

7. Applications with *lishang-wanglai*

Although *lishang-wanglai* itself is not a method or methodology in anthropological or social science studies, it has methodological implications for fieldwork research. The first two sections of chapter 7 will illustrate how the fieldwork implications of *lishang-wanglai* work with my own fieldwork experiences in two villages. Section 7.3 will then extend the focus to a case I observed during my fieldwork period in which the practice of *lishang-wanglai* went beyond Kaixiangong village.

7.1. Gaining access and getting to know informants

According to books on fieldwork methodology, it is important to let both institutional and informal gatekeepers understand the goals of a research study because they have a great deal of power in the process of gaining entry and this continues throughout the research process (Bailey 1996, Burgess 1991). However, my unusual experience of gaining access to a Chinese village shows that there are two steps in the process of gaining entry to a fieldwork site. They are: to find intermediaries, and to gain permission for fieldwork. For a fieldwork researcher, intermediaries are introductions provided by different kinds of mediators to the fieldwork site. Permission from the fieldwork sites largely depends on the importance of a researcher's intermediaries. In rural China the latter is most clearly expressed as the process of arranging accommodation, since without this fieldwork cannot be done. I will now illustrate how *lishang-wanglai* works by showing the establishment of relationships at this stage of my fieldwork.

7.1.1. Importance of intermediaries

Many Chinese anthropologists carried out their fieldwork in places with which they were familiar. For example, Yan Yunxiang, the author of *The Flow of Gifts*, did his in the village he lived for many years as a school graduate (*zhiquing*) during the period of the Cultural Revolution. Gao Mobo, the author of *The Gao Village*, carried out fieldwork in his own hometown. In China an individual researcher carrying out fieldwork in a strange place is a relatively new phenomenon. Chinese people are more familiar with social surveys or social investigations (*shehui diaocha*), rather than qualitative fieldwork (*tianye zuoye*). It therefore seems

normal to Chinese people that social investigation involves a group of people from a university or research institution for a short period (one week or ten days). It is also usual for an individual fieldwork researcher to be a foreigner specially arranged by a university or research institution. However, it is uncommon for a mainland Chinese researcher to carry out fieldwork in any one place for three months. It is even unusual for an individual Chinese based overseas to do fieldwork in a place in China with which they are unfamiliar. For example, Liu Xin, the author of *In One's Own Shadow*, found his fieldwork village after three failures through respectively a friend, colleagues, and former university's links. The villages either had a clear expectation of potential business benefits from him, or there was too much intervention from local officials. Eventually he found his fieldwork village through a postgraduate student of the university where he used to teach. Liu lived with the student's family in a village in Shanxi Province (Liu 1995: 23-24).

My situation and experience were similar to Liu's, but with one advantage and some disadvantages in terms of entry to a fieldwork site. The advantage is that I was going to do a restudy in Neiguan and Kaixiangong Villages where the ESRC project researchers had conducted their fieldwork. So I didn't need to try different places. The disadvantage is that I did not even know how to contact the villages and had no freedom to use my own resources in other places. In the ESRC project these two villages were selected because of special links with Shanghai University. Shanghai University organised five researchers to go to the villages more or less at the same time. I have no special link with Shanghai University apart from the ESRC project. As a favour, Shen Guanbao, the Chinese supervisor of the project, said he would bring me to Kaixiangong Village himself personally, and wrote me a personal letter to a researcher who worked in Neiguan Policy Study Institution. It is obvious that Shen didn't want to introduce me to the two villages through Shanghai University officially because my fieldwork was not part of his job. That was all I had before I went to China for my fieldwork.

I had to ask myself more questions, i.e. Would Shen's letter be enough? Who else should I contact as intermediaries? How could I introduce myself to them? What kind of help did I need? Who could help me? How could I get to know the people

who might help me? How could they accept me? Where could I sleep? Where could I eat? It was necessary to seek different kinds of sources to clarify the above puzzles and to gain access smoothly. This was a common concern for my two fieldwork villages, although they were very different. Similarly, I found before I started my fieldwork that the gatekeepers and the villagers simply summarised my study with one term - mutual help (*xiangbang* in Neiguan, and *huxiang bangzhu* in Kaixiangong). For them they were interested in following questions: Who are you? What do you do here? What should we do for you? How long are you staying? How should we treat you? What can you do for us? etc.

Initially I thought I might go to Kaixiangong Village first when I arrived in China, because the women's issues in that village interested me more. However, I found some intermediaries which led me to Neiguan Village first. I will now describe how I found a number of different intermediaries to the fieldwork site. (a) A friend of mine told me that he could introduce me to local officers in Dingxi County while he visited Dingxi Prefecture where Neiguan Village belongs, in Gansu Province with Fei Xiaotong in August 1995. However, he was not sure how long they would stay there. I went to Dingxi as soon as the NGO Forum of the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing¹ finished. Luckily, I met the friend in Dingxi Hotel. He was doing some investigations for a few more days after Fei left. He introduced me to the county officials. This was very helpful. (b) I got a letter of introduction to one of the vice-directors of Dingxi Prefecture from Han Xiangjing, a vice Chief Editor of *Chinese Women's Newspaper*. I found this link accidentally. I had been invited for a meeting by a rural women's magazine while I attended the NGO Forum. The editor introduced me to Han after she knew I would go to Dingxi for my fieldwork because Han came from Dingxi. Han then happily offered me the above nice letter. It was vital to have such a letter. The letter was addressed to the vice-director who was a female head of a county in the prefecture. She was also a model head among the one hundred female heads of counties in China. In this letter Han asked the vice-director to look after me, a female comrade (*yige nutongzhi*), when I was there. This was a typical female's way. In this case to look after me, in particular, meant to help me to sort out every problem, including providing me with accommodation. It did help me in such a way. I will say more about this in the

section on accommodation. (c) I also brought a letter of introduction from my former University, Chinese People's Public Security University, with me. I asked for this letter when I gave a talk there. The letter did not directly help my fieldwork because I was named as a visiting fellow of the University on the letter. The officials in Dingxi didn't think at all that I should be introduced by the Public Security Bureau because I was not in a post there according to their understanding. Maybe they also thought my research object was nothing to do with public security. However, the letter was useful in terms of proving that I was a trusted person politically, although I came from a university in England. (d) The only letter which I brought with me from the UK was from Shen Guanbao (hereafter "GS", Shanghai University). GS was the Chinese research adviser of the ESRC project. His university has had a special link with Dingxi. This was how the original study took place there. The letter was addressed to some researchers who worked in the Policy Research Office of Dingxi Prefecture, where Neiguan Village belongs. This was also helpful. I would say all the above introductions worked together and made my entry to the fieldwork site much easier.

In gaining access to Kaixiangong Village I had a dramatic experience. Although I did not know when I could go to the Kaixiangong Village, I was much more confident to do fieldwork there because GS promised me that he would sort out everything for me before I got there. He also offered to take me there since it was only eighty miles away from Shanghai. After I finished the fieldwork in Neiguan Village in November 1995 I decided to carry out my fieldwork in Kaixiangong Village from February to May 1996. I contacted GS two months in advance. I was told that everything had been arranged and he would meet me at the airport in Shanghai and take me to the village. However, just three days before my departure I received a fax from GS in which he told me that an accident had happened to his wife's natal family and he had to visit them with his family. He also gave me the names of some cadres, and the way to get to the village, i.e. two hours driving time by taxi from the airport directly to the village. At the last moment I had suddenly lost the only connection I had with the village.

It sounds foolish of me not to have asked for more details about the arrangement in advance, or even asked for a letter of introduction from GS. But it was perfectly

understandable according to Chinese common knowledge about interpersonal relationships. It would have been impolite to ask GS for such details when he had told me that everything was OK. It would also have meant that I did not trust him. I trusted his promise based on my understanding of Chinese ways in making and maintaining personal relationships. Over the past few years I had put lots of work into helping him at his request in different ways, before, during and after he himself came to England, or brought his colleagues to visit England. I did not do this to get help for my fieldwork in Kaixiangong Village, because when I started this I had no plans to go to Kaixiangong.

After GS's wife's natal family's accident I recognised that my situation in entering Kaixiangong Village had suddenly become very bad. To my knowledge there are many ways to enter field sites in China, excluding cases of researchers who return to their hometowns (i.e. Gao Mobo, 1999) or places where they had once lived (i.e. Yan Yunxiang, 1996b). (a) The worst way would be if I had no information about the site and no formal letter of introduction from any institution to prove who I was. Under these circumstances I could even be abducted or sold as a wife to a man. A French anthropologist told me that she never had such a letter when she carried out her fieldwork in a different place in China. However, she would not be in danger in the same way as female Chinese researchers because rural males would not risk their lives to marry a “non-Chinese face (*yizhang waiguo miankong*)”. (b) I had no letter of introduction but knew some names in the village and had information from the original study of the ESRC project. This was my case. I recognised then that I had to create more links in order to gain access there. (c) A normal way would be to bring a formal letter from one's work place or a personal letter from a friend or relative. It is not necessary to show the formal letter to a fieldwork site if one's arrangement is through the institution rather than a private arrangement. When I was a postgraduate student in 1986 I carried out fieldwork for one and a half months in an area where the Jinos² live, in Xishuangbanna Autonomous Prefecture, Yunnan Province. The only letter brought by me was a formal letter of introduction from my former University in Northeast China. The way in which I used that letter was to go to Yunnan University and the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences. I then had many personal links to the site. (d)

A better way would be to have a formal letter from any institution plus one or two personal letters. If the personal letter came from an important person, or a person who worked in an important institution then things would be much easier. This was what I had for Neiguan Village. (e) Another good way can be attachment to a project which belongs to an institution. It is much easier to enter a field site with a group of people. My other experiences in China show this. In 1993 I spent two weeks on some surveys in Sichuan and Shandong Provinces separately with a group of people from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. It was much more difficult to do fieldwork alone because in both Neiguan and Kaixiangong Villages the informants always asked questions like “whom are you working with?” and “why do you come here alone?” (f) A slightly better way is to enter a fieldwork station which has a strong link with a University or institution. It would be very easy for anyone to enter if the key person brought him or her. This was what I expected in Kaixiangong. (g) The most comfortable way to enter a site is through administrative links from top to bottom. This top can be several levels higher than the field site, or can be only one level higher. For example, the Public Security University, where I worked, belongs to Public Security Ministry. For staff who worked in this university to do any research work anywhere their accommodation and so on can all be arranged through the Ministry to the Public Security Bureau of province, cities, and counties, etc. However, the most comfortable way to enter the site is not the best way for the purpose of research because it could cause potential informants to hold back because of suspicion. This is why even in ancient China there are stories about how senior officials from the centre visited local places incognito (*weifu sifang*) in order to gain true information.

