China in Comparative Perspective Seminar, LSE

What Holds Chinese Society Together? –– A New Perspective from a Chinese Model of Social Relations and Relatedness *lishang-wanglai* (礼尚往来)

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Chaired by Prof Stephan Feuchtwang
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Introduction

In 2005 the roundtable "China Studies: anything new?" of the 4th International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS4) raised the question: what might "China Studies" become as a multidisciplinary subject? Three conferences have tackled or are tackling the question in 2007. They are the "International Conference on Contemporary China Studies", at Hong Kong in January, and "Defining the Field: Themes in Contemporary China Studies" at Cambridge in April, and the "International Conference on Chinese Society and China Studies" in Nanjing in May. However, the proposed themes and topics of the above conferences overlook a very important one -- "Chinese social relations". Happily, my panel application of "reviving Chinese social relations" was merged into one of eight major themes of the Cambridge Conference - Business and Social Relations.

Chinese social relations have a distinct character of their own, differing markedly from those of other cultures. In the 1940s Talcott Parsons of Harvard University generalised Chinese society as forming particularistic relationships in contrast with the universalistic impersonality of the West, and his idea has been broadly accepted. Parsons was the guiding spirit of the Harvard Department of Social Relations, created for interdisciplinary collaboration between anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists. But this was disbanded in the early 1970s, and the theme of social relations has been sub-divided into human relationships, personal relationships, interpersonal relationships, international relations, social networks, and involved studies of social capital, cultural capital, human capital and relatedness, and so on.

Over the last two decades the Chinese characters relating to Chinese social relationships have become popular – terms such as *mianzi*, *guanxi*, *renqing*, etc. make a frequent appearance. Scholars both in China and the West have studied Chinese social relations in the light of social support, social networks, and social capital. But their efforts have failed to make the study of Chinese social relations, which are at the heart of understanding China, one of the basic themes of China Studies. It's not surprising that in 2006 Andrew Nathan, after summarizing USA China experts' three main theories[1] about the future of China's government, still can't understand why "the stable Chinese polity", (*in question marks),* has to hold China by brutal suppression of religious groups and dissidents.

It's true that in recent years there has been a new wave of interdisciplinary collaboration on studies of social relations. For example the International Association for Relationship Research (IARR) was established in 2004. It claims 700 members representing a wide range of disciplines, including communication, education, family studies, child development, gerontology, human sciences, psychology, anthropology and sociology, etc. But how inter-disciplinary are we here in the UK? Of 22

[1] China's government will collapse (Gordon Chang, 2001), democratize (Bruce Gilley, 2004), or remain authoritarian but more resilient (Andrew Nathan 2003, Minxin Pei, 2006 etc.).

members from the UK only 3 are not psychologists. It would seem that here at least, the divisions between the disciplines of psychology, sociology, and anthropology in the field of personal and social relationship are still very significant.

This seminar will use the question "what holds Chinese society together" to introduce a Chinese model of social relations and relatedness *lishang-wanglai* (礼尚往来), derived from my empirical studies over the past 10 years. It shows how mechanisms that interweave ego or family based networks with certain implicit cultural patterns of social relationships hold local society together, and will help in understanding relationships between the state and society in China. And it may, I believe, even be applicable in other societies.

[This presentation consists of six parts, ***slide 2****]*

1. "Power of lunch": two ways of making research grant applications
2. Two "Fei Xiaotong"s and two "State"s
3. Kaixiangong Village – with and without a "China's gentry"
4. "How can nearly 80 per cent of the Chinese population live in rural areas without any state welfare"?
5. A brief review of what holds Chinese society together
6. A Chinese model of social relations and relatedness

1. "Power of lunch": two ways of making research grant applications

10 days ago in the Cambridge Conference on China Studies one of the audience asked me how the "Chinese model of reciprocity and relatedness – *lishang-wanglai*" can be understood in the Western context, and what is the link between personal and institutional relationships where *lishang-wanglai* operates.

I will begin my presentation by telling a story which inspired the topic of "the power of lunch". In 2005 Professor Ray Paul gave a seminar entitled "Getting and managing Research Grants" at LSE. He said: you fill a grant application form, you send it off and sometime later, you get rejected! The reject rate in both ESRC and EPSRC is 80 per cent. "What can be done to improve your chances", he asked.

