationship for their own sake, although not every relationship can be personalized, e.g. the international standard market or legal systems.

According to villagers, not only an institutional relationship can be partly personalised (see above case of Jinfeng Factory), but market relationships can also be partly personalised. For example, a shopkeeper in the village talks to people by sitting in a little chair in front of his accounts, rather than standing behind the accounts. This is a way to make personal relationships with customers. Once he has established special relationships with them then their relationship has become a personalised relationship. Although by doing this the shopkeeper gains more customers and the customers gain some items in what looks like a kind of market relationship, in fact only some villagers can be part of it, which makes it a personalised market relationship. In my study such a personalised market relationship, together with personalised institutional relationship, can be seen as a part of instrumental *wanglai*, which is identical to *guanxi* in other researchers’ studies (Yang M.1994, Yan 1996b). Once a person is involved in such a relationship by personalising it to gain resources from it, the relationship becomes a personalised institutional relationship or instrumental *wanglai*. *Lishang-wanglai* involves mutual respect or etiquette through the process of personalising relationships. If one of the participants is a website or automatic information system, the relationship is totally based on universalistic criteria. If, however they involve people’s feelings, even via an exchange of letters, they become partly particularistic. For example, I had such a relationship when buying a thirty-five year old model of Ian Fleming’s Chitty Chitty Bang Bang magic car for my son

from the online auction site eBay. The cost varied from a few pounds up to £300 each, depending on condition. One can't always rely on the photos or description of what one might want to bid for. In the end I kept one of a few I bought, and sold or exchanged the rest of them with other fans. It looked like pure market relationship, but the system allowed bidders to contact each other through email, which meant personalised relationships could be involved. I collected many moving stories from this experience but won't show them here due to lack of space.

When a relationship becomes a personalised one what things are involved? There are three factors at work: sharing common interests, personal recognition of the other and memory. Sharing common interests is important in involving a new personal relationship as in the above Chitty's case and the rest are important in developing existing sources. For example, when A reminds B about some links between them in making a personalised relationship, B recognises something about A, remembers how A is and the history of relationships between them. *Lishang-wanglai* can be used to personalise different kinds of relationship. This means people act according to *lishang* to personalise relationships. The personalised relationships, with different types of *wanglai*, can be ongoing relationships.

Wanglai typology

Table 3 shows a comparison of typologies for social exchange relationships and reciprocity which contains earlier sociologists' and anthropologists' work. They are Weber, Parsons, Polanyi, Yang L., Sahlins, Befu, Mitchell, Wen, Lin, Walder, King, Hwang, Yang Z., Yang M., Yan, and my own *wanglai* typology. It has four categories, which are generous *wanglai*, expressive *wanglai*, instrumental *wanglai* and negative *wanglai*. I will show what each type of *wanglai* is inherited from previous researchers and how I used them separately.

(1) Generous *wanglai* relates to people giving without expecting any kind of exchange in return, to do something for nothing, for no obvious reason, or immaterial gain, like enjoyment. This kind of exchange also includes what Chinese

scholars called ‘moral or soul exchange’ (Luo 1996, Wang 1998, see section 6.1.3). I use meanings of Sahlins’s (1957) generalized reciprocity but replace it with “generous *wanglai*” to highlight its character of “pure gift”, “free gift”, and “generosity”. Yang L.’s (1957) and Wen’s (1982) *yi de bao yuan* (return good for evil) is one extreme such case. Most of scholars’ related categories involved meaning of *bao’en* (pay a lot more for debt of gratitude), e.g. Polanyi (1957) reciprocity, Yang L.’s (1957) and Wen’s (1982) *bao’en*, Mitchell (1969) communication, Lin’s (1986) expressive support, King’s (1985) social exchange, Hwang’s (1987) expressive tie, Yang Z.’s (1991) *qinqing* (family and relatives’ relationships), Yang M.’s (1994) interpersonal exchange and reciprocal commitments, Yan’s (1996b) expressive gift giving, etc.

(2) Expressive *wanglai* is related to people mixing their feelings, obligations, and materials together in building a long-term relationship. The original meaning of *renqing* is similar to expressive *wanglai*. The following researchers’ related work is a direct source for the expressive *wanglai*. They are Weber (1904) traditional (customary) and affective (emotional) categories, Parsons’s (1937) particularism, Polanyi’s (1957) reciprocity, Yang L.’s (1957) *yi de bao de* (return good for good), Sahlins’s (1965) generalised reciprocity, Bafu’s (1967) expressive exchange, Mitchell’s (1969) communication action, Lin’s (1986) expressive support, King’s (1985) social exchange, Hwang’s (1987) mixed tie, Yang Z.’s (1991) *youqing* (friendship) and *renqing*, Yang M.’s (1994) interpersonal exchanges and reciprocal commitments and Yan’s (1996b) expressive gift giving, etc. However, Yan’s division of expressive gift giving is misleading. Yan (1996b) used Bafu’s above terms and divided gift giving as expressive gift giving and instrumental gift giving (52-73). Based on Xiajia villagers’ practice of *dashi* and *xiaoqing*, Yan (1996b) made further classifications of the expressive gift giving as on ceremonial occasions and in non-ritualised situations (1996b:52-67). Yan’s such distinguishing cuts off a link between small events and big occasions in historical context. For Kaixiangong villagers, on the one hand, *dashi* and *xiaoqing* can be seen as the knot and string which knit *lishang-wanglai* networks. For example, a wedding is a big event which involves different steps, such as asking for red paper from a fiancée’s family, engagement with several gifts of bridewealth, leaving feasts for a fiancée

from her family's agnatic kin, ceremony from natal family, wedding, new wife's natal family's visit, welcome feasts for a new wife from agnatic kin, welcome feasts for a new groom from the wife's natal family's agnatic kin, post wedding tea party with the groom's neighbours and fellow villagers families, etc. On the other hand, in the process of knitting *lishang-wanglai* networks, *dashi* and *xiaoqing* can be seen as inputs and outcomes, because each knot is tangled by the string. The whole process of establishing a marriage relationship included both *dashi* (wedding) and a number of *xiaoqing*. It would not be easy to understand how the marriage relationship is established without seeing the whole process (see section 3.2). In villagers' words, suppose the wedding is a pig, then the whole process of getting married is like fattening the pig and needs a long time of preparation and maintenance before and afterwards.

(3) Instrumental *wanglai* relates to people giving something (e.g. loaning money, providing materials, information, emotional or spiritual helps, offering special skill or ability, introducing a personal link, etc.) to others for direct gains or long-term benefit in horizontal and vertical ways. Both the horizontal and vertical instrumental *wanglai* relate to individuals or groups using their won resources to meet their own interests. The vertical instrumental *wanglai* can be mobilised from bottom up (e.g. villagers seek spiritual support - blessings or protection from ancestors or gods) or top down (e.g. from a local official to village cadres, or a village cadre to villagers, etc.) directions. The theoretical source of instrumental *wanglai* can also be traced back to Weber's (1904) category of end-rational (instrumental) action. A part of Parsons's (1937) particularism, Polanyi's (1957) redistribution, Sahlins's (1965) reciprocity, King's (1985) social exchange, Hwang's (1987) mixed tie, Yang Z.'s (1991) friendly / human feelings can be categorised into instrumental *wanglai*. Befu's (1966-67) instrumental exchange, Mitchell's (1969) instrumental action, Lin's (1986) instrumental support, Walder's (1986) instrumental / personal tie and particularism, Yang M.'s (1994), Yan's (1996b) instrumental gift giving are identical with instrumental *wanglai*. However, Yan's categories of instrumental gift giving and unbalanced reciprocity are rather confused. Yan's instrumental gift giving includes indirect payment, flattery gifts and gifts of lubrication (68-73). According to Xiajia villagers' gift giving for daily

life help, for the public interest of the entire community, gaining access to buy state-controlled industrial products for village collective or buying house building materials for villagers, or entering a hospital for earlier treatment, etc. can all be accepted as instrumental gift giving. But, when Yan discusses a kind of gift giving in imbalanced gift exchange (Yan 1996b: chapter 7) he used another category of “unbalanced reciprocity”. This kind of imbalanced gift exchange is that some people of lower status give gifts upwards for direct or indirect instrumental purpose, whereas others of higher status accumulate monetary gifts and make a show by using their prestige. Based on Kaixiangong’s case and my own understanding of Xiajia’s case my addition to Yan’s work is to further divide Yan’s instrumental gift giving into different types of *wanglai*: instrumental *wanglai* and negative *wanglai*. A part of Yan’s (1996b) “unbalanced reciprocity” relates to the developmental cycle of the family and can be counted as instrumental *wanglai*, and another part related to a gap of social status can be counted negative *wanglai* (148). Amongst Yan’s instrumental gift giving, which includes indirect payment and flattery gifts and gifts of lubrication (68-73), the indirect payment and part of the flattery gifts and gifts of lubrication can be seen as instrumental *wanglai*, and the rest relating to bribery should be moved to “negative *wanglai*” (see next point).

(4) Negative *wanglai* is a more complicated category (see (1) of section 6.1.1). The category of negative *wanglai* is taken from Sahlins’s (1965/72) negative reciprocity which refers to getting something for nothing, or to taking much more and giving much less or returning nothing. I also take the following related work into consideration: Yang L.’s (1957) *yi yuan bao yuan* (to return injury with injury) and *yi de bao yuan* (return good with injury), Wen’s (1982) *bu bao* (never return), *bao chou* (take revenge or make reprisals in an extreme way), and *yi yuan bao de* (return of evil for good), Walder’s (1986) instrumental / personal ties (the ceremonialised bribery attached to the ties), Yang M.’s (1994) bribery, and Yan’s (1996b) another part of instrumental and unbalanced gift giving are sources for the negative *wanglai*.

My addition to the above work is to divide negative *wanglai* into three subtypes: a) Getting something for nothing or to taking much more and giving much less or returning nothing as Sahlins’s main usage. It is a kind of horizontal negative valued

tense relationship (*guanxi jinzhang*). b) Getting something for personal interests (bribe gift and or the loyalty - in the case of someone getting promotion by the back door) with public resources as a higher status person, or getting the permit, the protection or the promotion with materials or other ways rather than through ability or hard work as a lower status person. It is a kind of vertical negative valued tense relationship (*bu zhengchang guanxi*, i.e. nepotism, jobbery or bribery which can be either top down or bottom up). c) Getting something one wants with the cost of losing kinship, friendship or even life, which appears as a broken down relationship (*guanxi polie*). It could be repaired, though it would be very difficult. It more likely leads to its extreme end: court involved abuse (e.g. Y. Guo 2001; Y. Yan 2003: 168), rupture for a long time, or even one party revenge against another by committing suicide (Y. Yan 2003: 86 & 162).