According to the above categories my situation suddenly dropped down from the above (f) to (b) after I lost the link to Kaixiangong. I then, in the space of three days, managed to improve my situation from the (b) to (d). I knew I had to go to the village during the Chinese New Year’s period because it was particularly important for my study and anyway my tickets were all booked. Since I had no way at all to contact GS I had to arrange everything by myself from scratch. My arrangements were as follows. (a) I rang a friend of mine who was an assistant of Fei Xiaotong in Beijing University. He told me that he would write me a personal

letter to a senior official in Wujiang City (county equivalent) to which Kaixiangong belongs. But he couldn't hand it to me because he had already booked tickets to his hometown for Chinese New Year. (b) I rang another friend of mine, who was doing a Postdoctoral Program in Beijing University, to collect the above letter for me. He would meet me anyway because I had bought him many academic books at his request and would bring them from the UK. He collected the above letter together with two bottles of liquor (*erguotou*)³ from his colleague and brought them to me. The two bottles of liquor (*erguotou*) were a present from the letter writer to the letter receiver. (c) I rang a former colleague of mine and asked him to provide a letter of introduction from my former University, similar to the one I had to Neiguan Village.

I arrived at Beijing in the middle of the day. I collected the letters and changed some currency with friends in my former university. I went back to the airport and the departure was at six o'clock from Beijing to arrive in Shanghai at nine o'clock in the evening. The aeroplane had been delayed for two hours due to bad weather. I went to the village straightaway by a taxi. However, on the way there our car was hit by another car in the dark rainy night. I was injured: my head broke the windscreen and my forehead was scratched, I had bruises on both my knees, and my back and neck were sprained (at that time there were no seatbelts in cars in China). The car which caused the accident had driven away. After we got policemen to sort out the accident, I changed to another car and got to the village at three o'clock in the early morning. That was Chinese New Year's Eve. The only light on was a guard's room in the town silkworm enterprise, which is located in the village. I knocked at the door and showed my letter from my former University to him. The guard, Wang, immediately contacted the managers of the enterprise and the head of the village for me. The results were: (a) the enterprise managers told me to go back to Shanghai for a few days and come back if I needed any help after the holiday had ended. (b) The head of the village, ZR Shen, agreed to see me at nine o'clock in the morning. A few hours later I met him. He arranged for me to see BY Zhou, the director of Women's Federation of the Village. Then I started my fieldwork.

In addition I should say more about where I lived during the holiday period while I was doing my fieldwork there. Although the following section is about accommodation, this relates to another intermediary which allowed me to carry out my fieldwork. This intermediary was my unusual appearance! As soon as Wang, the guard, found out about the refusal of the enterprise managers he started to complain. “How could they let an injured woman who came all the way from England go away on the Chinese New Year’s Eve?” “Their sympathy must have been eaten by a dog.” I asked for information about any possibilities for eating and sleeping. He told me that the enterprise has a luxury hotel (*bieshu*) with lots of suites and some simple guest rooms in a different building, but they were all closed and sealed with stamped paper during the New Year’s holiday. There was no B & B or other accommodation run as a private business in the village at all. No shops and restaurants would be open during that time either. There was even no transport to go to the township. He then brought me to his home. He lived in one room with his wife and a few months old baby. They borrowed another room from their neighbours next door during the holiday because they needed more space. This room was a shared bedroom for two female workers. I lived in that room and shared everything with this family for my first week of fieldwork.

7.1.2. Permission and accommodation

In rural China to enter a field site means not only to gain permission for doing fieldwork. Permission from the fieldwork sites largely depends on the importance of a researcher’s intermediaries. Accommodation arrangements are a crucial part of the permission. I have shown that *lishang-wanglai* is useful in this step of gaining access. Before I start to demonstrate my case I would like to make it clear again that *lishang-wanglai* can be involved in relationships between individuals, an individual and institutions (personalised institutions), and among institutions. Before I went to China I thought I could simply stay with a suitable family by paying for my accommodation, so that the relationship between us would be a mixture of expressive *wanglai* and instrumental *wanglai* (personalised market exchange). If this were the case the way in which we lived together for a few months could make very close our expressive *wanglai*. However, I failed in such arrangements in both Neiguan and Kaixiangong at that time (I will explain this

later in section 7.2). If researchers come to a village with a group or with a formal institutional introduction, like Shanghai University, the relationship can be counted as institutional reciprocity. A member of the group does not need to do anything because everything is arranged by the institution(s). In this case the relationship between researchers and the village can be institutional exchange, which may or may not involve *lishang-wanglai* (instrumental *wanglai* or *guanxi*). In my case, food and accommodation, local guides, etc. were all arranged (*anpai*) for me by local officials through my personal links. Such a case can be counted as a personalised institutional *wanglai* because I am an individual and the village cadres and local officials were representative of different institutions. Basically, there were two types of reciprocity involved in this stage of my fieldwork: market exchange and instrumental *wanglai* (personalised institutional exchange).

Firstly I will describe the market exchange in my case. This is not *lishang-wanglai*. My food and accommodation were arranged separately and only involved a small portion of market exchange. My sleeping places in both Neiguan and Kaixiangong Village were arranged by the local officials for free. Kaixiangong Village even offered me catering for free (see instrumental *wanglai*). The only arrangement involving market exchange was catering in Neiguan and eventually in part in Kaixiangong.

In Neiguan Village the food which I arranged for myself can be counted as pure market exchange. At the beginning I was eating in a canteen (*shitang*), which was located in the township court. The food and service were poor, although it was run by a private business under a contract which was supposedly better than the one run by the township itself. However, the local cadres told me that the canteen reform made it even worse than it was before, because it became less flexible in service times and more expensive. I then found many different sources for eating because there were restaurants and shops in the township. I sometimes ate in restaurants and sometimes bought some canned food from the shops.⁴ Although the eating arrangements were varied in Neiguan, the way I obtained it was quite simply just to pay for it.

However, in Kaixiangong Village the whole business of my catering was much more complicated. I was given a kitchen key and told that I should eat in a kitchen shared with three technicians of the village enterprise. They came from Shanghai and shared the only guest suite in the village. I will demonstrate this arrangement in the next section. I sometimes cooked something which I bought from the open market for myself in the kitchen. Occasionally I ate in restaurants (there were only two in total) in the village. Sometimes I ate with my informants when the interview lasted through a mealtime or when I took part in some events with feasts. I normally made breakfast for myself. I bought a cup with a built-in heater (*dianrebei*). It was only 800W because if the heater were larger than this the fuse would be blown. I used it to infuse instant noodles, boil eggs, etc. I also used it to boil water to make tea because there was no electric kettle available.

In sum, 45 per cent in total of my food consisted of free meals arranged by the village. Ingredients I paid directly for my own catering accounted for about 40 per cent of my food and can be counted as pure market exchange. What I paid for indirectly, by giving extra gifts to my informants when I ate with them, comprised 15 per cent of the total. By the way, eating with my informants in both villages should also be counted as expressive *wanglai* because we all enjoyed the mealtimes and my extra gifts to them, which were more or less equivalent to the value of the food.

Secondly I will describe the instrumental *wanglai* (personalised institutional *wanglai* or *guanxi*). The way in which I used this in Dingxi was as follows. I showed different letters to different people in Dingxi County, as I mentioned in the section on intermediaries. A friend introduced me to the county official, Mr Yan. I gave Mr Yan my book on *Marxist Sociology*⁵ and a little present brought from the UK. Mr Yan told me that it was all arranged that during my village fieldwork I would share with a female cadre and live at the Women's Federation of Neiguan Township, which is located by Neiguan Village. This arrangement was mainly influenced by the female vice-director of the Dingxi Province. On top of that Yan offered me accommodation in a grand hotel (*binguan*) for refreshment, namely, to come back once a week to have a bath and a nice meal there, free of charge. I was too busy in the village to take the offer. After I came back to the county Yan

invited me to a banquet with the senior officials of Dingxi Prefecture and the county. They asked me lots of questions about the village. They told me that they were very satisfied with my answers and felt that my information was very useful to them.⁶ They then arranged a free tour for me to visit otherwise inaccessible villages by jeep for a few days before I left there. All the above were due to my input and the outcome of instrumental *wanglai* (*guanxi*) with officials of the Dingxi Prefecture and the county, because we both gained information in which we were interested. This kind of instrumental *wanglai* is different to *guanxi* with a negative sense because the former lasts longer than the latter and a re-entry to the site is much easier.