In the seminar Ray asked the audience to think of everything for making a really good grant proposal. [***slide 3***]:
1. Problems?
2. Who are stake holders/why they care/how will it help? -- £?
3. Why give you the money?
4. What is the research?
5. How will you do it? – approach/milestone/structure
6. Dissemination results?

After we did it he then asked us what is missing?????? Nobody was able say more. He said "lunch"

Lunch
-- Investigate roughly, then take officials to lunch!
-- Rewrite, then send; rewrite, and re-lunch if necessary!
Who to lunch
-- Program manager
-- Committee members

-- Keep an eye on the websites, e.g. EPSRC/EU

The idea of having "lunch" with people who provide funding resource immediately reminded me of pulling "*guanxi*" in China. After having lunch with Ray, and meeting him twice more later, I found that lunch provides a platform where applicants and grant providers meet each other in person and can interact informally. Thus the relationship between the grant applicant and the academic-related institutions − the grant-providers − can be personalised.

[***slide 3***]: Ray called these two approaches the conventional way and the modern way because not many academics in the UK understand that "lunch" can increase the chances of getting a research grant. He stressed the "power of lunch" will only work for borderline situations, which means the application itself has to be good enough. To prepare a high standard proposal, including seeking information at meetings with grant officials to improve the proposal, clearly involves institutional relations. It seems there is no need for human feelings to come into it.

However, "the power of lunch" with grant officials shows that "human feelings" are indeed involved in the process of application, just as in a job interview. [In the job interview interpersonal responses are clearly relevant to the candidate's ability to perform the job. In the grant application there are no such considerations of utility, yet it appears that human relationships are nevertheless involved.] If we assume that the process of applying for a research grant is an interactive process like a job interview then the personalized relationships between grant applicants and academic-related institutions has to be important. "The power of lunch" demonstrates that the process of applying for grants is to do with materials, information, as well as people. Human beings have feelings, so it is important to maintain a good relationship with them, whether in the process of grant application or other areas of administrative relations prevail.

However, the differences in the operation of grant application between the UK and China are obvious [***slide 4***]. This slide shows: (1) in both the UK and China, everybody, both applicants and officials, want to do their job well. (2) Feeling out mutual liking brings personal relationships into the institutional relationship, but more strongly in the UK than in China. (3) Public availability of information is strikingly different between the two countries because China hasn't had such a system. (4) The acceptance of "collective bribery" (*jiti shouhui*集体受贿) in China is much greater[2] which is accord with a Chinese saying "no law is able to punish the masses (*fa bu ze zhong*法不责众)". This idea can be used in different ways. I will show how it worked with one example in Kaixiangong Village later. (5) Belief in Heavenly influences is distinctly more Chinese than British. As a Chinese phrase puts, it is the heavenly god's will if I fail after trying with all my heart (谋事在人成事在天).

So we've had two ideas of how to apply for a grant, and considered them in two different countries. Now I am going to show you two "Fei Xiaotong"s, and two "State"s, in China.

2. Two "Fei Xiaotong"s and two "State"s

In recent years scholars in China studies have been asking "what can China studies offer intellectually and theoretically to the understanding of human existence" (e.g. Mobo Gao, ICAS4, 2005, ??). At the same time, sino-anthropologists' have been asking what the "study of China" might contribute

[2] A friend told me how one day he received 10,000 *yuan* RMB from a grant applicant. In accordance with other committee members' "conventional way" he handed the money to his department, and the department distributed it to staff members as a bonus from so called "gray money". But also my friend paid special attention to the application. If the quality is good enough he will vote for it.

conceptually to more general studies of culture, political economy, politics, or society. This movement can be traced back to 1962 when Maurice Freedman made a speech in memory of Malinowski entitled "A Chinese Phase in Social Anthropology".

Only four years after Freedman's speech, the Cultural Revolution was unleashed in China, and it became impossible to study Chinese society itself for more than a decade. Happily for us all, anthropology came to be seen as respectable again in the late 1970s, and especially after 1981, when Prof Fei Xiaotong was awarded the Huxley Memorial Medal from the Royal Anthropological Institute. Fei's *Peasant Life in China* (1939)[3] had become a classic reference. While it touched upon every aspect of peasants' lives, its primary stress was on economic life. This is why when the first Chinese translation of Fei's book appeared in the 1986 it made use of the secondary Chinese title (*Jiangcun Jingji −River Village's Economy*) instead of a version of the original English [***slide 5***].