The key issue in distinguishing negatively valued instrumental *wanglai* from vertical negative *wanglai* is to understand the meaning of nepotism, jobbery and bribery in China. (a) Nepotism or jobbery normally applies to a kind of top down negative *wanglai* from an official who uses public resources through his or her power to gain his or her personal benefit, including both material and non-material. Although it appears to be a kind of negatively valued instrumental *wanglai* to begin with, it is more likely to be vertical negative *wanglai*. The negative *wanglai* of condemnation and sometimes of eventual dismissal or demotion comes later. These can be described with some Chinese phrases: *qundai guan* (an official who owes his position to petticoat influence); *yi quan mou si* (abuse power for personal gain), *jia gong ji si* (use public office for private gain), *fubai duoluo* (corrupt, embezzle, degenerate and villainous) etc. (b) Bribery is a negative valued word in both moral and legal senses under any circumstances. It normally applies to a kind of bottom up negative *wanglai* between people of lower and higher status. In Yan's (1996) Xiajia, villagers looked down on some people who bribed those in higher positions to gain a post of village cadre or get a place in higher education, including cases of upwards gift giving in Yan's "unbalanced reciprocity", etc. For them it is wrong morally and they regarded it as "no conscience" (*mei liangxin*), which refers to the fundamental self-constraint that one should obey (70). Strictly speaking to bribe somebody or be bribed by somebody are serious matters which

count as a breach of criminal law, not civil law. In an exchange relationship, once bribery is involved, it would never be an equivalent exchange according to the Chinese usage I mentioned earlier. For one side the cost can be quantifiable with money, whereas for the other side the loss can't be quantifiable, since it could be a loss of one's high position or even life. This is why in Xiajia's case the word of bribery is used very cautiously (Yan 1996b: 70, 72). So, in theory, whether or not bribery is involved distinguishes negative *wanglai* from Yan's flattery gifts and gifts of lubrication of instrumental gift giving and cases in Yan's "unbalanced reciprocity" upwards gift giving. However, in practice it is still not an easy thing to distinguish between vertical negative valued instrumental *wanglai* and negative *wanglai*.

In order to categorise my fieldwork observations sufficiently I defined the above typology of *wanglai*. It contains four levels arranged on the basis of moral valuation from higher to lower. The levels are generous, expressive, instrumental and negative *wanglai*. The frequency of *wanglai* in *wanglai* typology can be seen as the shape of a rugby ball standing on a pointed end. This means that generous *wanglai* and negative *wanglai* are two small ends on top and bottom, and expressive *wanglai* and instrumental *wanglai* are two big parts in the middle. In chapter 4 I will deal with these two relatively infrequent ends, and also cover instrumental *wanglai*, which although very important has been developed enough by others (Yang M. 1994, Yan 1996b, Kipnis 1997, etc.), whereas chapters 5 and 6 will concentrate on expressive *wanglai*. The typology of *wanglai* is related to existing classifications used by other researchers.

Although when looking at Chinese people in making and maintaining social or personal relations one can see four criteria and four types of relationships with *lishang-wanglai model*, in practice, they can be used in different ways. The criteria can be partly moral obligation, partly enjoyment of sociability or emotional attachment or greedy desiring, partly rational choice or utility purpose and partly religious sense. The different types of *wanglai* can be mixed. When I talk about *bao* or *mianzi* I look at generous *wanglai* or negative *wanglai* with the criteria of moral and human feelings. When I talk about *renqing* or *ganqing* I look at expressive *wanglai* with a combination of the emotional and the enjoyable

criterion. When I talk about *guanxi* I mean instrumental or negative *wanglai* depending on moral judgment. The *lishang* criteria also weigh differently which means they have more or less stress on one or another, more instrumental in some cases or more enjoyable in other cases. When I talk about *huhui* or *liyi* (long term benefit or short-term gain) I place more weight towards the instrumental than moral aspect. When I mention about *yuan* or *fu* I place more weight on the religious sense than other aspects in different *wanglai*, and so on and so forth.

6.2. Social support networks vs. lishang-wanglai framework

The study of social support is spread across a range of disciplines including sociology, social psychology and social anthropology. Initially social support study came from studies by the Chicago school on urban life, which served as a major foundation for social support study. But it was not until the 1970s that social support became a serious topic.⁴⁴ Since then social support has covered a very wide range: some researchers have used it in the study of human personality, e.g. from behavioural scientists (Homans 1961; Bergess & Huston 1979; Foa & Foa, 1980; Sarason, Sarason & Pierce, 1990), “[To] the social scientist, it represents a focal point around which social ecological models of distress can be developed (Cassel, 1974a, 1974b, 1976), [to] the interventionist, it promises powerful techniques for the amelioration and prevention of psychological problems (Caplan, 1974; Cobb, 1976)”⁴⁵. Others have used it in human / social services (Cook 1979, Gottlieb 1981, Whittaker, Garbarino et al. 1983, Naran 1991) or elderly care (Wentowski 1981, Sauer & Coward 1985, Yang H. 1990, Kallgren 1992, Wenger 1992 and 1994). They have used it in the study of poverty (The world bank 1988, Ellwood 1988), in relation to social policing (Netzer 1978, Sandison & Williams 1981, Orcutt, Merz & Quinke 1986 Hill et al. 1989), and even in studies of decision making in information sciences (Zhang 1990), etc. Although initial excitement in the topic of social support gave rise to a flood of empirical studies, the term social support still has not been included in either general sociological or social work textbooks or dictionaries.⁴⁶ By the early 1990s social support study became more focused, i.e. Sarason, et al., (1990: 2) emphasised its aspects, as: (a) the conceptualisation of social support, e.g. the network model, the received support model, and the perceived support model; (b) social support in ongoing

personal relationships; (c) the role of social support in coping with stress, and (d) applications of social support in clinical and community interventions.

Generally speaking, social support has been defined as the benefits that can be gained through interaction with others (Deaux & Wrightsman, 1988: 245). As it will be used in this dissertation, social support is about how people use different sources to get help to either cope with life events, or buffer stress, or meet social needs. Thus it is necessary to consider the *source* of the benefits, *resources* (or nature of the benefits), and *purpose* to which the benefits are put in an examination of social support.

The ESRC project on social support examined how rural Chinese people arranged resources from different sources for their everyday life (see Introduction). It provides important data based on a framework related to social support networks for this dissertation. The section 6.2.1 will show how the social support networks based on the ESRC project were developed by reviewing related work. In the section 6.2.2 I will introduce the *lishang-wanglai* model into the ESRC related social support networks and turn them into *lishang-wanglai* networks. At the same time a framework of *lishang-wanglai* networks will be presented. Section 6.2.3 will demonstrate how the *lishang-wanglai* framework works.

6.2.1. Social support networks

Social network study can be traced back to the Chicago school. The development of social network analysis has been complex. One tradition, called sociometry, coined by J. L. Moreno (1934), uses mathematics to develop formal models of the links and topology of social networks. Another tradition explores patterns of interpersonal relations and the formation of cliques. In this tradition, the psychologist Elton Mayo (1933) and the anthropologist W. Lloyd Warner (1937, 1941) worked together and applied Radcliffe-Brown's (1930-31, 1940) structural concerns into their investigations of American factory and community life.⁴⁷ The third tradition is based on the works of the Manchester anthropologists (e.g. John Barnes 1954, Elizabeth Bott 1956-57 and Clyde Mitchell 1969). They are also influenced by Radcliffe-Brown, but are interested in conflict and change in investigating the structure of community relations in tribal and village societies.

From the 1960s onwards the crucial breakthroughs in social network analysis occurred at Harvard. Harvard structuralists (e.g. White 1963, Boyd 1969, Lorrain and White 1971) carried out the above traditions and pushed network analysis into much more highly theoretical and technical areas. They even established their own journal: *Social Networks*, an interdisciplinary and international quarterly.

Although social network theory has been incorporated further in studies of social support by several researchers,⁴⁸ some researchers have diverted their interests toward other ways of using networks as an analytical tool because many social phenomena cannot be quantitatively measured. For example, Lomnitz (1977) examined life in a Mexican town, Hannerz (1980) explored city life in America, and Wallman (1984) studied eight London households.

My exploration of social support networks and reciprocity is mainly based on ego-centred social network analysis. According to Wasserman and Faust (1994:42), ego-centred networks have been widely used by anthropologists to study the social environment surrounding individuals (Boissevain 1973), families (Bott 1957) or households (Wallman 1984). Social psychologists and sociologists have often used ego-centred networks in the study of social support, which refers to social relationships that aid the health or well-being of an individual, (e.g. Hammer 1983, Cohen and Syme 1985, Seed 1990). The emphasis on relationships has allowed researchers to study support using social networks.

Amongst the anthropological studies Sandra Wallman's (1984) work of eight London households is close to mine. Wallman combined a total social field network and ego-centred social field network together, and used two network maps. One situates its contacts in relation to the local context and records the geographic distance of people in the household network. The other classifies these contacts in term of their practical or emotional resource value and also records the affective distance of people in the household network. According to Wallman, the latter is adapted from a family therapy model (Speck and Attneave 1974). Wallman also divided the rings of increasing distance into three parts. *Kin* go in the central circle, then *non-kin* form a ring, and *uncomfortable people* form an outer circle. This allows more detail in the closeness of contacts to be illustrated.

Wallman's ego-centered network study has influenced the ESRC social support project in two ways. (a) She looked at the geographic distance of people in the household network, whereas we looked at ranges of geographical distance in order to see how far the different supporters who feature in the ego's network are from the ego. (b) She divided people within the network into kin, non-kin and uncomfortable people, whereas we distinguished social support sources as households themselves, neighbours, friends and others. However, Wallman looked at how people in the ego's networks interrelate with each other by providing a chart of the density interactions between people who are in ego-centered networks. I have noticed such linkage between people within an ego-centered network, but I didn't do it systematically because my purpose is not to compare egos in more dense networks with egos in less dense ones. Rather my purpose is to establish other variations of ego-centred networks. I look at all the relationships an ego, e.g. one household, has and find out how different relationships relate to the ego and what kind of resources and quantity of support they provide to the ego, and how the ego maintains the different relationships within the ego-centered networks.

It is worth mentioning another anthropologist Yan Yunxiang's (1996b) *guanxi* network, which is also close to mine, because we are both concerned with the topic of reciprocity in a rural Chinese village. Yan examined both the dynamic process of cultivation of *guanxi* networks and their functions in everyday life, and the structure of *guanxi* networks with metaphorical and analytic uses. Yan analysed patterns of gift lists in the structure of *guanxi* networks, which are formed from a core zone, reliable zone, effective zone, village society, and beyond the village society, in all five categories of a donor's relationships. He distinguished inherited from created relations, and degrees of closeness between donor and recipient. Yan states "the closer to the centre in a given *guanxi* network, the more gift-giving relations are involved (101);" "all instrumental gift-giving relations go beyond the village boundary (102)." However, the nature of Yan's structure of *guanxi* network is not significantly different from Wallman's (1984) geographic and affective distance in the study of relationships or networks and Sahlins's (1965/72) reciprocity and kinship distance (see section 6.1.1).

Philip Seed's (1990) study on social network analysis in the social work field also helped me in sorting out contents of social support networks based on materials of the ESRC social support project. According to Seed, 'social network analysis is all about making connections between different kinds of network features, types and relationship qualities' (1990: 45). Figure 1 shows how the structure of the social support network is formed. As I mentioned in the Introduction that the ESRC project on social support was designed to provide further insights into resource exchanges among rural people in the Post-Mao era. The assumption of the exploratory survey on the above project was that there is a large, informal and family-based fabric of social support network performing the function of social security in rural China. In rural China "social support network features" include *sources* for support (family, kinship, friends, neighbours, and other institutions), *resources* (financial, labour, and information), *events* (family, emergency, and investment), and *range* (village, town, and beyond town).