My experience in Kaixiangong Village was more complicated. On the third day after I arrived in the village I contacted the senior official, Mr Yu of Wujiang City. He came to see me immediately and I gave him the letter and the two bottles of liquor from my friend. I also gave Mr Yu my book on *Marxist Sociology* and a little present I brought from the UK. He then called a meeting with the managers of the town enterprise and the head of the village. They discussed my situation and decided that (a) the town enterprise should open one of the guestrooms for me as soon as the holiday ended. (b) The village collective should sort out my catering problem. The above decision can be interpreted in different ways because it did not make the payment clear. It was easier for the enterprise. A manager of the enterprise arranged for me to live in an en-suite guestroom, which was located in a simple building. I will come back to this in section 7.2.

My catering problem is more interesting. The kitchen where I ate belonged to the village collective. Apart from supplying food for the village enterprise technicians, it also provided feasts for all the related higher authorities, i.e. bureaux of industry, commerce, tax, electric power, water, health, public security, and other links. There was a feast every three days on average, according to my fieldwork notes. So I ate sometimes with the technicians, sometimes in the different dining rooms with the guests, sometimes I cooked something for myself in the kitchen after normal mealtimes. When I asked Mr Shen, the head of the village, how much I should pay for my food, he told me not to feel embarrassed (*buyao buhao yisi*) to eat with them. He then explained to me that they would cook food for their guests including

the technicians anyway, and that to add one extra person was as simple as adding one pair of chopsticks (*jia yishuang kuaizi*).

It was easy for Shen to say such a thing. It was not easy for me to be “a pair of chopsticks”. Although physically I settled down, I still felt uneasy inside after I accepted their arrangements. I felt that it was not right to live there without paying enough for my own accommodation. Apart from the above catering matter in Kaixiangong, I did not question the payment business until just before I left, in both sites. The reasons were (a) I did not want to interfere with their arrangements; (b) I wanted to find out how the institutional system works and why. However, I was not sure whether this kind of arrangement for me in both the villages could be counted as taking advantage or corruption⁷. If it was, then why did they do this for me? If it was not, then how was I to understand this kind of relationship between them and myself? What was the way in which they normally treat other researchers and what did the others do? What would the villagers think about this? I will leave these questions until the next section.

7.1.3. A mutual learning process

My understanding of fieldwork informants is the broadest one. They include people who have been selected for my interview, any villagers in the village, local cadres and officials in the village and township, even anybody who I contacted for information around the village. In short, everybody in the field could be my informant. However, a problem in asking information from so many is that I couldn't remember some informants' names because I was either busy taking notes or talking to a group of people and had no time to identify individuals. In this case I will simply say “according to a villager...” in the following chapters. Besides, for me the period of getting to know informants can be counted from arrival to leaving the village. Therefore, I was learning all the time from all the informants. I also learned from my mistakes. I found that getting to know informants was a mutual learning process. Here I shall use mainly my fieldwork experiences related to Kaixiangong Village to illustrate this.

The following example will show how we learnt about each other. One day I was observing a house completion ceremony. Before the feast started, I told the host

that I had a stomach ache and needed to rest, and went away. A few minutes after I got back to my room a villager knocked at the door. He told me that the host had sent him to invite me formally to the feast. I told him again why I could not go. He told me that the host thought I was quibbling about etiquette, or reproaching him with that excuse (*tiaoli*) because he was not treating me warmly enough. I showed him the tablets on my desk and told him that I had been taking them for some time. He was surprised that my stomach ache was real. He then told me some gossip about me after I had left. One villager said that I might feel embarrassed without giving a gift to take part in that feast. The other said that wherever there was a feast, I was there. A villager even said that the village collective was not giving me enough to eat so I had to eat with the villagers as well, etc.

I cried after I heard the above gossip. The catering matter was a sensitive topic to me because I had accepted the arrangement by the village collective together with the permission to enter there. I had not yet worked out the best way to sort out the problem. Here I was involved in another problem with the eating matter again, although I had been very cautious about everything. I asked him: why should I come here to eat all of your food? It was not comfortable at all for me to eat in the feasts because I would sometimes have to eat things I did not like. I also had to eat some unclean food, although they did not think so, because they put food on the table around my bowl when my bowl was full. I learnt the local custom from villagers on different occasions that everybody on the same table, normally eight people, should serve a guest by continually putting different foods on his or her bowl or on the table around the bowl. The guest should feel honoured and eat all of it. To refuse was rude. I did say no sometimes but it didn't work because they thought I was being polite. Sometimes they asked me why I refused one person and accepted the other. It was very difficult for me to remember who served which food because I was talking with people during the mealtime and I ate with different people in different ceremonies. Anyway, to take part in as many ceremonies as possible was part of my fieldwork. In order to prove that the stomach ache story was true I didn't go back to the feast. Otherwise they would think that if they tried hard enough to invite me I would accept it. The villager had sympathy with me and

seemed to understand my awkward situation. He said he would explain it to other villagers. This might be one way that the villagers learned about me.

I am sure there was some other gossip about me. Some things were good and some things were bad. Some gossip came directly back to me, like the feast, and some did not or might come back to me in other ways. It is always extremely difficult to find out what other people said about me. However, I heard much gossip about previous researchers, e.g. a male and a female sleeping together when they were not a married couple; another told the villagers that his meals, even cigarettes, could be refunded from the project, etc.

I found that the villagers were generally hostile to researchers. They complained a lot about the researchers constantly studying them. They said those research projects were no use at all for the village development. On the contrary, some researchers told the villagers that the village had to always stay as it was just for the sake of the study. However, as I mentioned in the “moral judgement” section of 2.3.3, the village believed its developmental process had been held back by policy oriented studies. Under these circumstances I had to work out my situation and ways to gain trust and friendship with all types of informants. I understood that I should not interfere with my field site when I was carrying out my fieldwork. However, in the two-way communication process a fieldwork researcher has to interfere with the local development in different ways. On the one hand, the village and villagers have been interfered with over a few decades in the past by the previous researchers’ work, directly or indirectly. This is because the previous studies were more or less policy oriented and therefore very close to policies from central or local government. On the other hand, both the local officials and the villagers expected any fieldwork researcher and project to be useful in developing the village and improving the villagers’ living standards, because they did not know the difference between policy-oriented studies and purely academic studies. Therefore, as soon as a fieldwork researcher entered the site, he or she became involved in a triangular relationship: fieldwork researcher and the local officials, fieldwork researcher and the villagers, and local officials and the villagers. So, it is very important for a fieldwork researcher to make clear what he or she can do with these relationships. What I did was as follows.

(a) I chose gifts and presents to the villagers or informants in a proper way. For example, when I presented a small gift to sample households where I conducted my interview, I always said, with the local term, it was a *xiao yisi* (small gift). The reply from the villagers 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. They thought the small gift, a nice shaped mini-torch with the badge of City University on the surface, was one that I myself chose, bought, and carried all the way to them from England. This indicates villagers' moral norms for judging other people's behaviour. I also brought gifts to any household when I attended their events. I bought these gifts from the village shops, i.e. fruit, sweets, cakes, canned food, wine, and stationery, etc. I learnt what and how to buy gifts from the villagers. I bought different things for different people depending on my understanding of what they might like.

(b) I helped any villagers who were not necessarily my informants, if I could. Lots of Kaixiangong villagers called me the "photographer" because I always carried a camera and a video camera recorder with me. According to the local custom, members of a family should have a family feast in the Chinese New Year period. Some people asked me to take a photograph for them on that occasion. Others then thought it was a good idea to ask me to do so. I then took photographs, of course for free, for anybody at their request. I had the films developed and printed in a photo shop in the township as soon as possible. I also made sure everybody had his or her photos. Even the photos from my last film, which was developed after I came back to the UK, went back to the villagers. I never forget a story some villagers told me a few days before I left. An old lady had died and her only photo was the one which I took for her. They said it would have been a shame if I hadn't helped her, for her family would have had no picture of her at all.

I also took a camcorder to villagers' weddings or funerals. After I had shown them my videos on a TV, some villagers asked me to take videos for them. Mr Tan told me that although he spent 700 *yuan* hiring a photographer to make a video tape for his daughter's wedding, he still wanted to have my version because he thought my type was better than a real photographer's in some ways. They could see everybody

who played different roles in the events, rather than boring shows of the bridegroom and bride. Other poorer families asked me to do so because they wanted to save their budget on it. In order to help them I went to Shanghai and bought some equipment and tapes. I made copies for different people. The villagers preferred to play and replay the wedding tapes because they could find themselves on the TV and laugh from the beginning to the end. Although they asked for the tapes of funerals, they didn't play them repeatedly because the adults had to stop the children from laughing when they were watching. The funerals' tapes were only for keeping memory of the dead people.

There were a few extremely poor families in the village. One of them was a young widow whose husband had died in an accident. She lived with her sick father and two children. I left some money for her. I also helped other poor people in this way.

(c) I provided useful information for the local officials and the village cadres. As it also was in Dingxi County, the village cadres, township and county (city) officials in Wujiang always asked me for information and my opinion about the village. Especially during many mealtimes with the local officials, I tried very hard to show them the real situation for the villagers and their wishes⁸. An editor of *Wujiang Newspaper* invited me to write a paper about Fei's nineteenth's visit⁹ to the village. I was there and accompanied the visit and took part in the meeting report. I noticed that Fei himself was confused about which was the best way for the villagers. On the one hand, the "Southern Jiangsu model" originally came from Fei's idea and was successful in some villages. On the other hand, Kaixiangong Village was in a depressed situation. He asked the local officials to show him some private businesses and showed great interest in them. I picked up the topic of private economy and tried to get the media to push for the policy change. However, the newspaper did not support this because it was, at that time, not politically sensible to mention the words "private economy".