It would appear that Fei's interest was in economics. This is illustrated by the title of his latest essay collection, "*Aimed at Enriching People* (志在富民)" [***slide 6***]. Last year there was a Conference at Wujiang City to celebrate the 70th anniversary of Fei's study of the River Village. Amongst the 31 papers from this conference due to be published in May (ed., Li) there are no empirical studies on the cultural, religious, and political systems of China. It appears that these topics are not addressed by one of China's finest sociologists and anthropologists and his followers.

However, if we check the preface of *Peasant Life in China,* written by Malinowski, you will find Malinowski says that Fei and his colleagues offered to bring out "a fuller account of ancestor-worship; of more complicated system of belief and knowledge" and "a comprehensive picture of the cultural, religious, and political systems of China" (Fei 1939 Malinowski's Preface: xxiii). But this fuller account has never been made, although a great many studies have been carried out in the River Village and elsewhere by scholars from many different disciplines and different countries.

Are we to believe that Fei Xiaotong was only concerned with economic issues, and his whole ambition was "*Aimed at enriching people"*? Two years ago, a few days after Fei Xiaotong passed away, the *South Weekend Newspaper* published an account of an interview with him by Prof Zhu Xueqin of Shanghai University. Zhu revealed Fei's regrets that having become interested in the matter of *China's Gentry* in the 1940s, he had not been able to carry out studies on this important topic after the Liberation in 1949. Unsurprisingly, as the result of this indiscretion, Professor Zhu received serious criticism from his work unit. He was also excluded from taking part in the 2006 Fei memorial Conference. However, a few months ago, one year after Fei passed away, for the first time Fei's collection of essays *China's Gentry* (1953) has been translated and published in Chinese by one of his PhD students. According to the translator, Dr Hui Haimin, "Fei's lifelong aspiration is to understand Chinese society" (Hui, 2006, Preface, p2) [***slide 7***].

So here we can see in China there are two "Fei Xiaotong"s – one big and important one consulted by government, aiming at enriching Chinese people, and another small and hardly-ever-mentioned one interested in Chinese society. But why were Fei or his students unable to fulfill his promise to provide a comprehensive picture of Chinese social, cultural, religious, and political systems to the world while he was still alive? I won't provide my answer in this seminar directly, instead I will challenge you - how well you can understand this question depends on how well you understand China and Chinese society. I believe that to understand Fei Xiaotong and his village provides a key to understanding China itself, because this village is a living fossil and social laboratory.

[3] Fei, Xiaotong (Hsiao-Tung) 1939. *Peasant Life in China: a field study of country life in the Yangtze village*. London London/Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

The River Village is called Kaixiangong [***slide 8, 9, 10]***. It is situated on the south-east bank of Lake Tai and on the lower course of the Yangtze River**.** [***slide11 &12]***Kaixiangong has a total population of 3,044, comprising 790 households and 25 groups, income per capita 8,580 *yuan,* and a land area of 3,090 *mu* in 2006. There were 28 private cars, 850 motorcycles, 730 households built a new house with 1200 air conditioning. 1,230 mobile phones and 720 landline telephones and nearly one quarter of the village households now have broadband internet access!

Over the last 70 years the villagers' fortunes have gone periodically up and down in line with what was happening in the rest of China. In the late 1930s the Japanese War stopped the development of the silk industry; in the later 1950s during the Great Famine period things were so bad that one third of the villagers left the village to become beggars. During the Cultural Revolution period (1966-1978) the villagers had a very low standard of living with income per capita of only around 114 *yuan* (Fei 1986:253). Although rural social reforms began during the late 1970s, private business and spiritual life were both strictly controlled until 1990s. For instance, in 1996 the local government hired workers from outside to destroy the newly built first floor of the workshop of a private enterprise in the village, to limit the size of private business development. They also, in a single day, destroyed about 3,000 temples in Wujiang County, including those of Kaixiangong village afraid that these would be focal points for the villagers to gather together [***slide 13 &14***]. Even in 2003 the newly built village temples came close to being torn down again [***slide 15 &16***].

All this makes it look as if from the 1950s onwards, the local government, representing the central State, controlled the villagers' lives effectively.