Seed divided "network types" into density, self-contained, and embracing categories, which I do not use. I am not going to measure the density of the network and its other structural properties because I am not applying a structural network analysis. For "relationship qualities" Seed made a comparison between the sociological view and that of social work. According to Seed, from sociologists' (Knoke and Kuklinski 1982) view, the relationship qualities include transaction, communication, boundary penetration, instrumental relations, sentiment, authority power, and kinship and descent relations. For Seed, based on social work studies, relationship qualities concern communication and access, instrumental qualities, sentiment qualities, influence, esteem, and reciprocity qualities.

I am looking at different kinds of exchange relations, which are based on my informants' own categories, namely, generous *wanglai*, expressive *wanglai*, instrumental *wanglai*, and negative *wanglai* (see *wanglai* typology in section 6.1.3). "Relationship qualities" are very important to my research because maintaining good relationships stand families in good stead for various eventualities, and in the course of so doing there are continuous benefits, as in the fattening of pigs or *lishang-wanglai* (villagers' terms, see Introduction).

I initially applied social support network theory in a restudy of the ESRC social support project in Neiguan Village, Gansu Province in 1996. In the next section I show why this was not sufficient to explain my results and how I expanded the social support networks into *lishang-wanglai* networks.

6.2.2. *Lishang-wanglai* networks

I developed the notion of *lishang-wanglai* networks because of the problems I encountered, listed below, in using social support networks to analyse social support in Kaixiangong Village. (a) Social support is very little to do with generous *wanglai*, although it is an outcome of generous *wanglai* from Kaixiangong villagers' point of view. As I have shown in section 6.1.2, the villagers hardly ever use *bao* or *huibao* (repay, reciprocity) for social support issues. They told me that they won't say *huibao* because that means they have finished a *wanglai* relationship. (b) According to the ESRC project report the *renqing* kind of expressive *wanglai* was mainly based in the village, whereas the *guanxi* kind of instrumental *wanglai* was more likely to come from outside the village. In other words, social support networks mainly work in expressive *wanglai* within a village. (c) The villagers didn't consider the *guanxi* kind of instrumental *wanglai* or negative *wanglai* as social support, although social support can be partly involved in instrumental *wanglai* (see section 1.2). They also asked me to move investment, one of the possible family events in the ESRC project social support classification, into a different category. From their point of view, to invest in new equipment, and new corporation or a new line of work etc. should be regarded as instrumental *wanglai*, which is more likely to involve *guanxi*. (d) Social support resources (see Table 2) are to do with human beings, but the villagers also view gods and spiritual beings and spirituality as an important source of resources. In this case geographical range is not relevant. (e) Social support networks consider geographical range, but the villagers also consider time and space in vertical and horizontal ways (which I will define later in this section) when they arrange resources.

Bearing in mind the above problems of the social support networks that I was using, I therefore expanded social support networks into *lishang-wanglai* networks

(see “*Lishang-wanglai* framework” in Figure 2). The *lishang-wanglai* networks are enlargements of each element of the social support network (section 6.2.1), whereas the *lishang-wanglai* framework is a diagram which includes how the *lishang-wanglai* networks are structured (section 6.2.2) and how they work (section 6.2.3).

Figure 2 shows the expanded *lishang-wanglai* networks include the following elements. (a) Under “sources”, in the ESRC social support project ‘household’ means members of family, ‘private’ includes relatives, neighbours and friends, ‘public’ includes village collective and other institutions. On top of this I added ‘fellow villagers’, ‘ancestors’, and ‘local gods and goddesses’. All the above items together form the sources of *lishang-wanglai* networks. This goes beyond “social relationships” for social support because ancestors and local gods and goddesses are spiritual beings. This idea was confirmed by all my informants. (b) The “resources” in *lishang-wanglai* networks’ include not only the finance, labour, and information that the ESRC project looked at, but also materials, human feelings, and religious aims and categories because their range of exchange is much broader. (c) Apart from the family events, emergencies and investment the ESRC social support project, the “events” in *lishang-wanglai* networks also include ‘family division’, ‘house construction’, ‘annual cycle events’ and ‘lifecycle events’. (d) To supplement the “range” of ‘village’, ‘town’ and ‘beyond town’ in the ESRC project, I have introduced four more dimensions on top of the geographical element. They are time / space, vertical / horizontal, real / imaginary and *yin / yang*. Thus the “*lishang-wanglai* networks” constitute the dynamic part of a conceptualised concept of *lishang-wanglai*.

I will now engage previous researchers’ work to show how the additions to the categories of “events”, “resources” and “sources” of the social support networks are influenced by them. The idea of linking a time dimension to ego-centred family network benefits is from He Ruifu’s (1992) work. Based on a field study on family life and networks in his hometown, a Southern Chinese village, He defined a family network “as the social phenomenon formed by a group of families that are directly linked by kinship, friendship or other relationships and frequently interact (*laiwang*) in daily life with the ego family (25).” He believed family networks are

made up of separate individual networks and distinguished his network analysis by putting a family network in the time dimension and viewing the relations of network structure and people's behaviour dialectically (27). He's idea of time dimension in dyadic ties of *laiwang* (the same as Stafford's term *laiwang*) is particularly important for me. For me, an ego can involve different types of *wanglai* with one or more relationships at different times or even at the same time.

(a) **At the same time** the ego can have a relationship with **a particular person or object** with one or more than one type of *wanglai*, e.g. the Chinese famous story of the Hongmen feast (*Hongmen yan*). This told of a feast held at Hongmeng by Xiang Yu for his rival Liu Bang in the Three Kingdom time, at which an attempt was made on Liu's life. Here inviting someone for a feast sounds like an expressive *wanglai*, but the attempted assassination turned it into a negative *wanglai*. (b) **At different times** the ego can have a relationship with **a particular person or object** with one or more than one type of *wanglai*. For example, a friend of the given family (ego) attended its son's wedding in which the *wanglai* of gift and banquet between them can be expressive *wanglai*. A few days later the same friend came to the family asking to borrow its truck. The family interpreted this kind of using its resources as instrumental *wanglai* because it went beyond their understanding of mutual help between friends. (c) **At the same time** the ego can have a relationship with **a different person or object** with one or more than one types of *wanglai*. It was common for beggars to perform a greeting song whenever an ego family held a wedding banquet. The given family always gave them some food and sent them off quickly, which can be seen as mixed generous *wanglai* and instrumental *wanglai*, whereas its relationship with all the guests is expressive *wanglai*. (d) **At different times** the ego can have a relationship with **a different person or object** with one or more than one types of *wanglai*. This can be seen from how an ego centred family maintains its networks. An ego-centered family's networks are not fixed. They increase and decrease because the family adjusts their lists according to changing times and situations (see Chapters 1 to 4). The important thing is that different types of *wanglai* can be created, improved, decreased or destroyed by people at any time.

Charles Stafford's (1995, 2000a and c) cycle of *yang* encouraged me to use a similar spatial analogy in which links can be either vertical or horizontal. Compared with Stafford's *laiwang* cycle, which indicates a kind of latitudinal circle between an ego with its neighbours and friends, the *yang* cycle indicates to me a kind of longitudinal cycle between parents and children. According to Stafford, alongside patriline and affinity the *yang* cycle is equally forceful and a relatively incorporative Chinese kinship system (2000a: 38). The way in which the *yang* cycle looks at parents-children relationships of a family is similar to the way we looked at household support⁴⁹ in the ESRC social support project. It showed that 70 per cent of the "contents" in social support came from members of households (household support) from 10 villagers (Chang and Feuchtwang 1997). Stafford's finding and the above data back up each other when it comes to relationships inside a family rather than those outside of the family. Although I would not think it appropriate to treat a married daughter's family who lived in a different place from the given family as a part of the *yang* cycle, I agree with the idea of a *yang* cycle as a generational relationship between members of the family (ego), which can be seen as vertical *wanglai*. My addition to Stafford's work on the *yang* cycle is to insist on a generational cycle, and to include his *laiwang* cycle as a part of the horizontal *wanglai* including *wanglai* with the married out daughters' families (see chapters 3 and 4). For me, the family based *lishang-wanglai* networks can be inherited. I have shown, in Chapters 3 and 4, how children can be brought into a set of family *lishang-wanglai* networks, how they inherit their family's relatives and neighbours, how they make their own friends, etc., and how *lishang-wanglai* networks work continuously over generations.

Yan Yunxiang's (1996b) division of horizontal and vertical social relations (169) helps me directly in joining horizontal and vertical *wanglai* together in the family (ego) based *lishang-wanglai* networks. By using this we can see that the previous researchers' work on gift exchange can be mixed vertical and horizontal exchanges (Malinowski Kula 1922, Mauss's give-receive-repay circle 1925, etc.), or sometimes divided as either vertical exchange (Polanyi's redistribution 1957, Stafford's *yang* cycle 1995 and 2000a, etc.), or horizontal exchange (Fei's "ego centred ripples in a pond" 1947, Sahlins's "reciprocity and kinship residential

sectors” 1965/1972:199 and Stafford’s *laiwang* circles 1995 and 2000a, etc.). For me, the ego (family) based *lishang-wanglai* networks look like a globe formed by crisscrossing circles, like longitude and latitude. Here a vertical relationship indicates that one site’s status or position is higher than the other, whereas a horizontal relationship indicates an equal position between the two sides. It means one can have longitudinal or vertical *wanglai* with one’s ancestors, or local officials, etc. One can also have latitudinal or horizontal *wanglai* with different people, between fellow villagers, or colleagues, etc. In my study I will use the terms *vertical* and *horizontal* to describe the longitudinal and latitudinal mobility of *lishang-wanglai*.

The dimension of real / imaginary came from Kaixiangong villagers’ practices on social support and *lishang-wanglai*. I mentioned earlier in this section that Kaixiangong villagers considered ancestors and local gods at part of their sources for seeking support and general religious beliefs as part of their resources. This is to say that the imaginary world co-exists with the villagers’ real life. The villagers categorised their relationships with their ancestors and local gods as vertical *wanglai*, whereas those with other spiritual beings, i.e. ghosts were horizontal *wanglai*. Various examples can be seen from the villagers’ related practices throughout this dissertation whenever I described or analysed cases with the religious sense of *lishang* criterion. Moreover, imaginary time or space can also be used in real life in this world, e.g. the villagers’ memory of the past and longing of the future vertically, and imaginative closeness with different relations horizontally, etc.