(d) I promoted an equal communication between Chinese and Westerners. Before I left the village the local officials asked me to encourage SF to come back for XF's ceremony of sixty years in academia. Afterwards, SF received XF's paper in which

he summarised his lifelong academic achievements¹⁰. I spent a few days together with SF to study XF's paper and helped SF work out XF's position as an anthropologist in his speech (Feuchtwang, 1998). Another related example is that I have been working hard to be a bridge between Chinese and Westerners, which can be understood as an indirect way to repay the villagers' generosity. I remembered XF's earnest wish in Wujiang Hotel that he hoped Chinese anthropologists should get their own work onto the international academic track (*yu guoji jiegui*). Bearing this in mind while I was doing a literature review, I recognised that there is a link between XF's idea of *chaxugeju* and Sahlins's model of reciprocity. This was very helpful in promoting an understanding between China and the West. Furthermore, an interest in Chinese scholars' related work, both materials and ideas, will be one characteristic of this dissertation. This means I will refer to Chinese scholars' related works as much as possible as I refer to the Western scholars'. In a popular Chinese saying this is my way to repay people's loving-kindness in rearing me (*baoda renmin de yangyu zhi en*).

(e) I helped other local researchers to improve themselves in different ways. This was an extension of the above point. One of the examples was that SF and I invited Hui Haiming to visit the UK. Hui got a Ph.D. under XF's supervision in Beijing University and became a head of the Policy Study Office in Suzhou City, to which Wujiang City belongs. He was also head of a fieldwork station in Kaixiangong. He felt that he was losing his academic links at both national and international levels. He told me that he had helped many researchers, groups and individual, national and international, to do fieldwork or documentary research in this area. He hoped this would provide chances to keep academic contacts with them. However, he did not have any feedback from any of them. On the contrary, he found a paper largely dependent on his research published in Singapore, without mentioning him at all. He had been promised that he would be a co-writer before he handed his paper to the research group. He was deeply impressed by the arrangement of his visit to the UK made by SF and myself, because he did not help us at all when we were in Wujiang. What SF did was to encourage him to carry on his topic of village studies, by directing him and giving him related books. I shared my research experiences with him and also gave him some related books. After I finished my

fieldwork I have been in contact with him and the village in different ways and benefited from the relationship which we established with the village and the area.

In addition I would like to mention another example to show how the mutual learning process can be seen over a long period. A German anthropologist told me that although he received great help from his informants when he carried out his fieldwork in a Sichuan village, he did not see how *lishang-wanglai* works with his experience. He also did not want to be involved in *lishang-wanglai* with the villagers in the future, if he went back to the village again. However, the German anthropologist's understanding of *lishang-wanglai* mainly regards material benefits and the relationship which he did not want, can be categorised as *guanxi* or instrumental *wanglai*. He did not recognise that his relationship with the villagers was actually an expressive *wanglai*. From my understanding of the villagers' point of view, his input can be that he accumulated profound knowledge in Chinese studies in the past, he shared his interests with the villagers and worked hard when he was there, etc. The villagers valued this kind of spiritual wealth very much. What they could get from treating him nicely might have been the possibility that the name of the village would “go abroad (*zouxiang shijie*)” and the villagers' life last in writing, or it might have just been that they enjoyed the feeling of being nice to a foreigner (generous *wanglai*).

To summarise, my fieldwork experience shows that knowing each other is always a two-way process between a fieldwork researcher and informants. In the mutual learning process we observed and learned from each other. The more we know each other, the better the relations with the informants, and the more information it is possible to get from them.

7.2. *Lishang-wanglai* and social creativity

This section will consider *lishang-wanglai* and social creativity in the further analysis of the above topics of gaining fieldwork access, getting to know informants, and the mutual learning process.

7.2.1. Analysis using *lishang-wanglai*

The accidental loss of the only connection between me and the Kaixiangong Village, a few days before my departure from UK to the village, can be explained with *lishang-wanglai* between GS and me, as follows. Our relationship could be mixed with all kinds of *wanglai*, i.e. generous, expressive, instrumental (personalised market, personalised institutional), and negative *wanglai*. GS's letter to Neiguan and his other offers of help in Kaixiangong can be explained as instrumental *wanglai* which involved strongly the rational choice criterion because he needed me to help him and his colleagues to visit the UK. For me, morally, I should thank (returning his past help) GS for his help by helping him and his colleagues. However, I recognise now that I was willing to create a closer relationship with him. Originally, our relationship was a kind of institutional relationship because we were both Chinese scholars. I thought I could increase the closeness of our relationship to an expressive rank because we were both involved in the same UK based project and had had many personal contacts. In other words, I was personalising an institutional relationship with him by helping him a lot, although I did not expect a return from him. However, not all relationships can be personalised. In contrast, as a result of events the relationship between GS and me could have even dropped down to a negative one. GS arranged accommodation for me and invited me for a meal at his home after I returned to Shanghai from Kaixiangong Village. It can be seen as his way of repairing the relationship which solved the misunderstanding between us. I understood that he did not want to have a closer relationship with me because he had changed his research interests. So our relationship remained as an institutional one.

There were several different *lishang* criteria involved in the above *wanglai* between GS and myself. In the creative process of *lishang-wanglai* any action could involve more than one criterion. Our relationship did involve moral judgement, human feelings, and rational choice criteria, but the weight of it was not greater than we had had with other team mates in the ESRC project.

(a) Morally it would be not fair simply to say my considerable help for GS and his colleagues was only a kind of complicated long-term social investment. I am only

recognising now that this could be the case. It also cannot be simply explained by saying that I was generous to them. SF, my supervisor, told me that he had helped lots of Chinese scholars and students over the last twenty plus years and did not expect any material benefit in return from them. He thought his action mixed up different criteria: generosity, sincerity¹¹, commitment to the field of study, and self-adjustment to make relationships with Chinese scholars, etc. However, he did receive different kinds of returns from different people in different ways, although he did not make a social investment on purpose.

(b) I felt very sad and shamed after I lost the link to the village a few days before my departure from UK. I then very much enjoyed making last-minute arrangements to enter Kaixiangong Village within a few days. It provided me with a chance to recall my old friends and maintain relationships with them. We all enjoyed our telephone conversations and meetings very much. All these feelings of sadness, shame, and enjoyment can be categorised in the human feelings criterion of *lishang*.

(c) My involvement of *wanglai* is based on my understanding of the rational choice criterion of *lishang*. In this case I understood that to create a relationship is always a difficult business. Although I failed to make a closer relationship with GS, it would not stop me going on to help others in a similar way. In other words, even though I lost on one occasion it does not mean the whole idea of investment was wrong. I always believed I would get a return indirectly in different ways, like a kind of social investment (Fei, 1947:75), although it would be difficult to make sure this kind of investment could be bringing me any benefit. It would be nice if those people, who benefit from my help, could remember it, or help me when I asked, so as to get a direct return from the above investment. It would even be hurtful if the people whom I helped did not want to help me in return. It might end a particular relationship, as investment cannot always be successful. It would be useful to learn something through these experiences, including the loss. For example, I should have asked for a letter from GS just in case an accident happened, or I should have contacted the village in advance directly by myself or through other links, etc.

(d) I would also like to explain the failure of the instrumental *wanglai* (personalised institutional) between GS and myself with a Chinese term *wuyuan* (have not luck to do so) which is related to the religious sense of *lishang*. This *yuan* between us can be traced back to XF. There were vertical and horizontal circles among XF, SF, GS and me. GS was the first PhD student under XF's supervision and I was SF's assistant and student. GS's involvement in the ESRC project largely depended on the relationship between him and XF and he was a visiting fellow in LSE (The London School of Economical and Political Sciences) before the project started. The relationships between XF / GS and SF / me are vertical. The relationship between GS and me is horizontal. Whether or not the two sets of relationship would form a completely linked network (in which any two people have direct bi-directional links) and move continuously is dependent on many elements. One of the explanations can be that after the project ended GS and I have had no luck to work in the same field because he changed his research interests and the horizontal *wanglai* stopped. But I have been following SF to continue my research interests and remaining the vertical *wanglai*, but I am not sure how much this is determined by fate. When I discuss the religious sense of *yuan* I should point out there are two roles for me. On the one hand I treat myself as informant and use my subjectivity to understand things. I was like my informants in that I conducted myself according to a belief that my way of entering the fieldwork site was fated. On the other hand, as a social scientist, I treat this as a part of the way in which Chinese people, including I myself, use the idea of fate in dealing with their lives.

Now I am going to discuss *lishang-wanglai* in my case of gaining access to the site. The *wanglai* between me and the field sites were through different intermediaries. This was different from the normal way. The normal way of entering a field site in China should be to bring a letter of introduction from one's work unit. The relationship between the field researcher and the site would involve an institutional relationship. However, my gaining access to the sites mixed generous, expressive, and instrumental (personalised institutional) *wanglai*. Han's letter to Dingxi and Wang's family's accommodation were cases of generous *wanglai*. All the help from my friends were expressive *wanglai*. The letters of introduction from my former University were instrumental (personalised institutional) *wanglai* because I

had no formal personal file (*renshi guanxi*) there but had an informal personal relationship (*geren guanxi*) with it.