However, our previous ESRC social support project led by Prof Stephan Feuchtwang from 1991 to 1994, showed that the state played very little role in Chinese villagers' resource-seeking activities. I should mention that nearly eighty per cent of China's population are rural people who in the 1990s had never been covered by a state benefit system. You need to remember that in urban areas, the state provided everything from the roof over people's heads even to the furniture under it. The coverage of benefits in rural areas by the state's budget was less than 1 per cent (SSB: 1991; Cao 1991:343)[4]. The villagers therefore have had to arrange almost everything by themselves, for example weddings, funerals, building houses, coping with illness and emergencies, etc. The collective and institutions played only a very small role in support of villagers' major events. According to the project report less than 10 per cent of financial support came from collective and institutional sources in Kaixiangong, and this figure was even much lower, only 2.5 per cent on average taking the ten villages studied as a whole (Chang and Feuchtwang 1997: 8 in Kaixiangong and 10 of Summary section) − the relatively favoured position of Kaixiangong being due to its status as a model of collectivism.

Now how can we make sense of the phenomenon that the state had overall control of villagers' lives, and at the same time the state played a very small part in their financial arrangements for their big events?

[*Before I start this I shall show you my list of key Chinese terms. They will be used throughout this talk. If any Chinese terms that I used aren't on the list please don't bother with them – they are less important:* ***slide17 & 18***]

[4] This situation has changed quite lot in rich rural areas from 2004.

3. Kaixiangong village – with and without "China's gentry"

Let's go back to Fei Xiaotong's less well known book *China's Gentry*. It contains essays written in the late 1940s, in the Republican period. According to Fei, the Chinese traditional political system had two lines of defence which prevented an absolute monarchy from becoming intolerably tyrannical. They are the theory of do-nothingness, and an administrative system (1953: 74, 79) which can be described with a popular phrase "the empire's power always stopped at the County level"(皇权止于县). As one old villager, Jiang, commented to me, "one shouldn't stir up the fish too much while it is cooking", a way of saying that the state shouldn't stir up people lives too much. This is actually a Taoist political idea (*Zhi daguo ruo peng xiaoxian*) the theoretical base of "do-nothingness", though Jiang had not heard of it.

How then did the ancient central government rule China "under the county level"? According to Fei, the job of local officials upholding the do-nothing policy was merely to collect taxes and act as judges. Fei picked up one example from Yunnan Province where he worked then. According to Fei the county officials relied on the local "self-governing unit" − the so called *gongjia*, literally, public family, to manage people's lives. The "self-governing unit" was organised by local people to oversee the public affairs of the community, which included problems of irrigation, self-defence, mediation in personal disputes, mutual aid, recreation, and religious activities. Another important function of the "self-governing unit" was to represent the people in their dealings with the government. The leaders of the "self-governing unit" were the gentry class, who, until they became little better than absentee landlords, were rooted in the local community. Therefore, the power of the self-governing unit and gentry class was not derived from the central imperial power, but came from the local people themselves (1953:81-83). It is clear from Fei Xiaotong's point of view that the Chinese gentry played an important dual role by working with the self-governing unit horizontally and communicating with the local and central governments vertically. This is how Chinese society held itself together during the imperial period, over two thousands years.

However, in the Republic Fei pointed out that the local self-governing unit had broken down due to the re-introduction of the *baojia* system. This is a political system imposed from the top, originating in the Song Dynasty. Under it, a community is divided into several *jia*, while several unrelated units are combined into one *bao*. This artificial system cutting across natural settlements had been implemented on and off ever since though never evenly throughout China.[5] In *Peasant life in China* Fei Xiatong tells us that the *baojia* system was new to Kaixangong Village. A villager said to him "if the neighbouring villages are part of Kaixiangong, then the lake that belongs to Kaixiangong people will be shared by the people of the neighbouring villages. But of course this cannot be permitted" (1939:115).

Under the *baojia* system the natural local self-governing unit no longer had any legal power, but retained enough influence for the two systems to come into conflict (1953:85-90). The head of *bao* had the apparent real power of control but had little chance of bringing about any practical measures of social reform; and the local community was losing the gentry class which was no longer able to represent people in negotiations with government. People had no way to express opposition to the central authority. Fei's view was that when the situation becomes intolerable, the only way left is to rebel (1953:85-90). Fei did not tell us how, but Lucien Bianco has done so in *Peasants Without the Party: Grass-roots movements in twentieth-century China*, Armonk: M.E.Sharpe, 2001.

[5] According to Michael Dutton, some parts of China were ruled through both systems, local elites and *baojia* – (*Economy and society* 1988 vol 17 no 2).