I added the dimension of *yin / yang* based on my understanding of Kaixiangong villagers’ practice of *lishang-wanglai* and the Chinese classics. Figure 2 shows there is a Taiji Diagram (Tai-chi Tu diagram) in the middle of the framework on *lishang-wanglai* networks. I shall point out that amongst many studies on the Taiji Diagram my usage of it is based on the natural humanism of Taoism rather than the I-Ching. According to Shu Jingnan (1994) the former is the origin of the Taiji Diagram and the latter is an annotation of the Taiji Diagram. In ancient Chinese philosophy, the rhythm of life, which pulsates through the universe, is the action of complementary principles. The Taiji Diagram illustrates this principle with *yin* and

yang. The symmetrical disposition of the black *yin* and the white *yang* suggests cyclical changes. When *yin* reaches its climax, it recedes in favour of *yang*, then after *yang* reaches its climax it recedes in favour of *yin*. This is the eternal cycle. The dots inside the white and black halves indicate that within each is the seed of the other. *Yin* cannot exist without *yang* and vice versa. Although the dots are very important, they are so small that they may be ignored. Even the Chinese – English Dictionary (Revised edition, Cidianzu, 1995) ignored the spots in the Diagram. It says the Diagram “consists of a wavy or double curved line bisecting a circle, one half of which is white and the other black (973).” Although the dots are small, they could be the cause to turn the black into white or turn the white into black. The ideal state of things in the physical universe, as well as in the world of humans is a state of harmony represented by the balance of *yin* and *yang* in body and mind.

The main reason I replaced the word “ego” on the framework of the social support network with the Taiji Diagram in the middle of the crisscrossing globe of the framework of the *lishang-wanglai* networks is because it visualised a pair of basic dialectic changes on one thing. It can be an ego, i.e. individual or a family, or one pair of relationship (two sides), etc. For example, the relationship between commoners and an emperor can be a pair of relationships formed by the commoners (*yin*) and an emperor (*yang*). According to a Chinese saying: the water can bear the boat as well as sink it (*shui neng zai zhou, yi neng fu zhou*). This is to say if the emperor is a boat, then the people are the waters of the river and the inalienable water (people) can bear the emperor’s ruling as well as overthrow the ruler. The above two outcomes can be seen as a kind of vertical interaction on the globe shaped *lishang-wanglai* framework: bottom up or top down. The idea of *yin-yang* dialectic relationship provides another dimension for analysing how the two directions are exchanges (see sections 6.2.3 and “state” and “gender” issues in the Conclusion).

Figure 2 also shows how both the *lishang* criteria and the *wanglai* typology were expanded. To add the *lishang-wanglai* model on the framework of the *lishang-wanglai* networks is not only for categorising different kinds of relationships statically or explaining reasons for the differences mechanically, but also providing certain patterns for changing of relationships dynamically and a set

of criteria for illustrating orderliness of changes. For example, *wanglai* has four types: generous *wanglai*, expressive *wanglai*, instrumental *wanglai* and negative *wanglai* (see section 6.1.3). By involving vertical and horizontal directions the types of *wanglai* can be further divided as vertical generous *wanglai*, vertical expressive *wanglai*, vertical instrumental *wanglai* and vertical negative *wanglai*; horizontal generous *wanglai*, horizontal expressive *wanglai*, horizontal instrumental *wanglai* and horizontal negative *wanglai*. Unlike Xiajia's case (Yan 1996b) the relationship between the village cadres and the villagers always engaged an instrumental or negative *wanglai*, Kaixiangong's case show that sometimes village cadres also engaged expressive *wanglai* with the villagers. *Lishang* criteria explained the reasons and illustrated how the different kinds of *wanglai* between village cadres and villagers had been made close or distant (see section 2.2 and 2.3). Horizontally, a large number of cases in Chapters 1 to 4 showed how (*lishang*) through flow of different resources (*wanglai*) between an ego (family) and its neighbours, friends, and fellow villagers, etc. sources (networks) and how the networks were maintained.

6.2.3. *Lishang-wanglai* framework

The above section “*lishang-wanglai* networks” shows how the social support networks in the ESRC project were enlarged and how the four dimensions were added to my ethnographical materials and previous researchers' work. The *lishang-wanglai* framework (Figure 2) looks very complicated. It is actually simple to use because it can be treated as a toolbox which contains many different dimensions for analysing different relationships. One can have them ready whenever one needs to apply them, but need not use all of them for every single piece of work at once. In this section I will explain how *lishang-wanglai* networks work, based on the diagram of the *lishang-wanglai* framework.

In the previous section, although I have shown there are four dimensions and many different possibilities of changes in *lishang-wanglai* framework, they can be generalised as four basic changing patterns. (a) The idea of ego-centred globe shaped *lishang-wanglai* networks suggests the mobility of *wanglai* typology flowing upwards or downwards vertically, as well as inwards or outwards

horizontally. Networks always include symmetrical and asymmetrical relations or latitudinal and longitudinal relations. The ego can be an individual, a focal family or an institution. Based on this, one can see how resource exchanges between different kinds of relationships or different types of *wanglai* flow in horizontal or vertical ways. For example, Yan Yunxiang was interested in bottom up vertical relationships. According to Yan (1996b), most previous researchers⁵⁰ arrived at the conclusion that it was the donors who gain prestige and power in unbalanced transfers downwards to a debtor in the social hierarchy, whereas in Xiajia and even in China gift receiving is regarded as a symbol of prestige which motivates villagers to give. It is clear that Yan is interested in forming a sharp contrast with earlier generalisations within vertical contexts (147-48). In addition to this I am interested in both directions of gift flow: *wang* and *lai* (come and go). Kaixiangong's cases will show that both downward and upward gift flow co-existed in the villagers' everyday life (Chapters 1 to 4). This happened in Yan's Xiajia too. On the one hand, Yan shows in Xiajia that there was a kind of *xiaojing* gift given by the younger to senior generations, with no expectation of a return gift. This indicates an upward direction of gift flow in a hierarchical context (63, 151). On the other hand, he suggests with Xiajia's cases that the system of marriage transaction is no longer a circle of gift exchange between two families. It is a new form of premortem inheritance for a marrying son or a way of distributing wealth from older generations to younger generations (206). My understanding of the above two directions of gift giving is that they formed actually one reciprocal process of vertical expressive *wanglai* between two generations. The reason elder generations received gifts from the younger generations can be seen as part of the repayment from the younger generations. A Chinese saying that one rears children against old age (*yang er fang lao*) is another such a reciprocal circle of expressive *wanglai*. Thus marriage transaction, *xiaojing* gift, and *yang er fang lao*, etc. forms a vertical circle of gift exchange between two generations (see chapters 2 to 4).

(b) The addition of the time / space dimension allows us to see the changes of *wanglai* or reciprocity over time and cross space with vertical / horizontal dimension. As I have shown in the previous section, horizontally there are four possibilities for the time dimension, e.g. **at the same time** the ego can have a

relationship with **a particular person or different person** with one or more than one type of *wanglai*; **at different times** the ego can have a relationship with **a particular person or a different person** with one or more than one types of *wanglai*. From the **time vertical** way of *wanglai* (exchange or reciprocity) can be seen as real vertical relationships, e.g. different generations or social status; the imaginary time can be seen from historical evolution, e.g. looking back to the past and future (I will show a case later this paragraph). Here I will show a case of the imaginary time in the past. *Lishang-wanglai* between an individual or group and the institutions used in a time dimension can be seen over different historical periods. This means that in the *lishang-wanglai* model the classification of a relationship can be altered, over time. Thus a relationship can move from expressive to instrumental and back again to expressive through the actions of *wanglai*. The effect of a particular action (*wanglai*) on a relationship is determined by the existing *lishang* of the relationship. For example, it can be a reduction of institutional exchange in favour of market exchange, or market exchange can be used to reduce the amount of obligation to the party and the state, which is under expressive exchange. In this sense Polanyi's notion of redistribution is applicable to China as a communist society and in a transition period. Under Mao there was a dominant redistribution system. Then from 1974 in Anhui and Sichuan, where the Household Responsibility System was first introduced, and then in the rest of China, there has been much change. A mixture of market and the command economy was in Polanyi's SU and China, although China is no longer now a command economy. It is ruled by a one party government with quite strong economic powers. All the economic levels are indirect not direct and more work units (*danwei*) are released from their welfare responsibility in urban areas, although this has been changing rapidly only since the 1990s. The rural economy in China was the first to become marketized. Anyway, to see the relationship of reciprocity in the long term and the way in which this forms cycles or criss-cross circles in which the exchange of reciprocal gifts or obligations can go over several generations requires a very longitudinal study. This I was able to do in Kaixiangong (Chapters 1 - 5).

(c) Apart from a real life in the real world there is also, from the villagers' point of view, an imaginary life in the imaginary world. As a copy of real life the relations with ancestors or gods are always vertical imaginary because they are more powerful, whereas relations with ghosts, who could be souls of dead relatives or friends, can be horizontal imaginary. Moreover, the real life and imaginary worlds can also be seen from the space dimension in which *wanglai* (exchange or reciprocity) can be seen from geographical distance, e.g. from family, neighbours, village to outside village or even abroad, etc. as well as the imaginary distance or space, e.g. FY Tan never thought her adopted son was distant from her even when he hated her (see section 1.3).

Lishang-wanglai can be also used to understand the real world with the imaginary time / space dimension because personal participation and experiences (*wanglai* with a real world in time / space vertically and horizontally) are very helpful. Serge Moscovici, the founder of "social representations", said that he gained an inductive radar through his unconventional life experiences, and therefore, was more sensitive in touching the pulse of the world. In her interview to Serge Moscovici, Yu Shou (Preface, 2004) told us that the Romanian-Parisian thought that the logic of history has a rule of its own: e.g. from Communist Romania to the Red China, from the French Revolution to the Cultural Revolution in China, from Hitler's genocide of Jews to Mao's "brain washing" of all Chinese people, from the Industrial Revolution to Chinese centralized industrial developing model, from globalising a single market to Chinese complex on "walk up to the world", etc. All these similar historical events happened haphazardly in different places and at different times, but they were determined by an invisible historical rule, although any incident is unexpected. In addition, Moscovici recognised that the Chinese characteristic of indirectness or allusion (*hanxu*) is likely to occur more in unexpected or uncertain social change. Moscovici is convinced that rational choice is powerless with the above phenomena. As a natural humanist Moscovici appropriated much of Taoism's outlook on nature. He believed Taoism is not only a philosophy on the origin of life and source of metaphysics, it is also a great wisdom and practice of human beings' self cultivation (2004). Kaixiangong's case proved that the Chinese characteristic of indirection or allusion (*hanxu*) and the

uncertainty of environment stimulated the creativity in the practices of *lishang-wanglai*. Borrowing Taoist philosophy in studying *lishang-wanglai* reached the same goal by different routes as Serge Moscovici's concern of the world.

(d) To add the dimension of *yin / yang* to the *lishang-wanglai* framework is illustrated by Kaixiangong villagers' everyday life. In Kaixiangong there are many things related to circle or cycle (*yuan*), e.g. *yuanzi* or *tuanzi* (different kinds of rice balls); and they used many suggestive Chinese terms relating to reciprocity, e.g. *yuanhua* (smooth and evasive; slick and sly), *yuanhuo* (be flexible in handling a matter), *yuanman* (satisfactory), *yuanmeng* (dream become true or oneiromancy), *yuanshu* (dexterous), *yuantong* (accommodating), etc. For them the nature of dynamic change in *lishang-wanglai* networks can be represented by the eternal cycle of the Taiji Diagram.