However, a number of types of *lishang* would be always involved in gaining access in different situations. Take the above case as examples, (a) both Han and Wang wanted to help me because they felt that they respected me morally. This is a morality criterion of *lishang*. They told me that I must be someone who had devoted her life to social science undertakings because I chose either the poorest place or the most difficult time for my fieldwork. (b) There were many occasions involving human feelings, sympathy, and emotional aspects, which is another criterion of *lishang*. Obviously, Wang's family showed great sympathy with me when I first appeared in Kaixiangong. Actually, after the accident happened there were also a number of strangers who helped me out of sympathy. One person stopped his car and brought me to his friend's flat to ring a policeman (at that time mobile phones were not in popular use). One of the policemen woke up one of his friends (not a colleague) and asked him to help me to pass the border checkpoint between Shanghai and Jiangsu Province, because we could not then find a car with permission to drive in Jiangsu. I also had a sisterly relationship, in which we called each other "sisters" and felt warm towards each other, with a number of women. These were Xie, the editor of the rural women's magazine, Han, the vice Chief editor of *Chinese Women's Newspaper*, and Zhou, the director of women's federation of Kaixiangong. I would like to lay stress on the sheer enjoyment in the human feelings criterion of *lishang*. Both Wang's family and I felt strongly that it was a great enjoyment to spend the Chinese New Year together. Wang came from a poor village in North Jiangsu (*subei*) a few years ago. After he got his current job he married his girlfriend and brought her there. This was the first Chinese New Year for the young couple with a little baby in a newly settled place. It was snowing. They felt they were so lucky that they could spend such an unusual time with their "dajie" (old sister, which was how they addressed me). We made dumplings, played fireworks, and made a small snowman together. I also took some photographs of them and the baby. They told me that their parents, brothers and sisters would be very pleased if they saw those photographs. (c) However important the emotional aspect, rational choice was another criterion of *lishang*

involved. For example, the policeman's choice of asking his friend to help me to pass the checkpoint rather than finding another policeman to do so was based on a rational calculation. For him it was not worth risking his own career to help someone he could never meet again, for two reasons: it was wrong to allow a non-registered car to pass the checkpoint, and it was beyond his duty to ask another policeman to do so. In this case the relationship between the policeman and me does not look like *lishang-wanglai* because there was no personalising involved. However, from my point of view there was a generous *wanglai* between us. For the policeman expected nothing in return from me, but enjoyed the way he helped me. He could also share this kind of enjoyment with his friend who actually helped me. For me the generous *wanglai* is still there. Perhaps one day we could meet each other again accidentally. (d) Ideas of fortune which are related to the religious sense of *lishang* played a part. After the accident happened the policemen told me that it was a serious one and I was lucky not to be badly hurt. They also used a Chinese saying to comfort me. That is: after surviving a great disaster, one is bound to have good fortune in later years (*danan bu si bi you houfu*). However, a friend of mine said to me "you are so unlucky to have been involved in one accident (the lost link to Kaixiangong Village) and the other (a car accident on the way to the village)". Other people said I was so lucky because I had had several intermediaries to the sites. In short, people always like to link unexpected events with ideas of good luck or bad luck.

Next I will illustrate circles of relationships with *lishang-wanglai*. The three protagonists are: the local officials / village cadres, the villagers and me. According to a Taiwanese saying "*lishang wang* and *lishang lai*", which means that in a reciprocal *wanglai* process each side's action should be judged by its own criteria (*lishang*). Although there were big differences in my fieldwork arrangements between the two sites, the common element was that they had to work out different treatments for different people depending on *lishang* criteria, and the same was true for me. As I have already stated earlier, in the process of gaining access to a field site and getting to know the informants there were three types of reciprocity involved. They are market exchange, expressive *wanglai*, and instrumental *wanglai*. The market exchange was relatively simple. The expressive *wanglai* with

the villagers is easy to understand. I will touch upon it, but will concentrate on instrumental *wanglai*.

It is easy to understand the *lishang* criteria of moral judgement and human feelings. Once the local officials put me into the researchers' category I passed their moral judgement. They told me that they were moved by my choosing, (in the two villages respectively), a poor area or a bad time to do research there, regardless of my injury, and starting work immediately, etc.

However, some criteria were mixed together. For example, after I finished my fieldwork in Neiguan Village, I asked a head of the township how much I should pay for the place where I lived. He told me that I could pay any amount which I felt it to be worth. For me the place was convenient for my fieldwork because the township office is located in Neiguan Village. However, there were no bath, shower or flush toilet facilities because of poverty and the lack of water resources. The only public toilet in the end corner of the township courtyard was about 100 meters away from where I lived. It was dirty and cold because it was a big manure pit with simple half enclosed walls and roof, like a pavilion. The big manure pit is for the vegetable plots behind it. Like everybody else who lived there I was allowed to collect one thermos bottle of boiled water per day from the boiler room for drinking and cleaning. It was not possible to get my hair washed and have a shower or bath during my stay. I felt very itchy all over for the first two weeks and then I got used to it, as I was told I would when I arrived. I thought I should pay 10 yuan per night for such a place because a single room in a normal hotel of Dingxi County was only about 20 *yuan* per night.

However I would feel shamed if I offered such a price. The head of the township told me that the place was a part of the permission for me to carry out my fieldwork and the cost depended on the value of my work. So it was difficult to value it, and I paid nothing. I told him that I would remember that I owe them a great deal because I learnt much from such valuable experiences in my fieldwork. He told me that it was good to be generous to me about the accommodation because he found that I was the first researcher to live there so long without a break. Furthermore he told me that he did not take care of me while I was there, as

he was told to do by the higher officials, because he had wanted to see how I coped without special care. At this stage our relationship was instrumental *wanglai*. After I passed his test through observing all my work during the fieldwork period, which was the way in which he learnt about me, he decided to make a closer relationship, i.e. expressive *wanglai* with me. If I had failed the test he would have stopped the process of making a closer relationship with me, he might even have had a hostile feeling towards me.

The head of the township then took me to a meeting room and showed me proudly some calligraphy by Fei Xiaotong written specially for the township, which hangs in the middle of the front wall. The content was about shaking off poverty and building up a fortune (*tuopin zhifu*). He said that Fei *lao* (a respectful way to address him) was a pioneer in developing the north west of China (*kaifa daxibei de kaituo zhe*) and I should be one of the people who carry it on (*houji zhe*) because I was educated in England too. He hoped the wind (*feng*) from England would blow real water (*shui, yingguo de fengshui*) to the dried land, literally to help them shake off poverty and build up a fortune.

The above conversation shows that when I was doing the calculation he was thinking something completely different to me. On the one hand, they were generous to me and did not expect any payment from me. On the other hand, the sincere words and earnest wishes from the head of the township also moved me deeply. Although they have limited resources, they treated me as well as they could. I understood that he wanted to keep relations with me by letting me not simply clear out the balance (*jiezhang*) of the place where I slept. The way in which he used the analogy of English *fengshui* in religious sense means he knows their hope may or may not become true.

My expenditure in gaining access and knowing informants also involved both vertical and horizontal *wanglai* – it was great fun (a kind of human feelings of *lishang*). The relationships between the institutions and me, and the institutions and the villagers are vertical, whereas that between the villagers and me is horizontal. My case shows that I was able to gain resources from the institutions without bribing anybody. I personalised the institutional relationship and gained resources

from it relying on my previous achievements when I was in China. The institutional resources on which I relied were stored up by the villagers over a long period. I then completed the triangle by paying resources directly back to the villagers. This logic is confirmed by the Xiajia villagers (Yan, 1996b:130-31). There were a few other possibilities. If I paid back to the resources' controllers themselves, it would be counted as bribery. If I had paid back to the collective it would have been used in some other ways and might have gone back to the local cadres. A Kaixiangong villager even said that it would be nice if we could eat as much as possible from the collective until their resources dried out, because an ending of the collective would be a start of the eagerly anticipated private enterprise. As Li Youmei said in 2002 in a telephone conversation, the collective gave birth to the private. She had found that in Kaixiangong Village everybody was taking things from the collective. The only difference was that the village cadres took much more than normal villagers did. A certain degree of flexibility is always involved in the creative process of *lishang-wanglai*. In that case I could be forgiven if I did not pay the collective because I had done my share to speed up the collapse of the collective. If I had lived in the luxury hotel, that would have been another case. A villager told me that I was wise not to live in the luxury hotel because that would have meant I grabbed too much from them. The villagers would have hated me in the way they hated corrupt officials.

The rational calculation of *lishang* was also involved. Although my calculation of payment in the township was useless, I was still thinking about the payment after I went to the County. However, I found that their arrangement for my accommodation involved another kind of rational calculation. When I asked Yan why he could not arrange for me to live with a villager's family by simply paying for it, he also explained to me that it was not easy to work out a suitable amount of money for me to pay for a family where I could stay. It was also not easy to select a suitable family for me to stay with. The simplest thing for them was to find a way from official resources, without involving too much complication.

I also asked Yan why they did not want to charge me if I came back for refreshment from time to time in the grand hotel. His explanation was that he categorised me with other researchers who came from other parts of China.

Although I came from the UK, he applied similar entertainment criteria to me. He asked me not to worry about it because the local government would pay for all the entertainment allowance (*zhaodaifei*), as they did for many other projects which have been carried out there from all over the world for many years. He told me that they either travelled around with the local officials, or lived in the county hotel and made day trips to the side, or came in small groups and lived in a village for a few days. In addition he told me that if I did not live there most of the hotel rooms would be empty anyway, because they are normally used for meetings, by higher authorities and guests from everywhere.

Consider my side now. During my fieldwork time the villagers always asked me some questions, like “Where do you sleep?” and “Where do you eat?” They even asked the question “Why didn’t they let you live in a luxury suite in the hotel rather than leaving them empty?” I was not then sure why they asked such questions. I realise now that this is a rational way in which they learnt from me. Here is my budget for the trips, established before I went to China. It was about total £3,000 in total, which is equivalent to RMB 37,500 *yuan*, according to the exchange rate then¹². The internal and international travel and expenditure took about 50 per cent, 11 per cent for living expenditure in Neiguan, 27 percent in Kaixiangong, and 12 per cent for everything else. In other words, I allowed myself to spend about 4,000 *yuan* in Neiguan and 10,000 *yuan* in Kaixiangong. This budget was based on my understanding of the villages’ living standards¹³ and I assumed it would cover all my accommodation there. In reality, I spent more or less the amount that I budgeted, but on the villagers themselves, rather than the local officials and the village cadres.