Nearly 40 years after Fei Xiaotong's description of how the *baojia* system broke up the local self-governing group, impacting heavily on China's gentry class, Prasenjit Duara described the same phenomenon in *Culture Power and the State* (1988), talking about a 'nexus' of local elites (e.g. Duara 1988, Dutton 1988)− clearly referring to Fei's "China's gentry". Fei Xiaotong hoped that either the Kuomintang or the Communist Party might help establish a local democratic system enabling new local elites to mediate with central government and prevent central tyranny. This can be seen in his book *Peasant life in China* (1939). He quoted the *Law Governing Organization of the District* in 1929 based on Sun Yet-sen's principle of local self-government, and provided an example of compromise reached between central and local government in Fujian Province (1939: 110-111).

After the 1949 Liberation the Communist party controlled China. Party branches were set up everywhere. Initially, Kaixiangong village was divided into two "big" groups (*dazu*) known as Southern and Northern Kaixiangong Villages with one head (*cunzhang*) of each. The head of a big group was also the director of the Peasant Association (*nonghui zhuren*). According to Yao, the vice head of the township in the 1950s, it had been the job of the heads of group to represent villagers in communicating with the local government and Party committee. But in 1956 the agricultural cooperative movement was launched. The south and north Kaixiangong villages and a neighboring village Hehuawan formed a joint "Agricultural Cooperative". The head of the big group in Southern Kaixiangong Villages was chosen as Party Secretary of the Cooperative by the Township Party Committee. Thus the head of group's role had been shifted from representing the villagers to representing the Party.

In 1962 under the People's Commune system the "Agricultural Cooperative" divided again into the Southern and Northern Kaixiangong Villages. The Party Secretary of the "Agricultural Cooperative" Zhou SF had been promoted to be Party Secretary of Irrigation Stations of the Township. The Party Committee appointed another person Chen AX from outside the village to be Party Secretary of Southern Kaixiangong Villages, and appointed one of the deputy heads of the "Agricultural Cooperative" Tan XK to be Party Secretary of Northern Kaixiangong Village. Since then the Party Secretaryship has always been treated as the number one position in the village. The position is a valued one: out of 13 village Party Secretaries, 10 have been promoted to work in town after they finished their terms, the last two stayed in KXG as successful businessmen, as we shall see, and only one has ever been removed, due to having an affair.

This may seem odd to you, but of the two businessmen, the first, Zhou Yuguan, the one whose workshop's first floor had been destroyed, was not even a Party member when he was picked by the township to be in charge of the village in 1996. In spite of this the villagers called him "Party Secretary Zhou". He led the village successfully and peacefully completed the transition to privatization. However four years ago the local Party Committee finally managed to get rid of him because of his continued refusal to become a party member.

His successor was the second businessman, Zhou Yonglin, a successful "upstart" of privatisation. He was owner of the previous village-run silk factory [***slide 19***]. Three weeks ago, on 30th March, Zhou Yonglin resigned from the post of Party Secretary. I will analyse this case with my *lishang-wanglai* model in the last section.

So far we have seen that the Chinese Communist Party destroyed the class of China's gentry, and replaced it with Communist Party branches. Village-level branches virtually ruled rural areas. But as we shall see, this kind of top down administrative system did not succeed in bringing centralized government that much closer to people "under the County level."

4. "How can nearly 80 per cent of the Chinese population live in rural areas without any state welfare"?

This question was explored by Prof Stephan Feuchtwang in the early 1990s, in our previous ESRC social support project. The assumption of the project was that in rural areas informal and household-based social support networks perform the functions of social security. Our research, covering 10 villages in five provinces, strongly confirmed this assumption.

In 1996 I conducted a re-study for the project in two of our 10 villages –one of them being Kaixiangong, the River Village − using the original study's questionnaire and framework [***slide 20***]. The framework classified social support transactions in the following way: sources which are household support, private support, and public support; resources are financial, labour and information; events are family events, emergency events and investment events; and range, which is within village and township, and beyond township.

In addition to studying two major classes of event, and two major sources of resource going back to the late 1970s, I collected full lists of family networks with all events, resources and sources from 34 sampled households. The "transformation of local tradition in China", the second part of the project, led me to pay special attention to local customs and rituals, festivals and special days, etc. My empirical studies enabled me to make a very detailed ethnography. My data on Kaixiangong villagers' cultural and religious life is very broad-ranging: from life cycle events to annual life cycle and annual products cycle events, from everyday life to major family events, from house construction to investment and the handling of emergencies, even from current life to the afterlife, and so on.