I will now use the Taiji Diagram, the Taoism Symbol, to demonstrate my idea that particularism and universalism co-exist in Chinese society. Chinese society has been labelled as a particularist society for more than half a century. This notion originally came from Parsons (1937/49). I will omit an academic debate that China is mainly a particularistic society compared the Western universalistic society. I shall point out some Chinese scholars (e.g. Fei 1947, Skinner 1971, King 1986, Yu 1987a, Zheng 1995a, Bian 1997a and b, Zhai 1997, and Yang and Peng 1998/99) who have not made clear how particularism and universalism co-exist in Chinese society. For me, the universalism can be seen as a white dot in the black half of the *yin-yang* diagram where Chinese society is based, whereas the particularism is a black dot in the white half of the diagram where the Western countries are based.

But how have the dots moved? I had no idea 10 years ago when I heard a Chinese businessman say "whether USA trained Taiwan businessmen or UK trained Hong Kong businessmen, when they come to mainland China for business we are going to turn all of them black (*women hui ba tamen quandou bianhei*)". This means that universalism won't work in China because the particularism would melt it down completely. Looking back at the last ten years of development in China I can recognise only a partial truth in his words. Along with the development of the

concept of *lishang-wanglai* I understand now that there is a different way to understand and analyse Chinese society.

To do business involves a market relationship which is pushed by an invisible hand – universalism. Particularism relates to personalised relationships everywhere in the world. In theory people can personalise all sorts of relationship including even the market relationship itself. In practice, some relationships can't be personalised, e.g. the international standard market system or the legal system. However, in China there is a problem of which one is more powerful: law or political power (*fa da haishi quan da*) because the Chinese legal system has never been separate from political power, although there are legal systems and many laws and regulations in China. Although individuals can be personalised by Chinese particularism, these international systems act as a necessarily universalistic restraint on this process. China is a part of the world so processes of sinicization (*zhongguohua*) and globalisation (*quanqiu hua*) are happening at the same time. *Lishang-wanglai* delineates the boundary between what is non-personalised or personalised in complicated relationships and further categorises the four different types of personalised relationships (*wanglai*). According to the *lishang-wanglai* model, apart from the different types of *wanglai* there are different *lishang* criteria (6.1.3) which can help people to distinguish different *wanglai*, improve the quality of *wanglai*, maintain or update *lishang-wanglai* networks, etc.

Therefore, *lishang-wanglai* provides a way of understanding Chinese society and could in principle also be applied to the rest of the world, although it might possibly have less obvious effects in the Western countries. The key idea is that in China universalistic exchange relationships may be, but do not have to be, turned into personalised relationships, and vice versa. When this happens the relationships become partly particularist or partly universalised. But the co-existence of particularism and universalism is not static. The changing possibilities and ways of changing between particularistic and universalistic relationships distinguish my work from other researchers. In this dissertation I have shown I can, by empirical investigation with help from *lishang-wanglai*, find out how people use a set of principles to act on social relationships and to make them personal in Kaixiangong.

In order to understand how the globe shaped ego-centered *lishang-wanglai* networks spins I will show the motivation for conceptualised *lishang-wanglai* in sections 6.3.

6.3. Creativity and motivation of *lishang-wanglai*

When I mentioned creativity my English husband said Chinese people are generally less good at scientific creativity than English. He got this view from his teaching experiences over many years at Imperial College of London University, where Chinese students (including those who came from Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia and Singapore, overseas, etc.) are always at the top of passing examinations but often perform less well doing project work. However, he and many like-minded Europeans have been similarly categorised as simple-minded or scatter-brained (*que xinyanr*) by Chinese people because they are not good at working out complicated human relationships in everyday life. Here the Chinese character of *xin* (heart) has been translated as mind or brain. Half a century ago Liang Suming (1949, 1975) believed that the human heart is different from the human mind. He said non-Chinese scholars have not yet acknowledged the importance of a kind of study related to a human being's heart, not just the mind which is different from psychology⁵¹, and is so advanced in Chinese culture that it is impossible to have an equal dialogue with the West in this field (132, 280). However, towards the end of the twentieth Century a Chinese woman's American husband Kipnis (1997) conceptualised a kind of *ganqing* which touches upon Liang's "human heart" in its understanding of Chinese people and culture. Liang's notion can also be linked to social creativity in the Western social sciences.

6.3.1. Kipnis's *ganqing* and Liang's *qingli*

I will involve Kipnis's study on *ganqing* first and extend it to Liang's study on the human heart. Apart from embodying *ganqing* (see *ganqing* in 6.1.2) Kipnis's study of *ganqing* also touches upon its psychological effects and cultural aspects (111 and 195, n.2). In Fengjia village clinic a four-year-old boy was crying for fear of an injection and his mother told him that "[There] won't be a shot (*bu dazhen*)" or "[No] more shots (*bu dazhen le*)" before and after the injection. Kipnis thought this way of handling children would normally be considered as lying or dishonest by

the Western standard or at least “white lies” (111-115) and explained this kind of *ganqing* with “nonrepresentational ethics”. However, in China it is considered as comforting or soothing for the boy because the mother shared the boy’s pain with her heart (*ganqing*) and encouraged the boy with “It’s OK” (*renqing*) – an interpretation of “There won’t be a shot” and “No more shots”. By contrast, it would be considered that the mother was too cruel (no *ganqing*) with her son if she told him the truth. Let’s move to another common case in China. A warm-hearted host offered to share her favourite hot dish with a guest and told him “It is not hot (*bula bula*) and have some (*chang yi chang*)”. This is considered as perfect manners (*renqing*) for the host because she believed that if your mind thinks “it’s not hot” your body would feel “it’s not hot” and therefore you would enjoy the food well. In contrast, it would be impolite or rude if the guest refused her (*renqing*) because it would hurt her feeling (*ganqing*).

In China this kind of effect of *ganqing* is very powerful. For example, there is a pair of sayings representing two kinds of extreme ways of how the contemporary Chinese government controlled its people. One is “A fine example has boundless power (*bangyang de liliang shi wuqiong de*)” meaning that to make a model of a positive character, like Lei Feng in 1960s or models of patriotism nowadays, could gain endless benefits. Another saying is “to kill a chicken in front of monkeys”, or “to punish someone as a warning to others” (*sha ji jing hou*) which is also very effective, examples of its use being counterrevolutionaries in the Cultural Revolution or the Chinese democrats or Falungong practitioners. This kind of *ganqing* can also be used by an elite to encourage a youth. A successful Chinese writer, Liang Xiaosheng, said that all his achievements were inspired by a famous writer Ru Zhijuan’s one sentence. She said “Xiaosheng is a good young man (*Xiaosheng shi ge hao qingnian*)” in a symposium when he was an undergraduate. There is another saying which appeared in the June Fourth Event in 1989 and is still quite popular: “You will be fine if you are told you should be, even you are not; you won’t be good if you are told you aren’t, even if you are really good (*Shuo ni xing ni jiu xing buxing yexing, shuo ni buxing ni jiu buxing xing ye buxing*)”. This gives rise to several questions: Who said that to whom? What is the real power which determined the person’s fate?

I will now invoke a Chinese sinologist Liang Shumin's (1949/84) *qingli* (reason, sense, code of human conduct) which is central to Liang's ideas of human heart. Here the *qing* of *qingli* relates to human feelings. According to Liang, *qingli* includes external and internal feelings, such as to be a kindly and loving father, to be a filial and dutiful son, to love people, fairness, a sense of justice, etc. This kind of *qingli* comes from the human heart (129, 134). This kind of *qingli* relates to Kipnis's other kinds of *ganqing*: one person's anger at another (a woman shouted at a watermelon seller, 28), informal group *ganqing* (a women yelled at birth control officials, 107), collective *ganqing* (28), class *ganqing* (104-10, 185-86), etc. Apart from these *ganqing* in China there is also patriotic *ganqing*, nationalist *ganqing* and religious *ganqing*, etc. These *ganqing* can be grown to *reqing* (a strong warm feeling, ardour, glow, enthusiasm, etc.) or even *kuangre* (excessive, irrational zeal, fanaticism and craze). Where does the re of *reqing* or *kuangre* come from? According to Liang (1975) it might be driven by "*qi* (spirit, morale, anger, rage, insult, vital energy, energy of life, etc.)". For Liang, the human heart is formed by *zhudongxing* (go-aheadism), *linghuoxing* (flexibility) and *jihuaxing* (plan, arrangement) (16). The character of human heart is *jing* (stillness) of *xinqi* (heart and *qi*) (40-41). It sounds like psychology, religion, or something beyond human knowledge. There are some *ganqing* related Chinese phrases involving "*qi*": "acting impetuously (*ganqing yongshi*)", "be swayed by personal feelings (*yiqi yongshi*)", "get angry (*shengqi*)", "try to make a good show or win something (*zhengqi*)", "with justice on one's side, one is bold and assured (*lizhi qizhuang*)", "full of vigour and vitality or sap or animal spirits (*xueqi fanggang*)", etc.⁵² The translations of the above phrases lose some of the original meanings because "*qi*" is too difficult to be well translated to it can be traced back to Taoism philosophy on the origin of human life. It might be helpful if we concretise these abstractions with some questions: Why do the peasants shout at each other in villages in rural China, as well as urban China professors shout at each other in top institutions, or doctors fight each other physically in a top university not only during the Cultural Revolution period, as well as normal days even in the twenty-first century? Why did the Chinese people climb Everest from the North side in 1960 without having the technology, advanced requirements and traditional interests of the British mountaineers who failed on the same route?⁵³ What are the different motivations

between Mao Zedong starting up the Cultural Revolution, Deng Xiaoping's suppression of the June Fourth Uprising, and Jiang Zemin's suppression of Falongong? Solutions to this kind of question might come from the "human heart" that Liang (1949/84, 1975) proposed.

According to Liang (1949/84) the *li* of *qingli* relate to *lixing* (理性) which came from Confucius *lunli* (ethic) and its core *li* (Confucian theory). Liang divided *li* into *liyue* (religion and moral rites, 108) and *lisu* (customary rites) based on his human heart theory and idea of Chinese society formed with Confucius *lunli*. For Liang, *liyue* relates to religion, ideology and morality, which means people can cultivate themselves with *li* through enjoying music, poems, songs, and dance, etc (109-113). Here the *yue* of *liyue* is the same character and a synonym of the *le* (happiness and enjoyment) but with different pronunciations. *Lisu* is customary rites and can also be understood as a kind of popularised morality (*daode*) which is much more flexible than law (118-120). Thus over two thousand years Chinese people acted in a way based on the above understanding of *qingli* (human feelings with moral judgement) and *lixing* (clear, bright, still and harmonious heart) and consequently formed the respective structure of Chinese society (128-41).