In terms of the religious sense of *lishang*, informants told me that I had *yuan* (lot or luck by which people are brought together) with the village. It can be summarized as *tianshi*, *dili* and *renhe* (timeliness, favourable terrain and friendly people). In terms of timeliness the villagers told me that I should write a book about the changes of their life over the sixty years since Fei conducted his first fieldwork. For them the significance of sixty years (rather than fifty years) is that it is a whole cycle according to the Chinese calendar. Moreover, they remembered XF’s lifelong regret about not writing a book about the changes of the village over half a century.

In terms of favourable terrain, the villagers said that although so many people had visited the village from foreign countries, only XF and I were doing Ph.D. degrees in British universities. Therefore I should publish a book about the village in England, like XF did. In terms of friendship with people, the villagers told me that I have good *renyuan* (popularity) with the village. They would welcome me to do fieldwork there anytime.

One last little story related to *yuan* is that SF brought back a bag of dried green beans (*xun qingdou*) for me from the village after he came back from the ceremony of XF's sixty years in academia. He told me that the villagers heard I had got married and asked him to bring the *xun qingdou* for my present. The *xun qingdou* was a special product from Kaixiangong Village. It provides additional taste and contents for tea. I was moved when I saw the bag of *xun qingdou*. The process of producing it would involve several people several days' part-time work, picking, peeling, drying under sunshine, boiling with flavours, and drying over the fire. It was also one of the contents of labour support in my research. I feel sorry that SF cannot remember from whom this came because it was given on a flying visit. I cannot thank him or her. This is an unfulfilled cherished desire of mine. It will bring me back to Kaixiangong again one day¹⁴.

7.2.2. A creative process

Although I have shown earlier that the mutual learning process can be seen over a long period, my fieldwork experience also shows that the field situation can be changed from time to time, even within a short period. So gaining access and knowing informants is a creative process insofar as it requires adaptation to change.

After I came back to the Dingxi County from Neiguan Village I asked Yan why I couldn't simply live with a family and pay my living expenses while I was doing my fieldwork in the village. This was what I imagined would happen before I went to China. He told me that it was no longer the fashion (*bu zuoxing*) for the local officials to arrange (*anpai*) for a visitor or a visiting member of a work team to live with a peasant's family for a few months. In the People's Commune period, officials or researchers would institute the "three together" (*santong*, namely eating

together, sleeping together, and working together) working pattern when they stayed in a village, for firsthand experience. It was then normal for local officials to arrange for them to stay with a family because it was part of a big family – production brigade or team.

Even during the post Mao era the situation changed from time to time. Supported by Fei Xiaotong, researchers and students from Shanghai University had started to carry out fieldwork in Kaixiangong Village from 1983 onwards and a fieldwork station had been set up in the mid 1980s. They created a way to enter the site. As a group they lived in guestrooms in the Village Committee Courtyard for free. The project paid the cost price to Aming, a five-guaranteed old man, to cook food and look after the guestrooms. The researchers in the original study of social support, also from Shanghai University, followed the same pattern in 1991. Since then the village administration had divided into two parts: the main body moved into a new building inside the big courtyard of the enterprises, the rest remained in the old building. In the village enterprises' courtyard there was another building for entertainment. It included one kitchen, a few dining rooms, one guests' suite, and warehouses. The village collective employed a chef for cooking. Three technicians shared a guests' suite and ate in the kitchen. In the old Village Committee courtyard, the guestrooms had become a sort of inn for carters (*dache dian*). These guestrooms were for outsiders doing business in the free market in the village. Each of the guestrooms was shared between many people, so it was no longer offered to researchers.¹⁵

For these reasons my visits to both sites were different to those of previous researchers. For the local authority or village collective, Chinese researchers either came with a group of people based on an institution, i.e. the original study, or through an institutional introduction, plus some personal support. Overseas visitors only stayed for a few days, which involved them in different types of entertainment. I was an individual, coming from a British university with some informal letters of introduction, and was to stay for about three months. I did not know how they would treat me.

My behaviour was rather like Deng Xiaoping's famous slogan: test carefully the stones under your feet step by step when you cross a river which you do not know (*mo zhe shitou guo he*). My first night¹⁶ in Kaixiangong was spent in BY Zhou's house, the Director of Women's Federation of the village, because I came back too late with her son from a local temple in the township for the event on Chinese New Year's Eve. I slept in her daughter's room. On the following day I asked Zhou whether I could share the room with her daughter by paying for it. Her answer was that I could stay there sometimes because her daughter worked in another township and only came back once a week. However, it would mess up her relationship with her daughter because she actually was her adopted daughter and Zhou wanted to keep her life as normal as possible. She also told me that the reason she did not spend the New Year's Eve with her was because she stayed with her natal family. In the end, Zhou even told me that it was not easy for her to arrange any household in the village for me to stay in. I did not understand why then but I eventually found out the real reason. I will tell this later in the section.

I also asked Wang, the guard of the township enterprise, whether I could share a room with a worker in the building, as I did for my first week there. He told me that it would not be proper for me to live at such a low standard (*di biao zhun*). I told him that the standards were much higher than in Neiguan Village, where I had lived for my other fieldwork. He explained to me that the arrangement of accommodation was not just a matter of a place to sleep or eat. It was a matter of treatment (*daiyu*) and to get good treatment is half the success of fieldwork. Like Yan in Dingxi, Wang also categorised me as a researcher. This matter of the importance of *daiyu* is also confirmed by another incident. After I gave a talk to postgraduates in Fudan University, a professor told me that they should have arranged accommodation for me in the luxury hotel, as they did for him and other researchers. I thought the ensuite guestroom was good enough for me, although it was not comparable with the luxury hotel nearby.¹⁷ For him where I stayed should be equivalent to my academic status.

Although I tried different ways to arrange accommodation for myself, I had to accept all the arrangements by the local officials in both sites. Afterwards I felt both happy and embarrassed about it. There was a conflict inside me all the time.

On the one hand, I was glad the local officials treated me so well because I wanted them to fit me in the researcher category and they did. What they had done for me was much more than I expected. I was also moved deeply by their kindness to me. I really needed their permission with whatever strings attached, including all their arrangements for my accommodation. I was unusual compared to previous researchers because I was an individual carrying out fieldwork. I would not have got anything done if everybody there treated me as a stranger or even a spy. The local officials and village cadres were gatekeepers. The type of treatment I got from them was a sign of how much they accepted me. They had a very strong influence on the villagers because both places were models of the development of the collective economy.

On the other hand, I felt embarrassed because I felt that I was taking advantage by accepting both the permission and their entertainment at the same time. This was against my principles, as I understood that there would be a danger of leaving a bad name behind me. For a Chinese scholar nothing is worse than losing face in such a way. Furthermore, I might also be losing trust from the villagers. Thus I had to explore my own way to enter the site and know the informants (see previous section).

The local officials and the heads of the village collective had to create the proper way to entertain different people. The first thing was to put me into the right category as soon as I appeared. Although I was unusual, it was not too difficult for them to decide which category I should be in. The different letters convinced them that I was a researcher. Apart from the reason I mentioned before, which was that they respected my spirit of hard work, my book also proved it. Surprisingly, both the Dingxi County official and the senior official in Wujiang City talked proudly about my book to almost everybody whenever they mentioned me. Thus, my identity was sorted out.

Then they had to work out how to treat me. The entertainment in Dingxi County included allowing me to live for free in the township, a free hotel suite plus meals in the county, and a free local tour by jeep for a few days before I left there. This was a simple case. The case in Kaixiangong was more complicated. As I

mentioned before, the female manager decided to let me stay in a simple suite. I felt that she had worked out a sensible way to treat me, and was rather creative. For the manager, the question of where I should sleep was not a matter of money. It was a matter of working out a proper treatment for me. I have had a talk with her about the arrangement afterwards. She told me that normally researchers and other types of visitors who visit the village would be placed in the luxury hotel for a short period, free of charge. It would not have been proper to arrange this for me because she did not know whether or not I was qualified (*gou zige*). It was also not right for me to live there for such a long time for free. I asked her about letting me share a room with female workers, with a half joking tone. She laughed, put her arm round my shoulder and said, “come on, you are *dushu ren* (a scholar or student with a high degree) after all”. Being a *dushu ren* is very distinctive in Chinese society because Chinese people respect their knowledge in general. From her point of view it was just right for me to live in a simple suite for free.

Recently, I was told by a previous head of Kaixiangong, YG Zhou, that I could now eat reasonable food easily in the village because the catering service (*chuishifuwu*) became very popular after privatisation (*gaizhi*) from 1997 onwards. I could also rent a reasonable private place to live because the villagers are no longer afraid to earn money in such a way¹⁸. I understand now why BY Zhou felt then that it was too difficult to arrange for me to live with any villager’s family, because private business was restrained. I was glad at this change in Kaixiangong because that was what they had wanted for years. However, YG Zhou told me that the villagers said everything can be changed except that the Communist Party is always correct and Fei Xiaotong is always correct. What they say gives one much food for thought.