James Watson had already come to the conclusion, based on his and other anthropologists' historical and empirical studies on Chinese funerals, that the "Chinese state had no effective means of controlling beliefs regarding the afterlife" (1988: 11). My data led me to a broadened version of his argument: that "the Chinese state had little effective means of controlling Kaixiangong villagers' beliefs and customs, as regards this life or the afterlife".

Watson specifically suggested that funeral related studies would be helpful in gaining understanding of "What held Chinese society together?" (1988: 3). I now move to the next section **"**What holds Chinese society together"?

5. A brief review of "What holds Chinese society together"?

[***slide 21***] *The slide 19 provides a list of authors whose ideas I would like to bring forward in this section, but I have to be selective here due to the limited time.*

So now back to our main question. In 1999 George Yeo gave a popular speech at The Golden Jubilee Anniversary of New Asia College, Hong Kong in 1999. According to Yeo, what is unique and extraordinary about Chinese history is the ability of Chinese society to re-gather itself into a single polity again and again, as has happened from the Han Dynasty onwards. He thought this was because the political idea of "one China" is deeply embedded in the minds of all Chinese people, as a long-held cultural idea. Yeo argued that without a strong state to hold Chinese society together, it can dissolve quickly into internal dispute and civil war (1999). This idea had been put forward by Asia expert Chalmers Johnson's view that an "ideological shift from an all-embracing communism to an all-embracing nationalism has helped to hold Chinese society together" (2000: 50). The above sources show that both Yeo and Johnson believed that ideological power is a major element helping to hold

Chinese society together, although Yeo also maintains that it is the powerful state that holds Chinese society together. But their ideas lack evidence.

The philosopher Stuart Hampshire, speaking as a westerner, has said that institutions (of justice for instance) and their rituals hold society together based on a principle of rationality (2001)[6]. However, in KXG village, over thousands of years, villagers have hardly ever needed to resort to courts of justice. 1999 was a period when many villagers grumbled about the increasing burden of more than 30 different kinds of taxes and fees. The local government's first attempt at a solution was to send a villager to court when he refused to pay − which the villagers described as "killing a hen to frighten monkeys." They soon gathered together and decided that none of them would pay what they regarded as over charged taxes and fees. In their view, this decision was in line with the Chinese popular saying that "no law is able to punish the masses (*fa bu ze zhong*)". The decision spread to neighboring villages, and the list of villagers refusing to pay fees and taxes got longer and longer. Three years later, the government reduced 70% of these "overcharges". The villagers believed it was their resistance that had made the state change its policy. In the 1940s Fei had written an essay in this little book titled "A society without litigation (*wusong*无讼)" which summarized how rural Chinese conduct their affairs on a basis of "*li*" − customary practice, based on Confucian ethics (1947:54-55). This is how things still worked 70 years later.

In 2005, a villager told me that there was something very odd about the "harmonious society policy", under which the state had waived agricultural tax. For villagers, the grain and tax to the emperors (*huangliang guoshui*皇粮国税) was the God's truth or unalterable principle (*tian jing di yi*天经地义). Could this be an auspice for another wave of political tightness? Well, they soon worked out from their balance between cost and profit over a year that it was another way for the state to take money from them. Increased tax to the supplier of pesticide and fertilizer meant that supplies increased in price to the villagers, who now paid even more in this indirect tax than they had previously paid directly. Yao, a committee member of the Village Residents Association, told me that it was a change in form but not in content (*huantang buhuan yao*换汤不换药). But it was actually a fair exchange: the state gave a new policy to the villagers, the village gave money to the state, and all without any use of coercive power. The outcome − that the state obtained the money it needed − was arranged in a way that accorded with the custom and practice that holds local society together. As Glen Allport pointed out, "what holds society together isn't the coercive power of the state – it's peer pressure, social opprobrium, moral approbation, and, especially, self interest"[7]. I now move onto a new perspective from my own study.

6. A Chinese model of social relations and relatedness

My Chinese model of social relations and relatedness is built on two elements: social support networks and the *lishang-wanglai* framework.