Many popular Chinese usages in everyday life can back up Liang's idea of human heart. For instance, when children do homework their parents often encourage them with the characters of *yonggong* (use your energy for working hard), *yongnao* (use your brain and mind to get the correct answers – good results depend on the intelligence of the child), *yongxin* (use your heart for willing to do it well – it depends on an attitude of trying) and *zhuanxin* or *zhuanxin zhizhi* (concentrate your attention on the work with your heart or with single hearted devotion – if you concentrate the *qi* will push you to finish the work easily). Apart from the Chinese saying which I mentioned at beginning of this section that *que xinyanr* (literally, lack of a hole at the right place in the heart blocking spirit *qi* from getting through, which was inaccurately translated as simple-minded or scatter-brained⁵⁴), there is another popular Chinese saying that "there is no grief greater than the death of the heart, and no anxiety greater than the loss of the aspirations (*ai modayu xinsi chou moguo yu wuzhi*)". Here the death of heart is not a medical term, which can be reinforced by the second half of the saying using loss of the aspirations (*zhiqui*), in

which *qi* is involved again. Yan Yunxiang also found Xiajia villagers used “heart” in this way, e.g. *mei liangxin* which was translated it as “no conscience” (1996b:70). This should be “heartless” which is opposite to “be good-hearted” according to the context, and *fumuxin* (heart of parents) which means the parents’ limitless benevolence and love of the children, though Yan explained it as a psychological factor (2003:181). Similarly, Kaixiangong villagers always used *xiaoxin* (filial heart or sentiments) rather than *xiaodao* (filial duty or obligation), *xiaojing* (filial respect) or *xiaoshun* (filial obedience) to describe elderly care (see 4.3).

Therefore, as I mentioned earlier, based on *jing* (stillness) of *xinqi* (heart and *qi*) Liang (1975) claimed the human heart was formed with three *xing* (nature or character): *zhudongxing* - go-aheadism, *linghuoxing* - flexibility and *jihuaxing* - plan or arrangement (16-41). To a certain extent, the above three *xings* of a human heart can be generalized with Mao Zedong’s one *xing*: *chuangzaoxing* – creativity and interpreted with Mao’s famous slogans. They are “[People], only people are a real force of creating world history (*renmin, zhiyou renmin caishi chuangzao shijie lishi de zhenzheng dongli*)”, “[Only] human beings can create whatever wonder in the world (*zhiyao you le ren shenme renjian qiji dou keyi chuangzao chulai*)”; “[Fighting] with the Heavenly gods and the earth (nature) and creating a new world (*zhantian doudi chuangzao xin shijie*)” and “[It] is endless enjoyment of fighting with the Heavenly gods, the earth (nature) and human beings (*yu tian fendou qi le wuqiong, yu di fendou qi le wuqiong, yu ren fendou qi le wuqiong*)”.⁵⁵ This kind of creativity with enjoyment might represent Chinese people’s social creativity in the process of people making, maintaining, or stopping relationships with *lishang-wanglai*.

6.3.2. Social creativity and a case study

I am finally moving onto a relatively new theory of social creativity as a motivation for *lishang-wanglai*, which is a combination of principle, motivation, criteria, etc. Social creativity was a quite common phrase in the 1960s, according to John Davis (1994). In rural China the real work in managing family social support comes from decisions to change exchange relationships by developing some, or dropping

others. The chapters 1 to 4 have shown how the dynamics of *lishang-wanglai* can be considered a socially creative process.

Here I would like to omit a full literature review in the field of social creativity by first quoting some statements directly from John Davis. After reviewing other researchers' work, Davis reached his points, "social order we seek to create is in fact not a system, nor a structure, nor an organic functioning whole nor a necessary and inevitable evolutionary track, but a series of ramshackle contraptions which serve to get us through from one day to the next. They are ingenious, clever, often pleasing to contemplate, but they are inherently unstable and need continual affirmative re-creation and maintenance" (1994:107-108). "People use their given sociability to create agreements about actions" (97). "Every action and thought which involves other people is creative sociability, attempting to make a social world which is secure and stable to live in..... This is a universal, popular and irrepressible activity: everyone is creating most of the time" (98). Therefore, "social creativity is purposeful action aimed at routinising and ordering life to make shared existence predictable from one day to the next; and is in fact a universal, continuous activity"(99). He suggested that social organisation is the product of humans using their imagination and social creativity to work on raw materials, rather than an organic growth of some systemic kind or spontaneous product of society itself. He also suggested that "social creativity is part and parcel of human creativity as a whole, and that the principles and procedures for studying it are those we use when trying to understand the production of music and pottery, songs and dances, houses and cathedrals. In this sense we are all authors of our social worlds, engaged in continuous creative activity" (103).

My understanding of Davis' idea of social creativity is that people are always creating in order to maintain. In order to make it as it always has been, they are actually always changing things. Based on my empirical study and Chinese literature study I join Kipnis' notion of "nonrepresentational ethics," and Liang's idea of "human heart" to Davis' social creativity and made it a motivation of *lishang-wanglai*. Liang's human heart includes *qingli* (positive human feelings), *lixing* (clear, bright, still & harmonious heart), & three *xings* (social creativity –go-aheadism, flexibility & planning, p100). Liang's idea of three *xings* related to

the human heart is partially proved by one of my important findings that *lishang-wanglai* is the way in which participants enjoy balancing the multiple criteria in personalising different relationships. Therefore, Davis' idea of social creativity⁵⁶ has reached the same goal as Liang's three *xings* by a different route. From the quotations in the above paragraph we can see that for Davis social creativity is **purposeful action** because the social order people sought is a series of **ramshackle contraptions** which are **ingenious, clever, pleasing to contemplate, inherently unstable**, and need continual **affirmative** re-creation and maintenance.

Davis also classified social creativity into two kinds. One kind of social creativity "implies centres of power", namely it is a top down type, e.g. Thatcher's programme of social engineering. Another is "populist sociability - a form of diffuse power". For me both these types of "implied centres of power" and "populist sociability" can be understood as vertical and horizontal ways, respectively, of social creativity. They are thus highly appropriate to be used with *lishang-wanglai* and social support in rural China.

Finally, I will analyse a small case to show how social creativity works with *lishang-wanglai*. In Kaixiangong Village there are many events on the 5th day of the 5th lunar month, the traditional Chinese Dragon Boat Festival (*duanwu jie*). According to the villagers, children less than one year old should wear tiger hats, clothes, and shoes. The reasons for wearing the tiger suit are for health and luck, because they believe it can keep mosquitoes and evil away from the child. A working mother told me a story of how she created a new way for getting the tiger suit (see Photo sets 2:19) for her son. In the past some mothers gathered together to do this because they enjoyed working together to discuss fashions, helping each other to make different parts of the tiger suits. However, she had a job in the township and couldn't use the same way to get a tiger suit for her son. Eventually she worked out an appropriate way and enjoyed it very much.

This case illustrates many points. The working mother created a new way based on the customs of a tiger suit; she did it based on the local customs for the tiger suit and through her brother (*lishang*); she altered the customs a bit to fit into her change of situation; she enjoyed both that she created a suitable way in her case

and the allusive way of ending a labour support relationship with neighbours and friends; different types of *wanglai* can be changed between the same people or different people over time, i.e. expressive *wanglai* to a market relationship; different types of *wanglai* can be changed with space, i.e. geographical / social distance or closeness; the tiger suit case illustrates how *lishang-wanglai* worked in a social support arrangement in which the relationship can be maintained and ended. Below are detailed analyses of the case.

(1) The tiger suit involves both *lishang-wanglai* and non-*lishang-wanglai* relations, and indicates how one has to always be creative to maintain existing relationships. The working mother had several possibilities to obtain the tiger suit. The simplest way would be to buy one from a shop in the township where she worked, which wouldn't involve *lishang-wanglai*. However, according to local custom, the material should be given by her brother, which involved an expressive *wanglai* between non-agnatic kin. If her brother noticed that the tiger suit was not made from the materials given by him, then he would feel hurt (*ganqing*). If she followed the local custom, she would have had to ask somebody to make it for her because she couldn't do the main job all by herself, which would involve them in an instrumental *wanglai*. In the end, she asked her brother to give her some money before he or his wife purchased the materials. She then used the money to buy the outfit from a shop. The idea of buying a tiger suit, and asking her brother for the money, without bothering another person to make it, was creative.

(2) The effect of a particular *wanglai* on a relationship is determined by the existing *lishang* of the relationship. In the relations with her brother, the working mother thought she should keep in with the local custom to let him express himself on that occasion. This can be counted as a moral judgement. She should also care for his feelings and allow him to keep face by letting him take part in the event. This counts as human feelings. She asked for money to buy it because she did not want to waste the materials, which is a rational calculation. Although the tiger suit was optional for some families on the Dragon Boat Festival, it was very important for her because she believed the tiger suit would bring her baby double luck because her baby was 100 days old at about that time. This is a religious concern. However, the above reasons worked together with different weights. She agreed in

this case that human feelings and religious sense were more important than others. This example shows how *lishang* cause the making, maintaining, altering, and stopping of relationships. They can explain why and how people use their *wanglai* in different ways. What a particular contact or lack of contact means depends on the reason for it. *Wanglai* are the actions of people making relationships. The ways in which people, through contacts (*wanglai*), exchange resources are according to different reasons and principles (*lishang*). In other words, the real reasons behind *wanglai* for people to seek different resources are different criteria of *lishang*. Thus an observation of *wanglai* gives a superficial view of social contacts, whereas the determination of *lishang* allows the overall effect of the contacts to be evaluated.

(3) The tiger suit example illustrates that the local custom can be adapted in changing situations, although customs normally determine what a *wanglai* means. Yan also noticed this (1996b:230-32). Local customs involve *lishang*'s aspects of morality, human feelings, rational choice, and religious sense. According to the local custom, in the past, good luck (*tu jili*) required that the tiger suit be made by oneself, or any other personal connection. This led to the enjoyment of making it an expressive *wanglai* with others. This local custom was adapted by the people who bought a tiger suit instead of making one. The working mother was one of the first people who did this. Nowadays, villagers accept the idea of buying a tiger suit for practical reasons. *Lishang* is also intimately related to local customs for annual and life cycle ceremonies. These customs are used by villagers to make *wanglai* – and the *lishang* is affected by the local traditions, as shown by commonly understood customs. Kaixiangong's villagers created their customs while they were using them to support each other. On the one hand, they can meet all changes by remaining unchanged - coping with a constantly changing situation by sticking to a fixed principle (*yi bubian ying wan bian*), which can be understood as *lishang*, even though the contents of the *lishang* could change. On the other hand, they keep a principle of adaptability for survival (*shizhe shengcun*) to adapt themselves to all the changes. From this point of view, customs live. I think sometimes people want to *zao shi* (do something new-- create something.), but they always like to have excuses to support their ideas. They make changes, but only for adaptation. They explain that other people always do this, or people already have done something.

Their changes may be similar or close to what other people have done, but this is creativity. In other words, the villagers count adapting customs as being socially creative, although it is less creative because customs act as external constraints on what is possible. The most significant observation from my fieldwork relates to the way in which customs are modified by villagers when necessary, in order to get the right *lishang* for *wanglai* and so maintain or alter *lishang-wanglai* networks.