The operation of *lishang-wanglai* as a whole is very complicated. However, as a principle in personalised relationships it can be simply defined as a creative process based on some criteria (*lishang*). One way in which *lishang-wanglai* is a creative process is that working out actions (*wanglai*) that simultaneously satisfy different criteria of *lishang* is difficult, often serendipitous, and satisfying. For example, when Wang helped me by letting me stay with his family he never expected that his second brother would suddenly die from liver cancer just a few days after the Chinese New Year. He had to go back home for the funeral and he also did not

expect that I could give him 200 *yuan*, which is equivalent nearly to his monthly wage. For me it was natural that I should show my sympathy in this way because I understood that they needed money for such an event. Surprised, they strongly refused to take this. I was confused to begin with. I felt my self-esteem was injured and was embarrassed. I was even a little bit annoyed with this and almost took the money back because I felt them too hypocritical. But at that moment I also felt uncomfortable with this situation and wanted to work out the best way to solve this. I then asked them to give an old sister a little bit of face (*gei dajie yidian mianzi*). Eventually, they accepted this. It could have had another outcome if I had given up. They told me the reason they refused me was because they did not want the money to sully their generous motive when they helped me. They also told me that they were moved deeply from the bottom of their hearts when I gave them the money. Wang's wife even told me that they did need money and had borrowed only a small amount from the enterprise because it was in a depressed state (*changli bu jingqi*). They thought it could be possible to borrow some money from me but they would never under any circumstances ask me for such a favour because it was immoral. I was deeply moved by them and felt guilty that I almost misunderstood them. In the end we were pleased that we understood each other so well.

As a creative process *lishang-wanglai* may involve a bi-directional reciprocal relationship. Although the creative process of *lishang-wanglai* can be such a reciprocal relationship seen over a long-term period and through different people, the circle is not a solid line. This means in a bi-directional reciprocal relationship the return sometimes can not be seen at all. For example, when Han, the vice-editor of the Chinese Women's Newspaper provided a letter for me, I thought that I was lucky because it looked like a fortuitous phenomenon. This case involved a relationship between Han and me. However, it also could be understood as an inevitable outcome from the editor of the rural women's magazine's social investment input. When she introduced me to Han, her colleague, she did not expect that she could get any help from me. However, a few years later I had a chance to help her when she was in London. She had even forgotten that she had helped me until I mentioned the story about the letter from Han. She laughed and

said that good people would always have good results in return eventually (*haoren zongshi you haobao de*). This means that she agreed to the idea of helping anyone, leading to good results which can come from anybody.

My experience of gaining access to field sites shows that anyone could create a link to any place for fieldwork in China, if the place is open to foreigners, introduced by a subject related to central or local government bodies, universities, research institutions, relatives, or friends, etc. A thorough understanding of *lishang-wanglai* could help fieldwork researchers learn how to gain access and establish relationships for fieldwork in Chinese society. Although I am introducing my topic of *lishang-wanglai* by using China, the same considerations may well apply for all fieldworkers. Naturally there would be different ways and conventions to establish a relationship in different places. But anybody who gains field access is learning about how personal relationships are established in that society, for whatever purposes. It is always necessary to learn this in order to do fieldwork. *Lishang-wanglai* thus has methodological implications because everybody enters interpersonal relationships in the course of doing fieldwork. In particular, anybody at any time going into the field to investigate any subject has to enter into the personal relationships which they are investigating. This obviously is not a simple purchase or market exchange, although there may be payment involved. Therefore fieldworkers must necessarily learn how to relate to the people in their places of investigation. They need to learn the principles of personalised relationship and the local system for establishing trust. Therefore, gaining access and maintaining relationships are things we should learn all the time, which will in general be different in every new piece of fieldwork. *Lishang-wanglai* is a topic for all the fieldworkers because they have to establish personal relationships in doing the fieldwork.

7.3. A case study of *lishang-wanglai* beyond Kaixiangong

This example comes from my observation when I was doing fieldwork in Kaixiangong Village. My supervisor Stephan Feuchtwang (hereinafter “SF”) was invited to visit this village and the area for a few days. Before the visit I was told that SF would be entertained nicely because he was Fei Xiaotong’s (hereinafter

“XF” whenever it involves him as examples rather than quoting his ideas)¹⁹ guest, although I myself was not so sure how he would be treated. During the welcome feast the local officials kept on asking questions about the relationship between SF and XF. In the end they worked out that SF was XF’s *shidi* (younger brother under the same master or junior fellow apprentice) because both of them used to be supervised by Raymond Firth at LSE (the London School of Economics and Political Sciences)²⁰. Although SF told them modestly that he was one generation younger than XF, I heard an official tell a waitress, after the feast, to keep the same standard (*tongyang de daiyu*) for the rest of his stay because this was appropriate treatment (*daiyu*) for XF’s younger brother under the same master. The standard of the meal was 18 dishes. 8 small cold dishes (like different types of salad and similar to a starter in the West) were displayed on the inner ring of a big circular table, then 10 different types of hot dishes were served one by one as soon as each was cooked. Apart from this, all the entertainment for SF, which included meeting the vice Mayor of Wujiang City and some senior officials, visiting different places accompanied by some officials and researchers, and food and accommodation in the best hotel, Wujiang Hotel, was arranged and paid by the Wujiang Foreign Affairs Office.

SF offered to pay for a meal for the local officials and researchers to thank them for everything on the day he was leaving. His proposed budget for this was equivalent to the welcome feast. I thought it was reasonable and asked them about the cost. I was told it cost 500 *yuan*. After I told SF’s idea to the local officials, the vice Chairperson of Wujiang Political Consultative Conference thought she should find a restaurant which had a special relationship with the Government for SF, to make the 500 *yuan* more useful. The other official suggested that they should simply take any place (*suibian zhao yige difang*) to eat. In the end, the thank you meal took place in a small restaurant in a town on the way to Shanghai. Surprisingly, the meal was ten times worse than the welcome feast. I asked the officials why this was the case. They said the gold content of government’s currency (*hanjinliang*) was much higher than normal currency. This explanation did not satisfy me and I was still wondering about the meaning of the meal afterwards. I found out the real reason later, from some informal conversations on preparations for XF’s ceremony to

celebrate sixty years in academia. The meaning of the meal was to let SF remember he owes Wujiang a *renqing*, an obligation of human feeling, by giving him a shock (*rang ta mingbai mingbai*). The officials knew SF could attend XF's ceremony and wanted to make sure that he would express his thanks by coming back to honour it. It sounds horrible, for a non-Chinese, that the local officials treated SF in such a way, but it looked perfectly normal to them. My understanding then was that they had "fair play" with SF. "Fair play" is an English term, which appeared in China in the 1930s. In Chinese it is pronounced as *feiepolai*. I checked with the local official about the meaning of the meal with an explanation of *feiepolai* and he agreed with it, but still stressed the word *renqing*.

A *wanglai* between any scholar and the local officials normally should be an institutional reciprocity. In this case the scholar was a professor from a foreign university who came from England and the relationship between him and the local officials was still an institutional reciprocity. However, the local officials combined generous and expressive *wanglai* with the institutional reciprocity²¹ by which they would normally treat any other guests from foreign countries (*waibin*). The local officials were proud that Kaixiangong Village and Wujiang City were able to attract a foreign professor's visit. They deserved to be the "land of ceremony and propriety (*liyi zhi bang*)" as China has long been called in the world. There is a popular Chinese saying, which originally came from Confucius Analects, "Is it not a joy to have friends come from afar (*you peng zi yuanfang lai, bu yi le hu*)?" At this stage the *lishang* of morality and human feelings was shown in the entertainment, which mixed generous and expressive *wanglai* into the institutional reciprocity.

After they discovered a special relationship between SF and XF they began to personalise the above reciprocity into a personalised institutional *wanglai* by increasing the standard of entertainment to SF. Thus, the relationship between SF and the local officials became personalised institutional *wanglai* rather than normal institutional *wanglai*. Soon after that they discovered another link between SF and XF, which was that he would come again in a few months time to attend a ceremony for XF's 60 years' academic career. Thus the personalised institutional *wanglai* became mixed with generous, expressive and instrumental *wanglai*. The

standard of catering showed that the rational calculation criterion of *lishang* must have been involved. In this case a religious sense of *lishang* also carried a large weight. The fact that SF was XF's younger brother under the same master (*shidi*) showed he had *yuanfen* (predestined relationship, lot or luck) in this area. This put SF into a more likely position for his relationship to be personalised by the local officials than other professors from foreign countries. The fact that SF would come back again soon made another coat of *yuanfen* colour on top of the special relationship between XF and SF. The discovery of “younger brother under the same master” between SF and XF and the endless subsequent comments about it added more flavour into the enjoyment of creativity for the officials, and was another criterion of *lishang*.

Let us step back some distance to see the case. According to the principle of *lishang-wanglai* or “raising pigs” there were two processes involved in this case. One was the whole process of making and maintaining *wanglai* between SF and China. Wujiang's entertainment to SF was only one point in this whole process or circle. I will illustrate this by quantifying the different reasons for the *wanglai*. I estimate that 30 per cent of the *wanglai*'s importance came because SF is a distinguished foreign academic with more than twenty years of Chinese studies. His special relationship with XF gave another 30 per cent. Thus he was respected in the above ways, which were expressed in the entertainment by the local officials, to a total extent of 60 per cent. 10 per cent more was from their duty as the host; 10 per cent was from their desire to be in the “land of ceremony and propriety (*liyi zhi bang*)”, 10 per cent was the enjoyment of discovering the special relationship between SF and XF; and the final 10 per cent was an instrumental input for investment (L. Yang, 1957) to strengthen the relationship between SF and XF. Thus the motives for the *wanglai* were multiple, and not all of equal importance.