After my restudies of the ESRC social support project in the two villages the original categories were modified and expanded significantly to reflect qualitative aspects of the replies of my respondents. I am going to skip a huge amount of detail about it **[slide 22].** This slide shows some of the people and their concepts, to whom I am indebted in my development of *lishang-wanglai.* I have put the Chinese phrase

[6] Stuart Hampshire, *Justice Is Conflict*, Princeton University Press, 2001. http://press.princeton.edu/chapters/s6721.html

[7] BY G. D. Allport, The Paradise Paradigm, On Creating a World of Compassion, Freedom, and Prosperity, E. DIANNE PUBLISHING, 2006 http://www.paradise-paradigm.net/lovefreedom.html

lishang-wanglai on the bottom line. I believe my conceptualisation is not only simpler, but also inclusive of those above.

Let me pick Yan Yunxiang for a comparison. After I finished my PhD dissertation's draft I attended Yan's Malinowski Memorial Lecture in 2003 at LSE. Amongst more than 40 outstanding anthropologists in the world Yan was the only Chinese to receive such an honour. His book *The Flow of Gift* (1996) became another important Chinese anthropological classic after Fei Xiaotong's *Peasnt Life in china*. The difference between Yan's work and mine can be seen from **slide 23.**

[slide 24] This slide shows the *lishang-wanglai* model. The phrase *li shang wanglai* was given to me by a Chinese villager during my fieldwork in 1996. It originally came from the Confucian book of *Li Ji* (Book of Rites) and is deeply rooted in Chinese culture. I developed *lishang-wanglai* as a novel concept by interpreting certain implicit cultural patterns of social relationships that I found in Kaixiangong. I have taken elements from a wide range of previous work, some of which I've shown you, which I have attempted to unify.

Now imagine the model of *lishang-wanglai* as a toolbox for analyzing Chinese business or social relations. *Lishang-wanglai* consists of a static framework, and dynamic networks. The static framework includes sources, resources, events, ranges, which show how, what, why and where the villagers' seek resources. Compared with previous work, the *lishang-wanglai* model is as simple as possible given its aim to be truly inclusive. In providing a framework for categorising all the many different relationships possible, the *lishang-wanglai* model deals only with four basic types of relations (*wanglai*) and four basic principles (*lishang*) that underlie such relationships, and explains how particular cases appear in this or that way.

I now come to bottom item of "social creativity", which I owe to John Davis (1993). I see the dynamic networks as ego-centered networks driven by "social creativity". In order to understand how this concept works in a Chinese context it is helpful to link it with the Chinese notions of "heart" and "*qi*". Remember the name of Fei Xiaotong's last essay collection 《志在富民》? The English translation is *Aimed at Enriching People*. This translation missed the core meaning from the Chinese character "*zhi*". "*Zhi*" forms two parts: *shi* is on top and *xin* at the bottom. *Shi* stands for scholar, bachelor, soldier and person; whereas *xin* means heart, a term being used not as the source of love, sorrow and compassion, as may be expected in the west, but more in its sense of volition, desire and force of will. *Zhi* is always used with *qi* which means vital energy.

The matter of heart and *qi* is central to understanding Chinese people and society. Andrew Kipnis had problems typifying this kind of phenomenon, and coined the term "nonrepresentational ethics" for it (1997). However, I prefer the nomenclature of an earlier study by sinologist Liang Shuming (1949). He used the term "human heart" in a sense distinct from "human feelings" and regards "human heart" as the source of a deeper level of motivation. Liang's theory of human heart can be seen as making up the single *xing* of Mao Zedong: *chuangzaoxing* – creativity. Mao's famous slogans are highly expressive of this deep-rooted source of motivation. "People, only people are a real force of creating world history", and "[It] is endless enjoyment of fighting with the Heavenly gods, the earth (nature) and human beings".[8] This enjoyment of effort is a striking element of the social creativity Chinese people bring to the making, maintaining, or discontinuing of relationships in accordance with *lishang-wanglai*. The *lishang-wanglai* model follows this distinction and uses the term human feelings (*renqing*) as one of the *lishang* criteria, and human heart (*renxin*) for motivation.

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

For Kaixiangong villagers, social creativity means to use multiple *lishang* to work out solutions to the problems and niceties of maintaining different relationships based on changing situations. It is difficult, challenging, and enjoyable. I see this enjoyment of the creativity inherent in calculating relationships as a very important part of Chinese culture. So now I come to the story of the resignation of the latest party secretary, Zhou Yonglin, as I promised.