(4) In the village the ability to work out *lishang-wanglai* in creative ways for resources is valued and enjoyed. Among the above *lishang* criteria I will enrich the meaning of human feelings, which the working mother weighted importantly, by stressing the element of enjoyment. The way in which she worked out an appropriate way, without speaking to others, to balance and maintain different *wanglai*, had even more enjoyment than working with others in making the tiger suit. This tallies with the nature of Chinese people who prefer to do things in a way that is indirect: “hazy, dim, or allusive” (Smith, 1894: chapter 8). It also conforms to Chinese academic habits, which are also said to be similarly allusive (*hanxu*) or imaginative (*xiangxiang*) in (Gao, 1994:167-205). This can be seen from an old Chinese saying *buyao tongpo chuanghu zhi* (don’t poke a hole in the window paper - there was no glass in ancient China). This is a single phrase with a double meaning. On the one hand, the obvious meaning of poking a hole in the window paper is that it causes broken property and lets wind through, and looks nasty even after repair. This is why grown ups stop children from doing naughty things to the window paper. On the other hand, the real meaning behind the saying is usually used among adults, especially for educated Chinese people. It would be considered too foolish to point out why or to ask why one shouldn’t poke a hole in the window paper. The philosophy behind it is to let the audience or reader understand (*wu*) and enjoy the taste (*wanwei*) of it. For them an educated Chinese should be able to understand that poking a hole in the window paper would give a clearer view and at the same time destroy the enjoyment of a hazy view. Since the window paper is too ancient for modern people there are some common sayings developed from it meaning the same thing, such as “*buyao tongpo* (don’t poke through)”, “*diandao weizhi* (don’t mention more than a little touch)”, *yidian jiutou* (someone understood it as soon as one touched it a bit), etc. There is an essential difference between

“don’t poke a hole in the window paper” and “don’t give him or her all the answers”, a Western principle of education. The former wants to keep a thing unclear because if it is obvious it would be tasteless (*meiyou yisi* or *weidao*). The latter wants to encourage others to think for themselves and it doesn’t matter whether the answer is superficial or not. This explains the non-explicit nature of Chinese people’s actions in personalised relationships and Chinese social studies in which the method of allusion has often been used. I assume this is why people enjoy the maintenance of different *wanglai*, even if it causes misunderstandings (see section 7.3) or even get it wrong sometimes.

(5) The creation and change of *lishang-wanglai* between individuals or groups and the institutions can be seen at work over time. As the working mother said, traditionally women made tiger suits together, and this can be counted as expressive *wanglai* because they enjoyed themselves. She has had such expressive *wanglai* in many ways with her relatives, neighbours, and friends. She did not want the tiger suit to reduce her relations with them from expressive *wanglai* to instrumental *wanglai*. That the working mother asked her brother for money to buy the tiger suit could drop her expressive *wanglai* with her brother into instrumental *wanglai* because the local custom was designed for a son who inherited a family’s wealth to support his married out sister by giving gifts on different occasions. However, the way in which she did it tactfully enabled her brother to keep his *mianzi* (face) and *ganqing* (human feeling) so that expressive *wanglai* remained. The working mother’s purchase of a tiger suit can also be seen as a market exchange, which is not *lishang-wanglai*. This case also shows the time dimension of *lishang-wanglai* can be a reduction of expressive *wanglai* in favour of market exchange along with the market economy growing in rural China. In other words, market exchange can be used to reduce the amount of obligation which occurs under expressive *wanglai*.

(6) The case of the tiger suit shows *lishang-wanglai* can be changed with space. The way in which the working mother did not want to bother others for the tiger suit is one type of changing relationships with space. It can be seen from a close distance geographically. On the one hand, she and the neighbour are neighbours and friends to each other and might have a business relationship at the same time.

If the neighbour provides labour support for her the relationship this time between them is more instrumental *wanglai* than expressive *wanglai*. On the other hand, they invite each other for meals, or see each other often socially. In this way they can be close to each other with no or small gifts. These kinds of contacts are more generous *wanglai* or expressive *wanglai* than instrumental *wanglai*, because this involves emotion and enjoyment. There is another type of changing relationships with space that can be seen from the quality of relationships. This is similar to the above point (2) but from the angle of space rather than time. This means people can convert a relationship into a better or worse relationship by moving to exchanges of higher or lower types. For example, suppose household A was normally engaged in an expressive *wanglai* relationship with household B. A for some reasons rejected that kind of relationship, by going down to the next lower type of *wanglai* with B, namely instrumental *wanglai*. This was a visible sign that A no longer wanted to have the better (expressive) relationship with B. By doing this A was increasing his social distance from B. Under this circumstance B would not expect to have expressive *wanglai* with A, without involving a word. Thus, *lishang-wanglai* allows some space for people to apply all levels of *wanglai* relationship into their relationships. Even one relationship can have different types of *wanglai* at the same time.

(7) The case of the tiger suit shows how *lishang-wanglai* networks work, although it is a very small example from everyday life. Household events, e.g. the tiger suit or wedding, make variable demands on resources. Resources normally include material, financial, labour, information, technological, emotional, sociability, enjoyment and others. Different people are dependent on different sources with different resources – one can have emotional closeness but not rely on each other, e.g. a relative, for information resources, or one can rely on each other, e.g. a friend, for finance or professional advice, but not for emotional resources. It is these demands, particularly, which require villagers to make creative use of *wanglai* based on *lishang* and hence get the required resources. According to what the resources are, social distance may be much more connected with relationships of interdependence and sharing, including sharing emotional resources and several others. The closer you are the more different kinds of resources you share. The

greater the mixture of resources, the more close they are. The tiger suit case involved financial support from the baby's uncle and the possibility of labour support for making the tiger suit. *Lishang* will determine to what extent a particular relationship can be used, currently and in the future, to provide social support. *Lishang* will also determine, for a particular relationship in given circumstance, what for the villager is the appropriate type and quantity of a social resource to provide. This use of *lishang* is regarded by the villagers as important both for reasons of utility, to manage household resources, but also as an expressive and enjoyable exercise. Thus, the relationships can be made, maintained, altered, and stopped through contacts of resource exchange.

The *wanglai* of *lishang-wanglai* are practices including social support in which different types of relationships can be altered based on *lishang*. *Wanglai* can be held with a great variety of contacts. In the tiger suit example, the woman could have asked relatives, neighbours, friends or fellow villagers to make the suit. In both the ESRC project and my study, to deal with different relationships means to connect with different contacts or sources. For major events, contacts or sources include personal sources like kin, neighbours, and friends, and impersonal sources like collective, government, markets and other institutions. *Wanglai* describe how individuals or groups use different sources and ways at different times to keep in touch with others. It is typical of geographically (but not necessarily socially) close relationships and not identical with physical contacts. It may alternatively be made spontaneously without deliberate intent. The essential difference is that a social contact will have some deliberate effect on exchange relationships. There are a number of ways for new and old contacts to change relationships. Firstly, a new relationship can be promoted, by e.g. making a marriage relationship between two families. Secondly, contacts can maintain or alter exchange relationships. In Kaixiangong, families would update their list of different relationships by adding some new relationships or removing old relationships. Thirdly, people can discontinue an old, no longer desired relationship. Relationships can end gradually or suddenly. When relationships change suddenly it affects people more. People are not so affected by a gradual ending, such as the married out woman stopping the relationship with her father's father's brother's grandson's family. This

example does not appear gradual. However, there were several years between the girl's first engagement with her fiancé and the marriage. Acutely, this process involved the establishment of relationships between two families and their relatives. According to local custom, everybody who is related to these two families would update their relatives' lists, without involving any words. Thus the married out woman's great-uncle's grandson's family wouldn't feel shocked if they didn't receive an invitation from her.

To sum up, my argument is that to deal with different personal or personalised relationships in different ways (*lishang-wanglai*) is a creative process, and the creativity of people in making and maintaining their relationships is an operation of *lishang-wanglai*. Just as Yan attempts to use *renqing* and *guanxi* as conceptual instruments in social analysis of China (1996b:123), I suggest that *lishang-wanglai* as a whole can be such a concept which serves both principle and action functions of reciprocity by using its framework. For the purpose of analysis, I separated *lishang-wanglai* into its two constituent parts, *lishang* and *wanglai*. There are different dimensions of social closeness and social distance. I observed practices (*wanglai*) and look separately at what contacts are and what the principle (*lishang*) for the practices is. I also used *lishang-wanglai* networks to show how people change, start, maintain, alter, and stop their social relationships, and how social support resources are transferred. I have shown how social creativity works with *lishang-wanglai* in making personal or personalised relationships throughout the dissertation.

Section 6.1 has reviewed how within Chinese culture there are a variety of terms describing the principles behind social relationships. I have already shown that these terms have been the subject of much debate among anthropologists and sociologists inside and outside China. From these ideas in 6.1.3 I developed the *lishang-wanglai* model, which is crucial to the concept of *lishang-wanglai*.

In section 6.2 a brief review was undertaken of the large field of social support and particularly social support networks. From this the concept of *lishang-wanglai* networks is developed. In this dissertation I am emphasising the dynamic nature of exchange relationships. In rural China the real work in managing family social

support comes from decisions to change exchange relationships by developing some, or dropping others. Chapters 1 to 4 looked at in more detail in where the theoretical ideas developed here were applied to analyse fieldwork materials.

Finally, 6.3 reviewed Kipnis's *ganqing*, Liang Shumin's *qingli* and especially Davis' work on social creativity and showed how they can be fitted together. I highlighted that enjoyment of social creativity can be a motivation of conceptualised *lishang-wanglai* and showed how the dynamics of social exchange relationships can be considered a socially creative process.

¹ In conforming with the length requirements for a doctoral thesis I have necessarily had to halve the piece of research work as a Chinese saying “cut the feet to fit the shoes (*xiao zu shi lu*)”.

² e.g. Cobb 1976, Dunkel-Schetter, 1984, Gouldner 1960, Greenberg 1980, Shumaker, 1983, G. J. Wentowski 1981, etc.

³ e.g. Befu 1967, 1968, 1974, Davis 1973, Hostetler & Huntington 1967, Johnson 1974, Paine 1971; or to test it with their own field data, e.g. Brady 1972, Damas 1973.

⁴ I use different types of *wanglai* instead of reciprocity because I am using it to distinguish the action part of reciprocity from its principle.

⁵ *Wufu* of one family is a measure of close kin as distinguished from the other is *wufu* (five generations of a family’s agnatic kin).

⁶ Some traditional cultures and values used in particular fields, opposite to universalistic criteria used in modern society.

⁷ Hu 1944, Fei 1947, Yang L. 1957, Yang G. 1982, Qiao J. 1982, King 1980, Hwang 1985, Zhai 1993, Yang M 1994, and Yan 1996, etc.

⁸ e.g. Arthur Smith, Kipnis, Stafford, etc.

⁹ *Mien-tzu, pao*, etc. in brackets are older Romanization. I here follow consistently the modern pinyin transliteration, and write mianzi, bao instead.

¹⁰ This chapter involved six researchers whose surnames are Yang, e.g. Yang Guoshu, Yang Haiou Yang Liansheng, Yang Meihui, Yang Yinyi and Yang Zhongfang. In order to distinguish who is who whenever I mention them I will put their middle initial after the surname.

¹¹ They are relationships to ghosts and gods, between monarch and his subjects, father and sons, husband and wife, noble and commoner, close and distant, near and far, and so on.

¹² This is the first time Fei broadened his term of *shehui guanxi* (social relationships) from the previous paper instead of *siren guanxi* (personal relationships) (1947:33).