However, after SF offered a meal to thank them they played a “fair play” with him, which caused a misunderstanding and could have led to a negative *wanglai*. The misunderstanding came from different understandings of the relationship between SF and the local officials. If it were not for the fact that SF might come back again in the near future everything could have been much simpler, because Wujiang did very well at maintaining the relationship between SF and China. The fact that SF

would come back soon involved him in a more complicated situation. Although it was normal, from SF's point of view, for him to express his thanks to the local officials, for them it was not normal to accept his thank you meal. This involved another kind of calculation of *lishang*. For the local officials whether or not SF would come back was a judgement of their entertainment for SF. If they accepted SF's thank you meal it meant that they let SF "clear the balance" with them. If SF did not turn up they would be blamed for not keeping a good enough relationship with him, even though they worked very hard to strengthen the relationship between SF and China. They actually did not expect to accept anything from SF including the thank you meal, because for them the thank you meal meant a full stop of the *wanglai* between SF and the local institution. They did not want to be blamed for ending the relationship. This was their misunderstanding of SF's intention. Based on this, the "fair play" was designed to show SF that the thank you meal was not enough to "clear the balance". This, actually, was another way of saying that they wanted to keep a closer relationship with him. In fact my understanding of "fair play" then was more rational than their explanation of *renqing*, which is another criterion of *lishang*. They could never say "no" to SF's thank you meal because they thought that this kind of refusal would be too embarrassing to SF. They would never directly tell SF that he owes Wujiang a *renqing* either, hence the "fair play", which was clear to the officials, but sounds silly and hurtful when retold outside China.

In the end SF did go back to Wujiang and everybody was happy about it. Afterwards a village cadre told me that the local officials thought that SF was loyal to them (*jiang yiqi*), understood their human feelings (*dong renqing*), and the predestined relationship became true (*yuanfen lingyan*), etc., which relates to the moral, human feelings, and religious senses of *lishang*. From the local officials' point of view the relationship between them and SF was much more expressive *wanglai* after his return to Wujiang. The relationship would, however, have dropped down to a normal institutional or slightly negative *wanglai* if SF had not gone back there. The local officials would have thought that SF, as a Chinese specialist, did not even understand Chinese *renqing* and they did not have *yuanfen* with him. It might have added a little bit of negative feeling onto the local people's

feeling because they were already generally hostile to researchers who were constantly studying them.

In order to understand fully why, under the assumption of SF's not returning, the above relationship would deteriorate, another process of *lishang-wanglai* or "raising pigs" has to be involved. The fact that SF would come back soon also involved him in the more general relationship between researchers and local people. The local officials had entertained many researchers over past years, both individuals and groups, from inside and outside China. SF's visit was thus one point in the whole process or circle. The local officials' hint using SF's thank you meal would work only under a certain cultural context in which both sides understood each other very well. The local officials did not know this and assumed that SF would understand it. For them it would be nice if SF could realise why it should be so (*wu chu daoli*) without explicit explanation. If SF did not come back it would reduce his relationship with the local people a little, but not do great harm to the relationship between researchers and the local area, because only 10 per cent of the input involved in the entertainment was instrumental. This kind of Chinese rational calculation is different from SF's. He very much wanted to go back to Wujiang for XF's ceremony, and his decision to do so depended only on whether he could organise a grant for the trip.

This case shows that for the local officials it was a novel and thus creative matter to decide how to entertain SF, because SF's visit was an informal visit. This was different from formal arrangements, to which they would simply apply standard diplomatic etiquette. In the creative process there were many things that could go wrong. For example, to provide a fixed set meal in such large quantities for a few people every day was not a sensible arrangement. It would seem to be both unnecessary and repetitive for a few people to eat such a big meal everyday. However, according to a waitress, it was necessary to do so and would not be boring if one enjoyed some of the dishes each time. She told me that the set meal was very well designed for higher level leaders and honoured foreign guests (*guibin*). It could show local cooking skills, like colours, smells and taste, balance of ingredients, shapes of chopping, ways of cooking, etc. The variety of food was carefully chosen because it is very difficult to cater for all tastes (*zhong kou nan*

tiao). So both cold and hot dishes included fish, pork, beef, lamb, chicken, egg, bean curd, vegetables, and so on in order to cover different requests and tastes.

The “fair play” was also unnecessarily clever. It might seem odd to a Westerner that the local officials sometimes asked questions which pry into other people’s private matters. Sometimes they could not even ask a question straightforwardly, but used a hint. However, after I reviewed some related cases in Kaixiangong Village, I recognized that the question, i.e. what is the relationship between XF and SF, was the kind of question they always ask themselves. The “fair play” game was also what they always play with each other. They would never imagine that anything associated with a public fund or grant could affect SF’s future visit. Such misunderstanding could easily happen between the local officials and a Western professor. It also could happen among Chinese people: rural and urban, inside and outside a village, even different generations, gender, and social or economic positions within the same village. Like it or not, it was the way they lived. The endless behaviour of “raising pigs” or the fascination of the *lishang-wanglai* in making and maintaining personalised relationships gets its vitality from the enjoyment of creativity. This enjoyment, in Chinese society as a whole, is not without its cost in misunderstandings and lost opportunities.

¹ I attended the NGO Forum of the Fourth World Women's Conference in Beijing as a UK based female Chinese scholar whose research involved gender issues. The direct reason for my gaining the chance to go to the NGO Forum was because I was also one of the organisers of a conference on Social-economic Transformation and Women in China in SOAS, June 1995, and a co-editor of the proceedings from the conference, (West, Zhao, Chang, and Cheng, 1999, Macmillan).

² The last minority people of the 56 minorities in China.

³ A Beijing traditional liquor with a strong taste but colourless, which is distilled twice from sorghum.

⁴ Sometimes I ate at food-stalls on the street on market days (twice a week). There were also different types of fresh fruit and vegetables which could be eaten without cooking, e.g. a big white radish which was especially delicious. For breakfast I always bought some fresh made deep-fried twisted dough sticks (*youtiao*) and soymilk from a stall at the street. This kind of traditional popular way of eating breakfast was newly introduced to the town.

⁵ The book is published by Henan people's Publishing house, 1993. It was unusual to give such an academic book to local officials. However, it did work.

⁶ A similar thing happened again in Kaixiangong Village (see "c" of section 7.2.3.1). However, I do not know whether the local officials interested in my information affected local officials' decision making.

⁷ The way in which I am using the word corruption is the same as an anthropologist, i.e. Charles Stafford 2000b.

⁸ It is debatable whether or not a researcher should take part in any policy making activity in his or her field site, especially in China. Some Chinese researchers, i.e. Li Xiaojiang, Guo Yuhua, etc. told me that it was necessary to do so. My experience shows that whether and how much to take part in policy making activities would depend on how well one understood the site, and can be judged by the corresponding benefit or harm to the local people.

⁹ Up to September 2003, Fei Xiaotong had visited Kaixiangong village 25 times since 1936, his first visit to the village. 14th April 1996 was his 19th visit to the village.

¹⁰ See 1996, 4, Journal of Beijing University.

¹¹ Sincerity is the way of Heaven (*cheng, cheng zhe tian zhi dao ye* 诚, 诚者天之道也).

¹² This came from the GBCC, UCC, City University and the WIDE for the Women's NGO Forum.

¹³ The average per capita income was 977 *yuan* in Neiguan in 1994 and 4,078 *yuan* in Kaixiangong in 1995.

¹⁴ I found out the identity of the gift giver recently through telephone conversations with villagers. I agreed with him that in return I should give him a copy of my book about Kaixiangong Village in Chinese one day.

¹⁵ Another hidden reason for the village's new arrangement was caused by a conflict between the village and the Jinfeng silk factory. The factory was established in the village in 1929. It was jointly re-established in 1967 by seven neighbouring production brigades and was taken over by the township in 1972. After that it grew rapidly and built some buildings with many guests' suites and a luxury hotel. But it never paid for sewage purification to the village. Since then there was an unwritten rule that all the researchers and visitors visiting or studying the village should have entertainment from the town enterprise.

¹⁶ I spent my first half night (17th February) when I arrived in the village and first week with Mr Wang's family, except the first night (18th February) when I started my fieldwork for the Chinese New Year's event.

¹⁷ The luxury suites cost about 80-200 *yuan* each per night at the business rate. Although there were many rooms empty in the hotel, I would never have desired to live in such a place for fieldwork because it would be beyond my budget if they charged me, and I would feel morally all wrong if I did live in such a luxurious place without paying for it.

¹⁸ Mr Zhou's words were soon proved true by research students from Fudan University in spring 2001. They were six males and eight females. They paid 20 *yuan* per day for a town room with three meals full board in seven households for four days.

¹⁹ Fei Xiaotong (Hsiai-Tung Fei, 1910-), Professor of Peking University. He was the author of "*Peasant life in China—a field study of country life in the Yangtze Valley*", 1939 Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd; winner of Huxley Memorial Medal, by The Royal Anthropological Institute, 1981; and a vice-Chairman of Standing Committee of National People's Congress. Due to Fei's special academic and political position, it is impossible for me to avoid involving Fei's relationships with his academic

circle, his hometown and Kaixiangong Village where he carried out his fieldwork in 1930s, as part of the subject of my restudy.

²⁰ B. Malinowski (1884-1942) joined the supervising with Firth after he came back from a USA trip. According to Fei (2002), Firth was the tutor (*daoshi*) who decided on the title of Fei's PhD thesis, whereas Malinowski was his director (*yeshi*) who was in charge of the supervising of Fei's thesis (19, 25 & 29).

²¹ See section 6.1.3 for definitions of generous *wanglai*, expressive *wanglai*, instrumental *wanglai* and negative *wanglai*.