Zhou told me this story himself, with great excitement and satisfaction. As a successful "upstart" of privatisation, he was appointed by the Township Party Committee to be Party Secretary of Kaixiangong four years ago. It did not take him very long to decide that this post was altogether too onerous and interfered with his running of his own business. Unfortunately resigning would mean appearing to reject the honour the Party had given him, which would create a negative *wanglai* with the local Party Committee, and have a detrimental effect on his own business. Zhou Yonglin decided (in his own words) to liberate himself from the post by "crying". He believed you could never win over the Communist Party unless you appeared very pitiful. In what follows, you must not imagine that Zhou is complaining, he knows that would not help at all, he is "crying", and thus usefully personalizing his institutional relationship with the Party.

Zhou went about telling township officials from different departments how hard up the village was (*ku qiong*, poor-mouth) and how this was all the fault of policy. The village was a model village of "Southern Jiangsu Model" − which had actually been built on a theoretical basis created by Fei Xiaotong himself, in that enterprises were run by the village collective, representing the socialist direction. In the middle 1990s local government gave a big loan to these collective enterprises. In 1997 they went bankrupt to the tune of 10 million *yuan,* equivalent to 20,000 *yuan* per household. The previous Party Secretary had sorted out most of the resultant mess, but 4 million *yuan* of debt was still left when Zhou Yonglin took over. Zhou "cried" to the local government that the 4 million *yuan* debt should be waived, even citing Fei Xiaotong as in favour, which indeed he was [***slide 25***]. This photo shows Fei visiting a villager's house with its own "family business" (at that time people were still not allowed to say "private business") just a few months before Kaixinggong's collective business finally collapsed.

Zhou was successful. But you must remember that his objective was not to succeed but to resign. He never forgot that "crying" was the way forward, and made sure that in spite of his success he still appeared pitiful. His relationship with the township Party Committee – based, because of his crying, on human feelings as well as self-interest − now contained generous *wanglai* − he was "owed" for the waiver of debt, and expressive *wanglai*, because of his "crying."

Now was the time for instrumental *wanglai*. Using the way Zhou got back a part of lake which originally owned by the village but was taken away by the County WCB in 1980s. He also raised fund and built a road cross the lake which ended the history of boating to their land where was located in another side of the lake. The most difficult task for Zhou is to make enough money for the village to provide permanently for the village cadres' salaries. It was a hint from the Party Committee. So Zhou Yonglin diligently continued "crying" to different departments for financial support until eventually he got 2.4 million *yuan* for the village, from the "aid-the-poor programme" of Wujiang Science and Technology Bureau and other local governmental departments. This programme was a central government programme designed for providing assistance for poor areas of the country. How Zhou Yongling contrived to make the case for one of the richest villages in China to be the object of aid intended for the poorest is a testament to his creativity. He acquired land with the money and is building a standard workshop, the rent of which in three years time will cover most of the salaries of village cadres [**slides 26 & 27**]. Negotiations for his resignation could at last begin in earnest.

What to me is so striking is the enjoyment that Zhou obtained from all this manipulation. From a non-Chinese, his story could easily have been one of delay and frustration. Zhou's reactions typify the creative approach to relationships – even though these relationships are based on custom and tradition − that does so much to unify Chinese society. Yet, you must remember from slide 4 that the spirit behind Zhou's determination to get his way, and his "endless enjoyment of fighting with the Heavenly gods, the earth and human beings" is balanced in China with a religious sense that it is the Heavenly gods who ordain. So there are two Chinese ways of looking at Zhou's story.

Now let me recall my talking about two kinds of States and two Fei Xiaotongs. I use the Taiji Diagram to represent the fact that these two divided persons or phenomena create a dynamic unity. The **slide 28** shows how a one storey workshop joined to the owner's house after its first floor was destroyed in 1996. **The slide 29** shows the original two storey workshop rebuilt according to its original design, with new extended workshops in the surrounding buildings. This workshop which was half pulled down and then put together again larger than before illustrates how in Kaixiangong village opposing forces − in this case State policies and the will of the villagers − have created opportunity and new growth.

Conclusion

[I hope the Chinese model of social relations and relatedness will make for better understanding of the complex nature of Chinese culture, China's large and advanced society, and its rapid ongoing development. It might promote a common ground on which to help in the formation of the global civil society as well as contributing to general knowledge.]

Finally I am concluding my talk with a question: can *lishang-wanglai* be a general analytic concept for analysing Chinese social relations?