¹³ e.g. *Shehixue Gailun (An introduction to Sociology)*, Fei Xiaotong, eds. 1984, Tianjin: Tianjin People’s Publishing House.

¹⁴ In his paper Yang uses the term *pao* in an older Romanization. I here follow consistently the modern pinyin transliteration, and write *bao* instead.

¹⁵ These people were first recognised as a group during the period of the Warring States. During that time some people lost their positions, titles, and became knights-errant. They sought to right wrongs, and were distinguished by their reliability, which was their professional virtue. They proved most helpful to people who desired to secure revenge.

¹⁶ According to the values of those days revenge for one's parents also had positive moral standing.

¹⁷ Wen didn't use the term *lishang-wanglai*. Instead, his quotation is *lai er bu wang fei li ye, ci chou bu bao fei junzi* (1989:374). The way in which he uses the Confucian passage means the same thing.

¹⁸ Confucius classifies people mainly with three terms *junzi* (gentlemen), *xiaoren* (small men), and *shumin* (commoners). Sometimes *xiaoren* and *shumin* are interchangeable, e.g. *li buxia shumin, xing bushing dafu*.

¹⁹ This paper was first published in 1982. It has been collected in Guoshu Yang, ed. *Zhongguoren de xinli* (The psychology of the Chinese) which was published in 1989, Taipei: Guiguan Press. The pages which I cite are from the latter.

²⁰ See question number 56 and 59 of questionnaire in the ESRC project, as Appendix A, in Chang and Feuchtwang, *Social support in rural China (1979-1991)*, City University, 1996. Recompense in the Chinese version of the questionnaire has been translated in Chinese as *huibao*.

²¹ The subject, together with sociology, etc. was banned in 1950s, because they were treated as bourgeois pseudoscience by the Chinese Communist Party. Scholars introduced the concept from the West, e.g. in William A. Haviland, *Anthropology*, CBS College Publishing, 1982, trans. by Wang Mingming et al., *Dangdai renleixue*, Shanghai: Shanghai People's Publishing House, 1987; Marvin Harris, *Cultural anthropology*, Harper and Row publishers, 1983, trans. by Li Peizhu and Gao Di, *Wenhua renleixue*, Beijing: Dongfang publishing House, 1988.

²² e.g., Chen 1996/98; Gold 1985; Ho 1976; Hwang 1985, 1987; Jacobs 1979; King 1988, 1991; King & J. T. Myers 1977; Kipnis 1997; Oi, 1989; Peng 1998/99; Qiao 1981; Sun 1996; Walder, 1986; Yan 1996; Z. Yang 1989; and M. Yang 1989/94, Y. Yang 1999; Zhai 1993/96, Zheng 1984/96, etc.

²³ The name in square brackets is a modern *pinyin* which looks and sounds completely different from the older Romanization. I will apply this to what follows. The paper was originally published in K.S. Yang and C.I. Wen, eds., *Shehui ji xingwei kexue yanjiu de zhongguohua* (The sinicization of social and behavioral science research in China), Academia Sinica, Taipei, pp345-60. It has been collected in

Guoshu Yang, ed. *Zhongguoren de xinli* (The psychology of the Chinese), 1989, Taipei, Guiguan Press.

²⁴ The later reference is written in Chinese and was first published in 1985. It has been collected in Guoshu Yang, ed. *Zhongguoren de xinli* (The psychology of the Chinese), 1989, Taipei: Guiguan Press.

²⁵ The first two papers (1989a and 1989b) have been selected in Guoshu Yang, ed. *Zhongguoren de xinli* (The psychology of the Chinese) which was published in 1989, Taipei: Guiguan Press, pp75-104 and 319-345. The paper 1989a was originally published in *Collected Papers of the first international Sinological Conference*, Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1980, pp.413-42. The paper 1989b was originally published in *Collected Paper of the second international Sinological Conference*, Taipei: Academia Sinica, pp.39-54. The third paper was originally published in *Daedalus* 120 (2): 63-84. It has been collected in Tu Wei-ming, ed., *The Living Tree*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994, pp.109-126.

²⁶ I reviewed Zhai's explanations of *yuan*, *qing*, and *lun* in 6.2.

²⁷ I will explain the terms *yiqi*, *daoyi*, and *yi* in 6.2.

²⁸ For points number 1, 2, 4, and 5 see *Han ying ci dian* (A Chinese-English Dictionary), Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1995, pp836. All the five points see *Xiandai Hanyu Cidian* (Modern Chinese Dictionary), Beijing: Shangwu Yinshuguan, 1983, p961.

²⁹ I have two papers in both Chinese and English written by Hwang. The Chinese one which I have was originally published in 1995. It was then published in Guoshu Yang, ed. *Zhongguoren de xinli* (The psychology of the Chinese) in 1989, Taipei, Taiwan: Guiguan Press, pp289-317. The English one was published in 1997. The page number which I gave comes from the latter.

³⁰ The paper is written in Chinese. The English text here is translated by me. It was originally published in *Collected Papers of the first international Sinological Conference*, Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1980, p413-42. It was later published in Guoshu Yang, ed. *Zhongguoren de xinli* (The psychology of the Chinese) in 1989, Taipei, Taiwan: Guiguan Press, p75-104. The pages I give come from the latter.

³¹ *Idem*.

³² Kipnis' other way of using *ganqing*, which touched upon psychological effects and culture aspects, will be reviewed in 6.3.

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- ³³ See Kipnis' other part of *ganqing* (psychological and cultural aspects of human feeling) in 6.3.
- ³⁴ See question number 56 and 59 of questionnaire in the ESRC project, as Appendix A, in Chang and Feuchtwang, *Social support in rural China (1979-1991)*, City University, 1996. Recompense in the Chinese version of the questionnaire has been translated in Chinese as *huibao*.
- ³⁵ A nice shaped mini-torch with the badge of City University on the surface.
- ³⁶ There are some related discussions, e.g. M. Cohen 1976, Chen 1985, Hsieh 1985, J. Watson 1988, Thompson 1988, etc. on *yang*; and Pasternak 1972, Potter and Potter 1990, He 1992, Yang 1994, Yan 1996, etc. on *laiwang*.
- ³⁷ Five basic relationships, which are husband and wife, father and son, brothers then extend to relationships of the monarch and his subjects, friends. 五伦也称五常或五典。唐孔颖达疏：“常即五典，谓父义，母慈，兄有，弟恭，子孝；五者，人之常行。”
- ³⁸ See more about this *li* in 2.2.
- ³⁹ *Qiuju da guansi*, directed by Zhang Yimou, 1993.
- ⁴⁰ “何谓人情？喜怒哀惧爱恶欲，七者弗学而能”《礼记·礼运》。
- ⁴¹ See our questionnaire number 107 in Chang and Feuchtwang, 1996. The choices are none, Taoist, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, general belief in spirits, others. The answers are unclear because most of them told me that they have no religious beliefs because they do not like the word religion. However, they told me that they believe a bit of this, and a bit of that, and so on. In the end they agreed with me this can be clarified in a category “general belief in spirits” because they not like the word religion.
- ⁴² For example, Emily Ahern, 1973, *The cult of the dead in a Chinese village*; Clarence Burton Day, 1969, *Chinese peasant cults*; De Groot, 1892-1910, *The religious system of China*, Vols.I-VI, Leiden; Stephan Feuchtwang, 1992, *The imperial metaphor - popular religion in China* and its new edition of *Popular religion in China – the imperial metaphor* in 2003; Maurice Freedman, 1974, “On the sociological study of Chinese religion”; Marcel Granet, 1936; Max Weber, 1915, *Chinese religion*; Arthur Wolf, 1974, *Religion and ritual in Chinese society*, etc. Chang Yansheng, “Zhongguo minzu zenyang shengcun dao xianzai”, <Guolun>, Vol 3 (No. 12,13,14 in one volume); Wang Mingming, 1997, “Shenling, Xiangzheng yu yishi: minjian zongjiao de wenhua lijie”; Wang Zhixin, *Zhongguo zongjiao sixiang shi dagang*; Xu Siyuan, 1949, “Lun zongjiao zai zhongguo bu fada zhi yuanyin”,

<dongfang yu xifang>, No.1; Zhang Zichen, 1990, *Zhongguo wushu*; Zhu Tianshun, 1982, *Zhongguo gudai zongjiao chutan*, etc.

⁴³ I was told any researcher should live in the Jinfeng factory, which is located in the village but belongs to the township. Details see section 7.2.2.

⁴⁴ See *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 40, No. 4, 1984 & Vol. 41, No.1, 1985, and 2,693 entries in *Social support networks — A bibliography, 1983-87*, Compiled by D. Biegel, K. Farkas, N. Abell, J. Goodin, New York/London: Greenwood Press, 1989. One can also find 3,506 items of “social support” in the databases of Sociological Abstracts and Econlit (1969-1998/12).

⁴⁵ This quotation comes from Alan Vaux’s preface to his book *Social support: theory, research, and intervention*, New York/London, etc.: Praeger Publishers, 1988.

⁴⁶ See Ritzer, George, 1996 (fourth edition), *Sociological theory*, New York, etc.: The McGraw-Hill Companies, inc. Giddens, Anthony, 1993 (second edition), *Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press. Haralambos, Michael, ed. 1994 (second edition), *Sociology: a new approach*, Ormskirk: Causeway Press Ltd. Jary, David & Julia, 1991, *Collins Dictionary of Sociology*, Glasgow, Harper Collins Publishers. Marshall, Gordon, ed. 1994, *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*, Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press. Even in sociology for social work (Dominelli, 1997), the terms of support, and support network have been mentioned a lot, but social support still wasn’t discussed.

⁴⁷ See John Scott 1991:16-23.

⁴⁸ e.g. Tolsdorf 1976, Craven & Wellman 1974, Hirsch 1979, Mitchell and Trickett, 1980, Barrera, 1981, Vaux and Harrison, 1985, Cochran and Brassard 1979; Wellman, 1981, Nan Lin 1979 et al., 1986a, G. J. Wentowski 1981, Whittaker 1983, Hooyman 1983, Wellman 1981, Garbarino 1983, Cohen and Syme 1985, Seed 1990, etc.

⁴⁹ The household support considered members of a household, e.g. grandparents, parents, adult children, etc. who live in one household (see table 4).

⁵⁰ e.g. Malinowski 1922/1984, Mauss, 1950/1990, Sahlins 1965/72, Befu 1966-67, A. Strathern 1971, Vatuk and Vatuk 1971, and Raheja 1988, etc.

⁵¹ Liang didn’t mention psychoanalysis, and especially didn’t follow the development of psychoanalysis after Freud’s original work. I will exclude psychoanalysis discipline, although there might have been something comparable there.

⁵² A Chinese-English Dictionary (Revised Edition), Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press, 1995.

⁵³ See: <http://www.everesthistory.com>

⁵⁴ Same as note 75.

⁵⁵ Chinese people of my age grew up with endless repeating of Mao's famous slogans in primary schools. They are rooted in our hearts, although my mind can't remember references, which can be found if necessary.

⁵⁶ On 15th December 2003 City University organised a workshop on the theme of "Creativity" which encouraged new multi-disciplinary research initiatives in creativity. More details see: <http://www.city.ac.uk/researchdevelopment/creativity.htm> .